

News story

SFO Director announces retirement

Nick Ephgrave, the Director of the Serious Fraud Office, will retire in the Spring.

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Nick Ephgrave QPM, the Director of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), will retire at the end of March.

The decision comes after 38 years serving the public, holding senior roles in UK law enforcement, with the Metropolitan and Surrey police forces as well as the National Police Chiefs' Council.

He will remain in post until the end of March during which time an interim Director will be appointed pending a formal recruitment process for his successor.

Nick Ephgrave said:

“It is with great pride that I reflect on the enormous progress the SFO has made in the last two and a half years.

“We have achieved more things, more quickly than even I thought possible thanks entirely to the enthusiasm, commitment and can-do attitude from everyone at the SFO.

“I am certain that the momentum we have created will continue to propel the organisation forward to bigger and better things.

“I would like to thank each and every colleague for their support and hard work, without which none of this could have happened.”

Mr Ephgrave set out to redefine the ambition and scope of the SFO, overseeing a focus on proactivity, innovation and pace. This has included a sharper, faster casework approach, the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in support of improved disclosure practice and the creation of a crypto-asset capability.

Successes during his tenure include bringing charges against five men for complex fraud offences linked to the collapse of law firm Axiom Ince in just 15 months, the fastest in the organisation’s history.

Last month, a guilty plea was secured from the director of a company that sold aircraft engine parts with forged documentation just two years after launching an investigation.

In addition, the SFO continues to be a leading partner in global anti-corruption work. Of particular significance is the founding of the first international Anti-Corruption Prosecutorial Taskforce, delivering an enhanced operational partnership between key European partners.

From the outset, Mr Ephgrave has championed the incentivisation of whistleblowers to drive up referral rates and increase corporate prosecutions. In recent weeks the Government committed to assessing the feasibility of financial incentive schemes for those reporting economic crime as part of its new UK Anti-Corruption Strategy.

Nick Ephgrave added:

“I shall miss the job and SFO colleagues so very much but will reflect on the progress we have made together with pride and satisfaction.

“I believe we have achieved what we set out to do: create a rejuvenated SFO that is strong, confident, dynamic and pragmatic. It has an even greater future ahead.”

Attorney General Richard Hermer KC said:

“I want to pay the warmest of personal and professional tributes to Nick Ephgrave as he retires after a long career in public service.

“Nick brought over three decades of police experience to the Serious Fraud Office and as Director, he modernised the organisation’s approach to tackling serious fraud, bribery and corruption, strengthened its capabilities, and secured important convictions in complex economic crime cases.

“His energy, expertise, integrity, determination and commitment to public service have left a lasting mark on the SFO and on the police forces in which he served. I thank him for his dedication, pay tribute to his family for their support and wish him all the very best for his well-deserved retirement.”

Claire Bassett, Chair of the Board, said:

“Nick has led the SFO with tremendous energy and vision over the last two and a half years, transforming its approach to tackling complex crime.

“His legacy is a reinvigorated organisation which is well placed to build on swifter and more effective approaches to delivering justice.”

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