

Foreign Secretary statement on Guyana – 24 March 2020

The transition of government in Guyana should only take place in line with transparent and democratic principles that lead to credible results.

Any government sworn in on the basis of non-credible results will face strong international condemnation. If the situation continues to deteriorate, this international response will include a range of serious consequences for those concerned.

The UK remains ready, along with its partners, to assist in ensuring a credible process that provides the democratic outcome that the Guyanese people deserve.

Sentence increased for London man who kidnapped and sexually abused eight- year-old boy

A man who kidnapped and sexually abused an eight-year-old boy has had his sentence increased following an intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Shane Upton, aged 24, kidnapped the boy from a public park in Southwark in 2019. He proceeded to sexually abuse him, in both the public toilets and outside in the park.

When the boy's mother noticed his absence the police were called. Upon seeing the police, Upton ran away but was quickly apprehended.

On 8 January 2020, Upton was found guilty of sexual assault of a child, causing a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity and kidnap with intent to commit a sexual offence. He was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment at Inner London Crown Court.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, the original sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has today been increased to a sentence of 14 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing the Solicitor General said:

"Upton abused the young victim for his own gratification, which will have a

long-term impact on the young victim. The original sentence did not reflect the severity of the harm caused. I hope the Court of Appeal's decision today gives some closure to the boy's family."

Hemant Patel appointed as Non-Executive Board Member to DCMS

As well as sitting on the Departmental Board, Hemant will chair the Department's Audit and Risk Committee to provide constructive challenge and assurance on governance, risk management and control.

Hemant is currently Finance Director of Premier Inn.

He was born and educated in London before graduating from the University of Manchester having studied Physics with Astrophysics. He then moved into industry to train as a chartered management accountant.

He has worked at various multi-national companies including Mars Inc and SC Johnson in financial, commercial and marketing roles before moving with his family to Yorkshire to join Asda in 2003. At Asda, Hemant carried out various roles in finance including Commercial Finance Director and Retail Finance Director as well as running Asda's own label business and leading business reinvention as Director of Strategy.

Hemant then moved on to be Director of Online at the financial service provider, Provident Financial plc, with responsibility for their online loans businesses. Latterly he was Finance Director of the Pub Co at Greene King plc, leading the finance function for the business's 1,700 managed pubs.

He is currently Finance Director of Premier Inn & Restaurants at Whitbread plc, with financial responsibility for over 800 hotels and 400 restaurants across the UK and Germany. Hemant said: 'I am both honoured and delighted to have been chosen to join DCMS as a Non-Exec Board Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with a department with such a diverse portfolio and I very much look forward to contributing over my term.'

Until 2017, Hemant was chairman of Interplay Theatre, a Leeds based company using the arts to work with children in special schools nationally and socially excluded children locally. He was given the Arts and Business Individual of the Year award in 2007 for his work with this charity.

Hemant became a trustee of the Royal Armouries, the national museum of arms and armour, in July 2010, chairing the trading company as well as the audit committee, before becoming chair of the board in 2018.

Plans underway to modernise the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association

Since their inception in 1908, the RFCAs have played a vital role in connecting defence with the nation through 3 core strands: management of the Reserve and Cadet Estate; helping businesses support their Reservist employees; and providing administrative and logistical support to Cadets.

The review notes how the RFCAs go above and beyond and ensure that their roles remain relevant and significant in contributing to defence objectives, as well as building links in the community. In particular, the Cadet Expansion Programme, which has increased the number of cadets, and the Employer Recognition Scheme, which rewards employers for their support of Reservist employees are due to the work of the RFCAs.

In light of the review's recommendations, defence will now embark on a cross-government programme with the RFCAs to develop the best way to regularise the 13 RFCAs to drive efficiencies and provide enhanced consistency across the regions for our armed forces.

The RFCAs remain a vital partner to defence, and the proposed reforms will provide the foundation to not only strengthen this relationship, but also enhance their role in communities across the UK. This will ensure our Reserves are best able to meet future capability needs and the Cadet experience continues to deliver for our young people.

COVID-19: DBS Contact Centre has closed temporarily

Due to an ongoing issue following the coronavirus outbreak, the DBS Contact Centre will be closed temporarily while we deep clean the space.

We will be in constant review of the situation and aim to reopen the Contact Centre as soon as possible. All updates will be communicated via GOV.UK and Twitter.

If you have a general enquiry while the Contact Centre is temporarily unavailable, you can still contact DBS via:

You can track your application online:

- Online tracking for basic DBS checks, [here](#)
- Online tracking for standard and enhanced DBS checks, [here](#)

A variety of guidance can also be found across GOV.UK: