

[Privy Council appointments: 13 September 2019](#)



The Queen has been pleased to approve that Michael Ellis QC MP, Alec Shelbrooke MP and Valerie Vaz MP be sworn of Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

Notes for editors

Michael Ellis QC MP is a Conservative and Unionist Party politician and the Solicitor General. He was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Northampton North in May 2010.

Alec Shelbrooke MP is a Conservative and Unionist Party politician. He was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Elmet and Rothwell in May 2010.

Valerie Vaz MP is a Labour politician and Shadow Leader of the House of Commons. She was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Walsall South in May 2010.

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[UK – Albania Tech Hub launches call for applications 2019-2020](#)

What is the UK-Albania Tech Hub?

A one of its kind, the UK-Albania Tech Hub is a programme that supports collaboration between Albania and the UK in the area of technology. Following the second successful round, the programme this year will continue to include and accept applications from start-ups located in the Western Balkan countries as well.

The hub aims to facilitate bilateral tech partnerships between Albania and the UK. It focuses on tech start-ups that have the potential to contribute to growth in the UK by sharing innovation, skills and business opportunities between the two countries.

The project does this through identifying targeted solutions, partners and models of collaboration for tech start-ups engaging entrepreneurs with capacity-building events with key business experts leading to UK delegation to meet potential business and tech partners.

Structure

The programme is based on the successful UK-Israel Tech Hub and the programme includes a three step approach to supporting tech start-ups:

1. Training programme

There are up to 20 spaces available for start-ups with high-growth potential to participate in a workshop series in Tirana which will include training and mentoring session to help grow their ideas and develop their capacities using local and UK practices and expertise.

2. UK Exchange programme

Following a competitive process, a number of the start-ups that have successfully completed the training programme will be chosen to continue their training in London. The shortlisted start-ups will embark on further training, mentoring and explore business opportunities in UK's tech sector. Entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to meet with accelerators, hub, tech networks, investors and potential clients.

3. Post training

Follow-up support to further develop their businesses and acceleration programme for high potential start-ups to further grow their business, incl. high profile networking events, opportunities to be paired with UK mentors, opportunities for joint projects and opportunities to contribute to policy making.

What's next?

Applications are open to all technology start-ups that are already established in the Albanian market or the countries of the Western Balkans. Please fill in the application form and send it by email to: british.embassytirana@fco.gov.uk. Use UK-Albania Tech Hub as subject line.

Deadline for applications is: 18 October 2019

Important information

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a series of 8 workshops with

key international experts. Participants are therefore required to commit time in the evening and weekends. It is of paramount importance that participants commit to the above, trainings will start in early November.

Eligibility criteria

- 1) Are you a start-up in the field of technology?
- 2) Do you have at least one product and are looking for customers?
- 3) Are you are a resident/operating/registered in one of the Western Balkan countries?
- 4) Do you understand, speak, read and write in English? (most of the training session will be in English)

[Application form](#) (ODT, 50.7KB)

UN Human Rights Council 42: interactive dialogue with independent expert on human rights by older persons

The United Kingdom thanks the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to development, for their reports. We would like to address our remarks to Ms Kornfeld-Matte.

Global population ageing is one of the greatest social and economic challenges of this century; it has, and will continue to have, substantive policy implications. The UK remains committed to the rights of all persons, whatever their age. We acknowledge the serious issues that older persons face, and we will play a strong role in the promotion and protection of their rights.

As we have said previously, the UK believes that States should promote equality in older age, and the full participation and inclusion of older persons in all aspects of society based on equal respect for the dignity of older persons. We consider that States should consider the differential impact of their decisions, in particular age-based policies, on older persons.

Emergency situations highlight the intersecting challenges faced by older people. The independent expert's report rightly highlights many of the risks

older people face, for example in relation to land and property rights, income and work, and health and shelter. We would agree that specific measures, built on strong data and rigorous assessments of needs, should be adopted that support the requirements of older people.

Ms Kornfeld-Matte,

How can states improve the data they have on older people's needs in emergency situations, so they can use this to provide better support?

Major overhaul of hotel booking sector after CMA action

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has secured changes from the majority of hotel booking sites operating in the UK. 25 firms, including big brands like TripAdvisor, Airbnb and Google as well as major hotel chains, have now agreed to change how they display information where needed and have signed up to the CMA's sector wide principles for complying with consumer protection law. These principles include not giving a false impression of a room's popularity and always displaying the full cost of a room upfront.

Most have already made any necessary changes. Accor, IHG, Hilton, Marriott, Radisson Hotel Group, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts requested more time as they will need to introduce specific technical updates so that UK customers are always shown the full cost of a room upfront when searching for hotels abroad. The CMA will now be closely monitoring to ensure that these firms make the required changes in a timely manner.

Today's announcement comes after the CMA took [enforcement action](#) against 6 other companies – Expedia, Booking.com, Agoda, Hotels.com, ebookers and trivago – for serious concerns it had around issues like pressure selling, misleading discount claims and the effect that commission has on how hotels are ordered on sites. The CMA was concerned that some of these practices could mislead people, stop them finding the best deal and potentially break consumer protection law. All 6 firms formally committed to clean up their sites and have now made the agreed changes.

CMA CEO Andrea Coscelli said:

People booking hotels online can now do so with more confidence thanks to the CMA's action. Major websites and big hotel chains have agreed to clean up their act if they've been using misleading sales tactics, and have signed up to sector-wide consumer law principles on how to display important information to customers.

The CMA will now be watching to make sure that these major brands, used by millions of people in the UK every year, stay true to their word. We will take action if we find evidence that firms are breaking consumer law.

If the CMA finds that any sites fail to make the appropriate changes or becomes concerned that people are being misled, it will not hesitate to take further action.

As well as continuing to expect all booking sites and hotel chains to abide by its sector-wide principles, the CMA is pushing for compliance with consumer protection law in the travel and tourism sector globally. As part of this, it is co-leading an international project with other consumer enforcement agencies, which aims to tackle these issues on a global basis.

Notes to editors

1. The original 6 sites part of the CMA's enforcement investigation:

- Booking.com
- Expedia
- Agoda
- Hotels.com
- ebookers
- trivago

2. Following that investigation, the CMA published [Consumer Law: Principles for online accommodation booking platforms](#). The principles apply to any website where consumers could book search for or book hotels, bed and breakfasts or other short-term accommodation such as apartment holiday lets. The principles apply to booking sites (like online travel agencies or sites where people can search for holiday lets) and also to sites where customers can book directly with the hotel or other accommodation.

3. A further 25 online hotel and other accommodation booking platforms have signed up to the CMA's consumer protection law principles:

- Accor
- AirBnB
- Best Western Hotels & Resorts, Great Britain
- Google
- Hilton
- HolidayPirates
- HomeAway
- HotelsCombined
- IHG
- Kayak
- Lastminute
- Late Rooms (no longer operating)
- Marriott

- Momondo
 - On the Beach
 - Opodo
 - Premier Inn
 - Radisson Hotel Group
 - Skyscanner
 - Travelodge
 - Travel Republic
 - Travelsupermarket
 - TripAdvisor
 - Trip.com
 - Wyndham Hotels and Resorts
4. Not all firms engaged in all of the practices cited above, but all have nonetheless agreed to abide by all the sector-wide principles.
 5. As an enforcer under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA can enforce the above legislation through the courts. Ultimately, only a court can decide whether a particular term or practice infringes the law.
 6. Read more about the CMA's [hotel booking investigation](#).
 7. The CMA will be co-leading a project on digital platforms in the travel and tourism sector under the Colombian Presidency of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network, a network of more than 60 consumer protection enforcement authorities from around the world: <https://www.icpen.org>.
 8. Media enquiries should be directed to the CMA Press Office at press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
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Regulators set out plans to ensure the charity accounting framework better serves the public

The Charities SORP-making body has today set out plans to change the way the charity accounting framework, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)*, is developed so that it better meets the needs of users of charity reports and accounts.

The group is introducing changes to the development process of the SORP following a comprehensive governance review, which recommended that it must change in order to meet “new public expectations”.

The review was led by Professor Gareth Morgan and its findings and recommendations are available on the [SORP website](#).

A new process for developing the SORP is intended to be in place from 2020. The process needs to ensure a SORP that is both technically correct for true and fair accounting and that produces a report and accounts that users can understand and meets their information needs. Changes being announced today include:

- reforms to the SORP committee to ensure a stronger culture of constructive challenge, better stability, and better representation of small charities and funders with an interest in the impact charities have
- the introduction of a new engagement process; 7 stakeholder groups will be set up to work in partnership with the SORP committee. Each engagement strand will involve individuals and organisations with an interest in financial reporting and the work of the sector, to ensure user needs are understood and considered early on in the process of writing the next SORP.

Myles McKeown, Joint Chair and Head of Compliance & Enquiries at the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland said:

The recent governance review highlighted some positive aspects of the SORP development process, but it also made some constructive suggestions, particularly that charity reporting and accounting must become more user-focused. The changes we are introducing today will lay important foundations to ensure the SORP can continue to be fit for purpose.

Nigel Davies, Joint Chair and Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission said:

We know from our own research that the public care deeply about financial transparency from charities. Charity accounts are an important opportunity for trustees to communicate the difference they are making; today’s announcement reflects our joint commitment to ensure that charity accounts work for those that matter – beneficiaries and the public.

Laura Anderson, Joint Chair and Head of Professional Advice and Intelligence at OSCR said:

As regulators, we are conscious of the importance of involving a

wide range of views and expertise in the development of the SORP, to ensure that charity annual reports and accounts prepared using the SORP are the best that they can be. We hope that everyone with an interest in charity reporting and accounting will understand the changes we are making and why they matter.

Jelena Griscenko, Professional Accountant, Compliance and Enforcement, The Charities Regulator:

Should the SORP be approved in Ireland, the Charities Regulator will be the newest member of the SORP-making body. We recognise the need for an effective SORP process that is fully representative and works for everyone, including across different jurisdictions. We regard proactive and open engagement as essential to the future success of the SORP.

More information about the changes, and details of how to get involved are set out on the [Charities SORP website](#).

Ends

Notes to editors:

1. *The Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting and Reporting by Charities) sets out the financial reporting requirements that apply to almost all charities preparing accounts designed to give a true and fair view.
2. The SORP-making body is made up of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). The Charities Regulator (Republic of Ireland) is an observer on the SORP-making body.
3. The SORP-making body held a governance review of the constitution and composition of the Charities SORP committee and the SORP making process. Its findings and recommendations are available on [GOV.UK](#).