

UK ministers meet to drive progress on tackling drug misuse

Yesterday (Monday 11 October) government ministers and experts from across the home nations came together to discuss new ways to tackle illegal drug use across the UK, and the devastation it causes.

Held in Belfast, the Home Nations Drugs Ministerial focused on strong collaboration across the nations as crucial for finding solutions to all aspects of drug misuse.

Key issues discussed included cutting off supply routes for drugs, effective treatment and recovery systems, and how to end county lines networks – where vulnerable children and adults are exploited by organised crime gangs to transport drugs and cash.

The Ministerial was chaired by the Crime and Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse, who said:

This was our third Home Nations drug summit and the collective determination to confront the harm and degradation that drugs bring was strongly reaffirmed.

This is a complex and deep-rooted challenge, and there was strong recognition that we all benefit from working together to prevent drug deaths and build stronger neighbourhoods.

The Crime and Policing Minister was joined by Northern Ireland Executive's Health Minister, Robin Swann (MLA) and Justice Minister, Naomi Long (MLA), the Scottish Government's Minister for Drugs Policy, Angela Constance (MSP) and the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle (MS) from Welsh government.

Experts in the field of drug misuse were also present, including Professor Dame Carol Black, the government's independent adviser on drugs, and Professor Catriona Matheson, Chair of the Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce, who provided further insight on reducing drug deaths and harms.

Representatives from several police forces across the UK shared their perspectives from the frontline.

The meeting follows the UK Drugs Summits held in Glasgow in February 2020 and virtual UK Drugs Ministerial which took place virtually in September 2020. The UK government has a comprehensive strategy for addressing the problems associated with drug misuse in action, which includes:

- appointing Dame Carol Black as an independent adviser to drive forward progress in this area

- setting up Project ADDER, an innovative approach which combines tough, targeted law enforcement with improved treatment and recovery services – the project is now up and running in 13 areas across England and Wales
- supporting the police to expand capability to drug test suspects on arrest, in order to help develop an evidence base of the links between drugs and criminality and identify those who may need support or treatment
- commissioning the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to review the drivers of young people’s powder cocaine use in order to inform further action
- announcing £148 million of new investment to cut crime and protect people from the scourge of illegal drugs – the package includes the largest increase in drug treatment funding for 15 years, as well as additional money to help police forces shut down county lines gangs

[Charity Commission update on statutory inquiry into Al-Hijrah Trust](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has provided an update on its inquiry involving Al-Hijrah Trust (CIO).



The regulator confirms that its inquiry into the [Birmingham-based charity](#) has substantively concluded, but that the inquiry remains ongoing due to separate proceedings at Her Majesty’s Land Tribunal (‘HMLT’) .

Whilst the Commission’s inquiry examinations in respect of the Al-Hijrah Trust CIO are largely complete, the Interim Manager (IM), appointed by the regulator in March 2020 will continue in her role until the HMLT legal proceedings relating to the charity’s property conclude. The inquiry will formally conclude once the IM has been discharged.

The regulator confirms that the trustees of the Al-Hijrah Trust (CIO) have

engaged positively and fully with the inquiry. This includes working with the IM and complying with an order to make necessary improvements to the administration of the charity. For this reason, the Commission changed the scope of the IM's appointment, to focus solely on the outstanding land issue. Responsibility for the wider management of the charity has been returned to the trustees.

The Commission opened a statutory inquiry 18 March 2020 and appointed Ms Edwina Turner of Anthony Collins LLP as IM to the Al-Hijrah Trust (CIO), to examine serious concerns that the charity's property was at risk. This supported the work of an existing inquiry into a connected charity, [Al-Hijrah Trust](#). The inquiry has also examined concerns around governance and safeguarding. It remains the Commission's intention to publish an inquiry report once it has formally concluded.

Ends

Notes to Editors

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

Published 12 October 2021

[Manchester man handed increased jail sentence for historical sex offences](#)

Press release

Daniel Dunkerley has had his sentence increased to 7 years imprisonment



A Manchester sex offender has had his sentence increased by the Court of

Appeal following a referral by the then Solicitor General.

Daniel Dunkerley, 34, was convicted of four counts of sexual abuse taking place between 2001 and 2003 when he was aged between 14 and 17, and his victim was aged between 3 and 5.

Dunkerley was found guilty after trial of one count of indecency with a child, two counts of indecent assault and one count of attempted rape. On 27 July 2021, Dunkerley was sentenced to 4 years and 6 months' imprisonment at the Crown Court at Manchester Minshull Street.

Following the sentence, the then Solicitor General referred Dunkerley's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme. On 12 October the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 7 years imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP said:

The original sentence failed to take proper account of the seriousness of these offences, and I am pleased the Court has now seen fit to increase his sentence.

Published 12 October 2021

[High performing rail timetable announced for Manchester](#)

- government and Northern leaders agree a new and improved timetable will be rolled out across Manchester, following public consultation
- timetable designed to reduce service delays by 25%, improving punctuality and journey times for local passengers
- rail industry has worked collaboratively with local stakeholders to ensure changes respond to local concerns and is built with passengers at its heart

The core of a new timetable for rail services in and around Manchester has been approved for December 2022, focused on improving the performance of rail services and providing more punctual, reliable journeys for passengers.

The timetable follows an [extensive public consultation](#) that was launched in January 2021 and has the support of both government and Northern leaders. Once finalised, it aims to reduce delays for passengers by around 25%, benefitting the 150,000 regular passengers on Manchester's rail network as

they return following the pandemic.

The new timetable will see:

- direct Manchester Airport connectivity for Liverpool, Chester and North Wales retained
- an hourly service that will run between Southport, Wigan and Manchester Oxford Road all day
- a second hourly service from Southport to Manchester Victoria and Stalybridge all day

The final details of services are being refined ahead of launch and there will be ongoing public involvement in the process.

Changes to services will ensure that the wider Manchester area remains closely connected while bottlenecks become unclogged. The new timetable will improve the service mix across a number of 'hotspots', including the congested Castlefield area in Manchester.

This bottleneck has constrained the flow of rail services for years and has generated millions of minutes of costly and damaging delays.

The timetable was jointly produced by the cross-industry Manchester Recovery Task Force, comprising the Department for Transport, Transport for the North, Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail and the train operators Northern and TransPennine Express.

Local views have also been reflected in what is the first step in a wider strategy, including ambitious infrastructure plans being developed. Early phase infrastructure is targeted to start in the middle of this decade, which will help deliver better journeys for passengers and create a modern rail network for Greater Manchester and the North.

Chris Heaton-Harris Rail Minister said:

This new timetable has been built around the voices of Manchester that helped design it, focused on cutting delays on Manchester's railways and boosting punctuality.

Our plan for rail sets out our commitment to putting passengers first when it comes to our rail network. The work we are doing to fix Manchester's railways, which were bursting at the seams pre-pandemic, is all part of us building back better from COVID-19.

Liam Robinson, Chair of the Rail North Committee, representing Northern leaders on the task force, said:

This part of the network is the buckle in the belt of the North's rail network. It has to be able to do its job. The interim service solution in this consultation is, inevitably a compromise, but it

allows us the chance to run more reliable services until the task force can deliver on infrastructure solutions to enable the network to run as it needs to.

What's important is that we now have a commitment from government and the rail industry to develop and deliver a railmap which will enable us to build back services in a smarter and more intelligent way and provide an exit strategy from the temporary timetable we need in the interim.

Louise Gittins, Interim Chair of Transport for the North, said:

While rail travel has been significantly suppressed by the COVID-19 pandemic, all our data suggests that in a relatively short time this rail corridor will, once again, be under severe pressure unless we take action now.

The task force has, in phase 1 of this consultation, put forward a strategic framework for rail services, which rail operators will now consult with the public on in detail. What really matters is that, while this work is going on, simultaneously, significant work will be underway to address some of the fundamental structural issues of this network that need fixing.

[Manchester sex offender has sentence increased](#)

News story

A man who obtained and shared indecent images of children has had his sentence increased.



A man who obtained and shared indecent images of children has had his sentence increased following intervention by the then Solicitor General, The Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

In December 2019, Jaswent Rai, now 47, uploaded indecent images of children onto Instagram. This led to police searching his home in March 2020 and seizing his electronic devices which showed that Rai was in possession of indecent images of children and had uploaded images to online social media networks.

The children depicted in the images were aged between 6 and 16 years old, and the offender was also in possession of bestiality pornography.

Rai pleaded guilty to three counts of distributing indecent images of children, one count of possessing extreme pornographic images and three counts of making indecent images of children. On 18 August Rai was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years at Manchester Crown Court, with requirements to undertake the Maps for Change programme, 10 days Rehabilitation Activity Requirement, and 150 hours unpaid work. Following a referral to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme by the Solicitor General, on 12 October the Court found the sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 2 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal, the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP, said:

"The images held and shared online by Rai are truly shocking and abhorrent. I am pleased with the result of today's hearing, and that the Court of Appeal agrees a custodial sentence meets the gravity of the crime."

Published 12 October 2021