

[News story: Recruitment drive – Attorney General’s London Panel of Civil Counsel](#)

Applications will soon be open for counsel wishing to join the Attorney General’s London A and B Panels of the Civil Counsel.

This will be a fantastic opportunity for advocates with more than five years experience. Being a panel member gives advocates exposure to some of the most important and high profile cases of the day and the chance to represent the government in various courts including the Supreme Court.

Those interested are encouraged to attend an event on Monday 6 February at the Government Legal Department offices, which will give more information about the application process, and demystify the application process. You will have the chance to hear from the Vice Chairman of the Bar Council, and a current member of the A Panel among others.

Event details

Why apply to the panel counsel and how best to do it

Date: Monday 6 February 2017

Time: 5:30pm

Address: Government Legal Department, One Kemble Street, London, WC2B 4TS

For further information and to reserve a place, please contact Anna Rickard on 020 7210 1506 or email anna.rickard@governmentlegal.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 3 February 2017.

Background

What is the Panel Counsel?

The Attorney General maintains 5 panels of junior Counsel to undertake civil and EU work for all government departments. He has 3 London Panels (A, B and C), a Regional Panel, and a Public International Law (PIL) Panel.

Who can apply?

This recruitment drive is only for Panel A and B.

Members of the A Panel deal with complex government cases. They will often appear against QC’s. Those previously appointed to the A Panel have generally had in excess of 10 years advocacy experience.

Members of the B panel deal with substantial cases but these are not as

complex as those handled by the A panel. They will generally be instructed where knowledge and experience of a particular field is required. Those previously appointed to the B panel have generally had between 5 and 10 years advocacy experience.

What do potential candidates have to do?

Anyone considering making an application to join either the A or B Panel should register an expression of interest by emailing panelcounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk

The competition opens on Tuesday 21 February 2017. On or after that date everyone who has registered an interest will be sent details of how to access the online application form.

Government response: Government responds to agreement reached between Aslef and GTR

From:

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Part of:

The Department for Transport welcomes the news of the agreement between Aslef and Southern Rail.

Government responds to agreement reached between Aslef and GTR.

A DfT spokesperson said:

The DfT welcomes the news that an agreement has been reached between Aslef and Southern Rail.

We are grateful to all parties for their efforts to find a positive way forward.

Speech: Greg Hands speech on smart cities

I would like to thank Mark [Prisk] for inviting me here today, and take this opportunity to recognise the important work of the APPG on smart cities.

You are a vital voice in a necessary debate, and I look forward to working with you and your members in my role as Minister of State at the Department for International Trade.

As recently as 20 years ago, the term smart cities would not have registered with most people – myself included!

It would have been incredulous to think of a city where every person could access real time information on where there was a free car parking space; a city where refuse collectors know exactly when your recycling bins are full; and where urban parks are designed to promote biodiversity, reduce CO₂, and give you free wi-fi connection throughout.

But the pace of change has been astonishing.

This is all happening right now!

In London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, and other cities across the UK – services like these are becoming commonplace.

Though using data to understand and ultimately alleviate social problems is nothing new.

In the 19th Century, John Snow created the cholera maps, which located the source of London's cholera epidemic in Soho.

At a similar time, Charles Booth's surveys of working class life in London created the famous poverty maps which etched a street by street depiction of income levels across the capital.

We now live in a world where technology is ubiquitous and the ability to collect and access data is easier than ever before.

We also live in a world of finite resources, coupled with a population set to reach almost 10 billion by 2050, according to the UN.

This presents many challenges but also a golden opportunity to use technology to enhance economic development, sustainability and quality of life for people in urban environments from Manchester to Mumbai.

So, my commitment to you today is simple. The UK will seize this opportunity and this government will pull out all the stops to ensure British business leads the way in making the cities of the UK and the world smarter.

UK capability

There are 3 ways we will do this. First, we will continue building our domestic capability.

[Innovate UK](#) – the government’s innovation agency – has, over the last 5 years, invested nearly £100 million in projects to help our cities prepare for a sustainable future.

£32 million has been spent on the UK’s internet of things (IoT) programme, including [Cityverve](#) in Manchester – a smart city demonstrator that will help improve public services for local citizens, such as transport, energy, health and culture.

Bristol and Milton Keynes are internationally recognised as leaders in smart city technology. They are making use of sensors to monitor air pollution levels, energy usage, water consumption, and even living patterns at home to detect early signs of illness.

These examples are testament to the simple truth that open data requires open minds.

We must continue to see technology as a key that unlocks the potential of our cities – making them more responsive to their inhabitants.

Opportunities overseas

Whilst we build our domestic capability around smart cities, we must also be alive to the opportunity overseas, which brings me onto my second point.

Arup estimates that the global market for smart cities could be worth \$400 billion per year by 2020.

The UK has internationally recognised strengths in integrating city-wide systems around transport, energy and security networks; as well as in data and spatial analytics.

Our excellent engineering and architectural firms have already used their urban planning and design expertise to create smart cities around the world.

And standards set by the [British Standards Institute](#), on smart cities and the internet of things, are used the world over.

The possibilities are endless. These exportable capabilities can make the transport infrastructure of world cities more efficient, their healthcare providers more dedicated, and their emergency systems more responsive.

The Department for International Trade’s smart cities team will support UK companies in taking advantage of these overseas opportunities, as well as attracting inward investment for UK smart city projects.

The team and I will be in Barcelona for Mobile World Congress, where we will

be showcasing British expertise in cloud technology, sensors and artificial intelligence all on the UK stand.

British firms are already thriving abroad.

[Space Syntax](#), our sponsors this evening, are working with [AECOM](#) on designing the growth of Saudi Arabia's port city, Jeddah; over 30 countries have implemented Essex-based [Telensa's](#) smart street lighting technology; and Finnish telecoms giant Nokia is investing in the [Bristol is Open](#) smart city initiative, which is being led by the local council and the University of Bristol.

In November, I accompanied the Prime Minister on her visit to India, where she and Prime Minister Modi announced an Anglo-Indian Partnership on smart cities and urban development, which could unlock £2 billion worth of business.

Running parallel to the visit, my department led a trade mission of UK companies to the India Tech Summit, before taking them onto Pune and Kochi to see the smart city opportunities first hand.

India's ambition to create 100 smart cities provides UK firms with a huge opportunity.

In cities across Asia and Africa, smart cities aren't a 'nice to have', but a social necessity. With India's urban population expected to reach 590 million by 2030, the problems of resource depletion and demographic change are both immediate and acute.

This government will ensure our smart city capability is evolving to meet the needs of urban populations the world over.

Ways of working

My final point on how the UK can continue to lead the world in smart city capability, involves a change in how government and industry work together.

If individual UK companies are already garnering success overseas, imagine what we can achieve with greater levels of co-operation.

I would like to see our urban planners working with our security, transport and e-health specialist companies, so we can present a single UK smart city offer to the world.

This requires a step up in the co-operation between government and industry. A step we should look to take.

For if we are to lead the world in smart cities, our approach too has to be smart.

Conclusion

Before I close, I want to reiterate that the UK can be recognised as the global hub of smart city technology.

We should be bold in our thinking and use our already enviable capability in this area to make the world's cities more sustainable, responsive and smart.

Our aim should be to make people's lives easier and more enjoyable.

Indeed, it was Shakespeare who said, 'What is a city but the people?'

It is an exciting challenge. But one that the UK is more than ready to accept.

Thank you.

[News story: UK scales up humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia](#)

[UK scales up humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia](#)

Millions of people are living in desperate conditions in Somalia as extreme drought is threatening the lives and stability of a country vital to regional and UK security.

Ms Patel led a roundtable with humanitarian partners during her visit, to hear about the drought situation on the ground, how they are responding to it, and to discuss how the UK and international community can work together to save lives and prevent a catastrophic famine.

The 2015/16 El Nino is one of the strongest on record and has severely impacted Africa. In Somalia, conditions are worsening with daily reports of rivers drying up, crops failing, and people and livestock dying. As many as 3.9 million people need urgent assistance and 320,000 children are severely malnourished.

In the face of these famine-like conditions Ms Patel announced a UK package of support, which will provide:

- food for 60,000 people;
- urgent nutrition support for 240,000 children and pregnant women;
- safe water for 180,000 people;
- access to health service for 75,000 people; and
- vaccinations for 3 million animals.

Priti Patel said:

Millions of people are living in desperate conditions as extreme drought threatens the lives and stability of a country vital to regional and UK security.

I urge our international partners to join forces with Global Britain and provide immediate support for the relief effort.

Building a secure, stable and prosperous Somalia is a top priority for the UK and while great progress has been made, significant challenges remain. Together in partnership we can meet those challenges.

Ms Patel also sought the humanitarian partners' commitment to the London Somalia Conference objectives and to agree to work together to ensure it will address the drought response and deliver the international support needed to resolve Somalia's protracted crises.

The UK is playing a leading role in the wider international response to the ongoing drought in East Africa – where people desperately need the UK's support.

After visiting Somalia, Ms Patel attended a humanitarian panel discussion in Ethiopia with the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, and the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen.

Ms Patel highlighted that humanitarian reform is one of the top priorities for the UK and that she is committed to making the international system more effective at responding to global challenges that pose risks to both Africa and the UK. This is to ensure support is maximised to those affected by crisis and guaranteeing value for money.

The International Development Secretary also emphasised her concerns for people suffering from the Horn of Africa drought in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and urged humanitarian partners to accelerate joint efforts for an early response that will save lives.

Ms Patel outlined that increased UK support is helping 800,000 people in Ethiopia including:

- emergency nutrition treatment for 25,000 malnourished children;
 - clean water for 100,000 people; and
 - vaccination and treatment for 600,000 cattle.
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News story: Sir Mark Walport will lead UK Research and Innovation

In this role Sir Mark will lead the establishment of UKRI and ensure it plays a central role at the heart of the Industrial Strategy.

Subject to the passage of the [Higher Education and Research Bill](#) through parliament, UKRI will be established as a single, strategic body that will bring together the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation Jo Johnson said:

I am delighted that Mark has agreed to take on this pivotal role. With his experience of running a large scale research organisation, collaboration with businesses in all sectors and his work at the heart of government, Mark is uniquely placed to lead the establishment of UKRI and ensure the organisation becomes a major voice for UK research and innovation.

Following his appointment Mark will now work closely with the UKRI Chair Sir John Kingman and the research and innovation communities across the UK to shape the new organisation over the coming months, delivering on the Industrial Strategy proposals for investing in science, research and innovation in the UK.

UKRI Chief Executive Designate Prof Sir Mark Walport said:

I am honoured to be appointed as the first Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). My ambition is to make UKRI the world's leading research and innovation public funding agency.

I look forward to working closely with the Research Councils, Innovate UK and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as we work together to create UKRI. I also look forward to working closely with all of our research and innovation communities to provide a strong and coherent voice for UK science and innovation.

UKRI Non-Executive Chair Sir John Kingman said:

I have worked closely with Mark over many years; he is a superb scientific leader who believes passionately in the potential for

great science and innovation to make a profound difference to society and to the economy. He is the ideal first leader for UKRI.

Science, research and innovation are key strengths of the UK; vital underpinning elements of our economy and national wellbeing. The UK research and innovation system is world-leading, but there is an opportunity to make it even more effective.

The purpose of Part 3 of the Higher Education and Research Bill is to put in place the legal powers and safeguards that will enable government to protect the UK's status as a full-spectrum scientific power in the future. The proposals before parliament are to create UKRI, a strong, agile and joined up funder of research and innovation for the UK.

Through UKRI, we are implementing the recommendations of Nobel Prize winning scientist Sir Paul Nurse, who the government asked to lead a review of the UK's research landscape. In his report, published in November 2015, Sir Paul called on government to "support the Research Councils to collectively make up more than the sum of their parts", and develop a "smoother pathway to more applied research".

Subject to the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill through parliament, UKRI will include the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of HEFCE. This will create a single strategic research and innovation funding body, which will build on and protect the strengths and values of the current system.

UKRI will deliver a strengthened strategic approach to future challenges and a maximisation of the value and benefit from government's investment of over £6 billion per annum in research and innovation. It will provide a greater focus on cross-cutting issues that are outside the core remits of the current funding bodies, such as multi- and inter-disciplinary research, enabling the system to respond rapidly and effectively to current and future challenges. It will be a strengthened, unified voice for the UK's research and innovation funding system, facilitating the dialogue with government and partners on the global stage. Furthermore, it will create a smoother pathway for innovation, enabling improved collaboration between businesses and researchers and better alignment of research outputs with business needs.