

# Ben Wallace is first ever UK Defence Secretary to visit Serbia

The UK and Serbia will enhance their cooperation on defence and security issues, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has confirmed.

In the first ever official visit of a UK Defence Secretary to the country, Mr Wallace met with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Minister of Defence Nebojša Stefanović to discuss how our two countries' militaries can cooperate further and support shared efforts to protect security in the Western Balkans.

The recently published Defence Command Paper outlined that in an age of global and systemic competition, our Armed Forces would be persistently globally engaged with partners around the world.

Our growing defence relationship was demonstrated to both Mr Wallace and Mr Stefanović on a visit to Exercise Platinum Wolf, a Serbia-hosted multinational exercise of 11 countries to which the UK is this year's largest contributor.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our open societies are witnessing a rising tide of threats that cross borders and often occur below the threshold of conflict.

As our recently-published Defence Command Paper made clear, developing close partnerships is crucial to building the resilience needed to counter such threats and that's why I'm delighted we're expanding our defence cooperation with Serbia.

Following meetings in Belgrade, the Defence Secretary and his counterpart signed a bilateral document which will expand the ambition of our two nations' defence engagement and open up new opportunities for joint training. Mr Wallace also reaffirmed the UK's enduring commitment to European security, as set out in the recently published Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper, which includes a commitment to working closely with Western Balkans partners to maintain and promote regional and international peace and security.

That ambition was demonstrated on Exercise Platinum Wolf, where a UK company consisting of 70 troops from 3 SCOTS, 2 RIFLES and 8 RIFLES is the largest contribution to the international exercise that also features forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia and the United States of America.

While in Serbia the Defence Secretary also opened a memorial to the successful evacuation of the UK Special Operations Executive personnel and

Allied Airmen from behind enemy lines in what was then Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. Alongside local troops and villagers, British personnel directed the construction of an airfield under the Nazis' noses. The airfield was used to evacuate 2,400 Allied Airmen, 11,000 wounded Partisans and 400 wounded civilians between May 1944 and June 1945. The memorial unveiled by the Defence Secretary was made by metalsmiths from 4th Armoured Close Support Battalion of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers with the support of 22nd Engineer Regiment and brought over from the United Kingdom.

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## Inspectorates: Rainsbrook children and staff fear serious harm

Serious and widespread failings at Rainsbrook secure training centre have put children and staff at risk of harm, Ofsted, HMI Prisons and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) find.

Such is their concern about safety at the MTC-run centre near Rugby, the inspectorates have [written to the Secretary of State for Justice](#) triggering an urgent notification (UN) for the second time in 6 months. Robert Buckland now has 28 days to respond.

The Ministry of Justice announced on Wednesday (16 June) that they had taken the decision to remove all children from the centre.

During a June inspection, children and staff told inspectors that they did not feel safe, fearing that someone was going to die or be seriously harmed. Levels of violence and staff use of force are high. Physical assaults between children are common, and children are able to bully and intimidate each other.

The letter highlights serious failures of leadership and staff who are ill-equipped to care for the centre's highly vulnerable children. Inspectors found that unsafe practice still continues and is not being appropriately dealt with, while the disconnect between senior leaders and staff on the ground has deteriorated since previous visits.

Inspectors also found:

- the centre has struggled to recruit and retain enough staff with the right skills to care for vulnerable children. Staff shortages mean that units often only have one member of staff on duty
- lapses in security are placing children at risk. Searching procedures are poor and there is increased evidence of staff bringing prohibited

items into the centre

- education provision is poor, with children making little progress. Inspectors saw instances of aggression that took staff too long to de-escalate, making the learning environment unsafe. On two occasions, children were seen locked in classrooms unsupervised
- children aren't always being taken to medical appointments or are taken late, and as a result are sometimes refused treatment. Children are often going without their prescribed medication, putting their health at risk.

The findings follow a series of negative inspection and visit outcomes for the centre. After visits in October and December last year, which highlighted serious concerns – including children being kept in their rooms for up to 23.5 hours a day – the inspectorates issued the first UN requiring the Ministry of Justice to set out an action plan for improvement at the centre. While a monitoring visit in January this year showed some improvements, and that concerns about children on the 'reverse cohorting' unit have now been addressed, the second UN highlights further serious issues. An inspection report will be published in due course.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, said:

Despite being warned about serious failings last year, it's astounding to see that Rainsbrook has deteriorated even further, leaving children and staff fearing for their safety. These are incredibly vulnerable children – some as young as 14 – who need specialist care. The pandemic has been challenging, but that is no excuse for poor practice and leadership. It's vital that long-term, sustainable improvement is secured at the centre.

Charlie Taylor, Chief Inspector of Prisons, said:

It is hugely disappointing that in spite of the previous Urgent Notification, things have deteriorated at the STC with children and staff members not being kept safe. It is essential that the troubled and often challenging children who come into the STC are urgently provided with the right levels of care and support.

Rosie Benneyworth, Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care at CQC, said:

As joint inspectorates, our priority is making sure that the care, safety and well-being of the children at this secure training centre is front and centre. Where we have concerns, we take

proportionate action to drive improvement and the decision to issue an urgent notice is not taken lightly.

While the reasons for taking this step do not relate specifically to the healthcare provision at Rainsbrook STC, we are concerned about the impact that these issues can have on the well-being of children and young people at the service.

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## [\*\*Amanda Spielman letter to the Secretary of State for Justice about Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre\*\*](#)

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## [\*\*Updates to The Highway Code will make roads even safer\*\*](#)

Highways England has drafted updated guidance for The Highway Code with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to help road users better understand how motorways and high-speed roads operate.

More than 3,200 people and organisations responded to a consultation on the guidance, with their comments directly leading to it being amended and improved. The amendments are expected to become part of The Highway Code later this year.

The update will include:

- clearer advice on where to stop in an emergency
- the importance of not driving in a lane closed by a Red X
- the use of variable speed limits to manage congestion
- updated guidance on key factors that contribute to safety-related

incidents, including driving while tired, unroadworthy vehicles, safe towing, tailgating and driving in roadworks

Jeremy Phillips, Highways England's Head of Road Safety, said:

The updates to The Highway Code will help everyone who uses our busiest roads.

Thanks to the input from road users, we have been able to produce clearer guidance on how to use our motorways and major A-roads which will make journeys even safer.

The new edition of The Highway Code can give everyone on our roads the confidence that they have the knowledge and skills to safely get from A to B.

Among the updates to The Highway Code are clearer advice on how and where to stop in an emergency, including the importance of not driving in a lane that has been closed with a Red X sign displayed and, for the first time, emergency area signage. It includes the "Go left" messaging used in Highways England's recent £5m advertising campaign to help people know what to do in the event of a breakdown.

There is new guidance on the use of variable speed limits to manage congestion and information on how safety cameras are used to ensure compliance with speed limits and lanes closed with a Red X, including the hard shoulder.

The improved guidance also addresses key factors that contribute to safety-related incidents, including driving while tired, unroadworthy vehicles, safe towing, tailgating and driving through roadworks.

In total, 33 existing rules will be amended and two new rules will be introduced. There will also be a number of amendments made to the additional information within The Highway Code and its annexes.

Highways England has provided the amendments to The Highway Code as part of its commitment to provide clearer information for road users to further improve safety across England's major routes.

It is vital that all road users are aware of The Highway Code, are considerate to other road users and understand their responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

[View the results of the consultation.](#)

Highways England has also launched a campaign to help road users to understand what to do in an emergency on a motorway or high-speed road. For more information, [visit the campaign webpage.](#)

## General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# [CBD and controlled cannabinoids: results from a ring trial](#)

News story

The Government Chemist team have published a report summarising the findings of a ring trial to assess laboratories' performance in measuring CBD and controlled cannabinoids



The project has been funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Home Office and the Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) and has been carried out in collaboration with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL).

## [CBD and controlled cannabinoids – Ring trial report](#)

PDF, 2.28MB, 65 pages

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of this document in a more accessible format, please email [government.chemist@lgcgroup.com](mailto:government.chemist@lgcgroup.com). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

Cannabidiol (CBD) products have rapidly entered the UK market in a variety of forms, including food and cosmetics. Laboratories across the UK need to be able to accurately measure the CBD content as well as the controlled cannabinoid content in commercially available products. CBD and cannabinoids have been highlighted as difficult compounds to analyse. The aim of the ring trial was to share and compare methods for quantifying CBD and controlled cannabinoids in food and cosmetics among testing laboratories

Thirty-four national and international laboratories participated in the ring. The results have shown that there is good agreement of results between most laboratories. The data includes instrument types and limits of detection which helped assess the capability of testing laboratories and which will be invaluable information to determine the UK capability in analysing CBD products and controlled cannabinoids.

For more information about the report or the work of the Government Chemist please contact:

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