

# Portsmouth man jailed for longer

News story

Darren Rose has had his jail sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A Portsmouth man has had his jail sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Darren Rose, 29, was found guilty of aggravated burglary and wounding with intent against two victims. Prior to this case the offender had 38 previous convictions, a number of which involved theft and violence.

Rose was convicted of breaking into a shared house in the early hours of 26 October 2019 and assaulting a man with a wine bottle. Rose was jealous of the perceived relationship his victim had with Rose's then partner. A female housemate who confronted Rose was also assaulted and other residents were left in fear.

On 8 October 2020, Rose was sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment at Portsmouth Crown Court.

Following the court's decision, the Solicitor General referred the sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme. On 4 February 2021, the Court found the sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 9 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Rose broke into a house and assaulted two innocent people. The Court of Appeal's decision to extend his sentence was the right one, and I hope this will lead to comfort for his victims.

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## UK intervention in response to Ambassadors Çevik and Grau

Thank you Chair. I would like to thank Ambassador Çevik for briefing us today and Ambassador Grau for providing her update through her representative, Daniel Ricco. We are very grateful to both of you and your teams for the work you do to promote the peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict.

While we welcome the significant reduction in violence and casualties since the 27 July, Ambassador Çevik, your report shows us that we cannot be complacent. During the reporting period, the daily average of ceasefire violations was almost double the daily average between the 27 July to the 16 September 2020.

The Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) also continues to observe new and extended trenches, improvements to fortifications, and heavy weapons located in and near residential areas, in violation of the measures agreed to strengthen the ceasefire. In this context, we note that once again the overwhelming majority of heavy weapons observed by the SMM were in non-government controlled areas. This activity exposes civilians and civilian infrastructure to heightened risk of armed violence.

Your reports have highlighted the ongoing plight of civilians affected by this Russian-fuelled conflict. Sadly, the burdens faced by civilians have been increased by the restrictions placed on their freedom of movement. Ukrainians rely on crossing the line of contact to access jobs, education, pensions, medical care and to see their families. It is unacceptable that the Russian-backed armed formations are still refusing to fully open the new crossing points at Shchastia and Zolote. We commend Ambassador Grau for her continued efforts to resolve this issue.

Women have been particularly affected by these restrictions. Ambassador Çevik, we welcome the inclusion of their stories in your written report, as well as the accounts of the challenges faced by women working for peace and security across Ukraine. It is essential that women are included in official decision-making and conflict resolution efforts for those efforts to be effective.

We also highly appreciate your ongoing work to ensure the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission continues its important work, whilst ensuring duty of care for all staff remains a priority. We commend the numerous measures you have taken to protect SMM staff and, by extension, host communities in light of COVID-19, including regular PCR and antigen screening of Mission members and enhancing telecommuting capabilities.

Unfortunately, restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement continue to pose an additional challenge to the mission's activities. We noted that during the

reporting period 94 per cent of all restrictions faced by the SMM, including those imposed under the pretext of COVID-19, occurred in non-government-controlled areas.

We call on Russia to use its influence over the armed formations it backs to ensure full, safe and unimpeded access for the Mission's personnel and assets, in accordance with its mandate. We reiterate again that the Mission's mandate applies to the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and the uncontrolled segment of the Ukraine-Russia State border.

The SMM's ability to monitor is further impeded by mines and other explosive objects. The presence of these mines on roads frequently used by the SMM poses a serious threat to the Mission. Moreover, they continue to endanger the lives of civilians. Between 17 September and 21 December 2020, the SMM corroborated 38 civilian casualties due to mines, unexploded ordinance and other explosive devices. Ambassador Çevik, sadly your report also makes clear the heavy price that civilians continue to pay for the failure to mark, fence and clear such explosive material. We thank you and Ambassador Grau for your continued efforts in the TCG on a demining plan. It is appalling that Russia and the armed formations it backs still will not agree to its implementation.

We are grateful to Ambassador Grau for her work in the Trilateral Contact Group towards improving the situation for Ukrainian civilians and achieving peace and stability in eastern Ukraine. It is unacceptable that political issues in the TCG have been repeatedly used to block progress on vital security and humanitarian issues. We call on Russia to act constructively in the TCG, and in its Working Groups, to ensure that progress can be made.

The UK reiterates our strong support to both Ambassador Çevik and Ambassador Grau. Where there has been failure to make progress on the issues I have highlighted today, it is not for lack of hard work or dedication on your part, but rather a lack of political will, particularly from Russia who continues to fuel the conflict.

We reiterate our support for the Minsk agreements to deliver a peaceful resolution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Four in this regard. Russia must play its part and fulfil the commitments it made at the Paris Summit in December 2019 (many of which I have touched upon today) and under the Minsk agreements; and reverse all unilateral measures that undermine them.

We repeat our call on Russia to withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine; to cease its support for the armed formations it backs; and to stop access restrictions and intimidation of the SMM in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations.

The UK continues to strongly support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The UK has consistently stood with Ukraine in opposing all instances of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and we will continue to

do so, including through sanctions, together with our international partners.

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## Nearly all in-person test results returned next day by NHS Test and Trace

- Test turnaround times continue to rise, with 97.2% of in-person test results returned the next day after the test was taken
- In-person test results received within 24 hours is at 82.7%, the highest since July 2020
- 93.6% contacts reached – the highest percentage since NHS Test and Trace was launched

NHS Test and Trace has recorded another record-breaking week, with turnaround times for most testing routes returning to levels not seen since the middle of 2020, when testing demand was around a quarter of its current level.

In this reporting week, NHS Test and Trace returned 97.2% of in-person test results the next day after the test was taken, compared with 93.7% the week before.

Not only are people able to receive a test result more quickly and conveniently, but the service continues to reach a high proportion of cases and contacts.

NHS Test and Trace has successfully reached 86.4% of the people who received a positive test result, and 93.6% of their contacts, making a real impact in breaking chains of transmission. In total during the week of 21 January to 27 January, 507,692 people who had either tested positive or been identified as a recent close contact were reached and told to self-isolate – people who might otherwise have gone on to unknowingly spread the virus.

NHS Test and Trace's test site network continues to expand. With more than 850 test sites in operation, including 474 local test sites, people are travelling a shorter distance than ever before to get a test. The median distance travelled for a test is just 2.1 miles, compared with 5.1 miles as recently as September.

NHS Test and Trace has also delivered one of its best turnaround times for home test kit results since the service launched last May, with a median turnaround time of 35 hours. More than 280,000 ordered a home test kit during this reporting week, with the service ensuring that those who are required to take a COVID-19 test are able to access one without visiting a test centre and meeting demand despite the current weather conditions.

More than 300 local authorities have joined forces with NHS Test and Trace to launch local tracing partnerships, combining specialist local expertise with the data and resources of NHS Test and Trace. These strong partnerships enable NHS Test and Trace to go further in supporting people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and tracing their recent contacts.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

NHS Test and Trace is continuing to deliver record-breaking results. Thanks to the hard work of all those involved, we have been able to improve turnaround times for most testing routes to record speeds. These numbers are hugely impressive and have an enormous impact on the spread of the virus.

We are also continuing to carry out a significant number of LFD tests, identifying people who are infectious but not showing symptoms. Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not display symptoms. This means every positive LFD test helps us break a chain of transmission we wouldn't have identified otherwise.

Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection Baroness Dido Harding said:

In a few months we have built NHS Test and Trace from scratch, creating a service where tests are easily available, results are received quickly, and those who test positive – and their recent contacts – are reached successfully in the vast majority of cases. This has all been delivered at speed, against a backdrop of continued demand. The impressive performance of NHS Test and Trace during this reporting week is a continuation of the programme's strong start to the year.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone involved in NHS Test and Trace who is working non-stop to help us combat the spread of the virus.

## Testing

As of 2 February, more than 71 million tests have been processed in the UK in total since testing began, more than any other comparable European country.

In the latest reporting week, 1,782,807 lateral flow device (LFD) tests have been carried out, with 5,716,248 conducted in total since first introduced in October.

Pillar 1 test results made available within 24 hours have increased to 95.1%, compared with last week's total of 94.8%. This has remained broadly consistent since Test and Trace began. 96.5% of satellite tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 94.8% the previous week.

Over the past months, the government has put in place the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. NHS Test and Trace now has the capacity to carry out more than 790,000 tests per day, compared with 2,000 just 9 months ago.

## Tracing

So far, more than 8.2 million cases and contacts have been reached and told to self-isolate by contact tracers.

Tracing performance has remained high with 86.4% of cases and 93.6% of contacts reached last week. The proportion of contacts reached within 24 hours once identified as a contact was 98.0%.

198,874 positive cases were transferred to contact tracers between 21 January and 27 January, with 171,847 reached and told to self-isolate.

Between 21 and 27 January, 358,959 people were identified as recent close contacts, with 96.6% of those with communication details provided reached and told to self-isolate. Since Test and Trace launched, 89.6% of close contacts for whom communication details were provided have been reached.

## Background information

The [weekly statistics from the 35th week of NHS Test and Trace](#) show in the most recent week of operations (21 to 27 January):

- the proportion of contacts reached by the tracing service has increased to 93.6%
- 86.4% of people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 86.9% the previous week
- 96.6% of contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate, compared with 96.5% the previous week
- 97.2% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 93.7% of tests the previous week (England only)
- 95.1% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, consistent with last week's percentage
- 82.7% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 70.7% the previous week
- 96.5% of satellite tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 94.8% the previous week

Last month, the government announced an additional £20 million to local authorities to cover the cost of the [Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#), to ensure people continue to have access to the support they need to stay at home and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This includes an additional £10 million to enable local authorities to continue making discretionary payments to people who fall outside the scope of the main scheme, but who will still face hardship if required to self-isolate.

As of 27 January, the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) has been downloaded 21,629,902 times and 788,859 QR posters have been generated.

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## [The Prime Minister has reappointed Professor Lynda Nead, Ben Elliot and Nigel Webb as Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum](#)

### **Professor Lynda Nead**

Lynda is Pevsner Professor of History of Art at Birkbeck, University of London. She has published widely on the history of British art and culture, including studies of Victorian art and the city and, more recently, on the visual culture of post-war Britain.

She is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Historical Society, a Member of the Academia Europaea and sits on the academic advisory boards of a number of museums and galleries, including the Museum of London and the National Gallery, London. She has also been a member of the Leverhulme Trust Research Awards Advisory Council.

### **Ben Elliot**

Ben is a British businessman, investor and philanthropist. He co-founded the Quintessentially Group in 2000 and has a number of commercial interests across hospitality, retail and tech sectors. In 2008, he founded the Quintessentially Foundation, which has raised over £14m for charities to improve the health, education and welfare of disadvantaged people and communities across the UK.

Ben was appointed as the Government's first-ever Food Surplus and Waste Champion in 2018 – a role he still holds – and actively campaigns for the reduction of food waste by manufacturers, retailers and households. He has been Co-Chair of the Conservative Party since July 2019.

Ben is a Trustee of the Eranda Rothschild Foundation, Chair of the Philanthropy Board of the Royal Albert Hall and on the Board of the Centre for Policy Studies.

### **Nigel Webb**

Nigel is a Chartered Surveyor and a member of the Group Executive Committee and Head of Development at The British Land Company Plc, one of Europe's largest Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) and one of the country's leading

property developers.

Nigel has over 35 years of experience in property investment and development and has been responsible for over 12m sq ft of development including some of London's landmark buildings. His experience includes developing projects such as The Leadenhall Building ("Cheesegrater"), The Broadgate Tower, The Willis Building, the UBS headquarters at 5 Broadgate, Ropemaker Place, Clarges Mayfair and development of the Regents' Place campus. Nigel also Chairs the Be the Business Construction Productivity Taskforce.

These roles are not remunerated. These reappointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#), the process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Lynda Nead and Nigel Webb have not declared any activity. Ben Elliot has declared he is Co-Chair of the Conservative Party.

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## [Charting HMRC's progress this financial year](#)

This is a unique financial year for HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), as the department continues to be at the heart of the government's COVID-19 response, moving rapidly to deliver financial support to millions of businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic and measures to control the virus.

The pandemic has reinforced the need for a flexible, resilient and responsive tax and customs system – and demonstrated HMRC's competence and capability to deliver it.

HMRC's other priorities at this time are to help businesses understand the new post-Brexit rules and support customers to pay tax on time and with ease, while protecting the tax and payments system from fraudulent attacks.

### **Supporting customers during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Like other service organisations, it's been a tough year of urgent and unexpected challenges for HMRC. But despite the impact of the pandemic, the department has successfully delivered unprecedented financial support schemes and done all it can to offer the best possible service to its customers, through an almost entirely home-based operation.

The Chancellor extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme throughout quarter 3 and announced that the



schemes would continue to offer support until April, with HMRC continuing to manage tax compliance and tax debts in a way that is sensitive to the needs of customers.

As of midnight on 13 December 2020, HMRC had enabled 1.2 million employers to claim £46.4 billion for 9.9 million furloughed jobs through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

HMRC also provided £18.5 billion of support to the self-employed, with almost 7 million claims made across the three Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants.

HMRC launched a new coronavirus helpline in the space of 5 days during March 2020, and up to 22 January 2021 had handled more than 1.28 million calls across this helpline and others linked to specific support schemes.

Overall, call waiting times across our phone helplines have been longer than HMRC would like and we apologise for the inconvenience this causes to customers at busy times.

From October to December 2020, HMRC received 7.6 million calls and, on average, they were answered in 11:47 minutes, a similar time to the first quarter of the financial year. But it was significantly longer than during the second quarter, when the average answer time was 8:55 minutes.

This reflects the high level of customer demand during the national and regional lockdowns in November and December, as well as HMRC continuing its need to divert resources towards the government's financial support schemes.

While this is clearly not as good as HMRC would like, the department is proud that it has kept its core services running throughout this time of crisis, alongside its vital COVID-19 financial support role, while expanding alternative ways to provide customer support.

HMRC has increased COVID-19 webchats as an alternative to phone calls, holding more than 441,000 webchats with customers up to 22 January – and running nearly 600 webinars on COVID-19 support topics, with more than 290,000 attendees.

At the same time, HMRC's digital services are giving customers most of the support they need, 24 hours a day, without having to contact the helplines, and since the pandemic began, many more customers have successfully used the department's online services to get the information they need.

HMRC continues to record high customer satisfaction with its digital services – 85.7% in October to December of last year, almost 3 percentage points higher than the best quarterly result in 2019 to 2020.

HMRC has also made it easier for more Self Assessment customers to apply online to spread their tax bill over up to 12 months. Since October 2020, we've already seen 46,700 Time to Pay plans set up online with a total value of £147.7 million.

The department also said that Self Assessment customers who cannot file their tax return by the 31 January deadline will not receive a late filing penalty as long as they file online by 28 February.

It has been a difficult 9 months, with HMRC working at stretch and speed, serving customers as best as it can and continuing to chase non-compliance. It has moved staff to support the coronavirus helpline and support schemes and recruited about 1,500 new temporary staff into customer service and compliance roles.

HMRC is continuing to deliver on its purpose and is focused on helping customers understand what they need to do to claim their entitlements, get their tax right, and find guidance and support if they need it.

## **Tax receipts and compliance**

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is also having an inevitable effect on tax receipts, compliance yield and customer debt, all of which will take time to recover.

A consequence of taxpayers being able to defer payments is that debt is abnormally high. HMRC is currently holding £65 billion of debt, around £45 billion more than this time last year – and it estimates the debt balance at the end of March 2021 will be between £54 billion and £70 billion.

By the end of December, HMRC had collected £394 billion in tax, compared to £457 billion at the same point in 2019.

The total compliance yield from April 2020 to December 2020 was £16.8 billion. By the same period in 2019, compliance yield was £26 billion, although this was skewed by a small number of very large, one-off successful litigations during 2019 to 2020.

In these unprecedented circumstances, HMRC is rightly prioritising support for customers in urgent need, taking a sympathetic approach to those struggling to pay their tax or file their returns.

HMRC always steps in on behalf of honest taxpayers to tackle the minority who don't play by the rules and is continuing to use its criminal and civil powers where it believes someone is trying to cheat the system.

HMRC is also working hard in rejecting or blocking thousands of fraudulent claims against COVID-19 support schemes, starting post-payment compliance work, helping customers to correct any mistakes made in applications but also identifying and tackling instances of fraud and abuse. Six arrests have already been made for suspected fraud against these schemes, with additional criminal investigations underway.

## **Looking ahead**

In the final quarter of this financial year, and beyond, HMRC's immediate priorities remain to help customers cope with the economic impact of

COVID-19, support them to pay tax on time, and protect the tax and payments system from fraudulent attacks.

HMRC's other urgent priority is to help businesses navigate the new rules following the biggest border change for more than 40 years, after the UK reached a Free Trade Agreement with the EU which came into force on 1 January 2021.

The deal provides much needed clarity on changes that will affect hundreds of thousands of businesses if they trade within the EU and HMRC is continuing to work on publishing information and communicating to help customers understand what the deal means for them.

HMRC recognises the immense pressure that many people are facing at this time and is doing everything it can to help its customers and teams.

HMRC's message is clear: if you can pay your taxes, you should do so – but if you're struggling, it will listen and do its best to support you. Anyone concerned about paying their tax is urged to contact HMRC as early as possible to discuss ways to help.

You can see further information in [HMRC's quarterly performance update](#).