

# [DASA to host innovation investment networking forum](#)

News story

Businesses get the chance to find out more about investment opportunities and pose questions to a panel of professionals.



The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) will be hosting an online Access to Mentoring and Finance (A2MF) Forum event on Wednesday 16 September 2020.

DASA will be joined by the [NATO](#) Innovation Unit, [KX Ventures](#) and [Foresight Williams](#) to discuss how businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators can obtain investment and take advantage of network opportunities.

The event will provide the opportunity to hear briefings about the NATO Trusted Capital investment platform, access to KX Ventures' time-series database [Kdb+ Software](#), and how the 'new normal' might work as a result of coronavirus for those seeking investment.

This event is aimed at any innovator who is interested in finding more about how investment works, what opportunities there are, and how and where to network.

Registration for this event will close at 6pm, Friday, 11 September. Book your place via this [Eventbrite page](#).

Published 27 August 2020

---

# Important information leaflets published for prisoners & families

The Parole Board is delighted to announce the launch of two important information leaflets for both prisoners and their families. These publications are designed to increase understanding and provide clarity about the Parole process.

The first booklet, entitled [Information for family and friends of prisoners having a parole review](#), aims to provide a useful go-to document for anyone wishing to support someone in prison going through parole.

We published the information booklet for families and friends about supporting someone going through parole. It sets out who is involved in parole reviews, how to find a solicitor, how a family or friend might attend a parole oral hearing and also provides sign-posts to information and services that may offer other support and advice, for example helplines, information about licences and further reading about the parole process.

There is strong evidence that support of family and friends in the community can often be key to successful reintegration and reduced reoffending, The Board has a responsibility to highlight the important role of family and friends despite the current challenges. We published the information booklet for families and friends about supporting someone going through parole. The booklet comes off the back of research undertaken by experts at Southampton and Leeds Universities on the impact of the IPP sentence on families.

The impact of family contact to prisoners has never been more prevalent amid the ongoing global pandemic. Family visits in prisons have not been possible since March, with restrictions on travel brought in, social distancing measures, and prisons having to change regimes to ensure the safety of everyone on site. Although, not a direct response to Covid-19, this leaflet will help families support prisoners through the current climate and into the future as the country eventually returns to normal.

The [second leaflet](#) provides guidance and support for prisoners who opt to represent themselves during the parole process rather than seeking a lawyer. The Board always strongly recommends that prisoners should seek a professional legal representation to advise and represent them in their parole hearing.

However, there are a significant number of prisoners being unrepresented. This new guide gives valuable advice on preparing for a parole review. Whilst it is aimed at prisoners, it may also prove helpful to anyone supporting a prisoner. Both documents are attached below.

This guidance is part of a programme of work to increase understanding of the parole process. This material is provided for prisoners and their families. The Board already provides detailed advice and guidance for victims

explaining the parole process and victim entitlements and information for the public.

---

## Senior Technical Support Specialist – Southampton

News story

We have an exciting new vacancy at MAIB and are looking for someone to join our Technical Support team.



Your responsibilities will include but not be limited to:

- hold line management responsibilities for the 2 Technical Support Specialists. Guiding and enabling them to provide the required level of technical support to investigations while maintaining and developing the branch's technical capability. Help them achieve these goals by setting realistic and achievable objectives
- share on-call responsibilities with the other three members of the Technical Team, ready to deploy at 2-hours' notice, not more than 1 week in 4, to accident sites worldwide to carry out data recovery as part of the investigating team
- on site, support the lead investigator through the identification, forensic recovery and analysis of technical evidence relating to marine accidents, which could include imaging and cloning of memory and the use of forensic analysis tools to recover embedded, protected or deleted data
- analyse and present data on Geographic Information Systems (GIS),

Simulators and other analytical platforms

- support internal, external and international stakeholders on matters relating to electronic data recovery and analysis

We are looking for someone with technical experience in at least 1 of the following 3 technical disciplines:

- electronic navigation equipment and/or vehicle data recorders
- advanced electronic forensic data recovery and analysis
- programming/scripting using languages such as Python, Java and C#. As well as a high level of IT and technical competency; and a proven track record in the analysis of complex data.

For further information about this position and how to apply see [Civil Service Jobs, Senior Technical Support Specialist, Ref: 67613](#).

Closing date: 10 September 2020.

Published 27 August 2020

---

## [Performance update: HMRC's response to coronavirus](#)

HMRC has been at the forefront of the government's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the extraordinary challenges being faced by millions of individuals and businesses. The department successfully developed and implemented schemes at unprecedented speed to deliver financial support to more than 12 million employed and self-employed workers via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. In addition, it implemented more than 60 provisional policy changes or easements to help respond to the impact of coronavirus.

The operational priority has been to deliver the government support that aims to protect people's livelihoods and help businesses get through this difficult time financially. Now the department is seeking to build on what it has learned during the pandemic about large scale delivery and the citizens and businesses it serves as the country emerges from the pandemic. The IT

which underpinned the coronavirus support schemes was designed, built and delivered from kitchen tables and spare bedrooms; busy customer service staff answered queries remotely from their own homes for the first time; and 90% of HMRC's 60,000 workforce were able to immediately work remotely to help stop the spread of the virus when the country went into lockdown.

HMRC's primary purpose is to collect the money that pays for the UK's vital public services and pay out the correct financial support to those who are entitled to it, and as we emerge from the pandemic, the department will carry out this vital work in a way that is sensitive to customers' altered needs and the challenges they face.

Read our [quarter 1 performance data](#), which covers April to June 2020.

## Customer service

The department has aimed to maintain consistently high levels of customer service despite the need to move to home working and to divert resources to the coronavirus support schemes. The telephony service in particular was affected by the measures which were put in place to stop the spread of coronavirus; including reducing operating hours and re-deploying advisers to new helplines for the support measures on top of usual workloads. This led to an increase in call wait times in quarter 1 but in circumstances which were unprecedented and unforeseeable.

But there have been notable successes. Customer satisfaction in digital services reached 85.6%, compared to 79.5% in quarter 1 of the 2019 to 2020 reporting year. Part of this is due to the ability to quickly grow webchat capacity, so more staff could support customers from home, and the department delivered around five times the number of webchats that it was doing before the pandemic.

To maintain post handling capacity, changes were made as many customer advisers began to work from home instead of in the office, for example, introducing temporary measures to replace 'wet stamps' with digital stamps or remove the need for 'wet signatures' so that colleagues did not need to be in the office to process documents.

In order to ease the pressure on the telephone helplines, the department offered enhanced digital capability. It introduced more services into the Personal Tax Account and HMRC App and increased the webchat offer to cover more areas of work. These changes gave customers more of the support they needed without having to contact the helplines, which in turn allowed HMRC's front line staff to be flexible to customer needs as they developed.

We also innovated in light of the challenges. For example, changes to customs procedures to move key goods quickly through our borders like ventilators, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), denatured alcohol for hand sanitiser and hospital pressure mattresses. HMRC also worked closely with other government departments, such as the Ministry of Defence to clear 400,000 hospital gowns through customs within 45 minutes of flights landing at RAF Brize Norton from Turkey.

Furthermore, as part of the annual tax credits renewals process, changes were introduced to make things easier for customers, reduce demand and keep their money flowing.

## **Tax collection**

Delivering the COVID-19 support measures has been resource-intensive and has affected HMRC's core compliance activity and tax collection. Recognising this, the quarter 1 compliance yield – tax revenue that would have otherwise been lost without HMRC intervention – is lower than the same quarter in 2019 to 20 because of the realignment of resources during this period.

During this extremely difficult time, HMRC did everything possible to support and protect individuals, businesses and the economy. This included prioritising work to support customers whilst still tackling serious fraud, criminal attacks, and those who promote tax avoidance.

HMRC is also ensuring that it protects the COVID-19 support schemes against abuse from organised criminal attacks, inflated claims and other non-compliance. These schemes were designed in a way that reduced the likelihood of mistakes happening, and removed opportunities for fraud.

Where honest mistakes happen, the department will step in to help customers put it right, but it will continue to take tough action tackle fraud and avoidance. For example, in July, HMRC officers arrested a man in the West Midlands for suspected of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme fraud, and our investigators will continue to act where foul play is suspected.

The department also continued to work with those customers who wanted to settle their tax disputes with HMRC and compliance work will continue with a specific focus on criminal investigations, debt recovery and National Minimum Wage enforcement.

## **Looking ahead**

It is essential that the tax system continues to work to fund vital public services such as the NHS, so taxpayers should continue to file their returns and pay their tax on time wherever they can. Businesses should also plan for the future – going digital could make a positive difference to their business administration and make interaction with HMRC much easier.

Over time, as the economy reopens and the threat of the virus recedes, the country will slowly return to a steady state – a 'new normal' – and HMRC's activities are no different.

HMRC will of course keep the situation under constant review to ensure that it administers the tax system in a way that supports the nation's economic recovery.

As the department carefully refocuses its activity back onto its more routine function of collecting tax, it will follow some key principles to make sure that it continues to support the individuals and businesses of the UK, while

protecting the tax system and bringing in the money to fund the country's vital public services.

It will communicate openly and transparently, to give customers as much certainty as possible, so that they have all the relevant information to make the best decisions for their families and businesses, and its approach will be to collect the tax due in a way that recognises the very real needs and challenges that businesses and individuals now face.

More information about this can be found in our issue briefing on [how we will continue to support customers and the economy](#).

Looking further ahead, the government recently published its [10-year vision paper for tax administration](#). This sets out plans for changes to how tax is charged, paid and collected to be more in tune with how the world now works and will in the future to make it easier for individuals and businesses to keep on top of their responsibilities without adding undue extra burdens.

[Jesse Norman MP](#), Financial Secretary to the Treasury, [spoke at the annual conference of the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales \(ICAEW\)](#) on HMRC's response to COVID-19, and his future vision for the tax system.

---

## [Change of British High Commissioner to Malta: September 2020](#)

News story

Ms Cathy Ward LVO OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Malta.



Ms Cathy Ward LVO OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Malta in succession to Mr Stuart Gill OBE who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service. Ms Ward will take up her appointment during

September 2020.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Katherine Georgina Louise Marcelle Ward

Children: One daughter

2017 to present Quito, Her Majesty's Ambassador  
2013 to 2016 FCO, Deputy-Head, Near East Department, Middle East & North Africa Directorate  
2013 Dar es Salaam, Deputy High Commissioner  
2012 to 2013 FCO, Head, Balance of Competences Foreign Policy Report, European Union Directorate  
2009 to 2012 UK Representation to the EU in Brussels, Head of Middle East & Mediterranean Section  
2008 to 2009 European Commission, Senior Speechwriter, Commissioner for External Relations  
2007 to 2008 FCO, Strategy Adviser, Conflict, Policy Planning Staff  
2002 to 2007 Paris, First Secretary Political  
2002 Secondment to Africa Directorate, Quai D'Orsay  
1998 to 2001 Havana, Second Secretary Political/Press  
1996 to 1998 FCO, Senior Research Officer for Latin America, Research Analysts Department  
1994 to 1995 FCO, Research Officer for Latin America, Research Analysts Department  
1994 Joined FCO

Published 27 August 2020