

Change of Governor of the Falkland Islands: Alison Mary Blake CMG

Press release

Ms Alison Blake CMG has been appointed Governor of the Falkland Islands and Her Majesty's Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in succession to Mr Nigel Phillips CBE. Ms Blake will take up her appointment during July 2022.



Full name: Alison Mary Blake

Married to: Col Peter A Henry (Retd)

Dates	Role
2019 to 2021	Kabul, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2016 to 2019	Dhaka, British High Commissioner
2014 to 2015	FCO, Appeals Officer, Human Resources Directorate and also three months Full-Time language training (Bengali)
2011 to 2014	Islamabad, Deputy High Commissioner
2007 to 2010	FCO, Head, Conflict Group
2006 to 2007	Cabinet Office, Deputy Director, Defence & Overseas Secretariat
2001 to 2005	Washington, First Secretary Political
1999 to 2001	FCO, Deputy Head, Eastern Adriatic Department
1996 to 1999	UK Delegation to NATO, Brussels, First Secretary
1989 to 1995	Ministry of Defence, including Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Defence
1989	Joined the Civil Service

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Reinforcing our support and appreciation for the work of the OSCE

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Chair-in-Office, Foreign Minister Rau, for your briefing, and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for yours.

I would like first to pay tribute to the bravery and dedication of OSCE staff, and in particular to Maryna Fenina, a Ukrainian Special Monitoring Mission employee, who was killed in the Russian shelling of Kharkiv on March 1 while getting medicine for her family.

For decades, the OSCE has worked to bring security to Europe.

And yet, we meet today in the middle of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine – one OSCE signatory tearing up the rulebook and pursuing war against another, as Foreign Minister Rau said, as if the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law never existed.

President Putin's war violates fundamental principles of both the OSCE and the United Nations: sovereignty; inviolability of borders; respect for territorial integrity; and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

This war is a threat to us all. To the systems we have built together to preserve peace. It's a threat too to the peace and security of millions of people in Europe, Africa and Asia who rely on agricultural, energy and commodity supply chains – already profoundly disrupted by Russia's invasion.

We recognise the extensive efforts, which Foreign Minister Rau described, which the OSCE has made to try and avoid this catastrophe:

Russia was offered a chance to raise any security concerns in the OSCE Renewed European Security Dialogue – but said it was not the right time. We now know they were planning war all along.

Ukraine and others invoked the OSCE Vienna Document Risk Reduction Mechanism – to seek transparency from Russia and Belarus and to de-escalate the situation. Russia refused to engage.

And of course, the OSCE has worked for years to support implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russia is accused of the gravest war crimes – bombing schools, hospitals and homes; targeting families as they try to run to safety. We welcome action taken under the Moscow Mechanism to hold Russia to account. The OSCE fact-finding mission must be given full access so that evidence can be gathered.

Finally Mr President, I would like to stress that we continue to support the vital role of the OSCE field missions in Central Asia and the Western Balkans, including through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We strongly support OSCE efforts to facilitate a peaceful resolution

of the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in our support and appreciation for the work of the OSCE, and for Poland's Chairmanship at this critical time.

I thank you, Mr President.

Children to benefit from changes to Child Maintenance Service

Press release

Children of separated parents are set to benefit from changes to the Child Maintenance Service announced today (14 March 2022) as new powers are revealed.



The new powers being introduced will expand the list of companies and organisations required to provide information to the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) which will help the service trace the paying parent, calculate maintenance and enforce arrears more effectively.

To make it easier for companies to respond quickly and securely, the process is now being simplified so information can be passed on by secure digital means instead of compulsory in-person visits from CMS inspectors.

The government is also bringing forward proposals to allow all communications to be digital, which will speed up the service and make sure information is passed on to parents quickly.

Following responses from children's charities, parents and interested organisations, the government has published the details of the new powers in its response to the [consultation on the Child Maintenance Service](#).

DWP Lords Minister Baroness Stedman-Scott said:

At the heart of these changes is our commitment to making sure children get the financial support they need to have the best start in life.

We're bringing the service into the modern age, removing barriers that can slow down cases and prevent money reaching children.

The Child Maintenance Service collected or arranged £1 billion for children over the last 12 months, improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of children across the UK.

The CMS is set up for parents who have not been able to make a private arrangement about how their child's living costs will be paid. Child maintenance payments help lift around 120,000 children across the UK out of poverty each year.

Plans for future changes when the legislation timetable allows will:

- include unearned income in child maintenance calculations
- extinguish small volumes of very low value debt (£6.99 and under) where the maintenance calculation has ended but there remains an outstanding debt, and the value of the debt is substantially less than the cost of collecting it
- extinguish arrears where child maintenance has been deducted from a parent's earnings and their employer has gone into administration, and the outstanding arrears can no longer be recovered.

Further information: – The Child Maintenance Service was established in 2012 to replace the old Child Support Agency, to increase levels of cooperation between separated parents and encourage parents to meet their responsibilities to provide their children with the financial support they need to secure better outcomes in life. – The full consultation response can be found [here](#). – Regulation for digital notifications and expanded information regulations will be laid and come into force as soon as parliamentary time allows. – Postal communications will still be available for all communications where parents prefer this.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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'Homes for Ukraine' scheme launches

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, has today (14 March 2022) launched a webpage for sponsors to record their interest, ahead of Phase One of the scheme opening for applications this Friday.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the UK.

Phase One of the scheme will allow sponsors in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove said:

The courage shown by the Ukrainian people in the face of devastation caused by the invasion of their great country is nothing short of remarkable.

The United Kingdom has a long and proud history of helping others in their hour of need and our new Homes for Ukraine scheme offers a lifeline to those who have been forced to flee.

I'm asking people across our country who can provide a home for Ukrainians to consider being sponsors.

Local Government Association Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson said:

The humanitarian crisis caused by the Ukraine invasion is heart-breaking. Councils are ready to help new arrivals from Ukraine settle in the UK and to support communities who wish to offer assistance to those fleeing the devastating conflict.

Councils will be central in helping families settle into their communities and access public services, including schools, public health and other support, including access to trauma counselling.

Sanctuary Foundation Director, Dr Krish Kandiah said:

In 1939 the people of the UK opened their hearts and homes to children fleeing from the Nazis and we look back on that 'Kinder Transport' as an act of culture-defining hospitality. With the invasion of Ukraine the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the second world war is unfolding.

I welcome with great enthusiasm the UK government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. Sanctuary Foundation has already had over 7,000 pledges of sponsorship and I stand ready both personally and professionally to be part of this extraordinary welcome of Ukrainian refugees.

Co-Director of Reset Communities and Refugees, Kate Brown said:

We warmly welcome the introduction of a way in which communities in the UK can open their doors to welcome those who so urgently need help. We have seen that, when communities come together to welcome those seeking sanctuary, they can make a huge impact, transforming the lives of so many whilst offering safety to those who need it.

Individual sponsors will be asked to provide homes or a spare room rent-free for as long as they are able, with a minimum stay of 6 months. In return, they will receive £350 per month.

Those who have a named Ukrainian they wish to sponsor should contact them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application, with the application launching on Friday 18 March.

Charities, faith groups and local community organisations are also helping to facilitate connections between individuals, for potential sponsors who do not have a named contact.

Ukrainians arriving in the UK under this scheme will be granted 3 years leave to remain, with entitlement to work, and access benefits and public services.

Applicants will be vetted and will undergo security checks.

For more information or to record interest visit the [Homes for Ukraine webpage](#). Sponsors will be kept updated on the scheme.

[Call for evidence to support people with acquired brain injuries](#)

- New government ambition to prevent and limit the impact of acquired brain injuries
- A call for evidence will be launched to identify ways to improve services and support
- Those with experience of working with patients with injuries are invited to help collaborate

People whose lives have been affected by acquired brain injuries (ABI) are being invited to share their experiences and give ideas on how to improve the care and support available.

The government is asking people to come forward with their views on how to ensure a better quality of life for those who have experienced brain damage after birth.

Acquired brain injuries can be caused by traumas such as road traffic accidents, assaults and falls, or by medical issues like tumours or diseases, such as meningitis.

More support is needed to find ways to improve services and also increase rates of prevention and recognising symptoms.

The request for engagement is going out to those with ABI, their families, healthcare professionals and charities over the next 12 weeks.

It will provide an opportunity to hear first-hand from the people most affected to help find out what services are needed, where there may be gaps, and how the government can support services to help fill these.

Minister for Care and Mental Health Gillian Keegan said:

It is absolutely essential people living with acquired brain injury get the best possible care and treatment and that we take steps to prevent these injuries wherever possible.

Together the cross-government programme board and the call for evidence will allow us to deliver a strategy to address issues that matter most to those with acquired brain injuries and other neurological conditions.

A new programme board, jointly chaired by Minister for Care and Mental Health Gillian Keegan and Labour MP Chris Bryant MP, will look to publish a new strategy to reduce the amount of injuries sustained whilst also improving the experiences of those with acquired brain injuries.

Views are also being sought on extending the strategy to include other neurological conditions.

MP for Rhondda, and joint chair of the programme board, Chris Bryant, said:

I'm delighted that the government is starting to pull together a cross government strategy on acquired brain injury.

We need people to come forward with ideas and suggestions based on their experience of brain injury as practitioners, patients or family members so we can get this strategy right.

I urge everyone to take part if they think they have an insight to

offer.

Chloe Hayward, executive director of the UK Acquired Brain Injury Forum, said:

We are very pleased the government is giving acquired brain injury the attention it deserves with the ABI Strategy.

The call for evidence will help the panel to focus and prioritise their efforts, so we need people with lived experience of brain injury – whether, survivors, carers or professionals – to participate. This will ensure the panel has the best available information to develop their strategy.

The ABI strategy will be the latest step forward in improving responses to brain injuries. It comes after the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport published its action plan for tackling concussion in sport to help reduce the risks of head injuries.

In that plan new protocols will be put in place and steps taken to improve the understanding, awareness, prevention and treatment of concussion in sport at all levels.

Those leading on the concussion protocols will also support this strategy and call for evidence as the government does all it can to reduce risks, better understand symptoms and improve treatment and services.