

Speech: Women in Finance Awards: City Minister's speech

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Steve Barclay's speech at the first Women in Finance Awards.

News story: 'Prioritise gender equality' says City Minister to finance firms

[Speaking at the Women in Finance Awards](#) last night, newly-appointed minister for financial services, Stephen Barclay laid out the importance of the four industry actions in the Charter which aim to build the pipeline of female talent for leadership positions.

Mr Barclay made clear that the Charter offers financial firms, both large and small, the flexibility they need to make a real difference:

The [Charter](#) is simple. It doesn't tell companies who to hire, or how to run their businesses.

But it does ask them to make a real commitment to supporting women and their progression to more senior roles.

It asks them to set their own targets for what that looks like.

To measure their progress in achieving them – and make that progress public.

I simply don't buy the argument of those firms who say they cannot do this.

As well as celebrating the success of women in finance, the Economic Secretary emphasised that firms should also think about improving different types of diversity:

The charter does not prevent firms focusing on other aspects of diversity, and if we are to meet the economic and political challenges ahead, we need a meritocracy which promotes diversity across all areas, including LGBT, class, and geography.

The [Women in Finance Awards](#), held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, identified and celebrated role models and advocates in financial services.

The Awards are supported by HM Treasury, 30% club, London Stock Exchange, Virgin Money, Bloomberg, Prudential and Rolls-Royce, among others.

Winners were chosen by an independent panel of judges. Many of the winners, including the top prizes of the night, went to those from firms signed up to the Charter.

Stephen Barclay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said:

For too long many women have been underpaid, underrepresented and undervalued compared to men and it is events like the Women in Finance Awards which rightly shine the spotlight on female excellence and achievement in financial services. I want to congratulate all of the winners and I wish them luck for their future careers.

Top winners include:

Woman of the Year – Emily Cox, Virgin Money

For the flagship award of the night, given to an inspiring leader who has challenged, influenced and revolutionised the culture of the business, the judges chose Emily Cox. Emily stood out as a game changer for all of her work on the Gadhia Report, and for furthering the momentum of the Women in Finance Charter.

Banker of the Year- Maria Harris, Atom Bank

Maria stood out as one of the most influential and inspirational women in banking thanks to her genuinely disruptive approach to mortgage lending. Her work in mentoring team members and hiring for diversity singled her for this award. This was also evidenced by the scores of testimonials from clients and co-workers in praise of her hard work.

Advocate of the Year- Andrew Bester, Lloyds Banking Group

Andrew has gone out of his way to drive greater diversity and inclusion at all levels of Lloyds bank. Under his leadership, Lloyds Bank is now on track to reach its 2020 commitment of 40% of women in senior roles.

Employer of the Year- Columbia Threadneedle

Columbia Threadneedle has a proven track record of proactively cultivating a diverse workforce, introducing specific measures to promote diversity and backing these up by measurable impact.

Insurance Leader of the Year- Debbie Cannon, LV= Insurance

Debbie takes the title of Insurance Leader of the Year for her truly inspiring journey, her compellingly honest story, and for standing up as a role model to other women in the sector.

Legal Adviser of the Year- Leigh Kirkpatrick, RBS

Leigh stood out as a lawyer who has broken barriers to advancement, carved out a niche for herself in finance, while simultaneously paving the way for greater diversity in her firm. This was further bolstered by her mentoring and pro bono work outside of office hours.

Further information

Over 120 firms that have signed up to the Treasury's [Women in Finance Charter](#), covering over half a million members of staff – more than half of the financial sector staff.

The Charter sits among a set of wider government reforms to improve gender equality in the work place. These include the £5 million fund for 'returnships' announced at Budget 2017 and making gender pay gap reporting mandatory from April this year.

[Press release: New charity investigation: NSA Afan \(Community Regeneration\)](#)

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [NSA Afan \(Community Regeneration\) registered charity number 1088934](#). The inquiry was opened on 23 February 2017.

The charity has objects to promote the regeneration of the local area, the provision of education and training and the relief of poverty.

In May 2016 the charity reported a serious incident to the Commission outlining that there had been a theft at the charity, with £90,000 of the charity's funds unaccounted for. The Commission immediately opened a case to monitor the charity's response, the matter was then referred by the charity to Action Fraud and the police.

The Commission has also been liaising closely with the Welsh Government (a major funder of the charity) who have expressed concerns about the governance of the charity.

The Commission has serious concerns about the charity's governance and internal controls and the apparent failure of the trustees to remedy these issues, placing the charity's property and its operations at risk. In view of this the Commission opened a statutory inquiry in February 2017.

The inquiry will examine:

- the financial controls, management and application of charitable funds, property and assets belonging to the charity
- the governance, management and administration of the charity by the trustees, particularly whether the trustees have acted prudently and exercised reasonable care in respect of the day-to-day running of the charity
- whether the charity's decision making process is adequate, in particular how it has managed conflicts of interests

The Commission stresses that opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrong doing. The purpose of an inquiry to examine issues in detail and investigate and establish the facts so that the regulator can ascertain whether there has been misconduct and mismanagement; establish the extent of the risk to the charity's property, beneficiaries or work; decide what action needs to be taken to resolve the serious concerns, if necessary using its investigative, protective and remedial powers to do so.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the [Commission's online charity search tool](#).

Ends

PR 52/17

Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
4. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.

€1.5m EU investment helps Welsh company fight global infections

The investment will see IMSPEX Diagnostics Ltd, which is based in Abercynon, team up with leading manufacturers and clinical trial specialists in Germany and Ireland and with the University of Warwick and South Wales-based RedKnight Consultancy Ltd.

The €2.4m project aims to develop a rapid, non-invasive device called BreathSpec, which can diagnose bacterial or viral infections through ultra-high sensitivity breath analysis and will help combat the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The funding has been secured through the European Union's largest research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, which supports breakthroughs in science and technology and the development of world-class products and services.

Welcoming the news, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

"I'm delighted IMSPEX has secured this funding, which will enable research and innovation with such exciting potential to take place in Wales over the coming years.

"Through Horizon 2020, Welsh businesses and universities are benefiting from significant investment and opportunities to collaborate with leading organisations across Europe.

"It is vital ongoing access to this programme – and its successors – is retained as part of any new relationship between the UK and EU in the future."

The BreathSpec device will help alleviate the growing problem of anti-microbial resistance by helping to minimise the misuse and overuse of antibiotics through the improved diagnosis of infections.

Santi Dominguez, chief executive of IMSPEX Diagnostics Ltd, said:

"We are very excited by this funding, which will enable our organisation to collaborate with a first-class team and address the major social challenge of anti-microbial resistance with our new device.

"We have a vision of providing primary healthcare with a reliable, fast and simple solution for identifying bacterial or viral

infection, optimising patient care and minimising antibiotic consumption.

“As a result of this project, we hope to be able to assist GPs and healthcare providers on a global scale. I congratulate the whole consortium on the success of this bid and would also like to thank the Welsh Government for its support with the bid preparation.”

The investment in IMSPEX follows the publication of new data, which shows Welsh businesses and universities have won €76m of Horizon 2020 funding for research and innovation projects since the EU programme was launched nearly three years ago.

Professor Drakeford added:

“The Welsh Government financially backed IMSPEX’s application for Horizon 2020 funds and we will continue to support Welsh businesses and universities to access this important research and innovation programme and collaborate with leading organisations across Europe and beyond.”

To help increase Wales’ research and innovation opportunities through Horizon 2020 funding, the Welsh Government offers financial support for bid writing and travel costs to Welsh organisations interested in developing Horizon 2020 projects.

For more information about Horizon 2020 and the Welsh Government’s SCoRE Cymru fund email horizon2020@wales.gsi.gov.uk .

[Green Party calls on Theresa May to oppose Trump’s travel ban](#)



30 June 2017

The Green Party has condemned Donald Trump’s reinstated travel ban and called on Theresa May to stand up to the president.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Theresa May should show some backbone and lobby the US President ahead of the final Supreme Court decision expected in October. The international community has a collective responsibility for refugees. Those who are able to help the most should be doing the most – and leading by example.

“Watered down discrimination is still discrimination and Trump’s arbitrary and narrow judgement about what family means has no basis in fairness or compassion. This is a man driven by the desire to appease his own ego, willing to ignore basic common sense and decency, and withhold help from innocent people – even putting many of them at risk.

“The efforts of everyone, in the courts and on the streets, who have resisted Trump’s cruelty is heartening. We must refuse to accept such stirring up of hatred and continue to support all those who are fighting the president’s actions.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-40452360>

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