

Hemant Patel appointed as Non-Executive Board Member to DCMS

As well as sitting on the Departmental Board, Hemant will chair the Department's Audit and Risk Committee to provide constructive challenge and assurance on governance, risk management and control.

Hemant is currently Finance Director of Premier Inn.

He was born and educated in London before graduating from the University of Manchester having studied Physics with Astrophysics. He then moved into industry to train as a chartered management accountant.

He has worked at various multi-national companies including Mars Inc and SC Johnson in financial, commercial and marketing roles before moving with his family to Yorkshire to join Asda in 2003. At Asda, Hemant carried out various roles in finance including Commercial Finance Director and Retail Finance Director as well as running Asda's own label business and leading business reinvention as Director of Strategy.

Hemant then moved on to be Director of Online at the financial service provider, Provident Financial plc, with responsibility for their online loans businesses. Latterly he was Finance Director of the Pub Co at Greene King plc, leading the finance function for the business's 1,700 managed pubs.

He is currently Finance Director of Premier Inn & Restaurants at Whitbread plc, with financial responsibility for over 800 hotels and 400 restaurants across the UK and Germany. Hemant said: 'I am both honoured and delighted to have been chosen to join DCMS as a Non-Exec Board Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with a department with such a diverse portfolio and I very much look forward to contributing over my term.'

Until 2017, Hemant was chairman of Interplay Theatre, a Leeds based company using the arts to work with children in special schools nationally and socially excluded children locally. He was given the Arts and Business Individual of the Year award in 2007 for his work with this charity.

Hemant became a trustee of the Royal Armouries, the national museum of arms and armour, in July 2010, chairing the trading company as well as the audit committee, before becoming chair of the board in 2018.

Plans underway to modernise the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association

Since their inception in 1908, the RFCAs have played a vital role in connecting defence with the nation through 3 core strands: management of the Reserve and Cadet Estate; helping businesses support their Reservist employees; and providing administrative and logistical support to Cadets.

The review notes how the RFCAs go above and beyond and ensure that their roles remain relevant and significant in contributing to defence objectives, as well as building links in the community. In particular, the Cadet Expansion Programme, which has increased the number of cadets, and the Employer Recognition Scheme, which rewards employers for their support of Reservist employees are due to the work of the RFCAs.

In light of the review's recommendations, defence will now embark on a cross-government programme with the RFCAs to develop the best way to regularise the 13 RFCAs to drive efficiencies and provide enhanced consistency across the regions for our armed forces.

The RFCAs remain a vital partner to defence, and the proposed reforms will provide the foundation to not only strengthen this relationship, but also enhance their role in communities across the UK. This will ensure our Reserves are best able to meet future capability needs and the Cadet experience continues to deliver for our young people.

COVID-19: DBS Contact Centre has closed temporarily

Due to an ongoing issue following the coronavirus outbreak, the DBS Contact Centre will be closed temporarily while we deep clean the space.

We will be in constant review of the situation and aim to reopen the Contact Centre as soon as possible. All updates will be communicated via GOV.UK and Twitter.

If you have a general enquiry while the Contact Centre is temporarily unavailable, you can still contact DBS via:

You can track your application online:

- Online tracking for basic DBS checks, [here](#)
- Online tracking for standard and enhanced DBS checks, [here](#)

A variety of guidance can also be found across GOV.UK:

[Government confirms £500 million hardship fund will provide council tax relief for vulnerable households](#)

- Local Government Secretary confirms £500 million Hardship Fund will provide support, including council tax relief, in 2020 to 2021 to those who need it most
- Guidance released today (24 March 2020) provides clarity for councils on how to allocate the funding following its announcement at Budget
- The funding will enable further reductions in council tax for working age people in receipt of Local Council Tax Support

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has confirmed the government's £500 million Hardship Fund will provide council tax relief to vulnerable people and households to help those affected most by coronavirus.

The government has set out that the Hardship Fund, which was announced by the Chancellor at Budget, will go to local authorities in England to enable them to reduce the 2020 to 2021 council tax bills of working age people receiving Local Council Tax Support.

Councils will also be able to use the funding to provide further discretionary support to vulnerable people through other support arrangements such as Local Welfare Schemes.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Providing the necessary financial support to people and families is critical at this difficult time when many people will be concerned about changes to their income.

That's why we're giving local councils an additional £500 million, to ensure help is available for the most vulnerable people in our society who are struggling to pay their council tax bills.

The government is on your side and will do whatever takes to help.

The Hardship Fund will support those in receipt of Local Council Tax Support schemes by reducing their council tax liability for 2020 to 2021.

People in receipt of Local Council Tax Support schemes are recognised as the

most vulnerable to changes in income and the government is committed to ensuring they have the support they need.

The guidance published today provides clarity to councils on how they can quickly provide support to those households which require support.

The announcement comes after the government confirmed councils will receive an additional £1.6 billion in funding to enable them to respond to other COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including stepping up support for the adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people.

All councils have their own schemes providing support to working age council tax payers. The level of support is decided by the council, taking account of local circumstances, but will provide a reduction on council tax bills to lower income households, taking account of income and savings.

Billing authorities will also want to establish their own local approach to using any remaining grant to assist those in need, as part of wider local support mechanisms. These may include, but are not restricted to:

- council tax relief using existing discretionary discount/hardship policies
- provision of support outside of the council tax system through Local Welfare or similar schemes
- offering a higher level of council tax reduction for working-age Local Council Tax Support recipients whose annual liability exceeds £150

[Coronavirus \(Covid-19\): impact on our services](#)



Following the latest Government advice concerning social distancing and coronavirus, we are adapting the way we work to minimise disruption to our service.

We are temporarily operating a reduced level of telephony service. We

apologise for any delay or disruption this may cause.

Our phone lines are currently open 10am until 3pm, Monday to Friday.

We are continuously reviewing the level of service we can provide. We will provide regular updates here and on Twitter.

Until further notice, if you are delayed in providing information to CICA due to the impact of coronavirus please be assured that your application will not be disadvantaged by this. In order to free up our customer support staff to help those who need our support most at this time, you do not need to contact us to let us know that evidence in support of your claim may be delayed.

You can find details about our service [here](#)

You can e-mail us at info@cica.gov.uk and we will respond to your enquiry as soon as possible.

Thank you for your patience during this period of disruption.

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Last updated 21 April 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 21 April 2020

Added new phone opening hours

2. 24 March 2020

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