

News story: Social Mobility Commissioner opportunities

Dame Martina Milburn, the new Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, is appointing a new team of commissioners to join her in driving action on social mobility around the country.

Commissioner roles are open to people from all backgrounds and all areas of the country. We are looking for people who are passionate about creating a fairer society. We are seeking diversity of thought – from experts in the field of social mobility, to young people on their social mobility journey, to people with a drive to make change happen, to current apprentices. We encourage you to put forward an application even if you don't think a public appointment is for you – this could be the opportunity you have been waiting for to make a real difference to people's lives.

Each role is for approximately one day a month, paid at £250 a day plus travel and other expenses. The applications process is open until 11pm on Wednesday 25 July. You can [find out more about the role and apply](#) on the Centre for Public Appointments website.

These roles are an exciting opportunity to shape the social mobility agenda over the coming years, helping the achievement of the government's goal of improving social mobility and acting as an advocate for this important issue.

Successful candidates will be responsible for helping the chair fulfil the commission's remit promptly and properly.

As a commissioner, you will:

- actively engage with the business of the commission, contributing your knowledge and experience in order to shape and enhance its work
- comment on and contribute to the commission's major research reports and publications, including its annual report which is laid before Parliament
- build and maintain effective working relationships with the chair, the other commissioners, and the Secretariat, to ensure that the commission works effectively to fulfil its remit
- act as an advocate for the social mobility agenda, helping to drive a culture of change both within and outside government and building effective relationships with relevant stakeholders *act as a representative of the commission, espousing its values and work

Dame Martina Milburn said:

This commission matters, because its purpose is to help people enjoy better lives.

My first priority is to recruit my team of commissioners and we're

looking for people from all walks of life. I want to engage real people, with real life experiences, who can challenge government, business and society as a whole, to create a fair system where people can thrive.

[News story: Are you a GeoTech and PropTech start-up looking for funding?](#)

Location and property data start-ups could be in line to receive funding, business support and the strategic backing of Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry.

Start-ups using location or land and property data in their products and services can now apply to the [Geovation Programme](#) and applications to the Programme close on Monday 27 August. If selected, the start-ups will each receive up to £20,000 in funding and a range of resources and services, including access to experienced software developers, geospatial expertise from Ordnance Survey, property expertise from HM Land Registry, and mentoring to assist with business proposals and investor relationships.

[Geovation](#) has been specially designed to offer the best possible support to SMEs, start-ups and individuals that are using geospatial technology and data to create new products and services. In two years it has supported 72 new start-ups, which has created 152 new jobs and seen the companies raise £17m in investment. Those on Geovation's Programme have been using location and property data and new technologies to help transform a variety of sectors, including property, mobility and transport, infrastructure, energy, health and connectivity.

Orla Shields is the founder of [GetRentr](#), a PropTech company using artificial intelligence to track all UK property licensing regulations and consultations in real-time to ensure property portfolios are compliant. After a successful application, Orla's company was selected to join the Geovation Programme. In the twelve months that have followed, Orla and GetRentr have raised over £500,000 in funding and are currently working with letting agents and landlords via a partnership with the National Landlord Association. GetRentr is also about to launch a partnership with ARLA, the largest association of lettings agents in the UK.

Orla says of Geovation:

Geovation has been life changing. The grant money has helped us do things we couldn't have done while we were waiting to secure our investment. Free office space in Clerkenwell is a major benefit for

any business – early stage or not. It's great environment, with numerous other inspiring start-ups in a similar field. Geovation's network and connections with major people in this industry and in the government is priceless to us.

The team is very pro-active, and their support and experience is really helpful and always available. One of the best benefits has been the ability to use Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry data. This gives us the option to reach out to more people who are looking to invest and be strategic with their portfolios. It has also helped us predict where regulations will be implemented. Overall, the culture at Geovation is one of collaboration and support.

Jillian Kowalchuk, whose safety app, [Safe & The City](#), launched in March this year and already has thousands of users, was another accepted onto the Geovation Programme. Jillian says:

Geovation is filled with world-class minds and inspiring businesses. I have received a lot of support in growing my business during the Geovation programme. The resources to learn, create and test during critical stages of business. They actively promote, connect and raise their accelerator's profile to give you and your business a great head start. It is an amazing community to learn and be inspired by on a daily basis.

Head of Geovation, Alex Wrottesley, said:

We offer a founder-friendly environment, great mentors, support from Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry, high-quality workshop content and, almost uniquely, a dedicated software development team in house, who work hand in hand with our companies to build and release their first products. This is something very few accelerators can offer and it means the businesses joining us can move faster and further than they otherwise would have been able to.

We're very much future focused and are looking forward to meeting and working with next group of Programme members and being a part of their story and them ours. We can't wait to meet them.

For further information, examples of businesses, interviews and images contact Keegan Wilson, on 02380 055332 or email keegan.wilson@os.uk.

About Geovation

Geovation is an Ordnance Survey Initiative in association with HM Land Registry, which is dedicated to supporting open innovation and collaboration

using location and property data. Location is at the heart of many of the most successful digital products and services. Land and property is the foundation of our national economy. Read more on [Geovation website](#).

About HM Land Registry

HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles, which show evidence of ownership, for some 85% of the land mass in England and Wales.

For further information about HM Land Registry visit [our website](#).

Follow us on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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[Press release: G7 Foreign Ministers statement on MH17](#)

We, the G7 foreign ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in our condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, a civilian aircraft flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on July 17, 2014.

MH17 was carrying 298 crew and passengers, nationals of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Vietnam, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

We fully support the work of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), an independent criminal investigation led by the Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Malaysia and Ukraine. The JIT's findings on Russia's role in the downing of MH17 are compelling, significant and deeply disturbing. The G7 recalls that UN Security Council Resolution 2166 demands that all states cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability. We are united in our support of Australia and the Netherlands as they call on Russia to account for its role in this incident and to cooperate fully with the process to establish the truth and achieve justice for the victims of MH17 and their

next of kin.

In a rules-based international order, those responsible for unacceptable actions, such as the firing or launching of the BUK missile of Russian origin, which intercepted and downed a civilian aircraft, must be held accountable. To this end, we call on Russia to immediately engage with Australia and the Netherlands in good faith to explain and to address all relevant questions regarding any potential breaches of international law.

We express once again our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of MH17. We stand together against the impunity of those who engage in aggressive actions that threaten the rules-based international order, anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances.

[Press release: Operation Stack listening exercise enters final week](#)

This aim of the [exercise](#) has been to invite feedback on ways to manage lorries when there is extraordinary cross-Channel disruption. The solution could be on or off-road, at one site or a number of sites. No sites or solutions have been chosen yet. Views are also welcomed on the possible provision of cross-channel border facilities for lorries and 24-hour lorry parking facilities for everyday use by lorry drivers, which could help with lorry parking problems in Kent.

Seven public information exhibitions have been held across Kent over the last five weeks, in Maidstone, Dover, Ashford, Canterbury and Folkestone. This week, members of the project team are visiting motorway service areas and truck stops in Kent to meet the public. People wanting to have their say can also do so on the website, or via the questionnaire, which can be picked up at over 30 locations across Kent.

Highways England project director John Kerner said:

The response to the listening exercise has been very positive, and we have spoken to many people with lots of interesting ideas. It is important to note that no sites or locations have yet been decided, and this exercise has enabled us to take a completely fresh look at what a permanent solution to Operation Stack could be. With less than one week to go, I encourage anyone with an interest to get involved.

The next step when the listening exercise has finished is for Highways England to analyse responses. If a scheme is progressed, Highways England

will consult on more detailed options and proposals this winter. Any scheme that is taken forward will involve extensive public consultation and will require a full environmental impact assessments.

When extraordinary levels of disruption occur, Operation Stack is activated to queue lorries on the M20 until they can catch their ferry or train. In summer 2015, Operation Stack was in place for over 30 days. As a result, the Government asked Highways England to investigate options for management and handling of lorries caught up heading to Dover.

Without action, existing and likely future issues will continue to put pressure on the roads and motorways in Kent. With traffic levels due to increase, this would likely mean Operation Stack being activated more frequently.

The listening exercise started on 11 June and runs until 22 July 2018. While drop in sessions have now finished, information will be available at 30 locations countywide until 22 July.

Anyone interested in the scheme can sign up to receive updates via the project page on the [Highways England website](#).

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: Lord Ahmad publishes Annual Human Rights Report 2017](#)

Today (16 July) Lord Ahmad, the Minister for Human Rights Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, publishes the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 2017 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report.

The report is a barometer for the global human rights picture with particular emphasis on the FCO's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries*. The report also focuses on how the UK is working to protect and promote human rights across the world.

It covers the period from January to December 2017.

The Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, said:

50 years ago the UK played a vital role in drafting the seminal text that remains the cornerstone for human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, the ongoing repression of people's rights reminds us that our work to defend them is as pressing and urgent as ever.

This report is vital in documenting the serious concerns we have about the human rights situations in a range of countries.

Standing up for human rights is not only the right thing; it helps to create a stable more prosperous world.

The report also focuses on how the UK is working to protect and promote human rights across the world.

Read the [Human Rights and Democracy 2017 report](#).

*Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Further information