

Appointment of new CMA Panel Inquiry Chairs

News story

The CMA has appointed Margot Daly and Richard Feasey as Inquiry Chairs.



Inquiry Chairs are members of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Panel of independent experts who bring their experience of competition, economics, regulation and business to the CMA's decision-taking. They chair Phase 2 merger inquiries, market investigations and regulatory references and appeals. The new appointees will join the CMA's current four Inquiry Chairs.

Ms Daly joined the CMA Panel in May 2020. She has over 20 years of operating experience in digital technology, disruptive business models, enterprise transformation and has more than 10 years of regulatory experience. This includes working as a CEO of a FTSE-listed media and technology company, and as a member of the Competition Appeal Tribunal. Ms Daly is currently a non-executive director and chair of the Audit & Risk Committee at the Navy, Army and Airforce Institute. She is also a trustee of GamCare. Ms Daly will take up her role in September 2021.

Mr Feasey has served as a CMA Panel member since October 2017. He has 25 years' corporate experience, including 12 years as Director at Vodafone, engaging with regulators, politicians and competition authorities on market regulation, mergers and antitrust in Europe, the US and Asia. He is currently a Senior Adviser to the Payment Systems Regulator and a Research Fellow at the Centre on Regulation in Europe. He is also a Commissioner at the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales. Mr Feasey started his role on 14 April 2021.

The CMA selected its Inquiry Chairs from the CMA Panel in a fair and open competition. The CMA Panel appointment process is run by BEIS, in accordance with the requirements set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointment's Code of Practice.

Martin Coleman, who chairs the CMA Panel, said:

Richard and Margot bring extensive experience as senior executives in major UK businesses and expertise in competition policy to their new roles, as we take on wider responsibilities to protect British consumers and businesses following the UK's exit from the EU.

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[Interim report 01/2021: Derailment of a passenger train at Carmont](#)

Press release

Derailment of a passenger train at Carmont, Aberdeenshire, 12 August 2020.



Aerial photograph of derailment site

[IR012021_210419_Carmont](#)

PDF, 9.46MB, 29 pages

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RAIB has today released its interim report following the derailment of a passenger train at Carmont, Aberdeenshire, 12 August 2020.

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, the joint investigation instructed by the [Lord Advocate](#) to be carried out by [Police Scotland](#), the [British Transport Police](#) or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

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[Rob Woodward reappointed as Chair of the Met Office](#)

Rob Woodward has been reappointed Chair of the Met Office for a second 3-year term and 3 new non-executive directors, Anusha Shah, Christine Ourmières-Widener and Prof. Jordan Giddings, have been appointed to the Met Office Board.

The Met Office is the national meteorological service for the UK. It provides critical weather services and world-leading climate science, helping the public and customers make better decisions to stay safe and thrive.

The Met Office is a Trading Fund of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The role of the independent, non-executive Chair is to lead the Met Office Board. The Board's primary responsibility is developing the long-term strategy of the Met Office. The non-executive directors support and challenge the executive directors in order to assist the Met Office in delivering against agreed key performance indicators. The non-executive directors are encouraged to assist in raising external awareness of the Met Office and its work, and to build beneficial external relationships. The new non-executive directors bring a wide range of skills and experience, from scientific expertise through sustainable development to commercial and customer facing experience, which will add further depth and diversity to input to the Board.

These appointments have been made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Commenting on the appointments Rob Woodward noted:

Over the last 3 years, the Board has overseen the development of the Met Office's new corporate strategy, which reaffirms its commitment to provide the best weather and climate information to help the public and customers make better decisions to stay safe and thrive. I am excited to have the opportunity to help realise that strategy at a time when the challenges of a changing world make our exceptional scientific, technological and operational expertise more important than ever.

I am equally delighted to welcome Anusha, Christine and Jordan to join the Met Office Board following an extremely competitive selection process with an impressive field of candidates. Each brings specific expertise that will help the Met Office tackle the challenges ahead and together they ensure we will continue to have an appropriate range of expertise, experience and diversity of thought on the Board to support the Met Office team.

Rob Woodward

Rob was appointed to his first term as Chair of the Met Office Board in July 2018. He has held leadership positions across both the public and private sectors. His experience includes over 10 years as Chief Executive Officer of STV Group plc leading its successful transformation into a pre-eminent digital media group. He had previously been Commercial Director at Channel 4 Television, Managing Director with UBS Corporate Finance and lead partner for Deloitte's Telecoms, Media & Technology Industry Group in Europe.

Rob is also currently Chair of Court at Glasgow Caledonian University, Chair of technology company Blancco plc and marketing analytics provider, Ebiquity plc.

Anusha Shah

Anusha is a leading chartered engineer, thought leader, keynote speaker, panellist and a passionate advocate for diversity, inclusion and fairness. She is currently Director, Resilient Cities at Arcadis – UK, Fellow and Vice President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), Visiting Professor at King's College London and Honorary Professor with University of Wolverhampton. She is the Past Chair of the Thames Estuary Partnership Board and was a Non-Executive Director of Thomas Telford Board (ICE's Business wing).

With over two decades of leadership and management excellence on numerous high-profile engineering and environmental projects in the UK and internationally, she is driven by a desire to make societies inclusive, safe, climate resilient and sustainable. Anusha sits on various industry net zero and climate change groups including London Climate Change Partnership. She is recipient of several awards including 2020 – Top 50 UK Women Engineers in Sustainability Award.

Christine Ourmières-Widener

Christine has experience as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior business leader in the Travel & Transport Infrastructure sectors. She has particular experience in the field of organisational change, designing and implementing business innovation and optimisation strategies. She was previously CEO of Flybe Group, Europe's largest regional airline having previously spent almost 5 years as CEO at CityJet. Earlier positions include several years at Air France KLM including as Vice President & General Manager of Air France KLM USA.

Christine is currently a non-executive director at Datalex in Dublin and a board member of ZeroAvia, who are building the first practical zero-emission aviation powertrain. She is a recipient of IATA's Diversity & Inclusion 2019 Inspirational Role Model award.

Prof. Jordan Giddings

Jordan is an experienced leader of innovation and change in systems, data, cyber and technology domains with a background in academia, the private sector and government. His expertise has been recognised at a national and international level. Jordan has worked in the commercial sector (including his present part time role as Chief Scientist for Improbable.io's Defence business), government organisations (as the UK's Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser for both National Security and for Transport), European organisations and Trade Associations.

He is currently an advisor to a number of UK government departments, Professorial Research fellow for UKCRIC (the UK Collaboratorium for Research of Infrastructure and Cities) at UCL, visiting Professor at the University of Hertfordshire and an Honorary Principal Research Fellow to the Imperial College Institute for Security Science and Technology as well as a Fellow of several professional bodies.

[British Embassy holds online outreach events in Bulgaria](#)

World news story

The British Embassy in Sofia continues to hold events to update UK nationals on living and working in Bulgaria.

The British Embassy in Sofia has been holding meetings across Bulgaria to update UK nationals working and living in the country.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, these meetings with UK Nationals living in Bulgaria have moved online.

So far, the Embassy has hosted 3 online outreach events on its Facebook page and will continue to organise such meetings on a regular basis. To stay up to date on upcoming outreach events, visit [this page](#) regularly or follow the [Embassy's Facebook page](#).

You can watch the Embassy's 3 previous online outreach events here:

As a result of these meetings, the Embassy has created a list of useful links for UK nationals living in Bulgaria. This list includes links to information on Bulgarian government and UK government websites and covers a variety of useful topics from registering for residency, through access to healthcare, to latest COVID-19 measures in both Bulgaria and the UK: [Directory: UK Nationals and Bulgaria](#) (ODT, 10.9KB)

If you are unclear about current residency requirements in Bulgaria, how you are affected after 31 January 2020, or what are the latest COVID-19 measures and restrictions, come along to one of our upcoming events to ask the questions that most concern you.

- the meetings are free and open to all interested UK nationals
- if you know any UK nationals who might be interested in attending, please share this page with them
- the meetings will start with a short introduction to update you on latest developments and will be followed by a Q&A session

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New 95% mortgage scheme launches

- 95% mortgage guarantee launches today, available on high streets across the country
- Scheme part of a range of ownership options to help make home ownership a reality
- New figures show demand for home ownership has soared during lockdown, with nearly 80% of private renters now saving for a deposit
- Today's launch further strengthens government commitment to supporting the housing sector

A new government-backed mortgage scheme to help people with 5% deposits get on to the housing ladder is available to lenders from today (19 April 2021).

First announced at the Budget, the scheme will help first time buyers or current homeowners secure a mortgage with just a 5% deposit to buy a house of up to £600,000 – providing an affordable route to home ownership for aspiring home-owners.

The government will offer lenders the guarantee they need to provide mortgages that cover the other 95%, subject to the usual affordability checks.

The scheme is now available from lenders on high streets across the country, with Lloyds, Santander, Barclays, HSBC and NatWest launching mortgages under the scheme today and Virgin Money following next month.

The government has made clear its commitment to tackling inequality in the housing market and levelling up the country. [Official statistics](#) show more homes were delivered in 2020 than in any year since 1987.

In 2019 a pledge to build 300,000 new and attractive homes a year was announced with an investment of over £12 billion in affordable housing over the next 5 years – the largest investment in a decade.

Since 2010, more than 663,000 households have been helped into home ownership through government schemes, but when asked, 69% of private renters and 63% of those living at home who had looked into a mortgage said they cannot find many mortgages with a low deposit. Today's new 95% mortgage scheme will now make it even more accessible to own a home.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

For too many people, no matter how hard they work, home ownership can seem out of reach. One of the biggest divides in our country has been between those who can afford their own home and those who cannot.

That's why we are determined to do everything we can to help hard-

working families and prospective first-time buyers get their feet on the housing ladder in an easy and affordable way, to level up this country.

The new mortgage guarantee scheme which comes into effect today will give providers the confidence to lend and help families and young people get on the property ladder without the prohibitive burden of a large deposit.

Despite the challenges faced over the past year, the government has intervened to protect jobs, support builders and buyers to help keep the housing market healthy. Today's 95% mortgages launch further strengthens our commitment to build back better from the pandemic.

In recent years we've reversed the trend and seen a positive increase in owner-occupiers. We're determined to build on this through the range of flexible ownership options which help ensure home ownership is achievable. We want to match the ambitions of aspiring homeowners up and down the country.

Together we can turn 'Generation Rent' into 'Generation Buy'.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

Every new homeowner and mover supports jobs right across the housing sector, but saving for a big enough deposit can be hard, especially for first time buyers.

By giving lenders the option of a government guarantee on 95% mortgages, many more products will become available, boosting the sector, creating new jobs and helping people achieve their dream of owning their own home.

Miguel Sard, Managing Director of Home Buying and Ownership at NatWest said:

We welcome the government's new mortgage guarantee scheme to give further support to those with smaller deposits. For those customers, particularly younger or first-time buyers, saving up for a big deposit can often be difficult, and we know people in these groups are some of the hardest hit by the effects of the pandemic.

A government-backed scheme will help segments of the market for whom home ownership has felt far out of reach in recent months.

Mark Hayward, Chief Policy Advisor at Propertymark, said:

Over the past few months, there has been an increase in the number

of prospective buyers and the number of house sales taking place. Coupled with the decision to extend the Stamp Duty holiday further, the Mortgage Guarantee Scheme will provide additional options for more people to become homeowners.

Access to finance and affordability plays a key role in the ability for people to purchase their dream home, so we are now very pleased to see further support for both first-time buyers and current homeowners looking to buy property or move up the housing ladder.

The scheme is one of a range of flexible home ownership options available. These include Help to Buy, Shared Ownership and the First Homes Scheme. Figures show that the number of mortgage approvals for house purchases in January 2021 was 99,000 – a 40% increase on January 2020.

Part of the government's [Plan for Jobs](#), the scheme will help to support the housing market and protect jobs and businesses across the housing supply chain, from housebuilders and estate agents, to tradespeople, DIY stores and removal firms.

The intervention comes as new figures published by the government show a greatly increased desire for home ownership and a sharp reduction in 95% mortgage availability over the past year.

The figures show that more than two-thirds of private renters (68%) and those living at home (72%) want to buy, with the majority saying the pandemic has made them more aware of the importance and benefits of home ownership.

The survey also found that 76% of private renters and 70% of those living at home have started saving for a deposit or put more money into their savings during the pandemic.

The delivery of more homes was also an integral part of the government's most ambitious overhaul of the planning system in decades. The reforms will streamline processes, cut red tape and harness technology to deliver homes faster.

The government is committed to supporting people who aspire to become homeowners, helping over 685,000 households to purchase a home since 2010 through government backed schemes including Help to Buy and Right to Buy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a reduction in the availability of high loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage products, particularly for prospective homebuyers with only a 5% deposit. This has left many hard-working households unable to get on to the housing ladder.

The mortgage guarantee scheme will support a new generation in realising the dream of home ownership, in line with the Prime Minister's ambitions. This will enable more households to access mortgages, without the need for prohibitively large deposits.

The government will provide lenders with the option to purchase a guarantee

on the top-slice of the mortgage. In other words, the government will compensate the mortgage lender for a portion of the net losses suffered in the event of repossession. The guarantee will apply down to 80% of the purchase value of the guaranteed property.

The guarantee will be valid for up to 7 years after the mortgage is originated, evidence shows that loans are unlikely to default after such a period has elapsed.

The scheme is intended as a temporary measure. It will be open for new mortgage applications from April 2021 to December 2022, in line with the government's view that the current scarcity of high loan-to-value lending is primarily a response to the pandemic rather than a symptom of a longer-term structural change in the mortgage market.

The government will review the continuing need for the scheme towards the planned end date, and determine whether extending the period of eligibility for new mortgages would continue to deliver benefits for prospective home owners.

See more information on the [mortgage guarantee scheme](#).

Quotes from other lenders involved in the scheme

Susan Allen, CEO Retail and Business Banking at Santander said:

We know that raising a large deposit can often be challenging for potential home buyers, so we're pleased to be part of the government's Mortgage Guarantee Scheme offering a range of 95% mortgages to help both first-time buyers and home movers.

As one of the UK's largest mortgage lenders we see how important homeownership is to our customers and we use our wide experience and expertise to support them throughout the home buying process.

Michelle Andrews, HSBC UK's Head of Buying A Home said:

We have supported home buyers and the wider housing market throughout the pandemic and are excited to support the Mortgage Guarantee Scheme.

After such a turbulent year it is great that this scheme will make a real difference in enabling first time buyers who didn't think they would have a chance of getting a mortgage and home movers to get the keys to their new home.

Other government home ownership options available include

95% Mortgages: From today (19 April) first time buyers will be able to

purchase a home with only a 5% deposit. The scheme will help to increase the supply of 5% deposit mortgages for credit-worthy households by supporting lenders to offer these products through a government-backed guarantee.

Help to Buy: A government equity loan that supports first time buyers with a low interest loan towards their deposit.

Shared Ownership: Gives first time buyers the option to buy a share of their home (between 25% and 75%) and pay rent on the remaining share.

First Homes: A new scheme designed to help local first-time buyers and keyworkers onto the property ladder, by offering homes at a discount of 30% compared to the market price.

Source

ResearchBods/MHCLG polling with private renters (age 20-44, HH income £20k+) n = 1,000, living at home (age 20-44, HH income £20k+) n = 250, parents (own a home, children 18-45, HH income £50k+) n = 500. Great Britain, fieldwork 1st-3rd April 2021. Weighted GB Gender.

Q4: If you had the means available, what would you choose?/If you had the means available to help them which of the following would you like your children to do (excluding those that already own a house)? Private renters n = 1,000 Living at home n = 250 Parents n = 500

Q15c: How do you expect property prices to change over the next... 1 – 12 months/1-2 years/2-5 years – Private renters n = 1,000 Living at home n = 250 Parents n = 500 (% prices will rise)

Q19: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about buying your first home/ helping to buy a home for your children? 'The lockdown has really made me think home ownership is important' (% NET: Agree with statement) Private renters n = 1,000 Living at home n = 250

Q10: Thinking about the last year, how much time have you put into thinking or searching about home-buying (for your family) compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic? % NET: More time (Asked all who have taken action to buy a home) Private renters n = 619 living at home n = 149

Q17: Which of these statements do you agree with regarding the current state of the mortgage market? 'I can't find many mortgages that require a low deposit (ie. Up to 5% of a home's value) (Asked to those who have looked at or researched a mortgage) Private renters sample n = 207 Living at home n = 40 (% NET: Agree)

Q12: You said that you are saving for a deposit. During the Coronavirus pandemic would you say that: 'Started to save for a deposit for the first time' or 'Increased your savings for a deposit more than before the pandemic' (Asked to those who are saving for deposit) Private renters sample n = 443, living at home n = 111