

[Defence Secretary addresses members of the Royal College of Defence Studies](#)

News story

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP addressed members of the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) on Leadership in the Strategic Environment (LSE).



Royal College of Defence Studies crest. MOD Crown Copyright.

The Defence Secretary gave a talk yesterday on LSE, which is a prominent theme underpinning the entire course, as a part of RCDS' wider Strategic Leadership module. In attendance were more than 100 members from 52 nations, as well as members of the Defence Industry.

The Defence Secretary's address highlighted the importance of a close relationship which exists between leadership and strategy. It offered an opportunity for members to develop a better understanding of how being an effective strategic leader is informed first by the development of effective strategy.

Commandant RCDS Rear Admiral John Kingwell said:

We were delighted to welcome the Defence Secretary to speak to RCDS yesterday. As a world-leading College for post-graduate international strategic studies and strategic leadership, our course members valued hearing the Defence Secretary's thoughts and ideas as they prepare to take on strategic leadership roles, both in the UK and abroad.

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Investment of up to £6m in new listing technology to benefit court users

Press release

An investment of up to £6m in new software will give a better picture of capacity across the estate, meaning cases are more likely to be heard on time.



- new software, worth millions of pounds, will bring scheduling and listing activity into a single tool
- court and tribunal users will benefit from reduced delays and a more reliable system
- the move marks a significant step in the HMCTS reform programme

Scheduling and listing is currently managed using a variety of systems from paper-based files to tools based on Outlook diaries.

The new software will increase the quality of service offered to the public and legal professionals. It will support better use of hearing spaces; reduce administrative tasks so that skilled staff can focus on the more complex areas of hearing management; and provide greater confidence that hearings will proceed when scheduled.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp MP, said:

This is a significant step towards achieving our goal of bringing the courts and tribunal service into the 21st century.

Listing administration can take up a huge amount of time for our hardworking staff and this investment will support them to focus on important work helping all court and tribunal users.

This contract is part of a series of steps HMCTS is undertaking to modernise and improve the experience of all those using courts and tribunal buildings.

Other steps to modernise the courts and tribunals include:

- a new in-court system that records the result of cases digitally and instantly;
- a pilot of a new digital system providing shared case information in criminal cases to the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts and lawyers; and,
- online services covering divorce, probate, civil money claims and social security appeals which have been used by more than 300,000 people with user satisfaction rates over 80%.

McGirr Technologies has been appointed to deliver the changes following a competitive process. It will be implemented in a select few courts initially, with the aim of rolling it out across all courts and tribunals.

We will begin tests and installation in a small number of courts over the next 9 months, after which we will set out plans to roll the technology out nationally.

Peter Nanayakara, Chief Executive of McGirr said:

We are delighted to have been awarded this contract and to be working with HMCTS as it delivers on its reform plans.

This contract will allow HMCTS to modernise how it administers cases and we're looking forward to working together to improve the experience for all court and tribunal users in England and Wales.

Notes to editors:

- scheduling and listing is the judicial function that enables cases to be heard in courts and tribunals
- it is administered by HMCTS with careful consideration of the needs of members of the public, judicial availability and resources
- decisions on how and when hearings are listed are made by a judge
- this contract is part of the £1bn HMCTS reform programme, which will increase access to justice by introducing 21st century technology, online services and digital working to the courts and tribunals system.
- the contract is initially for £3.2m over two years with the option to extend for a further two years, bringing the total up to £6m

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1. 4 June 2020

Added translation

2. 4 June 2020

OSCE Centre in Ashgabat: UK statement

We welcome and thank Ambassador Natalya Drozd and her colleagues for her report to the Permanent Council and the work they have undertaken at the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat over the last year.

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan's permanent neutral status. We welcome Turkmenistan's efforts to strengthen security and reduce conflict regionally and internationally, and encourage Turkmenistan's on-going engagement with the international community and the rules based international system to promote increased respect for basic rights and freedoms for the Turkmen people.

Mr Chair, I would like to pay particular attention to three areas of Ambassador Drozd's report.

First, on the work in the third dimension. I was encouraged to read about the support provided by the Centre to the host authorities in helping them continue to adhere to international human rights standards, and assisting them with the implementation of the 2016-2020 National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). We too have supported the implementation of this Action Plan, and it is good to see this work prioritised.

I was also pleased to read about the assistance given by the Centre to the Ombudsperson's Office. The UK has supported the work of the Human Rights Ombudsperson since her appointment in 2017, through staff training, raising awareness of human rights, and providing human rights education to those in government and civil society. I am glad to see the importance of this role recognised.

I commend Ambassador Drozd for the work the Centre has done on the 2015-2020 National Action Plan on Gender Equality. The UK has supported human rights and civic education for youth, particularly for girls, and recently worked with the UN Population Fund to organise the first national survey on family life in Turkmenistan, which will provide base line statistics on domestic abuse. I am glad that the Centre's mainstreaming of gender equality has included organising and conducting lectures on the role of women in security, as well as women in leadership.

Second, on security. I would like to give special mention to the work the Centre has done to strengthen the capacities of the State Border Guard Service, by using innovative patrolling, surveillance, and other methods; and conducting cross-border workshops and conferences. As chair of the Security Committee, we place great value on comprehensive border management as a means

to reduce cross border crime.

And finally, on trade. I am pleased to see the focus on promoting economic connectivity through regional trade. In recent years, British experts have worked with Turkmen counterparts on exploring export opportunities, promoting diversity in routes and potential markets for exports, and developing international marketing strategies for natural gas products. Covid-19 restrictions aside, Turkmenistan's role in regional cooperation means people and goods have moved more freely across the region, and improved cooperation adds to the region's security and stability

As this is the last Permanent Council meeting for Ambassador Drozd in her role as Head of Centre in Ashgabat I would like to greatly thank her for her hard work and efforts in Turkmenistan. I wish the Centre continued success and wish Ambassador Drozd all the very best for the future.

[PCA Statement – Update on Support for Tied Pub Tenants in Relation to COVID-19 \(04 June 2020\)](#)

News story

The PCA has reported on its ongoing engagement with the regulated pub-owning businesses about how they are supporting their tenants in line with Pubs Code obligations.



On 06 April 2020 I called on all six of the regulated pub-owning businesses (POBs) to do as much as they were able to support their tied tenants through the COVID-19 emergency. On 01 May I said that I expected them to start from a clear and consistent methodology for how they will support their tenants, and to be open about their approach so that individual tenants know what treatment they can expect. I also stressed the importance of the Pubs Code requirements in regulation 41 to record and agree conversations with tenants.

Even before my intervention, Admiral Taverns had led the regulated industry in applying these principles and in providing their tenants with this information. Following my intervention Ei Group/Stonegate and Star Pubs & Bars have published the methodologies that they are applying to tenant support and Greene King has published this in relation to their approach to support for the period from early June 2020 onwards. Tenants may otherwise have been provided with their POB's methodology by their Business Development Manager.

Where a tenant has not been informed by their POB of a consistent and clear methodology for calculation of any support, or where the POB is applying it on a case by case discretionary basis, I have told the POBs that they must make sure tenants are aware that they can bring a complaint to their Code Compliance Officer if they do not consider they have been treated in a fair manner, and that a report on unsatisfied complaints must promptly be sent to me. It is essential that tenants have confidence that discretionary support is being applied in a fair manner and I continue to urge that the best approach is a transparent and consistent methodology in order to avoid disputes which will take time and effort to resolve. Contact details for Code Compliance Officers can be found on the [PCA website](#).

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[Extension of Sally Cheshire's appointment as Interim Chair of Cafcass](#)

News story

The Lord Chancellor has announced an extension to Sally Cheshire's tenure as Interim Chair of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service.



The Secretary of State has extended Sally Cheshire's tenure as Interim Chair of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) by 9 months. Sally's term of office as Interim Chair will run until 31 March 2021 while a recruitment campaign is carried out to fill the position on a permanent basis.

The role of Cafcass Chair is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and Sally's appointment has been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Cafcass is an independent (non-departmental) public body which has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children going through family proceedings. It is independent of the courts, social services, education and health authorities and all similar agencies. Cafcass ensures that children and young people who are the subject of such proceedings are kept safe, their voices are properly heard, the decisions made about them by courts are in their best interests and that they and their families are supported throughout the process.

Biography

Sally Cheshire CBE, has been a member of Cafcass since May 2018. She was appointed Deputy Chair in February 2019 and took over as interim Chair from 16 December 2019. Sally is Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the UK's regulator of the fertility sector and embryo research, has held senior leadership roles across the health sector and is currently Chair of Health Education England (North). Sally was also a Board Member of the regional adoption agency 'Adoption Counts', and an independent member of adoption panels in the North West, which approve adopters and family matches in the best interests of children. She previously enjoyed a successful corporate career with Deloitte.

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