

Dominic Raab speaks to officers at the Prison Officers' Association conference

I'm really sorry I can't be with you all today, but I wanted to record this message for your first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic.

And in particular, I really wanted to take the opportunity to thank all of you, every single one of you, for your incredible hard work, your outstanding dedication during such a tough set of times.

Prison officers, I know, may not always be in the public eye in the same way that police officers, doctors and nurses are. But I've got no doubt, and I've seen first-hand, that you're at the front line of our defences when it comes to protecting the public and you do an outstanding, amazing job.

I'd like to see all of you at the front line get more recognition for that incredible work you've done, both during the pandemic and more generally.

Throughout COVID-19, you've done more than ever to demonstrate why – in my view at least – you are the unsung heroes across our justice system.

I've been hugely impressed by what I've seen in the nine prisons I've visited so far since I became Justice Secretary.

At Category A prisons like HMP Franklin and Woodhill, I saw the extraordinary security challenges that the governors, Darren Finley and Nicola Marfleet, face in dealing with some of the most serious offenders, including radicalised terrorists and dangerous gangsters.

You guys and your teams, work incredibly hard in what is a very precarious environment, to see the early signs of terrorist risks, to nip them in the bud, to stop the spread of poisonous ideologies, and ultimately help us protect the public.

Of course, in many of those other prisons where the focus is more on rehabilitation, I've seen the vital role that governors and staff play in getting prisoners off drugs, getting them skilled up, and getting them into work.

From the marketing call centre that I saw at HMP High Down, to HMP Ford, where prisoners get the chance to work as HGV drivers when they're on ROTL. And from HMP Hatfield's farm shop and the recycling centre, to the working farm and timber processing at HMP Prescoed. From the barbers and bike repair shop at HMP Five Wells, to the mechanics and the cleaning workshop at Wandsworth.

I've seen the great potential that we've got, and that you're grasping in prison, to use inmates' time in a more constructive way, to get them the

skills, get them back into work, which is ultimately the way we'll get them back onto the straight and narrow and reduce reoffending and protect communities around the country.

And, you know, I'm really struck by the conversations that I've had with offenders that I've met, who are able and willing to take that opportunity to start to turn their lives around.

And I know it's a long haul, and there'll be ups and downs for many offenders, but getting prisoners off drugs for good through sustainable recovery, getting them the skills, the training, the work experience they need to go straight, those are two of my very top priorities.

And of course, they're critical elements in helping those offenders to turn their lives around, and that keeps our streets safer with fewer victims. So the public really do owe you all a debt of gratitude. And I want to say thank you for all that amazing work that you do.

And of course, when I look forward at the agenda that we've got ahead of us over the next year, that's why we're going to be assessing offenders for any addiction they've got from the moment they arrive, so that the treatment plans we put in place, including expanded use of drug recovery wings, a greater focus on abstinence, all of those things can be put in place straight away and strengthen the rehabilitation work you're doing.

And of course, we're going to have a zero-tolerance approach to drugs in prisons, clamping down on the illicit items being smuggled in.

We're enhancing our prison security with a lot of technology that's been funded by £100 million of new investment, including the state-of-the-art X-ray scanners across the whole closed male adult estate. I've seen them work first-hand and I'm convinced that they will help reduce the violence and help keep prison officers, as well as offenders, safer.

And, of course, we'll continue to build on our partnership with you at a national level, and between prison governors and local branches of the POA, to create prisons that are better, safer, and which, as I said, through all the work we're doing, will help drive down reoffending relentlessly.

I now want to pass over to our brilliant Prisons Minister, Victoria Atkins, to take you through some of the detail of our strategy. But again, from the bottom of my heart, through COVID and all the other work that we're doing, thank you so much for the outstanding job you're doing, and I look forward to seeing many more of you in the weeks and months ahead.

The PCA publishes new and improved arbitration quarterly report.

The PCA has today published its new Pubs Code Arbitration Quarterly Report, for the period January to March 2022. This latest improvement follows the appointment of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb) as the sole provider of the PCA's arbitration referral service.

Continuing to build on the recommendations of [independent research](#) into PCA communications, this report gives a picture of progress over time providing a comparison to the previous quarter and total for the year. Significantly, it provides more detail on the types of disputes referred for arbitration, the outcome, and duration. It also gives the industry more information to compare by pub company.

For example, the new style Quarterly Report enables the industry to see that Stonegate and Star, the two pub companies who had the highest number of cases at the end of last quarter (31 December 2021) have notably closed a number of cases this quarter. This has had a positive impact on the total open cases. Star continues to have the most open disputes. The majority of arbitrations (15 across all pub companies) ended this quarter with the parties agreeing a Market Rent Only tenancy.

This first report shows the number of open arbitrations continuing to fall, the majority of which are about the Market Rent Only full response. The PCA has focused on improving compliance and reducing disputes in this area, including the [MRO Compliance Record and Declaration(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-compliance-handbook-market-rent-only-proposals>) introduced in November 2019, [publication](#) of arbitration awards on its website, and the recent [consultation](#) on upcoming guidance to reduce financial barriers for tenants taking the MRO option. Recent changes in the law allowing the tenant and pub company more time to negotiate the MRO option before considering arbitration are an opportunity to reduce the need for arbitration further.

The PCA continues to work with CI Arb in ensuring arbitrators follow the [standards](#) introduced in April 2021 to ensure parties receive an efficient and quality service. CI Arb is currently developing arbitrator training and assessment to ensure arbitrators considered by the PCA for appointment have demonstrated their knowledge of Pubs Code arbitrations to a required standard.

Fiona Dickie, Pubs Code Adjudicator, said:

"I am pleased to be launching the PCA's new-style quarterly arbitration report, which offers more meaningful insights for the industry on Pubs Code arbitrations. I think it is right that the PCA publishes more detailed data, such as about arbitration outcomes, and to enable comparisons to be made by pub company. It is encouraging to see the number of open arbitrations

continuing to fall. We nevertheless continue our work to ensure that where arbitration is required, the parties receive a quality service.”

Note: The quarterly arbitration report replaces the PCA Arbitration Data – Quarterly Release. Total number of enquiries received is no longer reported on a quarterly basis. The updated PCA arbitration information publication policy can be found [here](#).

Keep up to date

[Have your say on the future of sea net fishing](#)

The Environment Agency is launching a public consultation on measures to protect salmon and sea trout in Yorkshire and the North East.

The Environment Agency wants to return healthy and sustainable salmon and sea trout populations to east coast rivers, while minimising the economic impact of fishing restrictions on local communities.

After taking public views into account, the Environment Agency will make a recommendation to Defra on the measures that should be put in place for the next ten years to balance the needs of the environment with those of the net fishery industry in tidal waters from Berwick on Tweed to the mouth of the Humber estuary.

It is illegal to net salmon or sea trout without a licence, and there is currently a Net Limitation Order in the region that means licences are limited in number. The current arrangements end on 22 December 2022, so this consultation provides people with an opportunity to influence how net fishing is managed in the future.

International decline in salmon

Fishing in the region has been limited in some way since the 1960's and licenced since 1865. In the years since the first regional Net Limitation Order began in 1992, populations of salmon and sea trout seem to have improved in some areas but remain vulnerable and at risk in others. Evidence shows an international decline in wild Atlantic salmon populations with many principal salmon rivers in England now considered to be “Probably at Risk” or “At Risk”. Sea trout stocks are also dropping in a number of areas and are under pressure from fishing exploitation as salmon stocks decline.

Salmon and sea trout populations are also threatened by changes to their environment throughout their lifecycle caused by climate change and other human activities. The Environment Agency is looking at every stage of the

species' journey that steps can be taken to increase their chances of survival. This includes making river systems more accessible and rearing fish safely in a farm environment to return to rivers and boost wild stocks.

People encouraged to review proposals

Jon Shelley, Environment Agency Senior Fisheries Specialist, said:

The decline in the numbers of both salmon and sea trout is of great concern and we are determined to protect the future of these important species.

Every fish returned safely to our rivers could lead to improved numbers of adult salmon and sea trout spawning, helping to contribute to a reversal in the current decline of returning adult salmon and sea trout numbers. The Net Limitation Order is one example of the decisive action being taken by the Environment Agency and other organisations to help as many fish as possible return to east coast rivers.

I'd like to encourage everyone with an interest in the well-being of our salmon and sea trout stocks, or an interest in the fishery, to review the proposals, participate in the consultation process and play a part in the recovery of these iconic species. The next generation should also be able to enjoy the benefits of sustainable salmon and sea trout fishing.

[A month long consultation launches online today](#) The survey will close on 17 June.

Media and LGBT+ discrimination: UK and Italy compared

- The British Embassy, in tackling the misuse of journalistic language on LGBT+ topics renews its partnership with the Circolo Mario Mieli, a non-profit organisation for LGBT+ Culture.
- The commitment against LGBT+ discrimination analysed by two experts in the field: Ben Hunte for the UK and Senio Bonini for Italy.
- The fight against LGBT+ discrimination remains a priority for Her Majesty's Government

The British Embassy in Italy renews its commitment to diversity and the defence of minority rights, choosing to open the doors of its splendid Roman residence, Villa Wolkonsky, to host a debate on “Media and LGBT+ Discrimination: UK and Italy Compared”.

After music, fashion and art, the British Embassy and the [Mario Mieli NGO](#), organisers of [Roma Pride](#), together put a spotlight on the language used by the Italian and British, and European, media. The media’s portrayal of the LGBT+ reality has often been controversial: from the most violent homophobic news cases to the ‘simple’ presence of LGBT+ people in the world of show business, sport, television entertainment.

The lack of proper use of terminology by the media and social media is a symptom of a much wider reality. Language, therefore, becomes a sounding board of a lack of basic information and becomes a means, at times unconscious, of discrimination against a community that struggles to claim its identity and conquer a social reality that, on the contrary, discriminates, threatens, offends, mortifies, kills. For the mere rejection of what is different.

Deputy Ambassador Eleanor Sanders said:

As the representative of Her Majesty’s Government in Italy, my goal is to do everything I can to implement and emphasise the importance of defending diversity in all social spheres. More needs to be done, everywhere in the world, to ensure that LGBT+ people feel safe and are treated equally throughout society. I am very proud to be here today, together with my friends at Mario Mieli, trying to achieve this goal. It is differences that enrich us, bring new perspectives and points of view, thus enabling us to improve ourselves and the communities in which we live.

Mario Colamarino, President of the Mario Mieli Club, commented:

I am happy, as President of the Mario Mieli Club, that also the new Ambassador of the United Kingdom opens the doors of his residence to our association, to our issues and to the approaching Roma Pride. Being able to confront such topical issues allows everyone to grow and feel less alone in this battle for civilisation and overcoming prejudices, even in such a difficult time as the one we are living through. Comparison and culture have always been the strongest weapon against all forms of marginalisation.

The event, organised with the Mario Mieli LGBT+ Culture Circle, will feature, among others, journalists [Ben Hunte](#) and Senio Bonini.

- Ben Hunte was the BBC’s first LGBT+ correspondent. He has always covered

stories about sexuality and gender. He was also, throughout his career, a correspondent from North Africa. In July 2020, Ben was ranked number one on The Guardian and DIVA Magazine's Pride Power List.

- Senio Bonini, host of Agorà Extra on Rai3, is a journalist and TV author. A former correspondent for Rainews24, he has followed the Council Presidency for years. He is civilly united with Rosario and is the father of two little twins, Leo and Luna.

This event is part of a wider context of initiatives and activities related to the LGBT+ universe undertaken by the British Embassy in Italy. In fact, in addition to supporting Pride, on 11 June, the overseas mission will participate in the Roma Pride parade, proud to be able to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first Pride in London this year.

The confirmation of the presence of the British delegation symbolises the attention with which Ambassador Ed Lewellyn, and the entire overseas mission, deals with such a relevant social issue. The Embassy's actions are part of the Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office's action strategy.

[Publication of the drug misuse prevention review](#)

News story

The report "Preventing drug use among vulnerable groups of people", commissioned by the Home Office, has been published by the ACMD.



Getty Images

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has published a report on how to better prevent drug use among vulnerable people.

This report was [commissioned by the Home Office](#) following its publication of the Drugs Strategy in December 2021 to provide advice on how these groups can be prevented from using and becoming dependent on drugs.

The recommendations from the ACMD, directed at the cross-government Joint Combating Drugs Unit, Department for Health and Social Care, and Department for Education, are that the government should:

- reflect in its policies and guidance the drug prevention approaches recommended by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
- not pursue drug prevention activities that the ACMD has found to be ineffective, for example approaches that cause fear in the target groups or stand-alone mass media campaigns – only activities that have been properly resourced and are based on peer reviewed, evaluative research should be used
- fund further research to improve understanding of adult vulnerability to drug use, with resources to support this identified within the innovation fund announced with the Drugs Strategy
- in consultation with professional bodies and prevention experts, invest in and mandate workforce training and resources to ensure that the professionals dealing with vulnerable drug users are equipped to respond appropriately
- not focus solely on vulnerable groups as this will limit the reach of prevention activities and contribute the stigmatisation and discrimination; instead, the government should acknowledge the varied nature of vulnerability and consider the impact of social environments on overall well-being

The full report is available: [Drug misuse prevention review](#)

Published 17 May 2022