

Margaret Beels appointed as Director of Labour Market Enforcement

- Margaret Beels appointed as new Director of Labour Market Enforcement
- Beels will set strategic direction for labour market enforcement bodies and will oversee an annual assessment of the scale and nature of workplace non-compliance
- new appointment will bolster government's continued efforts to protect and enhance workers' rights while stamping out workplace exploitation

Margaret Beels OBE has today (22 November 2021) been appointed as Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME) to coordinate continued government efforts in stamping out exploitation in the workplace.

Taking up the role with immediate effect, Beels will oversee an annual assessment of the scale and nature of non-compliance in the labour market – from accidental breaches of the national minimum wage to more severe and deliberate crimes such as modern slavery.

Beels will also set the strategic direction for the 3 existing labour market enforcement bodies:

- the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate
- the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
- HMRC's National Minimum Wage Team

Margaret Beels brings with her extensive industry experience, having been Chair of Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) since 2011, where she led on work to tackle and prevent modern slavery and labour exploitation – and which she was honoured with an OBE for in 2020.

Minister for Labour Markets Paul Scully said:

Clamping down on unscrupulous employment practices and protecting workers is an absolute priority for this government.

As we continue to support workers and root out exploitation by rogue employers, Margaret's experience will be invaluable, and I look forward to working with her in helping to build an economy that works for all.

Margaret Beels OBE, Director of Labour Market Enforcement said:

I am proud to take on the role of Director of Labour Market Enforcement. All workers are entitled to fair wages and proper working conditions. Sadly this is not always the case. I look forward to working with the 3 enforcement bodies within my

jurisdiction to deliver better outcomes for workers who are being exploited.

Beels takes on the role from Matthew Taylor, who was the previous interim Director of Labour Market Enforcement from August 2019 to January 2021.

In June 2021, the government announced plans to create a single enforcement body, which will see the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate and HMRC's National Minimum Wage Enforcement combined. This 'one-stop shop' approach will help improve enforcement through better co-ordination and pooling intelligence.

The appointment comes as the government recently announced a significant rise in the National Living Wage from April 2022, to £9.50 an hour – the biggest increase since its introduction.

The 2022 increases to the National Living and Minimum Wage rates will give around 2.5 million of the UK's lowest-paid workers a pay rise.

In addition, the government has more than doubled the budget for minimum wage enforcement and compliance, which is now over £27 million annually, up from £13.2 million in 2015 to 2016.

Margaret Beels Biography

Margaret Beels' career began in the Department of Energy. From 1987 to 1990 she played a key role in delivering the privatisation of the electricity industry in England and Wales. Margaret spent 4 years running the electricity market before joining British Gas as Head of Compliance.

When British Gas demerged, Margaret joined Centrica and became Director of Scottish Gas.

Margaret became Chair of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) in July 2011. GLA was formed in 2006 following the Morecambe Bay tragedy in which 23 Chinese cockle pickers were drowned. It was set up to run a statutory licensing scheme which upholds the rights of temporary workers in agriculture, horticulture food packing and shell fishing.

From 2014 to 2016 Margaret was much involved in GLA's move from being sponsored by Defra to sponsorship by the Home Office and then, in the transformation of the GLA into the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) with the expansion of its powers to include the investigation, across the whole labour market, into forced and compulsory labour as defined in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Margaret was awarded an OBE in the New Years' Honours in 2020 for services to modern slavery and labour exploitation.

About The Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (ODLME)

The Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (ODLME) is sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Home Office.

The Director of Labour Market Enforcement was created by the Immigration Act 2016 as part of the government's reforms to strengthen efforts to tackle non-compliance in the labour market.

The Director is required to present the annual strategy to the Home Secretary and the Business Secretary for their approval. In addition, the Director will prepare and present to Parliament an annual report on the extent to which enforcement activity undertaken during the year has had an effect on non-compliance.