

Recruitment process for Victims' Commissioner launched

Press release

The government has launched the recruitment process for the Victims' Commissioner in line with the standard public appointments process.



The competition will run from today until 4 April with the successful candidate taking on the role in the following months.

It comes as the government embarks on landmark reforms for victims, including new legislation to ensure they are better heard, served and supported by the criminal justice system. The role of the commissioner will be crucial in delivering this which is why as part of the Victims' Bill consultation ministers are considering evidence on the role's responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the government is investing nearly half a billion to provide the swift justice that victims deserve, and progress continues on the Rape Action Plan in order to increase the volume of prosecutions flowing through the system.

The commissioner will be integral in working alongside government to restore confidence in the justice system, and ministers are determined to seek the very best candidate.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

The Victims' Commissioner role is vital in holding the Government and criminal justice agencies to account and being the voice for those affected by crime.

I'm keen that all these roles are open to competition so we always have the best candidate in post, and have invited Dame Vera to re-apply as part of the process.

The commissioner position is being opened to competition as the fixed-term appointment comes to end, as is common with public appointments. Dame Vera has been invited to reapply.

Notes to Editors

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Home Secretary update on support for Ukrainians

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to update the House on the government's humanitarian response to Putin's depraved war on Ukraine.

As the House knows, the UK's humanitarian support for Ukraine has been developed following close consultation with their government and governments in the region.

On 4 March, I launched the Ukraine Family Scheme. It applies to immediate and extended Ukrainian family members and everyone eligible is granted 3 years' leave to enter or remain.

Today, I want to set out further changes I am making to the process to make it quicker and simpler. I have 2 overreaching obligations: first to keep the British people safe. Second to do all we can to help Ukrainians.

No Home Secretary can take these decisions lightly and I am in daily contact with the intelligence and security agencies who are providing me with regular threat assessments.

What happened in Salisbury showed what Putin is willing to do on our soil. It also demonstrated that a small number of people with evil intentions can wreak havoc on our streets.

This morning I received assurances which enable me to announce changes to the Ukraine Family Scheme. Based on the new advice I have received, I am now in a position to announce that vital security checks will continue on all cases.

From Tuesday, I can announce that Ukrainians with passports will no longer need to go to a Visa Application Centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK.

Instead, once their application has been considered and the appropriate checks completed, they will receive direct notification that they are eligible for the scheme and can come to the UK.

In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come here, fully online, from wherever they are; and will be able to give their biometrics once in Britain.

This will mean, Mr Speaker, that Visa Application Centres across Europe can focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports. We have increased the capacity at those centres to over 13,000 appointments per week.

This streamlined approach will be operational as of Tuesday 15 March, in order to make the relevant technology and IT changes.

I will, Mr Speaker, of course update the House if the security picture changes and if it becomes necessary to make further changes to protect our domestic homeland security.

Threat assessments are always changing, and we will always keep our approach under review.

In the meantime, Mr Speaker, I once again salute the heroism of the Ukrainian people.

[DBS works with partners to create animated guide to DBS checks](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has recently worked with a number of organisations to create an animated 'guide to DBS checks' video, and accompanying leaflet.

The video and leaflet, which can be found below, look at a number of different subjects, including:

- the different types of DBS check, and how to apply
- what type of information may be included on DBS certificate
- what countries DBS covers
- the DBS Barred Lists

Feedback from customers and partners showed that various parts of the DBS checking process can be confusing, so we worked alongside [The Prince's Trust](#), and the [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#) to understand which sections of the process they wanted us to focus on, to maximise understanding of the work we do within DBS.

Cathy Taylor, Regional Outreach Manager at DBS, said:

By working with The Prince's Trust and the DWP, and finding out what they need from us, we were able to produce a resource which

will not only benefit the individuals they work with, but the general public too.

Cathy continued:

The work of the Partnerships team at DBS focuses on that collaborative working with partner organisations, and we really value the feedback we're given, as it allows us to continually review how we provide information to those that use DBS services and products.

[A guide to DBS checks](#)

[A guide to DBS checks](#) (PDF, 2.95 MB, 5 pages)

Jonathan Townshend, Chief Executive of Prince's Trust UK, said:

The Prince's Trust is pleased to have worked with DBS to develop the training information and animated guide to assist organisations and individuals in using DBS processes to create safe environments for children and young people. As an organisation supporting young people to achieve their potential, we recognise the importance of working with other organisations to deliver safe and effective programmes.

Martin Snooks, of the National Employer and Partnership team at the DWP, said:

DWP and DBS have been working collaboratively on this project for the past year. It arose out of an identified need to let our customers have a product that they could refer to, that was in plain English and a simple format. Following consultations with work coaches and account managers within DWP, the leaflet and supporting video has been produced and will allow our customers to understand the process of DBS checks.

More information around the DBS Partnerships team

The Partnerships team consists of a number of Outreach and Engagement Advisers, who work regularly with other organisations, and support them in a variety of ways:

- Answering DBS-related queries and providing advice via phone/email
- Delivering workshops and webinars to provide an overview of DBS
- Helping organisations to understand what level of DBS check can be applied for, and what information these checks will provide
- Informing organisations and employers of their duty or power to refer

If you have any general enquiries about the work of the team, please contact DBSRegionaloutreach@dbs.gov.uk.

Pensions, People, Planet: Saving for the future to save the future

Thank you Nigel [People, PLSA's Director of Policy and Advocacy].

It is great to be part of this second ESG [Environmental, Social and Governance] conference.

I am sure it will continue as a firm fixture in the PLSA and pensions calendar, given the growing demand from the sector for ESG advice, guidance and other tools.

Because, pension schemes are weighing up the risks from environmental, social and governance factors like never before, as they look at how sustainable – and in tune with their values and outlooks – their assets and investments are.

And Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been a reminder to investors about the importance of thinking carefully and holistically about risk, and about the influence that investment can have.

As a result of what we agreed four months ago, when 197 countries convened by the Clyde for COP26, we kept the aim of a 1.5 degree rise in temperatures within reach – mobilising global climate finance to help power our greener future and committing to make the UK the world's first Net Zero financial centre.

As a government, we are investing billions into our green industrial revolution.

But the simple fact is, the change we need is not going to happen – here or globally – without a lot of private finance.

That was – and is – our mantra, in our COP26 Presidency, and in picking up the COP baton,

Egypt has relayed that message – and the importance of using innovative finance to ensure last November's commitments are converted into action.

With the halfway point between Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh already on the horizon, this conference is a good opportunity to take stock – to look at what we are doing – and what more we can do – to ensure pensions play their full part in leveraging private capital... so that, as we save for the future, we can help save the future.

As the largest single group of institutional investors in the UK – with around £2 trillion of investments – occupational pension schemes are in a prime position to take the long view and invest in green assets that can help us reach Net Zero and keep 1.5 alive.

With all that investing power and influence over financial flows, I have called pensions a potential superpower in the fight against climate change.

And we are helping provide plenty of green investment opportunities – for example, by issuing new green gilts to fund projects like zero-emissions buses and offshore wind or through our new infrastructure bank, which is increasing green infrastructure investment across the UK.

We are also giving schemes greater flexibility to invest in productive finance – in real assets like infrastructure and innovative businesses of tomorrow.

We will bring forward legislation shortly to remove barriers that currently prevent schemes from being able to invest in more assets like these, if they feel that would benefit their members.

As with any superpower, it is important to know your kryptonite – climate change presents a real risk to scheme investments, to employers' funding plans and ultimately the retirements of savers.

Which is why it is great that UK pension schemes are at the forefront of tackling climate risk, with leadership and progress being made across the sector – for example, we are seeing increasing numbers of schemes choosing to move to a Net Zero target as part of their investment strategy.

It is also why, in government, as well as looking to remove barriers to support investment we have been focused on carefully putting in place a world-leading regulatory system of accountability and transparency to help pension schemes manage this risk.

Last year, we were the first country in the world to give new legal duties to trustees to assess – and publish – the financial risks of climate change within their portfolios.

And in the summer, we will bring regulations before Parliament requiring trustees to report on how their investments align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We plan for this to come into effect from the 1st October.

Trustees will be able to select a portfolio alignment tool which reflects their circumstances, including their investment strategy and governance capacity.

We know that limits to data coverage for certain asset classes present challenges. However, they are not sufficient to delay action.

And given the data gaps that currently exist, trustees will only be required to calculate Paris Alignment 'as far as they are able'.

These new requirements are part of a bigger push right across the economy for new standards on environmental reporting to weed out greenwashing and support our transition to a net zero financial system – for example, through our new Sustainability Disclosure Requirements.

Disclosure, transparency and accountability are powerful tools.

And as we have been clear, our approach is about better information and empowerment, not about divestment or directly penalising today's high carbon emitters.

High emitters – like fossil fuel companies – should be supported in their transition to Net Zero – and we need them to invest in green technologies.

So this is about enabling pension schemes to distinguish between the leaders and the laggards based on the ambition of those companies so that investment does not shift if they have a credible net zero plan.

But equally, it will not be enough for schemes to just passively report on and tick-box their way through climate change risks and to net zero.

Trustees can be strong investment influencers – as asset owners, as the appointors of investment managers, by sharing their views and wishes when it comes to votes on company and shareholder resolutions, and their engagement with firms.

I see strong and active stewardship as a really important component of what it means to put climate change right at the heart of a scheme's governance and risk management.

Trustees may feel they have a solid stewardship strategy in place – but are asset managers and service providers on board, walking the walk and following through?

That is where effective stewardship comes to the fore, with trustees taking action and driving change in the behaviour of those making decisions on their behalf.

I invite all trustees watching today, to ask:

'Am I maximising my influence?'

'Can I engage even more with companies and issuers in our portfolio over their plans for Net Zero – in the short, as well as the medium and longer term?'

'Are my scheme's votes being used to support shareholder resolutions that require robust Net Zero plans and climate disclosures?'

'As asset owners, are we encouraging managers to sign up to the UK Stewardship Code?'

'Are we making sure our managers' activities reflect our climate strategies?'

I do understand that trustees have a lot to consider – and that climate disclosures have added to the important agenda of wider reform to the pensions system to make it safer, simpler and more transparent.

But the regulations and stepping up on stewardship are vital for the protection of pension savers and the planet alike – and we want to help trustees to carry out their duties.

In the next few months, DWP will be publishing specific guidance on the new Paris Alignment metric, as well as on the stewardship role of trustees – and I want to thank all those who contributed to the consultation on this.

The Minister for Pensions and I think we can go further.

We are looking right now at how we can make 2023 the year of the trustee – to recognise some of the excellent work trustees are already doing, as well as provide more support through a programme of education and by promoting best practice during the course of next year.

We will work with pension industry partners, including the PLSA, on this – so watch this space!

We want to look at a range of support and opportunities because I recognise that we are asking a lot of trustees and occupational pensions schemes, and I want to thank you for the leadership and focus you are taking.

I also want to thank the PLSA for the work you have done – and continue to do – to bring the pensions sector together on the climate and ESG agenda, to develop and share best practice, and help guide trustees in their important role.

We are committed to continuing to work with pension schemes and their trustees to ensure the risks from climate change are properly managed, to protect people's pension savings, to maximise investment opportunities to fuel our transition to our greener economy, to turn promises on climate change into action, and to fully harness the power of pensions to deliver for people and the planet.

DfT launches UK SHORE to take maritime 'back to the future' with green investment

- government launches new unit, UK SHORE, to tackle shipping emissions and advance the UK towards a sustainable shipping future
- £206 million new funding to accelerate research into and development of

- clean maritime technologies and create skilled jobs across the country
- clean maritime competition given multi-year extension for UK organisations to accelerate zero emission shipping technologies

Thousands of ships, cruises and vessels will become greener and cleaner with £206 million investment to support zero emission sailing and skilled maritime jobs, as part of the government's shipbuilding strategy.

Taking steps to cement the UK's role as a world leader in shaping the future of transport, the government will create its first office purely dedicated to making maritime greener – pioneering new research and development of technology that could make journeys by sea as green as they were hundreds of years ago.

Known as the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE), the new unit will be housed in the Department for Transport, building on the success of the UK's [Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition \(CMDC\)](#) launched last year.

Dedicated to creating a world free from shipping emissions, UK SHORE will implement a comprehensive research and development programme, including a multi-year CMDC, and will work in partnership with industry to tackle supply and demand issues with shipbuilding and help build greener vessels – from cruises to tankers and leisure boats.

UK SHORE will also help develop the infrastructure to enable zero emission technologies and the physical infrastructure needed to power these new-age vessels. The programme will include a multitude of technologies including hydrogen, electric and ammonia, and this funding will place the UK among the leading nations in the development of new and innovative vessels and port infrastructure, supporting its rich maritime industry and coastal communities.

Funding under UK SHORE will relaunch manufacturing hotspots across the UK, creating new skilled jobs and opportunities while levelling up local economies.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Climate change is a global challenge and it's essential that, with our maritime sector's rich history of green travel, dating back thousands of years, we tackle shipping emissions.

I want UK SHORE to take the industry back to the future. The age of the sail was the first green maritime age; new technology will bring us to a second green age.

And as we turn the tide for green shipping, I can't wait to see thousands of new jobs created around the country, too – from masterful shipbuilding to the high-tech sailors of tomorrow.

Following the highly successful CMDC round in 2021, the extension of the competition will boost the UK's position as a world leader in zero emission vessel technologies. Details of the funding will be revealed in the coming months and it will be open to a range of UK innovators – from small businesses to universities.

Maritime Minister Robert Courts announced the new funding today (10 March 2022) in Southampton docks and said:

We are building a green maritime legacy for generations to come.

This is the biggest single investment in green shipping in the past hundred years and is a further demonstration that the government is committed to working with the sector to develop the green shipping technologies of tomorrow.

Reiterating the government's commitment to wiping out carbon emissions from transport, the funding boost is a major step towards the UK government's aim for all vessels to be zero emission by 2050, and signals a green industrial revolution that will transform the shipbuilding enterprise into a technological powerhouse, strengthening the UK industry's competitiveness.

The government will deliver this ambitious programme in parallel with regulatory changes, ensuring a strategic approach to the transition to zero emission shipping as it continues to implement its [Transport decarbonisation plan](#).

Maritime UK CEO, Ben Murray, said:

We've always been an island of maritime pioneers, and this investment will ensure this will long continue, by helping the UK develop its role as a global centre for maritime decarbonisation.

The establishment of UK SHORE and extension of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition can enable us to create the innovative green solutions at home and, in turn, export these across the world.

And this will create new jobs across our coastal communities, helping them realise their potential of becoming green engines for economic growth. Maritime UK and its members will be working more closely than ever with government to ensure these ambitions are met.

UK SHORE will deliver a suite of interventions inspired by our experience of decarbonising other transport modes. It will look at programmes such as the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, transforming the UK into a global leader in the design, manufacture and operation of clean maritime technology.