

News story: Government appoints Tim Eggar as new Chair of Oil and Gas Authority (OGA)

The OGA's role is to regulate, influence and promote the UK oil and gas industry in order to maximise the economic recovery of the UK's oil and gas resources.

Mr Eggar will take up his position on 11 March 2019, replacing Frances Morris-Jones, who will complete her term as interim Chair at the end of March.

Prior to taking on this role, Tim Eggar was a highly experienced non-executive Chair and Board Director, including in the oil and gas sector and the wider energy sector. He was a government minister for 11 years, and Energy Minister between 1992 and 1996. He is currently Chair of MyCelx Technologies, a clean-water technology company for the energy sector, and a Board Mentor.

News story: Seasonal workers pilot opens

The seasonal workers pilot, announced by the Home Secretary and Environment Secretary in September 2018, has now opened.

The pilot will mean fruit and vegetable farmers are able to employ up to 2,500 non-EU migrant workers for seasonal work for up to 6 months.

Two scheme operators – Concordia and Pro-Force – have been licenced to manage the pilot and will be responsible for identifying suitable workers and matching them to UK farmers. They will also be required to ensure the welfare of the workers whilst they are in the UK.

The first workers will arrive on UK farms this spring, subject to recruitment and visa application processes.

Commenting on the pilot, Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

Visiting a fruit farm last year, I saw first-hand how vital British produce is for our economy and listened carefully to the powerful arguments from farmers about the support they need.

The seasonal worker pilot shows this government not only listens, but is willing to take the necessary action to make sure our farms can continue to grow, sell and export more great British food.

The Home Office and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have worked closely to ensure the successful delivery of this pilot.

Food Minister at Defra, David Rutley said:

Our farmers and growers have been absolutely clear about the need for additional sources of labour to work on farms during the busy harvest months.

We have heard these concerns, which is why today we are opening this pilot to boost the workforce on farms this spring and summer and help farmers with their harvests.

This pilot, which will be closely monitored and reviewed, will help inform future policy as we look at how best to support the longer-term needs of the industry outside the EU.

The pilot will test the effectiveness of our immigration system at helping to alleviate seasonal labour shortages during peak production periods, whilst maintaining robust immigration control and ensuring there are minimal impacts on local communities and public services.

The pilot will run until the end of December 2020. The pilot will be reviewed before any decisions are taken on running a future scheme.

Press release: New counter-terrorism information sharing platform announced

A new multi-million pound project to share information with the private sector has been announced by the Security Minister.

Press release: New counter-terrorism information sharing platform announced

A new counter-terrorism project to keep the public safe by enhancing collaboration between business, industry and the public sector has been announced today.

This joint initiative will see a ground breaking interactive online platform developed to provide secure expert advice and training to businesses and public sector organisations to help them develop their own counter-terrorism approaches.

In the event of an attack, the platform will give businesses access to timely and accurate information.

The Security Minister, Ben Wallace, announced the project at the Home Office Security and Policing Event in Farnborough today.

The £10 million project is being funded by Pool Re, the terrorism reinsurer, and led by Counter Terrorism Policing, in partnership with the Joint Security and Resilience Centre, part of the Home Office.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace, said:

This project is one of the first of its kind – a collaboration between the police, the insurance sector, and the government that will help to keep the country safe and secure.

If we are to properly respond to the terrorist threat, we need to ensure everyone plays their part. That is why partnerships like this one are so vital and I thank Pool Re for their leadership.

Pool Re Chairman Geoff Riddell said:

Pool Re and the insurance industry are uniquely placed to promote resilience, protect the UK's economic infrastructure and enhance national security interests by improving the UK's ability to tackle terrorism.

We take this responsibility very seriously, and as such are delighted to be collaborating with the Home Office and counter terrorism policing to deliver this critical initiative.

The platform will meet a longstanding need from the private sector for more credible, quality and timely information to be used in their protective security and resilience planning.

The national policing lead for Protective Security, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi, said:

Since the tragic events of 2017, counter terrorism policing has been working alongside government and the private sector to strengthen our defences against terrorism through greater collaboration and information sharing.

That is why this ground-breaking new platform is so important, as it will allow businesses to access credible information 24/7, connect users to experts, provide accredited online training and send direct messages in the event of an attack – strengthening our frontline against the unprecedented threat.

By supporting this initiative, Pool Re will improve the engagement, collaboration and sharing of information between the private sector, policing and the security services – resulting in a better assessment of emerging threats and helping us to work together to keep the UK safer.

The government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, is committed to building a more integrated relationship with the private sector to increase the UK's ability to tackle terrorism.

The platform is being developed primarily for the private sector, specifically focused on small and medium-sized businesses for whom access to expert external advice can sometimes be costly.

Consultation with key partners is already underway and further discussions will continue this year to ensure the platform is fit for purpose.

Technical development will commence later in the year.

Press release: New plans to help next generation of young entrepreneurs turn their ideas into reality

Breaking down the barriers preventing young people from starting up a business to be the focus of a new government review backed by The Prince's Trust