

Stephen Gibson appointed as RPC interim chair

Press release

RPC committee member Stephen Gibson has been confirmed as the RPC interim chair.



Stephen Gibson has been appointed as interim chair of the RPC, having previously been a member of the committee since May 2018. Stephen has over 25 years' experience as a professional economist across a range of regulated sectors including post, water, ports, rail, aviation, energy and telecoms, working as a consultant and from both sides of the regulatory fence.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said: "The Regulatory Policy Committee offers important advice and scrutiny to Government on regulatory change, ensuring we can effectively deliver policy, while keeping the burdens on business to a minimum.

"I am pleased to see Stephen appointed as interim chair. As an existing committee member, he brings the vital experience and continuity the RPC needs to take forward its work in these exceptional times."

Interim chair of the Regulatory Policy Committee, Stephen Gibson said: "I am delighted to be appointed to this exciting role. It is more important than ever that we have better and more effective regulations that promote the interests of society including businesses, civil society organisations and the public. I look forward to working with government departments and regulators to improve the evidence and analysis underpinning their regulatory decisions."

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Protecting our mental health

News story

Our lives have all changed dramatically over the last 2 months. In times like this, it's natural to feel more anxious or stressed.



World Mental Health Awareness Week

So, this year's World Mental Health Awareness Week is even more important than ever.

We will once again be sharing lots of resources this week to help you look after your mental health or to give you support if you are struggling.

We will also be sharing some of our employees' thoughts and top tips for their mental health during these strange times.

The theme for this year's event is kindness. We'll be sharing some of our employees' thoughts on this, as well as continuing to share some of the extraordinary examples of kindness our employees have been demonstrating through their volunteering.

Sellafield Ltd's Chief Nuclear Officer and mental health sponsor, Euan Hutton said:

We are once again supporting Mental Health Awareness Week. It is a great opportunity to remind everyone of the need to look after their mental health. This has always been important and has always been a message I've shared, but it's even more critical now.

No matter how resilient any of us is, the huge changes we've seen to our lives, are bound to have an impact on our health – both mental and physical.

As always, one of the best mental health tips is to speak to someone about your mental health, especially if you are not feeling

as you normally do.

In fact, I would urge everyone to take the time this week to have a conversation with someone about their mental health. Why not give a team mate or friend a call for a chat? Especially if you've not been in touch as much as normal.

[Euan Hutton](#)

Resources and more information

We've shared some welfare and wellbeing resources on our Coronavirus guidance for employees area on the [website](#).

Mental Health Awareness Week is organised by the Mental Health Foundation. You can find lots of useful information on their [website](#).

The Green Ribbon campaign promotes mental health awareness. They encourage people to share a green ribbon. Ordinarily, we'd wear these badges, but this year, they are promoting [virtual green ribbons](#).

On social media, search the hashtag #mhaw or #mhaw2020 to find other resources.

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[Students in Wales encouraged to apply now for student finance](#)

Press release

Full time undergraduate students in Wales encouraged to apply now for student finance.



Full time undergraduate students in Wales are being encouraged to apply for student finance as soon as possible to ensure their finances are in place for the new academic year.

That's the message from the Student Loans Company (SLC) which has ensured that the application service has remained open to students as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SLC is prompting continuing students to reapply for their next year's student finance as soon as they can. New students are being urged to submit their applications; they don't need a confirmed place on a course to apply, they can use their first choice of course and update their application later if this changes.

The easiest way to apply is online at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk and SLC has produced the following guide and video to help with the process: [guide](#)

[How to Apply](#)

There is also a dedicated resource for parents and partners who are supporting applications at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/parents-and-partners.aspx

Derek Ross, SLC's Executive Director of Operations said: "We recognise that students will have much to consider at the moment. However, for those going to University this autumn, it is important that they make applying for student finance a priority. SLC has worked hard to ensure the continuity of the application service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the message is still that students should get their applications in ASAP to ensure that their student finance is in place for the new academic year."

This information is designed to help new students and their parents find out everything they need to know about the application process. Students can also follow SFW at [facebook/SFWales](https://facebook.com/SFWales), twitter.com/SF_Wales or [youtube/SFWFILM](https://youtube.com/SFWFILM) to keep up with all the latest news alerts.

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Government invests £35 million to protect critical freight routes

Vital freight routes into, out of and around the UK will continue to run smoothly, thanks to a multi-million-pound government scheme to help ensure critical goods, such as food and medical supplies, can move freely.

The government has signed agreements with 6 operators to provide up to £35 million to help ensure there is enough freight capacity to prevent disruption to the flow of goods.

The decision has been made to protect 16 of the most important routes covering the Channel, the Short Strait, the North Sea and routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland which were previously at risk of closure due to a drop in demand as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). They will now be designated as Public Service Obligation routes for a period of up to 9 weeks.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

From the very beginning of the outbreak, we have committed to do whatever it takes to minimise the disruption caused by COVID-19.

By taking this action, we have helped protect the movement of goods and services in and out of the UK, safeguarding the flow of supplies across the Union.

The Department for Transport is working closely with the transport sector and devolved administrations to monitor the situation on all freight routes (not just those in the scheme) in order to ensure critical goods, such as food and medical supplies, can move freely.

The agreements follow the UK, French and Irish governments' [pledge to work together on temporary measures to ensure COVID-19 does not threaten vital freight routes between the countries](#).

UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, Irish Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross, and French Minister of Transport, Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, said the nations are united by trade and we will continue to engage closely to help keep freight moving.

Adaptability is the key for nuclear worker Kay

When she left her house for work for the first time after the coronavirus lock down was announced, Kay Mulhatton felt nervous.

While other people were urged to stay at home, as a key worker keeping one of our nuclear plants safe, Kay was asked to continue to come to work.

It felt strange the first time I set off for work. I didn't know what to expect. Thankfully, as time has moved on, things have felt more normal.

Kay works 12-hour shifts in the vitrification plant. While the plant isn't currently turning radioactive waste into glass, work in the facility cannot stop. This has meant a change in Kay's role.

Our team of 5 process engineers would ordinarily be working to keep the plant running. As the plant's normal processes are paused, we're carrying out other work that must continue, and are supporting our colleagues in other parts of the facility and at home. In fact, we've been doing quite different sets of tasks to normal.

We've all adapted to our new circumstances, and it's reassuring to see just how seriously all key workers on the site are taking this. It did take time though. At first people were trying to work as usual, but we all support each other and call out behaviours that are unsafe. This means pointing out when people are not social distancing.

Thankfully we've had to point this out less as people have become accustomed to it. But we obviously remain nervous about what happens when more people return to work. With more people on site it will be harder to social distance. But the measures we are seeing being put in place should help this.

These include reconfiguring canteen areas so people can keep their distance in the workplace, more robust cleaning regimes and new stations for hand sanitising and cleaning down kit.

Since the changes to working arrangements, only a small number of people have been based in the plant, but this will increase slowly, over time, as a phased return to operations takes place.

Until that point, Kay is reassured by the way those on site are working, and

the camaraderie they are showing.

I've been working with a fantastic team, and we're all chipping in to help each other. We're continuing to have good conversations about both work and our wellbeing and are enjoying some lovely home-made food. Thank you!

While there are far fewer of us on plant and on site, we're certainly a team.

Kay recognises the importance of mental health. As well as supporting colleagues and checking in with other team members, she keeps her mind busy outside of work with crocheting, knitting and DIY, as well as walking her dog.

Kay was keen to thank her colleagues for their efforts during this time. She is happy to speak to anyone who feels overwhelmed at the moment.