

**First day for new PCC Charter Commissioner**

Sir Michael Willcocks today starts work as the PCC's new Charter Commissioner, taking over from Sir Brian Cubbon, who has retired. The Charter Commissioner is an independent figure who investigates complaints about the way in which the Commission has handled cases, reports findings and recommendations to the board of the PCC, and publishes an annual report. The position was instituted in 2004 to improve the PCC's level of service to the public and its accountability. Speaking on his first day as Charter Commissioner, Sir Michael said:

"I am delighted to have taken on this position, which is fundamentally about holding the PCC complaints process to account. I will be robustly independent in dealing with the challenges ahead and look forward to finding out more about the concerns of those who use the Commission's important services. A free press and an independent press regulator are vital in a democracy. I believe that the role of Charter Commissioner should serve to boost the effectiveness of those crucial institutions."

From 2001 until the end of April this year Sir Michael held the position of "Black Rod". Previously, he had a distinguished military career, serving as Chief of Staff Land Operations at the Joint War HQ for the period of the first Gulf War and its aftermath, before becoming the first Director General Land Warfare, responsible for Army doctrine and force development in 1993. He was subsequently deployed to Bosnia & Herzegovina and was Assistant Chief of the General Staff from June 1996 to February 1999. He became the UK Military Representative to NATO and the EU in July 2000. For further information please contact Stephen Abell on 020 7831 0022.

**ENDS**

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