

The Insolvency Service welcomes new chair and board members

Incoming Chair, Mark Austen, will be joined by Gary Kildare, Samantha Durrant and Rob Hunt on the Insolvency Service Board.

The new non-executive board members, together with Mary Chapman who is continuing in her role on the board, will work closely with the Insolvency Service's senior leadership team to provide strategic leadership and governance for the agency.

The Insolvency Service's Chief Executive, Dean Beale, said:

I am very pleased to welcome Mark, Gary, Samantha and Rob to the board at what is an important time for the Insolvency Service as we support the country's recovery from the pandemic and ensure that insolvency processes operate efficiently and effectively for businesses and individuals.

The new board members bring significant experience in their respective fields and will provide valuable support and guidance to the Executive Leadership Team as we deliver the agency's objectives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the immense contribution and support of the outgoing board members. Their hard work, dedication and expertise over the past few years has supported the agency to consistently deliver its objectives.

Mark Austen is an experienced financial services professional, having been a partner and board member of global accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he led major changes to the financial services environment in the UK. Mark was also a senior partner at IBM and has served as chair and director of several other commercial and not-for-profit boards, including LV=, Standard Bank PLC, Mott MacDonald, The Home and Savings Bank and one of HRH Prince of Wales's charities. Mark is currently Chair of a UK bank and Transform Housing and Support, a major housing charity in Surrey. He has also regularly contributed to Speeches for Schools and the Mentoring Foundation.

Samantha Durrant has worked as a senior leader in a broad range of organisations across the public and private sectors. Previously, Samantha was the UK Chief Operating Officer of a global health and benefits consulting firm and brings a wealth of executive leadership experience in areas such as operations, business change, customer management and governance. Samantha performs a variety of non-executive director roles for several organisations, including chairing the Change Management Committee for the Disclosure and Barring Service and chairs the Finance & Performance Committee for the NHS Sussex Commissioners.

Rob Hunt is a restructuring specialist and was a partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers' business recovery services practice. He led their UK mid-market restructuring practice and was also elected to the PricewaterhouseCoopers's Supervisory Board. Recently, Rob has worked as an independent adviser providing turnaround and restructuring advice to a range of businesses and is a former member ICAEW Insolvency Committee.

Gary Kildare is an experienced business executive and has previously served in senior HR roles for IBM, including: Chief HR Officer for Europe and Global Head of Labour Relations for the IBM Corporation in New York and Madrid; Chief HR Officer for IBM's consulting business based in Paris; Chief HR Officer for Global Technology Services, based in New York; and as Vice President of HR for Americas, EMEA and Asia Pacific. He is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Gary also serves as a non-executive director for several organisations, including Chair of the People Committee for The Defence Infrastructure Organisation, a lay-member of the Legal Services Board, a non-executive director of the British Quality Foundation and a member of the CBI Business Council for Scotland.

Board members are appointed initially for three-year terms. The newly appointed board members take over from Stephen Allinson, Alan Graham and Richard Oirschot who have now completed their term of service on the board.

Mary Chapman will remain on the board having first joined in 2017. Mary previously served as Chief Executive of the Chartered Management Institute and Chief Executive of Investors in People UK, as well as holding several senior director roles for companies within the L'OREAL Group. Mary is a Chartered Director and has served as a non-executive board member for public organisations including the Royal Mint Ltd, the National Lottery Commission, the Gambling Commission and Brunel University London. Currently Mary is Chair of the General Chiropractic Council and a Trustee of the British Tourist Boards Pension Scheme.

Incoming Chair, Mark Austen, said:

I am much looking forward to working with the senior team to build on the legacy of my predecessor, Steve Allinson, in the continuing development of the Service. Such development is ever more pressing now as the comprehensive pandemic support measures are unwound.

[UK sends further life-saving support](#)

to India

- The UK will send 1,000 more ventilators for use in India's hospitals
- The Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Adviser and NHS staff have given help and advice to their Indian counterparts
- Fresh assistance follows medical relief sent by the UK last week and a surge in support from the British people to India
- On Tuesday the Prime Minister will hold a virtual meeting with Indian Prime Minister Modi to discuss deepening cooperation between the UK and India

India's fight against a surge in coronavirus cases will be reinforced by new UK Government support announced by the Prime Minister today. 1,000 ventilators will be sent from the UK's surplus supply to Indian hospitals to help the most severe Covid cases.

This is in addition to 200 ventilators, 495 oxygen concentrators and 3 oxygen generation units the UK announced we were sending to India last week.

Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Patrick Vallance have also spoken to their Indian counterparts to provide advice, insight and expertise to the Indian healthcare system as it deals with the world's worse surge in Covid levels.

NHS England is also establishing a clinical advisory group led by Chief People Officer Prerana Isaar to support India's Covid response. The group will work with Indian institutions such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences to share experience on managing Covid outbreaks. The group will include researchers in public and global health, alongside nursing and other health professionals who have experience of the Indian healthcare system.

In a powerful demonstration of what Indian Prime Minister Modi has called the 'living bridge' between our countries, over the last week British people have come to the support of India in huge numbers. Businesses, civil society and the wider public have responded to appeals for help and launched funding drives.

This includes the British Asian Trust's 'Oxygen for India' emergency appeal, which is raising funds for oxygen concentrators to be rapidly deployed to Indian hospitals. The BAT appeal, which has been personally backed by the Prince of Wales, has raised more than £1.5m in the last week.

Virgin Atlantic also flew 200 boxes of oxygen concentrators to Delhi on

Saturday, after partnering with Khalsa Aid. Further cargo space will be given free of charge on 6 flights to India in the next week, in association with The Red Cross.

India has also provided support to the UK throughout the coronavirus pandemic. As the 'pharmacy of the world' the country has kept its borders open to supply the UK with vital medicine and PPE – exporting over 11 million face masks and 3 million packets of paracetamol over the course of 2020.

On Tuesday the Prime Minister will hold a virtual meeting with Prime Minister Modi to agree a huge range of commitments to deepen cooperation between the UK and India, including on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The terrible images we have seen in India in recent weeks are all the more powerful because of the close and enduring connection between the people of the UK and India.

I am deeply moved by the surge of support the British people have provided to the people of India and am pleased the UK Government has been able to play our part in providing life-saving assistance.

The UK will always be there for India in its time of need.

The world is safer and stronger because of work between the UK and India. The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, for example, was developed in the UK, is currently being produced in the millions by India's Serum Institute and will be distributed to the world at cost through COVAX.

It is those shared values of openness and the pursuit of knowledge and scientific advancement for the betterment of our societies that lie at the heart of the relationship between the UK and India. During his call with Prime Minister Modi, the Prime Minister will emphasise the importance of working with India to promote our shared values.

India is the largest democracy in the world, a fellow Commonwealth country and in June Prime Minister Modi will travel to the UK to attend the G7 Summit as a guest – one of four world leaders invited to join the Summit of leading democracies.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

This support will help urgently meet some of India's acute needs, particularly oxygen for patients. We are determined to help our Indian friends in their hour of need.

We need to all work together to defeat Covid-19. No one is safe until we are all safe.

Further information

A number of other UK charities are running their own appeals for India's Covid crisis, including ActionAid, Action Against Hunger, the British Red Cross, CAFOD, CARE International, Christian Aid, Concern, Age UK, Islamic Relief, Oxfam, Plan UK, Save the Children, Tearfund and World Vision.

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[Surge testing to be deployed in Hounslow](#)

Press release

Additional testing in Woodlands area follows confirmed case of COVID-19 variant.



Working in partnership with the local authority, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing targeted in and around the Woodlands area of Hounslow, Middlesex. It follows the identification of one confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa (B.1.351).

The confirmed case has self-isolated and their contacts have been identified.

There are no links between this case and previous cases identified in the South London area.

Everyone aged 16 and over who lives or works in the Woodlands area of Hounslow is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern (VOC). This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period to determine the route of transmission.

By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify VOC cases and their spread.

If you have symptoms you should book a free test online or by phone so you can be tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to your home. If you have no symptoms, you should visit [Hounslow's Test and Trace website](#) for more information.

People in this area should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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Statement by the Media Freedom Coalition on World Press Freedom Day

Media Freedom Coalition statement on World Press Freedom Day:

Today, on World Press Freedom Day and the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration, we celebrate the fundamental principles of media freedom and stand together for its protection around the world.

The Windhoek Declaration is a historic call for media freedom. It upholds this freedom as a crucial component of the right to freedom of expression, as enshrined by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and underlines that an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy and to economic development.

A free media, both online and offline, is essential to upholding freedom of expression as a human right. Access to reliable and independent information is paramount, as exemplified by the dissemination of information during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need

journalists to report the facts, keep us informed and to hold those in power to account.

While we have witnessed important progress regarding media freedom in the past 30 years, many of the old threats to media freedom persist and new challenges are appearing. The safety of journalists is declining worldwide.

Journalists and media workers increasingly face physical and verbal violence, threats and intimidation, lawsuits and imprisonment with the aim of silencing them. Online harassment against women journalists has increased exponentially. The repeated use of anti-media rhetoric by some politicians and government leaders is eroding media freedom and is putting individual journalists at risk.

To counter threats to media freedom, a global effort is needed to take urgent action. If violence against journalists triumphs, media cannot be free and democracy cannot function.

We urge all states to promote and protect media freedom at home and abroad, offline and online, and call upon all states to release all arbitrarily detained journalists and to prosecute all perpetrators of crimes against journalists.

The Media Freedom Coalition strongly reaffirms its continued support for media freedom around the world. Without media freedom, there can be no true progress in human rights, democracy and prosperity.

Signatories:

Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Ukraine, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, The United States, Uruguay.

F-35B jets to join the fight against Daesh from the Carrier Strike Group

F-35B Lightning fast jets will be the cutting edge of the Carrier Strike Group's (CSG21) formidable power in the air.

These are next generation multi-role combat aircraft equipped with advanced sensors, mission systems and stealth technology, enabling them to carry out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks.

This will be the first time UK fighter aircraft are embarked on an operational aircraft carrier deployment since 2010, and will be the largest number of F-35Bs ever to sail the seas.

The renowned 617 Squadron RAF ('The Dambusters') will operate the jets to provide tangible and impactful support to counter-Daesh operations in Iraq and Syria.

Minister for the Armed Forces, James Heappey MP said:

The F-35B Lightning jets will pack a potent punch against Daesh and help prevent them from regaining a foothold in Iraq.

This is a prime example of the UK Armed Forces stepping forward with our allies to confront persistent threats around the world. It is Global Britain in action.

CSG21, led by HMS Queen Elizabeth, is the largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation and will set sail next month on its first operational deployment.

This is a joint Royal Air Force and Royal Navy deployment which is committed to confronting persistent threats around the world and make a meaningful contribution to global security.

The F-35B Lightning jets, which will operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth throughout the deployment, will make a significant contribution in degrading Daesh.

Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral Sir Ben Key said:

This deployment represents the embodiment of the UK's Joint Expeditionary Capability and utilising the F-35Bs in the fight against Daesh will further demonstrate our commitment to securing their global defeat.

March 2021 saw the second anniversary of Daesh's final and total loss of territory in Syria. However, there remain significant numbers of Daesh terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

The UK remains committed to defeating Daesh and enhancing security in the region, alongside the Iraqi Security Forces and our NATO allies.

Operation Shader is the UK's contribution to the Global Coalition against

Daesh.