

Chief of force that failed crash victims gets Met job

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chief-of-force-that-failed-crash-victims-gets-met-job-vq63nl0x6>

Fiona Hamilton, Crime Editor

February 15 2018, 12:01am, The Times



Sir Stephen House is coming out of retirement to join the Metropolitan Police commissioner's team
DANNY LAWSON/PA

The chief constable who stepped down after his force's disastrous response to a fatal car crash has been hired to tackle Scotland Yard's disclosure controversy.

Sir Stephen House, who left Police Scotland in 2015 after a critically injured woman remained unfound in a car wreck for three days, is coming out of retirement to join the Metropolitan Police commissioner's team.

His appointment is understood to have caused disquiet among some senior ranked officers but Cressida Dick, who has worked with him before, said he had "huge operational experience" and a "strong track record in tackling violent crime".

Sir Stephen, 60, who was appointed the first chief constable of Police Scotland, announced his retirement earlier than expected in 2015 after outrage over the crash, which was reported to police but not followed up. Lamara Bell, 25, and her partner John Yuill, 28, lay undiscovered in a vehicle near Stirling despite a call from a member of the public. Sir Stephen had also faced criticism over his decision to put armed officers on routine patrols and large-scale use of stop-and-search.

Sir Stephen, who applied for the job as Met commissioner in 2011 but lost out to Ms Dick's predecessor Lord Hogan-Howe, will start work on March 5. He had been on a "select list" from which Ms Dick could appoint within 12 months after he applied last year for an assistant commissioner role. Helen Ball was appointed instead.

The Met said one of his initial tasks would be to co-ordinate the force's response to recent disclosure failures.

Thousands of rape prosecutions are being reviewed by forces across the country, including about 600 by the Met, after claims that officers may not have given all relevant evidence to defence teams. The trial of Liam Allan, a 22-year-old student, collapsed when it was revealed that text messages from the alleged victim that would have immediately exonerated him had not been given to his lawyers.

The Met said that Sir Stephen, who has been given a five-year contract, would bring "resilience and succession planning" to its senior leadership team. His appointment could trigger a battle for the post of deputy commissioner. The incumbent, Craig Mackey, is expected to retire this year.

Niven Rennie, the former head of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents, said that Sir Stephen had tackled violent crime in the west of the country and brought an important focus on domestic violence cases.

Ms Dick said: "There is a huge amount of transformation taking place within the Met and at the same time we are dealing with rising demand and big operational challenges.

"Steve has a strong track record in tackling violent crime — particularly domestic violence, knife and gang crime — both within the Met and then with huge success in Scotland."

Sir Stephen said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to return to the Met, at such a busy and challenging time. I joined the police to serve the public and it is an honour to be able to return and work as part of a really talented team to protect the public and fight crime in London."

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Smoky Ashton Feb 15, 2018

It's all in the handshake....again !

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Woodburner Feb 15, 2018

I take it he received a substantial payoff for agreeing to resign, it seems that that he is now back on the public payroll and probably on larger salary

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Peter Walters Feb 15, 2018

To my mind retirement from the police force means exactly that. Once an individual is in possession of his/her pension that should automatically preclude them from working for any police force, in the country, again. Bringing people out of retirement, especially those with chequered histories, can't be much of a morale booster for currently serving officers either.

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Reg Grub Feb 15, 2018
@Peter Walters Why? Why waste all that experience?

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grindles Feb 15, 2018
@Reg Grub
chequered histories, reg . . .

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TommyCovi Feb 15, 2018
If the Met have recruited him to set up processes and recruit individuals in order to look for missing people in canals, ditches, skips and so forth, then this might not be the right decision.
On the other hand, if he has been recruited to tackle violent crime and he has, as we are told he has, a strong record in doing just that, then there would seem to be a great deal of logic in the appointment. At the end of the day you can't buy experience and if you can find someone who is competent and experienced (where those two attributes are scarce - for obvious reasons they probably are) to perform a necessary function you have achieved, as they say, a 'result'.

May he succeed abundantly in what will be a very difficult job.

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1RecommendReply
Anteeta Feb 15, 2018
More jobs for the boys. He's already secured a substantial pension. Is this really the best person the Met can come up with?
Little wonder there's a public loss of confidence in the police. They remain largely untouchable, despite spectacular failure to deliver.

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3RecommendReply
Ms Elizabeth Keith Feb 15, 2018
'The chief constable who stepped down after his force's disastrous response to a fatal car crash'. So what's new? To get a new top job in this wretched country, fail spectacularly at the top job you've already got.

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Philip PM Feb 15, 2018
'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' Hypocrites Anonymous gathering round for the slurfest.

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Michael Christie Feb 15, 2018
He'll be top cop at the Met within four years, just wait and see.

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2RecommendReply
Hafthor Ericsson Feb 15, 2018
The public sector, where failure is rewarded and no one has to carry the can.

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14RecommendReply
Minority Man Feb 15, 2018
I don't get why he resigned in the first place. Was he supposed to look in every ditch in Scotland himself? Did he direct those who WERE responsible to look in them, not to do so? Scotland lost a very good chief officer for no sound or legitimate reason, it seems to me. This "Falling on one's

sword" gesturing makes no sense when the individual cannot possibly have brought about a different outcome, I believe.

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Keith Feb 15, 2018

@Minority Man also why put victim in the plural in the headline?

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

Because there was more than 1 victim?

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Bob N Feb 15, 2018

The wonderful police - yet again. Job for the boys. No doubt on a consultants wage!

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Keith Feb 15, 2018

@Bob N hmm who would you think may be better qualified then?

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

Someone not tainted by professional incompetence?

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rahb Feb 15, 2018

Altogether now..."the jobs for the boys go round and round, round and round, round and round".

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Jack Townshend Feb 15, 2018

Just when you thought that things couldn't get any worse within the police, we will now be treated to House 2. Beyond belief.

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Arcane Solutions Feb 15, 2018

He has retired and is on full pension. Does this mean he'll be working for the Met for free? He obviously wants to get bumped up to the Lords. A knighthood is not good enough for these 'devoted public servants', as Jezza calls them.

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John Batten Feb 15, 2018

Many of the comments here are not even up to kindergarten standard...

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Jack Townshend Feb 15, 2018

@John Batten

Really? In many cases recently neither are our police.....

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Brian Souter Feb 15, 2018

Why do Chief constables get automatic knighthoods?

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13RecommendReply
John Doy Feb 15, 2018
@Brian Souter

Because we the electorate continually return to office those who preside over and promote the system.

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3RecommendReply
Demitri Coryton Feb 15, 2018
@Brian Souter They don't. Most don't have them.

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Woodburner Feb 15, 2018
@Brian Souter Perk of the job, when you retire , if you are lucky, you get a peerage and so remain on the public pay roll for the rest of your life

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Chris 1966 Feb 15, 2018
The 1% appear to suffer no consequence's for things they are responsible for.

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Keith Feb 15, 2018
@Chris 1966 and I dare say you are in the 99% that are responsible for nothing and get all the benefits...?

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Brian Souter Feb 15, 2018
Jobs for the boys! We live in a rotten society.

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John Doy Feb 15, 2018
@Brian Souter

The "rotten society" is the one that we endorse at every election.

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JOHN BALL Feb 15, 2018
Am I alone in thinking allowing a fit 60 year old to retire on a full pension is scandalous? If Sir Stephen enjoys a good life he will have been paid more pension in retirement than salary when working. If a retiree wants something like his old job back he should not be better off than if he had not retired. (This is a comment on the ludicrously generous public pension system. Can hardly blame the individual for taking advantage of a scheme which robs the tax payer.)

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19RecommendReply
David Robb Feb 15, 2018
only over generous for the top people

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Craig Lang Feb 15, 2018
@JOHN BALL He retired at 57.

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Mr N D Feb 15, 2018

Another good opportunity to remind ourselves that the current Met Commissioner is the officer who was directly responsible for the fatal shooting of an innocent Brazilian electrician.

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joshh Feb 15, 2018

@Mr N D At least we know Mrs. Dick doesn't fire blanks...

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John Doy Feb 15, 2018

@Mr N D

Had the "innocent Brazilian electrician" not taken advantage of the incompetence of the home office and overstayed the generosity of his British visa he would now be alive and well in Brazil.

Had you been a policeman at the time and faced with the same decision that those who were involved, what would you have done?

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

Professionals are paid to make the right decision, not the wrong decision.

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John Doy Feb 15, 2018

@Graeme Harrison

Had you been one of those professional policeman at the time and faced with the same decision in the same circumstances and with the same information, what would you have done?

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1RecommendReply

Smoky Ashton Feb 15, 2018

First of all, let us remember what really happened that day. The policeman who should have been watching the house, had stepped out of line to relieve himself. The Brazillian, who was not the surveillance target, left the house and walked to the tube. The Police then play catch up, chasing the wrong man, burst into the carriage and become all American. However you look at it, the policewoman in charge of the operation had not briefed her officers clearly. There were gaps in their surveillance and the end result was the shocking death of an innocent party.

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John Doy Feb 15, 2018

@Smoky Ashton

Had the policeman not stepped out, would it have made any difference?

A tragedy yes, but had the Brazilian not been the Brazilian but a walking bomb, and the police had not "become all American" but hesitated, they would have been equally crucified.

And he shouldn't have been there in the first place.

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Hafthor Ericsson Feb 15, 2018

@Mr N D He was not innocent. That's why he ran away in the first place.

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

He didn't run as even the Keystine Kops were forced to admit.

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J Anderson Feb 15, 2018

@Hafthor Ericsson @Mr N D He wasn't a terrorist either and that's why they shot him.

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robert everitt Feb 15, 2018

I do not like the term "co-ordinated response" especially when the man resigned because of an uncoordinated response. Suggests the Met want to keep a better lid things.

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Lucy Lastic Feb 15, 2018

"You pat my back, and I'll pat yours"! Just shows that you don't have to be outstanding at your job once you reach the upper tier of the Met, and other forces; you just have to know the right people. (T'was ever thus)!

By and large the policing in this country is a disgrace. All about being politically correct and not upsetting the sensibilities of some scrote from the Middle East who kills young women!

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Foreversideways Feb 15, 2018

Let's face it they are all as bad as each other. If it isn't him it will be some other useless Plod.

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Furor Scribendi Feb 15, 2018

A question prompted by some of the spiteful comments below.

Is a person who resigns, or retires early, because he accepts responsibility for the failings of junior staff, to be barred forever from further gainful employment in a field in which he possesses considerable expertise and experience?

If the answer is 'yes', then beware the unintended consequences. There is probably not a single consultant in the NHS whose junior doctors have not made mistakes. Or a single cabinet minister or permanent secretary whose junior staff have not made mistakes. Or a single chief executive of a listed company whose junior staff have not made mistakes. And so on.

Didn't someone once say something on the lines of 'Let he who is without sin throw the first stone'?

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

What's the point in resigning if the consequences of doing so are further employment opportunities in a field in which you've already admitted failing?

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Furor Scribendi Feb 15, 2018

@Graeme Harrison Fred is a bricklayer. He is a very good bricklayer, who can lay bricks faultlessly much more quickly than almost any other bricklayer. His employer, Bob the builder, values him greatly.

One day Bob asks Fred if he would like to be a foreman bricklayer. Fred says he would give it a go. Unfortunately, the other bricklayers in Fred's team keep making mistakes and despite Fred's best efforts Bob is losing money. One day Fred says to Bob that he has come to the conclusion that he, Fred, must take responsibility for the mistakes of the other bricklayers and, consequently, he proposes that Fred should recruit a replacement foreman. Bob accepts Fred's resignation.

Question: Is Fred to be allowed to resume employment as a bricklayer, a role in which he excels, or is he now barred for ever more from employment as a bricklayer?

Answers on the back of a postage stamp, please.

Even if Sir Stephen had failed as the first chief constable of Police Scotland, and it is not clear that he had, it does not follow that he had failed in other police roles. On the contrary, if he had, it is extremely unlikely that he would have been appointed as chief constable of Police Scotland.

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1RecommendReply

Smoky Ashton Feb 15, 2018

If one is retired on a full pension, which in fact is gold plated, from public service, I say one should not work in public service again. Move into the private sector by all means but stay out of public service to avoid any conflict of interest.

Flag

RecommendReply

D Peacock Feb 15, 2018

Brilliant news for Stephen House - but what about the similarly talented (don't laugh!)

senior officers in the Met?

They have all been overlooked in this process - in favour of a man who took early

retirement, the traditional route for officers facing prosecution. Dear oh dear!

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8RecommendReply

Stephen Campbell Feb 15, 2018

@D Peacock Stephen House, it should be said for clarity, was never facing any form of legal action for the operational failures below him at Police Scotland.

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Diogenes911 Feb 15, 2018

It would seem we now have at least two Dicks at the head of the Met. Do these people not have any PR staff to tell them how bad this continuous reward for failure looks.

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BB Feb 15, 2018

'Lord ' Hogan Howe? The man was a disaster and 'Sir' Stephen could not have made a worse job of it. Now we've got Dick of the Yard to pursue her left wing feminist agenda. No matter, they are probably all Masons and graduates of Common Purpose.

Still, whilst they focus on hate crimes in the days after terrorist atrocities (see their guidance on hate crime) we can all rest easy in bed at night.

Onwards and downwards with the regressive left.

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Howzat Feb 15, 2018

Nepotism is alive and well under Cressida.

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8RecommendReply

Text Feb 15, 2018

Quote; "There is a hugh amount of transformation taking place within the Met....."

Parachuting a retired former colleague into a position in the Senior Management team will work wonders for morale and he'll be respected by the rank and file. I DON'T THINK SO.

Was the post offered to Sir Stephen House advertised, if so, what was the selection process and who was interviewed? Openness, honesty and integrity does not apply when feathering a former colleagues nest!

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11RecommendReply

Joe in Suffolk Feb 15, 2018

@Text These are reasonable questions which C Dick should address, but won't.

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1RecommendReply

Soysauce Feb 15, 2018

@Text It's blindingly obvious why he stepped down or was persuaded to go...*Sir Stephen had also faced criticism over his decision to put armed officers on routine patrols and large-scale use of stop-and-search...* In other words he is an old fashioned copper who believes his job is to protect the public not pander to his PC masters, it will have been made clear to him that dinosaurs do not become Met Commissioners, that is a job for 'special people', people with special needs, sexual orientations, gender identities and skin colour, their effectiveness at doing the job is just a bonus...

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6RecommendReply

Lucy's dad Feb 15, 2018

And Teflon coated sloping shoulders.

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4RecommendReply

Lucy Lastic Feb 15, 2018

@Lucy's dad Well said Son!

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Ian Lumsden Feb 15, 2018

I am as critical of the police as many here in regard to appointments in Cleveland and the various investigations into sex abuses that came to an expensive nothing, but this seems unfair. Sir Stephen House has done very well in terms of pension and honours, but he cannot alone be held responsible for the terrible events surrounding the missed victim of a car crash.

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9RecommendReply

Ytongs Feb 15, 2018

@Ian Lumsden Whether he is responsible or not depends upon whether it was his strategies or omissions of strategies under his control that were to blame for the debacle.

In passing it's a bit rich Cressida Dick herself commenting on this as it was she who was in direct control of the police operation that ended up shooting Jean Charles de Menezies. The inquiry into the events somehow managed to come to the conclusion that the young man had been wrongly identified and shot dead but no one was to blame. Apparently least of all Ms Dick who received a promotion.

All this is what passes for responsibility in public life thesedays.

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3RecommendReply

Anthony Byrne Feb 15, 2018

Job for the boy on the merry go round of public service. Will his pension stop while on a public funded salary?

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Mark Feb 15, 2018

He doesn't sound particularly reliable having scarpered with a fat pension at the first sign of trouble.

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Graeme Harrison Feb 15, 2018

It's the public sector way!

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Rachel Mortimer Feb 15, 2018

I am very concerned that Sir Stephen has been handpicked by Ms Dick to coordinate the review into the recent disclosure failings. These failings need reviewing by a totally independent party. Marking your own homework always brings skewed results.

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2RecommendReply

Paullindum Feb 15, 2018

Strange how senior public sector employees can grow their own magic money trees...

Flag

16RecommendReply

Joe in Suffolk Feb 15, 2018

@Paullindum friends in right places. Twas ever thus

Flag

3RecommendReply

Hairy Cat Feb 15, 2018

@Paullindum This sort of things is by no means confined to the public sector. In the private sector it's less likely to be visible.

Flag

RecommendReply

Hafthor Ericsson Feb 15, 2018

@Paullindum That's why Labour leaders believe in the magic money tree. They hear about it from public sector employees.

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Nick Tilley Feb 15, 2018

One has to ask whether Chief Constables or Police and Crime Commissioners understand the public's disquiet at 'retired' staff being appointed in a different force or position when their is any question of competence.

In this case we see the head of the Metropolitan Police, a force embroiled in disclosure issues, arguing that a strong track record in dealing with violent crime and operational experience was in anyway a positive attribute for the initial role, must be of concern.

Equally in Devon & Cornwall we have the unedifying experience of the local PCCC, supporting the force's heavy handed and seemingly misdirected, but heavily publicised, modern slavery assault on a long established flower farmer farm's seasonal staff resulting in the staff protesting to defend their employers.

The Police need to realise that their problems are almost all a consequence of internal promotion and inadequate external scrutiny, and accept and welcome outsiders to all management and policy positions.

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26RecommendReply

dcr6vpcd Feb 15, 2018

He says he won't draw his pension during this 5 year "bonus" appointment. Does this mean payment is deferred to be drawn later or is he foregoing it? Answer needed.

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4RecommendReply

Avicenna Feb 15, 2018

To have probity he must forego.

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3RecommendReply

Paul Bickerdike Feb 15, 2018

@dcr6vpcd While drawing a public sector pension if he takes another job in the public sector he can only earn the difference between his pension and the salary it was based on (index linked) after which his pension reduces £ for £ for any earnings above that difference.

If as seems likely his new job is paying a salary similar to his old one his pension would be reduced to zero.

There is no mechanism for retrieving this loss.

(This assumes he did not retire early and draw an actuarially reduced pension and that the Police pension scheme does not have fundamentally different rules to the rest of the public sector)

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7RecommendReply

Lady Dorin Feb 15, 2018

@Paul Bickerdike @dcr6vpcd Does that depend on whether he is hired as a permanent public servant or as a consultant. If permanent there there will be added pension years - I assume. If a self employed consultant then he need not forgo his pension, I assume. All depends on employment law and circumstances.

Flag

RecommendReply

C J Delmege Feb 15, 2018

@Paul Bickerdike @dcr6vpcd Thank You for the important clarification.

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Flintshire Ian Feb 15, 2018

That only applies if his money was still in the police scheme when he retired. If he transferred his benefits out he hangs on to the money.

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Simon Baldwin-Purry Feb 15, 2018

@dcr6vpcd The word "Draw" means to take out. It does not mean to abandon. And why on earth should Sir Stephen abandon that which he has already earned?

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RecommendReply

Michael Doughty Feb 15, 2018

The public sector job merry go round continues.

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15RecommendReply

Avicenna Feb 15, 2018

Jobs for the total failures. HE should have his pension payments suspended whilst earning money.

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2RecommendReply

Robert Highfield Feb 15, 2018

@Avicenna He will not have been personally responsible for the tragedy of that crash error, but he took responsibility as Chief Constable and resigned. I like that, an increasingly rare example. He has now had more than two years out of the job, and a man of his abilities is valuable back in. That he is willing to work two ranks below the top also says a lot for his commitment to service.

And you, Avicenna, what have you done for the public good?

Flag

28RecommendReply

Avicenna Feb 15, 2018

Yes he was responsible for the training and operating procedures which failed. It is scandalous to re-employ thus failure of a man and his pension payments should be stopped until he stops working.

People with public sector pensions should be allowed to work and draw a pension.

Flag

2RecommendReply

Stewart Evans Feb 15, 2018

@Avicenna "re-employ thus failure". Wow, what a way you have with, how shall we put it, "words".

Unfortunately, it is not a way that makes much sense. Ever thought of asking Ralphy for tuition?

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5RecommendReply

Bodhisattva Feb 15, 2018

@Avicenna What you've written reads makes you sound inarticulate...

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1RecommendReply

Michael Jones Feb 15, 2018

Boom, boom.

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RecommendReply

David J Feb 15, 2018

@avicenna.

Do you bother to read what you have typed? Not that I got very far in the spying world, but do you mean "re-employ this failure of a man"? Too late now to change it.

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1RecommendReply

Stephen Ellis Feb 15, 2018

@David J Copy-Delete-Paste-Edit-Post

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Ytongs Feb 15, 2018

@Robert Highfield @Avicenna Your confidence in his degree of responsibility is touching. If as chief constable it was found to be his management strategies or omissions then he would have been indeed personally responsible.

If (as far as I am aware) no one else was held to have done anything wrong and those involved proved they ticked all the correct boxes and a tragedy followed then it is who created and signed off on the system who is to blame.

Knowing public servants as I do if he resigned then it wasn't some beneficent gesture.

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Sandra Bell Feb 15, 2018

Hardly a front line policeman look at his cv.

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