

## GLD welcomes 2019-20 legal trainees

GLD recently welcomed 43 new legal trainees to embark upon an exciting career as a government lawyer. Our trainees have a packed training programme over the next two years to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need. By experiencing four different areas of practice, in both an advisory and litigation capacity, GLD trainees will experience a range of fascinating legal work – and may have the opportunity to participate in the legislative process itself. □

David Walters, currently seated in immigration litigation, said: “The highlight of my experience so far is getting to attend the prorogation Supreme Court case. For a trainee it was a once in a lifetime chance to get to sit in the courtroom with the government’s lawyers during one of the most important constitutional cases in recent history and an experience which I would be unlikely to have had if I was training elsewhere. I have also enjoyed being able to tackle cases of my own from a very early stage. Everyone in my team has been very supportive.”

Jane Saycell, currently seated in our Employment Team, said: “‘You are in the best place in the whole of GLD. Everyone here is really lovely...’ So said every member of my new team in the Employment Group as I was introduced on my first day in the office. A month down the line and, although I have nothing to compare to, everyone really is lovely! I have been involved in interesting and varied work – from joining calls with Counsel to giving presentations on unfair dismissal to Defra managers. It’s a steep learning curve and I’m looking forward to the remaining five months of my Employment seat.”

Lucy Sawyerr, currently seated in Immigration Team 4, said: “I have been surprised by the amount of responsibility that I have been given so early on which has meant I have learnt a lot in such a short amount of time. All of my team have been very welcoming, supportive and seem really invested in my development. It has also been really nice to have a friendly cohort of fellow trainees to share experiences with.”

Omer Hamid, currently seated in our Commercial Law Group, said: “I chose GLD’s trainee scheme because of the experiences I enjoyed most at university, namely internships at commercial law firms and in the policy side of the civil service. This was the perfect combination of the two. I also wanted a job which straddled both law and politics. So far GLD has not disappointed – in less than a month here, I’ve witnessed a change of minister and a (pretty important) Supreme Court case! I’m looking forward to the rest of my seat at DWP and a long career as a GLD lawyer.”

For more information on our Legal Trainee Scheme, visit the [Government Legal Profession guidance page](#).

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# Appointment of the new Chief Executive and Permanent Secretary at HMRC



The Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced the appointment of Jim Harra as the new Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary at HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Jim was formerly the Second Permanent Secretary at HMRC, and has been covering the role of Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary on an interim basis since Sir Jonathan Thompson moved to become Chief Executive of the Financial Reporting Council.

Welcoming Jim Harra's appointment, Sir Mark Sedwill said:

As Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary, Jim will continue building on the excellent work he has already set in motion at HMRC. I know that he will provide strong leadership to one of the biggest departments in the Civil Service, and his appointment reflects not only the huge contribution to public service he has made to date, but also the wealth of departmental knowledge he will bring to the role.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Sajid Javid said:

I'm delighted that Jim Harra has been appointed as Chief Executive and Permanent Secretary of HM Revenue and Customs. I've worked closely with Jim as we have prepared Britain for Brexit, and his experience and expertise mean he's the right person to lead HMRC at this crucial time.

Jim Harra said:

I'm thrilled to take on the role of HMRC's Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary, particularly at such a critical time. I have a deep respect for colleagues within this department and am

proud that they are recognised as among the best in government. I'm very much looking forward to tackling the challenges and opportunities that we'll face, together, including continuing our progress towards making HMRC the best tax and customs authority in the world.

## Notes

- This appointment has been made by the Prime Minister with the agreement of the Chancellor for the Exchequer and Cabinet Secretary. It follows an internal recruitment exercise.
- Jim Harra has been interim Chief Executive since 1 October 2019 and Second Permanent Secretary since January 2018.
- Previously Jim held the dual role of Tax Assurance Commissioner and Director General Customer Strategy and Tax Design in HMRC.
- Jim Harra's career began in HMRC's predecessor, the Inland Revenue as a tax inspector in 1984, and held a number of director-level positions becoming director general for business tax in 2012.
- Arrangements to appoint a successor as Second Permanent Secretary will be announced in due course.

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## **Audio and visual funding for buses will make journeys accessible for all**

- £2 million to provide audio and visual equipment for buses to improve journeys for everyone including those with visual or hearing impairment
- DfT launches new communications campaign 'It's everyone's journey' to improve disabled people's experiences on public transport
- call for partners to sign up to the campaign and join partners already supporting it including British Airways, LNER and Alzheimer's Society

Buses around Great Britain will become more accessible for disabled passengers thanks to a new partnership with the Real Time Information Group

(RTIG), announced today (29 October 2019).

The group, which supports good practice in the use of communications technology on public transport, will work with the Department for Transport to allocate £2 million of funding to small bus operators for audible and visible on-board information.

With around 50% of public transport journeys made on buses, this funding will help to ensure that passengers can board more buses with greater confidence, knowing where they are and when to get off.

It coincides with the launch of the [It's everyone's journey](#) campaign, the first stage of a new government-backed initiative to highlight the part we can all play in improving disabled people's experiences when using public transport.

The department is now calling on charities, transport operators, and commercial organisations to join the campaign, helping to raise awareness of the needs of disabled travellers and share some of the improvements being made to make travel easier for the one in 5 disabled people in the UK.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

It is unacceptable that people still feel they cannot travel by bus, because of a lack of basic route and destination information on board local bus services.

This partnership is the next step in ensuring that passengers have the information they need to travel confidently on local bus services throughout Great Britain.

However, we know there is more to do which is why I'm delighted we're also launching our It's everyone's journey campaign today and I invite as many partners as possible to join up so that everyone has equal access to public transport.

Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Transport is at the heart of how we live our lives, and I am determined that we remove any barriers faced by disabled people.

Every passenger, regardless of where they travel in Great Britain, should be able to do so confident that they have boarded the correct vehicle and are travelling to the right place.

That's why it's fantastic to announce this partnership with the Real Time Information Group today, and I hope this funding will help more buses meet the needs of the people who rely on them every day.

The fund for the provision of audio and visual information on-board buses was announced as part of the government's [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#) which aims to provide equal access to the transport network by 2030.

Operators of local bus services are likely to be required to have audio and visible information systems in their vehicles, and this funding is intended to help small operators which might find this costly to implement.

With audio visual equipment only available in limited areas, and predominantly provided by larger operators, the department expects this funding to benefit up to 30 small bus operators.

Tim Rivett, General Manager at the Real Time Information Group said:

Audio visual information helps reduce barriers to travel and increases confidence in public transport for all passengers, but particularly disabled passengers.

RTIG is looking forward to working with the department to help small operators roll out audio visual information and provide the customer benefits more quickly than would otherwise happen.

In the first phase of It's everyone's journey, the campaign will work with partner organisations to communicate the improvements that are happening at a local and national level to make public transport more accessible and inclusive of disabled people.

It will be followed by a public advertising campaign early in 2020 that will challenge how we all use public transport and encourage everyone to reflect on how common, and often unconscious, behaviours can impact others.

This is another commitment in the Inclusive Transport Strategy and is the next in a series of improvements by the Transport Secretary to create a more accessible transport network, helping disabled people travel safely and with confidence.

Martin Harris, Brighton & Hove and Metrobus' Managing Director, said:

We're right behind the DfT's strategy and we welcome it wholeheartedly. Everybody deserves to feel happy and confident while they travel. The best way to make buses more accessible is to keep listening to the experts: our passengers and our communities.

Our entire fleet (440 buses) is 'talking buses', where passengers can see and hear next stop and other announcements, such as diversions. We introduced them in 2016 after one of our visually impaired passengers told us she had alighted at the wrong stop several times and it was making her anxious.

A study commissioned by Department for Transport to investigate how [access to transport affects the life opportunities and wellbeing of people living in England](#) found that access to public transport has a wide-ranging positive impact on people's lives.

The research, carried out by NatCen and the University of the West of England, published today along with 2 other studies ([Transport, health and wellbeing](#) and [Transport and inequality](#)), found public transport is important for being able to access services like healthcare, food shops and education.

The government recently announced a major package of new measures worth £220 million, which will invest in new ways to ensure more flexible public transport such as express lanes for buses, to start in the West Midlands.

The long term funding plan for the upcoming long-term bus strategy – a first for the UK – is expected at the 2020 spending review.

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## [Five year disqualification for Dundee scaffolding firm which compromised road safety](#)

The Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, Claire Gilmore, has disqualified a Dundee based scaffolding company and its director for five years following the repeated unlawful use of a vehicle.

The industry regulator concluded AFS Scaffolding Ltd poses “a significant risk to road safety” and that director Ross Findlay “deliberately and repeatedly” operated a vehicle without the required operator's licence.

Ms Gilmore's decision follows a public inquiry into the business, which looked at the company's illegal use of a vehicle before it was given an operator's licence.

Businesses are required to hold a valid licence to run commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and must meet certain standards to keep that licence.

AFS Scaffolding Ltd's application for an operator licence was considered at an inquiry before the Deputy Traffic Commissioner for Scotland in February this year, following allegations that it had been using a vehicle unlawfully.

Mr Findlay gave assurances to the Deputy Commissioner that the unlawful use had been infrequent and happened as a result of error rather than a deliberate attempt to avoid the licensing regime. After considering the application in detail, the company was told it could start running vehicles on 29 March.

However, evidence subsequently gathered by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) revealed the company had actually continued to use the vehicle unlawfully before its operator's licence came into force.

In evidence at the latest public inquiry, Mr Findlay said one of the journeys was an emergency job to stabilise someone's chimney. He told the Deputy Traffic Commissioner that the vehicle in question had been parked up for lengthy period prior to the licence being granted, but inspections revealed it had travelled significant mileages. In fact, over 10,000km was recorded in the vehicle between 10 December 2018 and 25 March 2019, when the company did not have a licence.

Other concerns raised at the inquiry related to vehicle safety standards, including a vehicle that was not checked properly and sent out with a tyre worn below the legal limit. The defect was categorised as safety critical.

In a [written decision](#) following the inquiry, the Traffic Commissioner said she was unable to rely on the Mr Findlay's evidence.

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## **Office for Disability Issues becomes part of Equalities Hub**

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is leaving the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 1 November 2019. The newly created Disability Unit will join with the Race Disparities Unit and the Government Equalities Office to become part of the new Equalities Hub in the Cabinet Office.

The new cross-departmental disability team will bring the voices of disabled people into the heart of government. By working closely with disabled people, disabled people's organisations and charities to develop a new approach to disability, their views and experiences will be at the forefront of any new policy.

The new Disability Unit will continue to support the Office of the Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Justin Tomlinson MP, which will remain part of DWP.

On 25 June 2019, the government launched a new cross-government approach on disability which is guided by a vision which recognises the contributions disabled people make and where disabled people can participate fully in society. This move into the Cabinet Office will enable vital, co-ordinated, cross-government action to tackle barriers faced by disabled people across the course of their lives and will enable the profile of disability issues to be raised.

Maintaining and building invaluable relationships with disabled people and

their organisations, colleagues, stakeholders and partners, to improve the lives of all citizens will be a focus for the Disability Unit.

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