

Interim CEO appointed for Office for Environmental Protection

Natalie Prosser has been appointed by Defra as the Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Designate of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP).

She was confirmed in this post in agreement with the Chair-designate of the OEP, Dame Glenys Stacey, and the appointment was approved by the Civil Service Commission.

Natalie is currently General Counsel at the Gambling Commission. Her previous roles have included Director of Legal at Ofqual and regulatory and policy lead on the independent Farm Inspection and Regulation Review.

She will start her role in February alongside Dame Glenys. The role of the Interim CEO is time limited until December and will be focussed on setting up the new body pending the appointment of a permanent CEO.

Speaking about her appointment, Natalie said:

The OEP has such an important job to do, with the clear ambition to set the benchmark for excellence in environmental regulation.

We must take on that challenge in a focused and dedicated way and we must establish ourselves so that we can make the wise and well informed decisions that will enable us to make best use of our powers and our voice in order to protect and improve our environment. I am so delighted to be able to play my part in establishing the OEP as the world leading environmental regulator that it needs to be.

Dame Glenys Stacey, Chair-designate of the OEP, said:

I am delighted that Natalie will be our interim CEO. She brings an in-depth understanding of public law, regulation and enforcement, and her experience in shaping and developing organisations independent of government and with oversight functions will be invaluable.

I am looking forward to working closely with Natalie to set up the OEP, a new and independent environmental watchdog. We have a one-off opportunity to build a truly capable and committed organisation.

The OEP will be created by the Environment Bill and will be a new, independent statutory body with the principal objective of contributing to

environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment. It was announced this week that the Environment Bill is being carried over to the next parliamentary session, with Report Stage recommencing early in the Second Session, with Royal Assent expected in the Autumn.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow also announced this week that the OEP will have its headquarters in Worcester – part of the Government's commitment to ensuring that opportunities are spread fairly across the country.

The appointment of the interim CEO and confirmation of the OEP's location demonstrates the Government's commitment to a green recovery and maintaining environmental standards now we have left the European Union.