

News story: Sara Weller CBE appointed as the department's lead non-executive

Sara Weller is a Non-Executive Director at Lloyds Banking Group and United Utilities plc. She also chairs the Planning Inspectorate, an executive agency of the Department for Communities and Local Government, and is on the Governing Council at Cambridge University and the board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Sara brings an extensive business background to the role. She was Managing Director of Argos from 2004 to 2011 and previously held senior executive roles at J Sainsbury plc, Abbey National and Mars. She holds a First class Masters in Chemistry from the University of Oxford.

Welcoming the appointment, Secretary of State of the Department for Work and Pensions, Damian Green said:

Sara Weller has an excellent track record in business and a wealth of top tier board experience which I have no doubt she will bring to the role.

I'd like to thank Dame Clara for her dedication and hard work over the past 6 years. Her work has helped to improve the department's governance as it delivers an ambitious programme of work, welfare, and pensions reforms.

Sara Weller said:

The work that DWP does touches customers at almost every stage of life.

As the department moves from reform to a process of embedding change, I look forward to bringing my expertise in business and strategy to the country's biggest public service department.

The role of the board is to advise the department on performance, including agreeing key performance indicators. It also oversees operational issues, such as the operational and delivery implications of policy proposals, and the effective management of the department.

It exercises its role through influence and advice, and both supports and challenges the executive.

Members also scrutinise the progress and implementation of the business plan, and are involved in recruiting, appraising and ensuring appropriate succession planning of senior executives.

The board meets regularly with other non-executives across government to ensure departments learn from the successes and failures of comparable organisations.

All board members, including the lead, are appointed for a 3-year period.