

Press release: New Lead Non-Executive Director Appointed at the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Office of the Advocate General

Shonaig Macpherson has been appointed as Lead Non-Executive Director for the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland, to support their work in delivering for Scotland. Her appointment concludes an open, fair and transparent competition and will be undertaken for a three year period.

Non-Executive Board Members are senior figures from outside government, appointed to provide external challenge to government departments. As set out in the government's Code of Practice, Non-Executive Board Members should be appointed directly by the Secretary of State and are not civil servants. Their role is to:

- give advice to ministers and officials on the operational and delivery implications of policy proposals
- provide independent support, guidance and challenge on the progress and implementation of the department's strategic direction
- advise on performance and monitor implementation of the department's business plans

Ms Macpherson will sit on the OSSS and OAG Joint Management Board. She is currently the interim Lead Non-Executive Director for both Offices as well as a Non-Executive Director at Futurelearn. She serves as the Chair for both the Robertson Trust and the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company.

Ms Macpherson has extensive experience serving on the boards of Scottish bodies including the Scottish Government, National Trust for Scotland, the Royal Conservatoire for Scotland, SCDI, ITI Scotland Limited, the University of Edinburgh, Open University, Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh College of Art, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust.

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Press release: Highways England builds bridges on International Women's Day

As part of their GCSE studies, pupils from the Bristol Free School were invited to visit the site by Highways England and construction partners Galliford Try.

The girls were treated to a tour and presentation and also met and spoke to a number of women working on site – from Galliford Try, graduate engineer Palvia Rupalia, site agent Tricia Griggs, document controller Jo-Ann Middleton and communications manager Elisabeth Exton and from contractors MJ Church, quantity surveyor Chantal Griffiths and trainee Lauren Newberry.

Graduate engineer Palvia said:

I wanted to be a civil engineer because I wanted to be a part of creating something that everybody uses, such as roads and bridges.

The misconception of the construction industry is that it's a man's world, which is definitely not the case – and my advice to the pupils was 'don't be afraid to jump in feet first'.

Susan King, Headteacher of Bristol Free School, added:

We promote opportunities for girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) at every opportunity, and we are proud of our award-winning STEM days and our female scientists. Our A-Level STEM subjects have 60% female students, and we welcome every opportunity to support our female students in their pursuit of STEM careers. We were thrilled to be invited out on site.

Highways England and contractors Galliford Try are delivering the new junction scheme on the M49 to provide a much-needed connection into the Avonmouth and Severnside Enterprise Area from the motorway network to help promote economic growth in this area of Bristol.

The scheme involves building a new bridge next to the existing bridge at Farm Lane to form a single roundabout spanning the motorway with new access and exit slip roads connecting fully with both northbound and southbound traffic.

Colin Bird, South West Programme Leader for Highways England, said:

One of the main designs of this scheme is the construction of a new bridge and in a way, the school visit is all about building bridges.

At Highways England, we're very focused on inspiring young people to consider engineering as a rewarding career, and this is a nice opportunity to give the pupils an insight into the world of construction and engineering and to meet and speak to female role models working and thriving within the industry.

Highways England is working with partners, including South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the scheme. Main construction work started last year and is due to be completed by spring 2020, and more details can be found on the [scheme web page](#).

Responsible for improving, managing and maintaining England's motorways and major A roads, the company is working with schools and colleges across the country as part of the Government's [Engineering: Take a closer look](#) campaign.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Highways England builds](#)

bridges on International Women's Day

Schoolgirls from Bristol bridged the gap between classroom and construction site on International Women's Day when they visited Highways England's M49 scheme at Avonmouth.

News story: The IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate the UK Home Office Country Information Products

Background

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information \(IAGCI\)](#) is part of the Office of the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. Its purpose is to review the content of all Country of Origin Information (COI) produced by the UK Home Office. Country of Origin Information is used in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. It is also used in policy formulation.

The IAGCI reviews products to provide assurance to the Independent Chief Inspector that the content is as accurate, balanced, impartial and as up to date as possible. COI is contained in:

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis for the top 20 asylum intake countries, and commonly address a specific type of common asylum claims or provide general information for several claim types. They are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (news sources, academic literature, independent research reports, fact finding reports from UK government or from other governments, etc.). These documents also contain Home Office policy on the recommended position to be taken with respect to various types of claims, based on the available and accepted country information.

Information Request (IR) responses are made directly by case workers or others to the Home Office. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs. The IAGCI includes in its reviews a consideration of the COI included in a sample of (not more than ten) IR responses. Each IR response is typically a maximum of 2 pages in length.

Tender Details

The IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate

and report upon the country of origin information contained in UK Home Office information products. At its next meeting, the IAGCI requires a country expert to review the use of country information used in the following CPINs (2 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

Tender 1: [Ethiopia](#)

Tender 2: [Jamaica](#)

For each tender, the expert is also asked to consider a selection of approximately 10 Information Request Responses, which will be provided by the Chair of IAGCI, and are an average of 2 pages long.

Description of work

Country Policy and Information Notes aim to provide an accurate, balanced and up to date summary of the key available source documents regarding the human rights situation, with respect to the issues selected for coverage, in the country covered. The purpose and scope of the reports are clearly set out in an introductory section of the document. Reviewers should evaluate the reports in this context and seek to identify any areas where they can be improved. Specifically the review should entail:

- assessing the extent to which information from source documents has been appropriately and accurately reflected in the CPIN Reports
- identifying additional sources detailing the current human rights situation in the country with respect to main grounds for asylum claims (which are noted in each CPIN Report)
- noting and correcting any specific errors or omissions of fact
- making recommendations for general improvements regarding, for example, the structure of the report, its coverage or its overall approach
- ensuring no reference is made to an individual source which could expose them to risk

Reviewers should follow these specific guidelines:

- the review should focus exclusively on the country of origin information contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- the CPIN should be reviewed in the context of its purpose as set out above. It should consider the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information
- when suggesting amendments, rather than 'tracking changes' on the original CPIN, a list of suggested changes should be provided as part of a stand-alone review paper, and each report should be reviewed separately. A reporting template will be provided to reviewers (for reference please refer to most recent reviews on the IAGCI webpage for examples of the template) *any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document for the Home Office to be able to use it (preferably Open Source). The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available

in English language source

Previous reviews of COI products can be viewed on the [ICIBI website](#).

The selected reviewers will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in London, when their review will be considered. This meeting is due to take place in May 2019. Alternative arrangements may be made if attendance is not possible.

Representatives from the UK Home Office will also attend the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by the IAGCI may be used as source documents for future CPIN reports or other Home Office information products.

How to Apply

Researchers interested in conducting any of the reviews should submit:

- a one page letter demonstrating their expertise in human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the particular country or countries
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk by close of Tuesday 26 March 2019.

We are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

Successful bids will be notified by 29 March 2019. Final reviews will be due by the close of Monday 29 April 2019 and will be discussed at the IAGCI meeting in May 2019.