

Parole Board statement on passing of Helen's Law

Press release

The Parole Board has released the following statement after the Prisoners (disclosure of information about victims) Bill received Royal Assent.



The Parole Board has immense sympathy for families that find themselves in this tragic situation and recognises the pain and anguish they have endured.

The Board is absolutely committed to ensuring that victims and their families are treated with the utmost respect and dignity during the parole process and appreciate the distress that a parole review of the offender is likely to cause.

We are all too aware that cases where an offender is unwilling or unable to reveal the location of their victim have a massive impact on families of victims.

The Parole Board already has long-established internal guidance in place which advises panel members to consider the reasons for any failure or refusal by an offender to disclose the whereabouts of a victim's remains when assessing suitability for release.

The Board must ultimately decide whether the prisoner's continued detention is necessary for the protection of the public.

We will be re-issuing guidance to all panel members to reflect the change in law.

It is also established Parole Board practice to consider the non-disclosure of relevant information by offenders in cases involving living victims.

The Parole Board welcomes the introduction of the Prisoners (disclosure of information about victims) Bill which puts our guidance and current practice into statute.

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Estonia

Press release

Mr Ross Allen has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia in succession to Mrs Theresa Bubbear.



Mr Ross Allen has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia in succession to Mrs Theresa Bubbear who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Allen will take up his appointment during May 2021.

Full name: Ross Allen

Married to: Suzanna Harrison

Children: Three

2015 to Present	New York, Deputy Consul General and Deputy Trade Commissioner, USA
2014 to 2015	FCO, Head, Consular Assistance Department
2013 to 2014	Secondment to Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking
2010 to 2013	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Private Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister
2008 to 2010	Washington DC, First Secretary (Middle East)
2007 to 2008	FCO, Press Officer to Minister for Europe
2004 to 2007	Jerusalem, HM Consul, Political
2003 to 2004	Full-time Language training (Arabic)
2001 to 2002	FCO, Desk Officer, Non-Proliferation Department

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Luxembourg: Fleur Thomas

Press release

Ms Fleur Thomas has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in succession to Mr John Marshall.



Ms Fleur Thomas has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in succession to Mr John Marshall. Ms Thomas will take up her appointment during April 2021.

Full name: Fleur Louise Thomas

Married to: Single

Children: One son

2018 to present	Ministry of Defence, Head of Exports, Security, Policy and Operations
2016 to 2018	Department for International Trade, Regional Director – Europe, Africa, Middle East, Central & South Asia, Defence and Security Organisation
2014 to 2016	Council for Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, Director Engagement
2002 to 2015	Roles including South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (SERFCA), Regional Director – SaBRE Campaign; Employer Support Executive, Managing Director, Forward Learning Technologies Ltd; and Associate Lecturer and Consultant, Open University
1995 to 2002	British Airways, Cabin Crew

[Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry to hold public sessions to probe human impact and the institutional settings](#)

- The Inquiry will hold open sessions to hear from those in the most senior positions in the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to understand what went wrong in relation to Horizon
- public sessions will also be held to understand the human cost to those impacted by the longstanding Horizon dispute

Senior members of the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be invited to give evidence in formal open sessions as part of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, its Chair Sir Wyn Williams has announced today.

The non-statutory inquiry is committed to understanding and acknowledging what went wrong in relation to Horizon and to ensuring that there is a public summary of the failings that occurred at Post Office Ltd so that they should never be repeated.

The Inquiry follows the conclusion and a settlement of £57.75 million in December 2019 at the end of a long-running civil court case brought against Post Office Limited by a group of postmasters regarding issues related to the Horizon IT system.

Sir Wyn Williams, who was appointed Chair of the inquiry in September, has today published a [Statement of Approach](#), setting out how the Inquiry will engage with relevant parties. Further details will be published at the end of November.

Evidence gathering will occur in a number of different forms and in a manner which is designed to maximise the receipt of information. There will be:

1. Public sessions: focus groups sessions will be held in winter 2020 to 2021 so that persons affected by the failings in the Horizon system can share their accounts of the human cost and impact. Sir Wyn hopes to hear from current and former postmasters, employees of the Post Office Limited, relevant third parties (including but not limited to contractors and/or those who have represented postmasters interests, or who have been involved in mediation and/or dispute resolution processes with the Post Office Limited) and the family of friends of these groups.

In May 2021 Sir Wyn will invite the senior members of the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and BEIS to provide evidence in a public and open setting.

2. A call for evidence and a people survey: formal invitations will be extended to collect written evidence via a call for evidence being launched at the close of November 2020, and a people survey conducted in early 2021. These will support the Inquiry's understanding of the institutional setting and the experience of postmasters and employees/contractors at the Post Office Limited both historically and as the company seeks to respond to the findings in the Horizon judgments and implement the measures set out in the Settlement Agreement.

3. Private hearings: Sir Wyn will also welcome personal accounts and/or sensitive evidence in select private hearings throughout winter 2020 to 2021.

Sir Wyn Williams, Chair of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, said:

My approach to evidence gathering is intended to build on the findings in the Horizon judgments (No 3 and No 6) and analysis which will be undertaken by the Inquiry Secretariat of written material which will be provided to the Inquiry by Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and BEIS. I fully understand that many participants have an expressed view that their experiences have not been properly acknowledged and that there has been a failure to hold anyone to account for what occurred over very many years.

The process of obtaining evidence will be robust and transparent wherever possible although there may be instances in which the need to respect privacy and the need for sensitivity means that private hearings will have to be accommodated.

Sir Wyn's [Statement of Approach](#) includes an Expression of Interest form for participants to register their interest in the sessions described here.

Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, which supplied the Horizon system, and BEIS have committed to fully cooperating with the Inquiry.

[36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Andorra](#)

World news story

The UK delivers statement on Andorra at the 36th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights

record.



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

Thank you,

The United Kingdom recognises Andorra's progress since its 2015 review and its commitment to upholding human rights. We welcome the adoption in 2017 of the Law on action against trafficking in human beings and for the protection of victims, and the introduction of legal provisions on a recovery and reflection period and a renewable residence permit for victims of trafficking. We do, however, remain concerned about the limitations which remain on women's sexual and reproductive rights, specifically the criminalisation of abortion, and encourage the Andorran government to urgently revise this.

We recommend that Andorra:

1. Develop a multi-disciplinary framework for the proactive identification of victims of trafficking for referral to assistance and support, involving law enforcement agencies, labour inspections, health-care staff, social workers and child protection authorities, with particular attention to at-risk sectors.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections;
3. Amend domestic legislation to protect women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Thank you, Madam President.

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