

# Frankie Smith has prison sentence increased

News story

The mother of Star Hobson has had her sentence increased after the Attorney General referred her case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.



The mother of Star Hobson has had her prison term increased after the Attorney General, the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP referred her original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Frankie Smith was convicted of causing or allowing the death of her 16-month-old daughter, Star Hobson. Star Hobson was murdered by Frankie Smith's partner, Savannah Brockhill on 22 September 2020.

On 15 December 2021, Frankie Smith was sentenced at Bradford Crown Court to 8 years' detention. At the same hearing, Savannah Brockhill was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 25 years for the murder of Star Hobson.

The Attorney General referred Frankie Smith's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme. On 15 March the Court of Appeal found her original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 12 years' detention.

Speaking after the judgment, the Attorney General said:

This is a tragic and extremely upsetting case and my thoughts are with all those who loved Star Hobson. This case involved prolonged cruelty and neglect, deliberate disregard, and a failure to take any steps to protect or seek assistance for her before and after her murder. No sentence can reverse this tragedy, but I welcome the decision to reflect the gravity of this offending by increasing the sentence today.

## [Scottish Secretary responds to March Labour Market Statistics](#)

### News story

As new ONS figures show Scotland's unemployment rate decreasing, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack says the UK Government is continuing to help people into work.



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

“There are some encouraging signs in today's employment figures, and while we should not be complacent, our economy is proving resilient.

“The UK Government is helping people right across the country get into work and progress. This is part of our vision to level up all parts of the UK, driving economic growth and creating opportunities for everyone.”

### **Background**

Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that Scotland's unemployment rate has decreased by 0.3 percentage points compared with the previous quarter. Scotland's labour market has strengthened over the past 12 months, with the employment rate at 74.1 per cent.

# New measures to tackle corrupt elites and dirty money become law

The new Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act received Royal Assent in the early hours of this morning (15 March), following an expedited passage through Parliament.

Introduced following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the new legislation will mean the government can move more quickly to impose sanctions against oligarchs already designated by our allies, as well as intensifying our sanctions enforcement. The Foreign Secretary will set out further sanctions made possible by our new powers later today.

A new Register of Overseas Entities, requiring those behind foreign companies which own UK property to reveal their identities, will also be created under the act. Entities who refuse to reveal their 'beneficial owner' will face tough restrictions on selling the property and those who break the rules could face a fine of up to £2,500 per day or up to 5 years in prison. This will be a valuable tool for law enforcement agencies in investigating suspicious wealth. Companies House will now begin work to implement the register as quickly as possible, working closely with the UK's 3 land registries. Any foreign company selling properties between 28 February and the full implementation of the register will also be required to submit their details at the point of sale.

Reforms to Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs) will remove key barriers to their use, increasing time available to law enforcement to review material provided in response to a UWO and protecting them from incurring substantial legal costs if they act reasonably in a case that is ultimately unsuccessful.

Furthermore, UWOs will be more effective against those who hold property in the UK via trusts and other complex ownership structures. The government has also committed to publishing an annual report on their use.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This government has moved quickly to strengthen our response to Putin's cronies and ensure that corrupt elites have nowhere to hide their dirty money in the UK.

We will continue to work with our international partners to take the strongest possible action against those who enable this unprovoked aggression towards Ukraine.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

There is absolutely no room for illicit finance in the UK, and by bringing forward this Economic Crime Act at unprecedented speed we've put Putin, and the corrupt elites propping him up, on notice.

Our new Register of Overseas Entities, the first of its kind in the world, will have an immediate dissuasive effect on oligarchs attempting to hide their ill-gotten gains, ensuring that the UK is a place for legitimate business only.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

Our Economic Crime Act will enable us to crack down harder and faster on dirty money and those who support Putin and his regime.

We are using all of our financial might to send a clear message to the Kremlin that this criminal venture will end in total failure.

These measures form part of a wider package of legislative proposals to tackle illicit finance which will be introduced in Parliament in the coming months, including reforming Companies House and introducing new powers to seize crypto assets more easily.

The Prime Minister also announced a new 'Kleptocracy Cell' based in the National Crime Agency, which has been created to target sanctions evasion and corrupt Russian assets hidden in the UK.

The Home Secretary will attend the inaugural ministerial Russian Elites Proxies and Oligarchs Task Force on Wednesday. This meeting will bring together finance and justice and home affairs ministers from the G7, EU and Australia responsible for the supervision of sanctions and enforcement work. The task force aims to ensure the effective implementation of financial sanctions on Russian elites and oligarchs to further drive collective efforts to tackle Kremlin-linked illicit finance.

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## [RPA opens application window for farm payments for 2022](#)

The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) application window has opened today (15 March) for farmers to claim for their 2022 payments. The claim window for customers with existing Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES)

revenue agreements has also opened.

Farmers are being encouraged to apply as soon as they are able, to ensure applications are submitted ahead of the deadline of 16 May.

All applicants can quickly update their personal and business information by applying through the Rural Payments service, where farmers and their agents can also view and transfer their BPS entitlements and land parcels.

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

I am pleased that last year we paid over 98% of all BPS claims in the first month. This year we are committed to match this target, and ensure timely payments to all farmers and land managers – but we strongly encourage all eligible farmers to submit their applications as soon as possible.

We will continue to build on our performance while also supporting farmers across the country to make the most of the opportunities arising from the transition to the new farming schemes.

Since leaving the Common Agricultural Policy, the Government is introducing a new system that is tailored to the interests of English farmers. The new [environment land management schemes](#) are the most significant change to farming and land management in 50 years, designed to deliver a renewed agricultural sector, producing healthy food for consumption at home and abroad, where farms can be profitable and economically sustainable.

Since last year, Direct Payments are being gradually reduced – with the biggest reductions made to the higher payment bands. Reductions will be applied until the last payments are made in 2027.

The savings from phasing out these payments will free up funds which will go back to farmers and land managers through new grants, and through the roll-out of the three environment land management schemes, namely the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery, which will incentivise sustainable farming practices alongside profitable food production.

Later this year, Defra will open applications for the [Lump Sum Exit Scheme](#), which provides financial support to BPS applicants in England who wish to retire or leave farming in a planned way. Farmers who are considering applying for the Lump Sum Exit Scheme are encouraged to apply for BPS in 2022 as well as applying for the Lump Sum Exit Scheme later on. This will protect applicants if they find that they are not eligible for the lump sum payment, cannot complete the transfer of their land in time, or decide to withdraw their application before payments are made.

- The Sustainable Farming Incentive will open for applications later this

year. Farmers who participated in the SFI pilot will continue to receive their BPS payments while they are in pilot agreements.

- Basic Payment Scheme guidance 2022 is available [here](#).
  - Guidance on how to make a capital or revenue claim for Countryside Stewardship is available [here](#).
  - Guidance on how to make an Environmental Stewardship claim is available [here](#).
  - The Rural Payments Service can be accessed [here](#).
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## [Businesses to benefit from extension to plug-in van and truck grants](#)

- plug-in van and truck grants extended for 2 years as government goes further and faster to decarbonise transport
- drivers with standard licences can continue driving electric goods vans at a higher weight limit, making it easier for businesses to make the switch
- comes ahead of 2030 phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans as part of net zero commitment

Businesses will be supported to make the switch to electric as the government commits to a 2-year extension of [plug-in van and truck grants](#).

The move is expected to support the purchase of tens of thousands of greener vans and trucks, and will help make the UK less reliant on imports of foreign oil, improving the security of our energy supply and reducing our vulnerability to volatility in global energy prices.

Last year, industry figures showed the UK had the [highest number of plug-in electric vans sold in Europe](#) and there were around 4 times as many grant applications compared to 2020.

Existing grants have supported the purchase of more than 26,000 electric vans and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) across the UK since the programme launched in 2012.

With nearly 5% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions currently coming from vans, the 2-year extension to these grants and the switch to greener vehicles is essential to support the government's climate change and air quality commitments.

Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said:

When it comes to clean business, this government means business. We are backing a generation of green growth for our thriving fleet

sector.

As demand for electric vehicles continues to grow at speed, this extension to our grant scheme will allow tens of thousands more vans to be purchased, transporting goods in a way which is kinder to our environment. This will support our vital, ongoing work to clean up our air in towns and cities right across the country and build back greener.

Government grants for electric vans and trucks has helped kickstart the market, which now offers more than 30 models of electric vans and trucks which qualify for such schemes.

Electric vehicles are becoming more popular and affordable, and the number of available models will continue to rise, allowing more people and businesses to benefit from the lower running costs of greener vehicles.

This government has committed £2.5 billion to vehicle grants and chargepoint infrastructure to support the transition to zero emission vehicles to date, and plug-in vehicle grant schemes have supported the purchase of over 450,000 ultra-low emission vehicles across the UK – including more than 300,000 zero emission vehicles.

As well as the extension to grant schemes, the government has also announced it will continue to allow drivers holding standard car driving licences to drive electric goods vans at a higher weight limit, up to 4.25 tonnes (compared to a 3.5 tonne limit for diesel vans).

This takes into account the additional weight of electric vehicle batteries and makes it easier for businesses and drivers to make the switch.

To ensure funding and taxpayers' money goes where it's really needed and supports the transition to zero emission vehicles, eligibility criteria for existing plug-in vehicle grants will also be recategorised from the spring with a focus on heavier vehicles.

From 1 April 2022, the threshold to claim the small truck grant of up to £16,000 will be increased from 3.5 tonnes to 4.25 tonnes. Vans up to 4.25 tonnes will be able to claim the large van grant of up to £5,000.

With the increasing number of large vans on the market, the move will ensure government targets support where it's most needed, allowing for heavier and more costly trucks, up to 12 tonnes, to benefit from the higher grant funding.

This change will ensure funding is focused on helping more polluting trucks to make the switch to a zero-emission future.