

# Interest rate increased on the Court Funds Office special and basic accounts

News story

The interest rates were increased for Court Funds Office special and basic accounts today (25 October 2022).



Please note that, in response to the increase in the Bank of England base rate on 22 September 2022, the Lord Chancellor has reviewed the Court Funds Office (CFO) rates of interest payable to clients and has directed that from 25 October 2022 these will change to the following:

- Special Account – increases from 1.75% to 2.25%
- Basic Account – increases from 1.313% to 1.688%

The Lord Chancellor has made this decision to ensure that the running costs of the CFO service can continue to be met and that an increased rate of interest payable to clients can be provided.

If you wish to discuss further, please contact the CFO on 0300 0200 199 or email [enquiries@cfo.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cfo.gov.uk)

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## CMA considers remedy to address

# concerns in chemical admixtures merger

In November 2021, Swiss firm Sika agreed to buy the German based MBCC Group in a £4.5 billion deal. Sika and MBCC are the 2 largest UK suppliers of chemical admixtures, which are an essential input for products like concrete and cement used in the construction industry and control various characteristics of concrete, such as its strength or setting time.

The companies are widely regarded as the strongest suppliers in the UK market, particularly in relation to their product development and innovation capabilities, and together account for over half of the UK supply.

Following an initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA identified competition concerns in the supply of chemical admixtures in the UK. As a result, the CMA referred the deal for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation in August 2022.

Early in the Phase 2 investigation, the 2 businesses conceded that the deal raises competition concerns and asked the CMA to “fast-track” the case to the assessment of a remedy that could address those concerns.

The CMA accepted the businesses’ request and has provisionally found that the deal could reduce competition. Without remedies to restore this loss of competition, the deal could reduce the level of innovation, services and quality available to concrete producers, as well as leading to higher prices.

To address this, the merging businesses have now proposed to sell MBCC’s chemical admixtures business in the UK, Europe and several other countries. The next stage of the CMA’s investigation will focus on assessing whether this will fully replace the loss of competition arising from the merger, and the CMA is currently consulting on the remedies that have been proposed.

Richard Feasey, Independent CMA Panel Chair, said:

The firms accept that the merger could reduce competition in the UK chemical admixture market. If it were to go ahead without a remedy, this could lead to higher prices for UK concrete producers and less innovation, lower service levels and poorer quality.

The next stage of our investigation is focussed on making sure that any remedy properly addresses these concerns to avoid any adverse impact for UK businesses and consumers.

The CMA is asking for views on the remedy offered by 4 November 2022 and on its provisional findings by 15 November 2022. The statutory deadline for the CMA’s final report is 24 January 2023.

For more information, visit the [Sika AG / MBCC Group merger inquiry page](#).

1. Under the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA has a duty to make a reference to

Phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted in, or may be expected to result in, a substantial lessening of competition (SLC) within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.

2. The Parties propose to sell MBCC's chemical admixture businesses in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to a single purchaser. The CMA will need to approve the purchaser before the deal is finalised.
3. The process that applies where merging parties request to concede an SLC is set out in paragraphs 7.18 to 7.21 of [CMA2 revised](#).
4. In addition to conceding that the deal raises competition concerns in relation to the SLC identified at Phase 1, the firms have agreed to waive their right to challenge this position during the CMA's Phase 2 investigation and have submitted a proposed remedy to address the concerns identified.
5. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk).

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## Looking towards the mandate renewal of the UN Support Mission In Libya

Thank you President, and let me thank SRSG Bathily for his inaugural briefing to the Council, and congratulate him on taking up his appointment. SRSG Bathily – you have the full support of the United Kingdom in the implementation of your mandate. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in our meeting today.

President, it is regrettable that Libya's political elite have made no further progress to agree a basis on which to hold free, fair and inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections. I therefore welcome SRSG Bathily's efforts to engage with all Libyan parties across the country, including civil society, women, and youth groups.

As a Council we should now urge all Libyan parties, in particular Libya's political leaders, to work constructively with SRSG Bathily, and agree a roadmap to elections as soon as possible. This is in the interest of all the Libyan people.

President, I would also like to highlight two areas that are undermining prospects for free, fair and inclusive elections. First, the UK is deeply concerned by reports of increased restrictions on, and a deteriorating operating space for, civil society in Libya. As well as administrative impediments, civil society organisations reportedly face an escalation in the

level and frequency of scrutiny of their operations.

A vibrant civil society is critical for the holding of free, fair, and inclusive elections. It is an essential component of a functioning democracy, leading to greater stability and prosperity. So we urge all Libyan authorities to ensure a safe, secure and unhindered operating environment for civil society.

Second, President, we call on all Libyan parties to protect the neutrality, integrity and reunification of public institutions so as to ensure that Libya's wealth is used for the good of all citizens. Reports of the misuse of public funds, set out in the recent Audit Bureau's report, damage the credibility of Libya's institutions. These institutions must be supported to serve the whole of Libya and all Libyan people.

Finally, President, I would like to thank Council members for their constructive engagement in negotiations to renew UNSMIL's mandate for a year. We look forward to the resolution's adoption later this week. Thank you.

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## **SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCES THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Press release

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Chris Heaton-Harris MP, has announced the re-appointment of Deirdre Toner as Chair of the Civil Service Commissioners.



This appointment is for a further term of five years ending on 31 May 2028.

## **Biography**

Deirdre Toner's background is in Senior Leadership as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director positions in the voluntary and public sector, focusing on mental health and community development. A graduate of public policy and later human rights law, Deirdre has over 30 years of experience of leading organisations, and 20 years of board and chair experience in the public sector in health and justice. Deirdre is currently a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

## **Terms of Appointment**

- The position receives remuneration of £16,000 per annum for Chairing Civil Service Commissioner meetings and participation in Commissioner's business as required by the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order.
- The position is not pensionable.

## **Political Activity**

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

Mrs Toner has declared that she has not been politically active in the last five years.

## **Regulation**

Appointments to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are not regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

## **Statutory Requirements**

Appointments to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are made under the provisions of section 36 (1) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973.

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**SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCES THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF NIO LEAD NON-EXECUTIVE**

# **DIRECTOR**

## News story

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Chris Heaton-Harris MP, has announced the re-appointment of Leslie Philpott as Lead Non-Executive Director for the Northern Ireland Office.



This appointment is for a further term of three years ending on 30 September 2026.

## **Biography**

Leslie Philpott is a Chartered Accountant with a background in public finance and leadership at senior executive levels. He is a former Chief Executive of the Office for Nuclear Regulation and had previously held senior roles in Health and Safety Executive. His portfolio of non-executive experience includes membership of the NEBOSH Board, Mid-Cheshire NHS Trust, Benenden Healthcare Society and Board of the Government Actuary's Department.

## **Terms of Appointment**

- The position is a part-time appointment for a duration of three years.
- The position attracts a fixed remuneration of £12,500 per annum for a commitment of approximately 20 days per year.
- The position is not pensionable.

## **Regulation**

This appointment is not regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

## **Political Activity**

Non-Executive Directors to departmental boards are appointed on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

Mr Philpott has declared that he has not been politically active in the last five years.

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