

News story: Kathryn Cearn's OBE appointed as new Chair of the Office of Tax Simplification

Kathryn will chair the OTS board and will lead the OTS as it shapes its strategy and priorities. Kathryn will direct engagement with HM Treasury, HMRC, ministers and Parliament.

Alongside the Tax Director, Bill Dodwell, she will provide independent advice to the Chancellor on simplifying the UK tax system for both businesses and individual taxpayers.

Kathryn joins the OTS with extensive senior level experience in both the public and private sectors, notably as Chair of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board to HM Treasury from 2010 to 2016 and Chair of ICAEW Financial Reporting Committee from 2008 to 2017.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

We want to ensure our tax system is as simple as possible for everyone, and Kathryn Cearn's will play a vital role in helping meet that commitment.

Her impressive track-record of leadership in the public and private sectors and strong vision made her the ideal candidate to steer the OTS through the next phase of its work.

I would like to thank Angela Knight for her contribution to the OTS over the past 3 years. She leaves having established the OTS as a permanent office, acting as an independent voice providing beneficial advice.

Kathryn Cearn's, incoming OTS Chair, said:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to help to develop a tax system in the UK that is straightforward for taxpayers while remaining effective and fit for purpose for the 21st century.

OTS Tax Director, Bill Dodwell said:

I – and the OTS team – look forward to working with Kathryn as our new Chair. Improving the interactions of taxpayers with the tax system and aiding understanding of taxation remain very important goals.

Further information

The OTS was established in 2010 to provide advice to the Chancellor on simplifying the UK tax system and was made a permanent, independent office of HM Treasury in July 2015. It was put on a statutory footing in the Finance Act 2016.

Kathryn Carns brings to the OTS a wide range of relevant leadership experience:

- non-executive director of Highways England and Chair of the Highways England Audit and Risk Committee and member of the Group Audit and Risk Committee at the Department for Transport
- previously, Chair of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board to HM Treasury from 2010 to 2016
- formerly Chair of the ICAEW Financial Reporting Committee for 10 years up to the end of 2017
- other prior roles include a project director at the UK Accounting Standards Board (now the Financial Reporting Council), and the consultant accountant for Herbert Smith Freehills LLP and council member of the ICAEW
- Kathryn currently holds a number of non-executive, trustee and advisory appointments most notably as a member of the External Audit Committee for the International Monetary Fund, a non-executive director for the UK Supreme Court, a non-executive board member and member of the Audit Committee for Companies House, a non-executive director for The Property Ombudsman and as a trustee for Royal British Legion Industries

Although this appointment does not come under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, the recruitment process has been run in line with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

The Treasury Select Committee can hold a hearing for the Chair of the OTS after the appointed is announced, but before it has been formalised. The hearing will be held on Tuesday 5th March 2019.