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The Whitehall & Industry Group

A Year in Review

September 2020 - August 2021





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Collaboration and understanding drives quicker progress. That's a fact. Our events offer sits at the heart of WIG, giving our members a platform for connections, collaboration and mutual learning which support improved outcomes and solutions, for the benefit of society as a whole.

Our events provide members with a trusted environment to discuss the issues of the day, bringing together a range of perspectives from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Attendees gain insights directly from the senior civil service, alongside thought leaders across from industry, charities and academia, to help identify solutions to key challenges and shape organisational strategies.

WIG delivers over 120 unique events a year, designed in response to input from our members and advisory councils. The programme covers seven key topical themes: Economic Growth and Prosperity, Technology and Digital, Society, People, Environment and Climate Change, Trade and International Affairs, and Infrastructure.

We are delighted to bring you this 'year in review', where you will find bitesize reports recapping a range of the virtual events we have convened over the last 12 months across all seven themes. Please do explore our online [resource library](#), which offers on-demand access to recordings from these and other sessions.

If you have any questions or ideas around our events and content programme get in touch on workshops@wig.co.uk

**Best wishes,
Tom Sapsted**

Director of Strategic Engagement





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Environment and Climate Change Series

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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

The Impact of Climate Change on the Global Economy

4 September 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Jean-Francois Coppenolle, Head of Credit and Sustainability Risk at Aviva, to discuss the impact that Climate Change could have on the global economy. Speaking on the costs of inaction, Jean-Francois touched on many points, including:

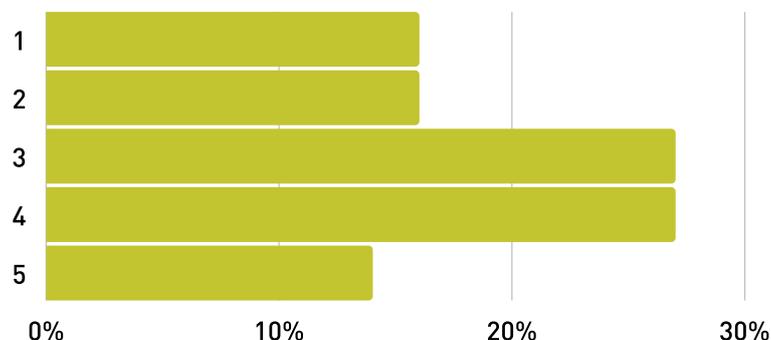


- If we are to avoid the worsening of climate change related impacts, global temperature increases must be kept below 1.5°. We are currently on track to surpass this by the mid 2030s, with most of London set to be below the flood level as soon as 2050.
- This will create severe economic shocks across the world, as environmental damage and extreme weather events cause supply chain disruption, resource scarcity and weakened market participation (especially in poor countries).
- Addressing climate change should therefore not be seen as incompatible with growth, but essential to it. Quicker action on mitigating climate change will result in a smoother transition to a green economy, and lower physical risk from the effects of climate change (such as from rising sea levels and natural catastrophe).
- To meet the 1.5° benchmark, countries must half their carbon emissions every 10 years, starting now. This is the 'carbon low'. If we fail to meet this target, we will fail in the fight against climate change.

Cross-Sector Opinion

Over 130 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not at all, 5 being very), how concerned are you about the cost of a green, climate-friendly economy?



Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions. Some of the issues raised included:

- The global nature of climate change and the role of international policies such as 'carbon border taxes'
- Whether GDP needs to be replaced by a new measure of economic health that accounts for the environment
- What must happen at COP26 to ensure that existing targets are met, and appropriate new ones created
- The role of hydrogen, nuclear, wind and solar in the world's energy mix, and where economic tensions exist within the energy sector

WIG members can listen to Jean-Francois' presentation [here](#)



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Expert Insight

We were joined by Sinead Lynch, UK Country Chair, Shell, to discuss the route to net-zero. Sinead touched on many points, including:

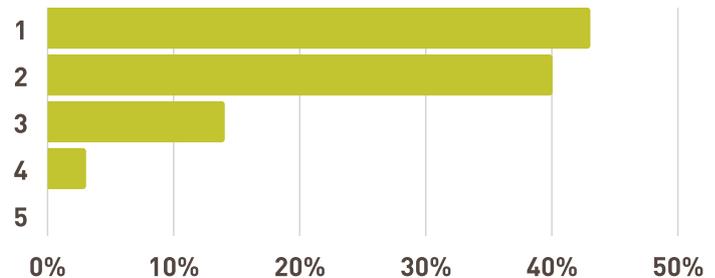


- According to the Committee on Climate Change, the policy frameworks needed to reach net-zero must be in place by the end of this parliament. There is a clear will for action on decarbonisation. What's needed now are the means to achieve this.
- 3 principles that underpin a green recovery include: government focus on areas that deliver low-carbon investment and create jobs quickly, such as hydrogen, renewables and CCS; support from from existing industries, such as oil & gas, that is explicitly linked to carbon reduction commitments; and demand-side measures that stimulate consumer spending on lower carbon technologies.
- The Contracts for Difference framework has made the UK a world leader in offshore wind. The CfD framework could be used to cut the costs of the next generation of wind power technology: floating wind turbines.
- We need to focus on the delivery of 2-3 low carbon technology clusters in the UK, that tackle the hard-to-abate sectors such as steel cement and chemicals. This would include significant investment in CCUS and hydrogen.
- Industry and government will need to work closely with one another, to ensure that the appropriate measures are put in place to deliver these infrastructural changes.

Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not at all, 5 being very), how confident are you that global temperature increases will kept within a safe limit?



Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions, issues raised included:

- Whether Electric Vehicles are truly better for the environment in the long term, and if energy would be better spent focusing on hydrogen
- Whether the UK should consider a policy framework in line with the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Proposal
- How evidence on the safety of new technologies can be shared between countries, and to what extent international collaboration on net-zero will be necessary, as the UK cannot reach its goals alone
- What is needed to transition the UK Oil & Gas sector away from hydrocarbons and into supporting the renewables industry

WIG members can listen to Sinead's presentation [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

The Role of Nuclear Energy in a Low-Carbon Future

15 October 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Jan-Horst Keppler, Senior Economic Adviser at the OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency; Stephen Speed Sinead, Director of Nuclear Energy, BEIS; and Dawn James, Vice President, Nuclear Power, Jacobs. Our panel touched on many points, including:

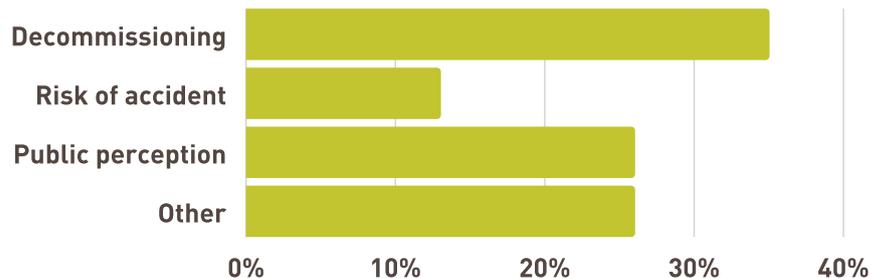
- Nuclear currently provides 40% of the UK's low-carbon energy. By 2050, the demand for clean power will quadruple. To achieve net-zero, nuclear power will need to be expanded.
- Renewables are also key, however high costs and limited technology mean that a combination of nuclear and renewables will be necessary to reach net-zero. The 2 are not in competition, but complimentary.
- Renewable energy has immense battery storage needs, which are costly, while some forms of renewables, such as solar, have a lower market price and are less cost-effective under the current economic system. Similarly, no nuclear system has been built in a free-market, and requires cooperation between industry and government.
- Nuclear is clean, almost 100% GHG emission free, and operational 90% of the time, making it by far, the most efficient energy source. We also now know how to decommission nuclear power stations and dispose of waste safely, however this is a costly process.
- The biggest problem for nuclear is the nature of the risk: very low probability but significant impact, with a public perception of danger that far exceeds the danger it poses. Coal and gas, for example, are both responsible for a far greater number of deaths. However there are also immense start up costs. Innovation will be key to ensuring the roll-out of new nuclear.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

What is your greatest concern regarding nuclear energy?



Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions. Some of the issues raised included:

- There is a clear financial case for nuclear energy in a low carbon future, however financing is an ongoing challenge for new nuclear. What can industry do to make the 'business case'?
- Is there a future for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in the UK?
- How is the nuclear industry preparing for COP26, and what outcomes would you like to see?
- As the grid cannot facilitate Variable Renewable Energy easily, is there a place for distributed solar energy with localised storage?

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

The Opportunities of a Green Economy

13 November 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by David Croft, Global Sustainability, Environment and Human Rights Director, RB; Karen Ellis, Director Sustainable Economy, WWF-UK; and Elsa Palanza, Managing Director and Group Head of Sustainability and ESG, Barclays. Our panel touched on many points, including:

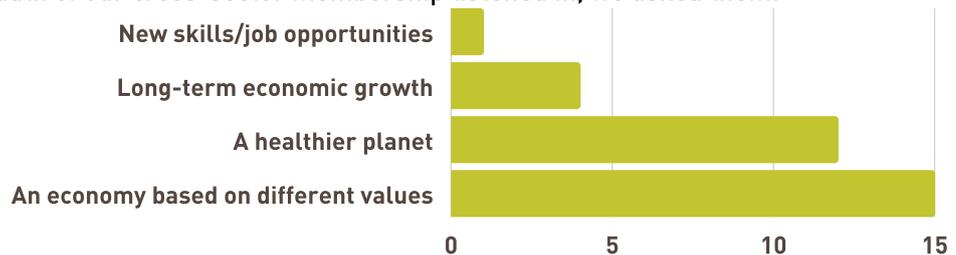
- An economic model that prioritises the environment not only mitigates climate-related risk, but delivers opportunities for community wellbeing, animal and plant health, resource abundance and sustainable trading.
- Investing in net-zero transition could unlock £90bn of yearly benefits in the UK and 210,000 green jobs in sectors such as green building, electric vehicles and low-carbon energy. Data also shows that if we invest in renewable energy, there are more job opportunities provided per unit than investment in fossil fuels, with estimates showing 40 million employed by 2040.
- Green investment is incredibly compatible with a COVID recovery, as it can drive fast job creation, drive innovative industries, and enhance social opportunities and wellbeing (for example through the shoring up of green spaces).
- The UK government can use policy to ensure public sector investments are in line with climate targets while also incentivising the private sector to make green investments.
- A Circular Economy could offer new materials, recycled products, clean fuels, and sustainable development across the sectors. There is also the opportunity to create a more inclusive economy built on wellbeing - environmental and otherwise.
- COP26 will provide an opportunity for inter-sectoral action. The UK will play an important role not only as host but as exemplar. Through its presidency at the G7 next year, the UK can also drive a green recovery and climate action worldwide.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

What do you think is the most valuable benefit of a greener economy?



Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions. Some of the issues raised included:

- The barriers to adequately factoring in climate-related risk into investment decisions and whether current policy frameworks will be able to overcome them.
- How products are classified as green or sustainable, whether the end-of-life cycle and social impact is included, and the extent to which industry has control over this process.
- With COP26 approaching next year, what legally binding net-zero commitments mean at the nation-state level, and what the consequences will be for those that fail to deliver.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

The Future of Agriculture

8 December 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Kevin Austin, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Environment, Environment Agency; Andrew Clark, Director of Policy, National Farmers Union; Janet Hughes, Director of the Future Farming and Countryside Programme, Defra; and Laura McMullen, Global Head of Sustainability, Compass Group, to discuss the future landscape of the agricultural and farming sector, and what this means for the natural environment and climate change goals in the UK.

- The agricultural sector does not have a cultural disregard for the environment, its impact stems primarily from narrow margins and the economic model to which it is subject.
- From 2022 the Agriculture Act will transform farming subsidies, by paying farmers for providing public goods, such as carbon sequestration and biosecure environments.
- Brexit signals significant change for the agri-business, especially regarding access to markets. Whether popular or not, EU policy has provided certainty for farm businesses.
- With 39% of people in the UK reducing their meat consumption, the meat-free food market is set to be worth over £1.4bn by 2024, with young people most likely to buy ethical products.



Cross-sector Opinion

We asked our speakers, how could government, industry and the NfP sector collaborate to achieve more sustainable agriculture in the UK?

Kevin: Continuing to recognise that we all have shared outcomes we are seeking to achieve and to remain genuinely open minded to the ideas of others as we shape future direction in a true spirit of co-design.

Andrew: Sustainable agriculture will be the product of each family farm having a profitable, environmental and socially sound business model. Its not enough just to will the environmental component.

Janet: Making farming and the countryside more sustainable will require farmers, government, experts and everyone else who has a stake in the future to work together to understand the issues and co-design solutions that work. I'm excited to be part of that collaboration.

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions, issues raised included:

- How can the UK achieve a more sustainable agricultural sector while maintaining food costs and tackling food poverty.
- The countries or areas that the UK can look at and learn from regarding the shaping of future policy and best practice.
- Whether the government has a position on what people eat, and how that might change. Or whether this is down to consumer preference.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

Closing the Loop: A cross-sector approach to achieving a Circular Economy

21 January 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Tim Brooks, Vice President of Environmental Responsibility, LEGO Group; Paula Chin, Sustainable Materials Specialist, WWF-UK; Michael Topham, CEO, Biffa; and Dawn Woodward, Deputy Head, Resources & Waste Division, Defra, to discuss the opportunities of a Circular Economy, both in terms of environmental protection and economic development. they touched on points including:

- The challenge is moving up the 'waste hierarchy' to prevent as much material going into landfill as possible (re-use), while increasing the recycling of products (second life).
- Recycling can create investment, jobs, and new industrial opportunities, while regulation could prevent waste from being exported to other countries for financial convenience. This would allow us to use most materials, including plastics, in a circular way.
- It can be resource intense to recycle and repurpose perfectly viable products that could be re-used. Product compatibility and durability are essential to creating a higher level of circularity.
- If they are not flexible enough to allow for the roll-out of innovative materials, some good-natured legislation and regulatory frameworks can stifle circularity rather than promote it.
- Improving access to and quality of information is vital to allowing businesses to
- collaborate with government, as well as making it easier for consumers to act sustainably.



Cross-sector Opinion

'In around 20 words, what do you see as the single most important factor to the achievement of a circular economy?'

- Tim: Ensuring regulatory frameworks actively support circular economy development and recognition of the necessity of harmonisation across countries for delivering the circular economy on a global scale.
- Paula: Stakeholder collaboration will be the key to achieving not only a circular economy, but also driving the elimination, reduction and reuse of valuable resources.
- Michael: Make plastic packaging recyclable AND recycled. Label it clearly, and choose green jobs and raw materials for the UK over export of plastic waste!
- Dawn: Producer responsibility for managing resources efficiently and reducing waste, supported by the right policy framework, services, and incentives.

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions. Some of the issues raised included:

- How to improve waste collection and recycling at a local level, and create greater consistency across various municipal areas.
- The ways in which organisations can establish cooperative targets to ensure that efforts to achieve a more circular economy are not siloed.
- How policy and regulation can match ambition across industry and the not-for-profit sector, so that key stakeholders from across the sectors are working in tandem.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

Economics of biodiversity

21 April 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Emily McKenzie, Head of Evidence and Policy, Economics of Biodiversity independent review team, HM Treasury; Dr Ruth Waters, Deputy Chief Scientist, Natural England; and Martin Casey, Director Public Affairs Europe, CEMEX Europe, to discuss the implications and opportunities of 'The Economics of Biodiversity' for organisations across the sectors. The panel touched on points including:

- The economy is embedded within nature and therefore bounded by nature's limits. The Dasgupta review presents a comprehensive framework outlining ways in which we can account for nature in economic decision making.
- Biodiversity, the diversity within our natural assets, is imperative to keeping our ecosystems productive, resilient and adaptable.
- Unsustainable engagement in nature over the past decades, has led to a decline in biodiversity. The number of species in the world is now in sustained mass decline.
- Urgent transformative is needed to reverse these trends.
- Areas of focus are: increasing nature's supply, through conservation and restoration efforts, reducing our demands on nature through sustainable consumption and production, changing measures of economic success to account for nature; and transforming institutions and systems.
- These are in part addressed by recommendations in the 25 year Environment plan, and forthcoming Environment bill. Implementation of Local nature recovery strategies, the nature recovery network and the environment management scheme will facilitate this.
- There exist significant opportunities to collaborate across the sectors to increase biodiversity, for example in the development of investable nature projects, and creation of natural capital accounts.
- Martin provided examples of the private sector integrating biodiversity into their strategic priorities, highlighting CEMEX's long-standing global partnerships with the RSPB and BirdLife International.



Presentation Spotlight

“ To detach nature from economic reasoning is to imply that we consider ourselves to be external to nature. The fault is not in economics; it lies in the way we have chosen to practise it. Transformative change is possible – we and our descendants deserve nothing less ”

[Click here to read The Dasgupta Review](#)

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions for discussion. Some points that were touched upon include:

- Lessons learnt from abroad on ways to measure social wellbeing beyond the financial e.g New Zealand
- The link between maximising carbon sequestration and biodiversity
- Ways for the private sector to benefit from long term gains from nature
- The Treasury's role and involvement now that the review has been published
- Whether there should be an equivalent to a carbon market for natural capital

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

The role of academia in COP26 - integrating experts with industry & government

13 May 2021

Expert Insight

As we look ahead to COP26 in Glasgow this November, WIG was delighted to host a cross-sector panel to discuss how the expertise coming out of the UK's academic institutions can be best integrated into policymaking and industry developments, with: Alyssa Gilbert, Imperial College London, Rhona Turnbull, Natwest Group and Pauline Metivier, ReLondon (formerly LWARB).

- Alyssa introduced the audience to the tools available to connect research with policy and industry decision makers, including: specialist staff, exchange schemes/ secondments e.g. the Royal Society pairing scheme, UKRI funded programmes, publications, events targeted at specific audiences, and corporate partnerships.
- The COP26 Universities' Network initiatives include: a directory of experts which can be searched by topic to help make those crucial connections, podcasts and briefings aimed at informing civil servants on key strategic issues, and next week's virtual [Climate Expo](#) event.
- Rhona shared how climate is core to the Natwest group's purpose moving forward, aligned to Paris agreement commitments and Sustainable Development Goals.
- Key to collaborative partnerships is converting academic research into something that can be practically implemented, e.g. recent Handbook for Nature-related Financial Risks.
- Consider engaging both external and internal audiences with academic insights; Natwest Group do this through stakeholder roundtables, and extensive climate education programmes across seniority levels in the organisation that have been developed with partner universities.
- Pauline noted that while energy related emissions have the most significant impact on climate change product based emission account for 45% globally; moving to a circular economy is a crucial component in achieving net zero.
- Collaboration between cities and academia is a powerful and necessary engine to tackle the climate emergency in 3 key ways: to inform cities' actions, amplify their reach, and pilot new circular models on campus.



Presentation Spotlight

The panel highlighted numerous examples of collaborative projects where their organisations have taken a leading role, including:

- [The COP26 Universities Network](#) - A growing group of over 70 universities and research centres working together to raise ambition for tangible outcomes from the UN COP26 Climate Change Conference. They aim to do so by easing access to evidence and academic expertise for COP26 for government, NGOs, and other actors, and by taking action.
- [The Banking Environment Initiative \(BEI\)](#) - a group of global banks committed to pioneering actionable pathways towards a sustainable economy, convened by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.
- [CIRCuiT](#) - Circular Construction in Regenerative Cities with 31 partners in Copenhagen, Hamburg, the Helsinki Region and Greater London, including ReLondon and Imperial College. Bridging the gap between theory, practice and policy by delivering a series of demonstrations, case studies, events and other dissemination activities.

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions. Some points that were touched upon include:

- What the future of academic collaboration looks like in the context of a move to virtual meetings and conferences in place of face to face, due to both the environmental impact of travel and new working practices post pandemic.
- The importance of tailoring engagement activities to the audience, particularly in terms of speaking to the wider public, e.g. in behavioral change initiatives
- Where the driving force behind research engagement on climate change lies; within academia, industry, government, or across sectors.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Adaptation Committee of the Committee on Climate Change, and an expert cross-sector panel for this session exploring how organisations across the sectors can work together to adapt to current and future risks to the UK from climate change.

- Baroness Brown reminded us that next week will see the CCC's publication of a comprehensive new Evidence Report to underpin the UK's next Climate Change Risk Assessment (due 2022), which will go on to inform national adaptation programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (due 2023).
- She outlined the range of risks from climate change which require adaptive action: risks of increased flooding, of varied plant and animal disease, risks to health from heat, to food production and supply, to our natural capital (including ability to deliver nature-based solutions) and to water supply.
- Stephanie Holt-Castle, Director of Growth, Communities and Environment at Kent County Council discussed their proactive approach to adaptation, having declared a climate emergency in 2019, which seeks to deliver co-benefits in terms of well-being, quality of place, local skills and productivity.
- Stephanie noted that investing upfront is more cost-effective than reactive spending, and shared details of practical on-the-ground actions such as the cool towns pilot in Margate, where tree planting offers both shading and water retention.
- David Black, Interim Chief Executive of Ofwat, spoke about the need to look at both supply side solutions, and reducing demand.
- Water demand management includes, setting 15% leakage reduction target across the industry, consumer behaviour change, and working with industry on innovative solutions.
- Jo Harrison, Director of Environment, Planning and Innovation, United Utilities, discussed how her team are working to ensure resilient service provision in the long term.
- UU's holistic risk management approach includes potential impacts of climate change on their workforce and supply chains. Adaptation challenges specific to the water supply / waste water context include reduction in river flows and algae growth impacting water quality.



Presentation Spotlight

Our panellists shared a range of supporting information in their slides, which can be accessed [here](#), including insight from Jo Harrison into the increased extreme weather experienced in the North West in recent years. As Baroness Brown noted, increases in maximum temperature are of significant concern, not just average temp rises.

100%
of the 10 hottest years
have occurred since 2002

50%
of the 10 wettest years
have occurred since 2000

0%
of the 10 coldest years
have occurred since 1963

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions, topics touched upon included:

- The training and educational needs of organisations across the sectors, around climate literacy, adaptation and living systems awareness, and how the FE/HE sector can help fill these skills or knowledge gaps.
- The importance of cooperation at the international level for effective climate change adaptation in the UK, in the context of COP26.
- To what extent the concept of, and need for, climate change adaptation is understood by the general public, and how this could be increased to drive behaviour change.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

Green Skills:

Preparing the UK for a low-carbon economy

9 June 2021

Expert Insight

WIG was delighted to welcome Bryony Livesey, Challenge Director, Industrial Decarbonisation, UKRI; Rhian Kelly, Corporate Affairs Director, National Grid; and Professor Ian A Graham FRS, Director of BioYork and Weston Chair of Biochemical Genetics, University of York, to understand more about the challenges and opportunities of a green recovery. The panel touched on some key points:

- Bryony leads the industrial challenge, which will aim to develop and deploy low carbon technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, across high emitting industrial clusters in the UK.
- Transformed industrial clusters, with new production processes, will bring investment and job opportunities to regions. Roles in engineering and construction will be in high-demand.
- Rhian points out that the energy industry will need to recruit for 400,00 jobs by 2050 to meet net-zero. This provides a significant opportunity to address regional inequalities, and promote the levelling up agenda.
- Development of clean technologies such as Offshore wind, hydrogen, CCUS and Electric Vehicles are necessary to unlock new job opportunities.
- National Grid is working closely with BEIS on their Offshore transmission network to address barriers in the provision of offshore wind. They have also worked with Equinor and BP to find CCUS transport and storage solutions in the North-East.
- Rhian emphasises National Grid's commitment to a more diverse and inclusive workforce to achieve net-zero targets. The organisation also intends to create a diverse talent pipeline, providing access to skills development for young people in disadvantaged areas.
- On 12th November 2020, the government launched the Green Jobs Taskforce which will set the direction for the job market as we transition to a high skilled, low-carbon economy. The aim is to unlock 2 million green jobs by 2030.
- Prof. Ian explains how BioYorkshire aims to kickstart the bioeconomy, through the development of the bioeconomy skills academy.
- The academy will underpin national and regional green skill needs, focusing on delivering education, training and courses, and providing information on careers.



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the key issues raised included:

- Drawing the distinction between 'green skills' and 'green jobs'
- Broader digital skill and green skills growth agendas
- Further innovation can lead to further negative impact on the environment



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'Environment & Climate Change' Series

A global roadmap to Net Zero by 2050 with the
International Energy Agency (IEA)

3 August 2021

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Katherine Dixon and Peter Levi from the the International Energy Agency for this session exploring how organisations across the sectors can work together on the global roadmap to net zero.

Some key points they covered included:

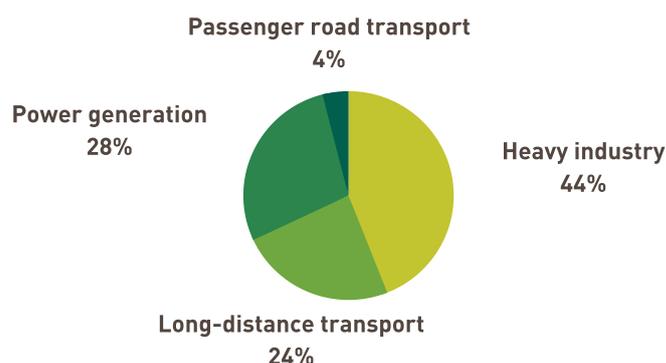
- It is no longer an issue of how to create political will to change, but how to create the mechanisms and environment to facilitate collaborations on an international scale
- National approaches may work in some sectors but in many sectors cross-national solutions are needed, it will be much cheaper and quicker to reach net zero if states work together
- There exists a narrow but doable path to net zero, but there is a large gap between stated ambitions and current reality
- Net zero pledges to date cover about 70% of global CO2 emissions, but fewer than a quarter are supported by policy measures to ensure they happen on time
- The goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 needs to be accompanied by interim milestones, to allow governments to understand the scale of the task going forward
- To stay on target global electric car sales have to increase 18 fold by 2035, and buildings need to be retrofitted so they are zero carbon ready
- Looking beyond 2030 will need more net zero technologies to be deployed at scale, especially for sectors that are hard to abate e.g. long distance transport modes, heavy industry
- For hard to abate industries like cement, primary steel, and chemical production, CCUS and hydrogen based technologies will play a large role in achieving net zero by 2050



Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

When it comes to the main sectors of the energy system, what are the most challenging areas in which to make substantial emissions reductions?



Our members' questions

Our members posed some challenging questions, topics touched upon included:

- The larger effect on global emissions that heavy industries have in developing countries compared to advanced countries
- Possible effects of the EU's proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism on heavy industries outside the EU if implemented in its current form
- The role of universities in working with industry to achieve net zero goals

WIG members can view the speakers' presentations [here](#)



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Infrastructure Series

- Page 17 **Gareth Davies, Director General for Aviation, Maritime, International and Security Group, Department for Transport**
- Page 18 **WIG/UKRN: Balancing infrastructure renewal with net-zero targets**
- Page 19 **Virtual Live Briefing with Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair, Civil Aviation Authority**



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'Infrastructure' Series

Gareth Davies, Director General

Department for Transport

24 September 2020

Expert Insight

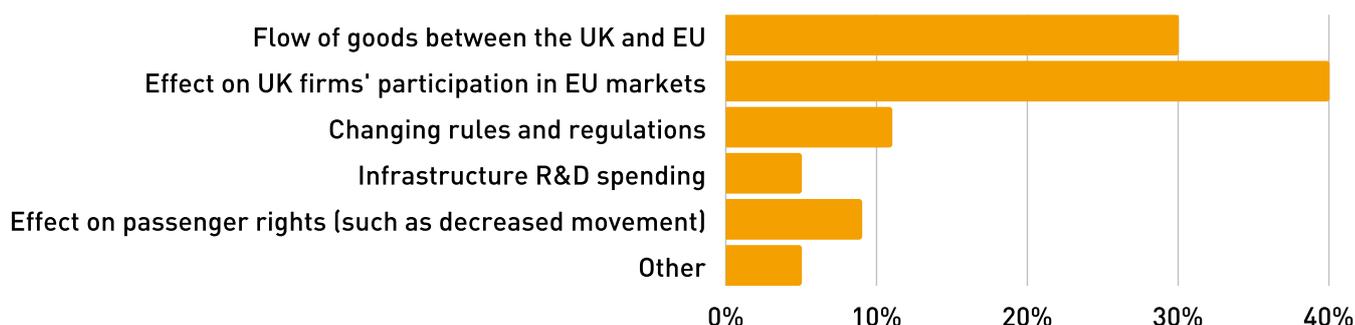
We were joined by Gareth Davies, Director General for Aviation, Maritime, International and Security Group at the Department for Transport. Gareth joined us to discuss what DfT is doing to ensure the UK's transport infrastructure is prepared for EU transition, and the impact of COVID-19. Gareth touched on many points, including:

- As the pandemic hit the UK, passenger demand collapsed, hitting rail, aviation and bus networks. With financial risk usually held by operators, in the early days of the crisis, the system was reconfigured with government taking on some of this risk.
- Transport, on the whole, relies on passenger density. As the UK moved from crisis-response to rebuilding, the transport network faced tough questions on safety vs. commercial reality.
- Internationally, the focus was on preventing reinfection from abroad, though intra-UK transmission was the greatest source of infections. Again, the balance was between open travel, and ensuring that this travel was safe, both during and after journeys.
- Going into the Autumn, the Department's major priorities will be continuing to fight COVID through a 2nd wave; supporting the long-term viability of operators faced with continuing low demand; navigating the risks of traffic disruption as the UK leaves the transition phase; and tackling longer-term transport issues sidelined through the crisis, such as decarbonisation of the transport sector.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 WIG members from across the sectors tuned in live, we asked them: What is your greatest concern about the impact of EU Withdrawal on the transport sector?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered. The issues raised included:

- Whether we will see greater reliance on public funding to maintain transport networks, or a gradual reduction in transport capacity
- Future priorities for transport providers as we see a shift in cities from office spaces to home working.
- The role of autonomous vehicles in the future of transportation and decarbonisation.
- Whether the maritime sector will receive funding akin to the investment made in the aviation sector, particularly around decarbonisation and autonomous systems.

WIG members can listen to Gareth's presentation [here](#)



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'Infrastructure' Series

Balancing Infrastructure Renewal with Net-Zero Targets

30 September 2020

Expert Insight

In this joint event with the UK Regulators Network on Net-Zero Infrastructure, we were joined by Niva Thiruchelvam, HM Treasury; Jane Dennett-Thorpe, Ofgem; Prof. Charles Donovan, Imperial College; and Suleman Alli, UK Power Networks. Our speakers touched on a vast amount of topics, including:

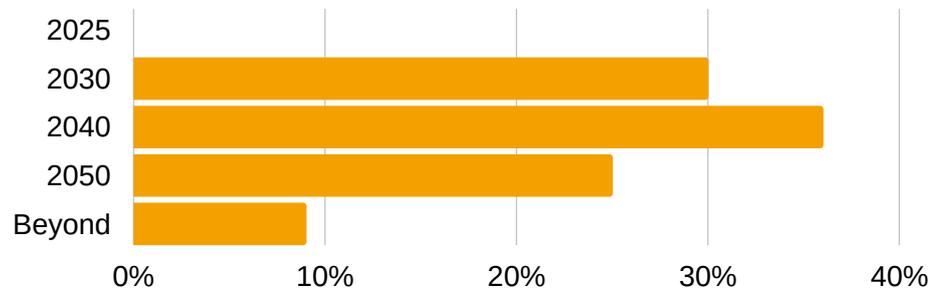
- 30 years was the difference between pagers and worldwide instant connectivity. This level of innovation must be mirrored to achieve Net-Zero, and past success shows it is feasible.
- To achieve effective change, investment in networks and low carbon infrastructure needs to be incentivised. However, it is vital that consumers interests are protected alongside the roll-out of new, innovative products and services.
- We need to move beyond a binary idea of 'green' and 'dirty' industries, thinking more about standards that apply to all sectors, industries and markets.
- Those living in flats currently pay more to charge an electric vehicle than those with their own driveway. As energy and infrastructure come together, inequality must be addressed. Similarly, there will be a concomitant need to enhance digital skills across the workforce.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 WIG members from across the sectors tuned in live, we asked them:

When do you think the infrastructure needed to achieve Net-Zero will be in place?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered. The issues raised included:

- Whether state intervention can be mobilised to facilitate the implementation of new technologies.
- How consumers can be incentivised to adopt greener utilities that don't provide value for money.
- If the net-zero agenda aligns with levelling up, and where there are opportunities for regions.
- The way to ensure that Net-Zero strategies do not detract from firms' viability and attractiveness.
- How infrastructure investment can be delivered at pace, given the range of pressing issues (both net-zero timeframes, as well as macro economic stimulus).
- The role of nuclear energy and fusion power in the Renewables Obligation (RO) programme.

WIG members can listen to the presentations [here](#)



Expert Insight

We were pleased to welcome Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for some insights from his time at the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and to discuss the CAA's role in addressing challenges faced by the aviation and aerospace sectors. He touched on points including:



- The CAA's priorities over the next period will revolve around maintaining the trust of their consumers, being flexible and adaptable to change, and empowering their people.
- The recovery phase of COVID-19 will continue to bring challenges to the aviation sector, especially in relation to public health and consumer rights. Careful calibration of the pace of this recovery will be integral, and must be supported by an internationally recognised means to enable freer movement of passengers.
- The airspace modernisation plan will be key, not only in tackling vast environmental challenges, but in the integration of new technologies such as remotely piloted air systems.
- Withdrawal from the EASA presents risks but also opportunities for the CAA. The potential to build new international relationships, and greater freedoms in decision-making could be valuable to the UK.
- CAA's Project Horizon will allow for the creation of a coherent strategy, addressing the core challenges mentioned above and more e.g. innovation and technology, consumer interests, skills, stem and diversity.

Spotlight

Sir Stephen shared some valuable personal insights from his time in distinguished roles such as Chief of the Air Staff for the Royal Air Force (2016-2019) and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, MoD (2012-2016). He mentioned that:

- Leadership considerations are at the heart of success. Importantly, authority must be deployed sparingly; emphasis must be placed on cooperation and enabling other's success.
- Key to excelling in any role is to understand the context you are operating in. In the case of the MOD: imperfect knowledge, reputation management, internal scrutiny, and financial shortfall management shape decision making.

Our members' questions

Our members raised a number of interesting questions. Topics included:

- How the CAA will utilise digital processes during and post-COVID-19
- The biggest hurdles associated with performance-based regulation
- CAA's approach to competition and working with the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority)
- How to best generate collaboration between airports and airlines
- How the CAA will promote innovation investment, and the way this will compare with the EASA

WIG members can listen to Sir Stephen's presentation [here](#)



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Society Series

- Page 21 **Putting individuals at the heart of developing the National Skills Fund**
- Page 22 **A Cross-Sector approach to tackling obesity in the UK with Jenny Oldroyd, Deputy Director, Obesity, Food & Nutrition, DHSC**
- Page 23 **What's Next for Higher Education in the UK? with Prof. Sir Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University**
- Page 24 **The Future of the NHS - a cross sector perspective**
- Page 25 **Lessons in public-private sector collaboration - the UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme**



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'Society' Series

Putting individuals at the heart of
developing the National Skills Fund

16 September 2020

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Matt Hassan, Deputy Director for the National Skills Fund and National Retraining Scheme for a webinar discussing the development of the National Skills Fund.

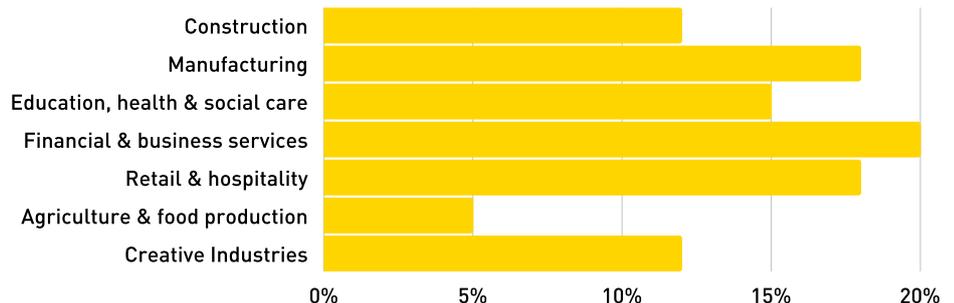
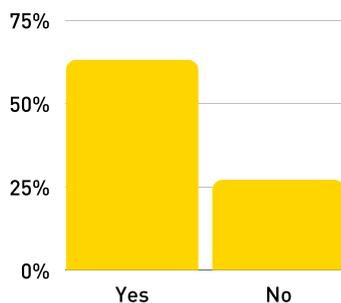


Matt touched upon points including:

- The importance of adult skills provision as a crucial contribution to the levelling-up agenda throughout the UK, to drive productivity and support economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Starting this Parliament, the Government is investing £2.5 billion for the National Skills Fund
- There are a number of barriers to retraining, which disproportionately impact those who will be most affected by changes in the jobs market.
- Over recent years we have seen a number of trends that highlight the need for adult retraining, such as technological change and longer working lives.
- We are taking an evidence based approach to developing the National Skills Fund and we will continue to engage with employees, employers, careers advisers, training providers, unions, think tanks and other stakeholders to build on what works.
- Our research to date has indicated that there is appetite from employers for a more flexible approach with modular learning enabling the training offer to be tailored to the role and delivered in a shorter timeframe, particularly when it comes to digital skills.

Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in live, we asked them: in your sectors and areas have you seen any examples of innovative practice in the delivery of adult skills provision and retraining, in response to recent circumstances? We also asked what sectors could benefit from a short, flexible approach to training?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Exploring models or policies from other countries which have been successfully implemented to upskill their populations, such as e.g. Singapore's Skills Credits
- How all levels of apprenticeships fit within the National Skills Fund and National Retraining Scheme
- The need to develop a learning mindset in the UK population, as longer working lives will require the workforce to engage with learning throughout their careers



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'Society' Series

A Cross-Sector approach to tackling obesity in the UK

1 October 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Jenny Oldroyd, Deputy Director for Obesity, Food and Nutrition at the Department Of Health and Social Care for a webinar discussing the priorities and challenges ahead for her team, as the UK shifts towards a more preventive approach to healthcare, and a renewed focus on tackling obesity in the context of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.



Jenny touched upon points including:

- Almost two-thirds of UK adults are above a healthy weight, and 1 in 3 children are leaving primary school already overweight or living with obesity.
- Health inequalities which have lifelong impact are apparent in rates of childhood obesity, which are double in the most deprived areas. The UK Government aims to halve these figures by 2030.
- The new 'tackling obesity' strategy, launched in July 2020, builds on existing interventions and introduces new actions such as: restricting retail promotions and advertising for high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products, calorie labelling in restaurants, encouraging conversations about weight in primary care settings which have had demonstrable impact, and increasing availability of NHS Weight management service such as self-care apps.
- Current and upcoming consultations with industry on next steps include; front of pack labelling, alcohol calorie labelling, and marketing of infant foods.

Presentation Spotlight

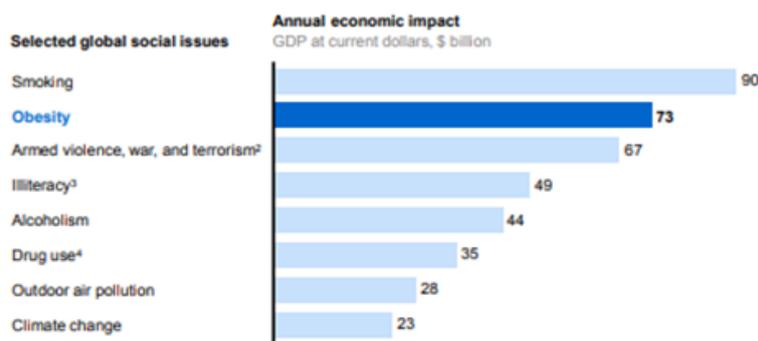
The costs of obesity in the UK are high, and rising:

- Estimated cost to employers is £4.6 billion per year.
- In 2014, there were 16 million sickness days attributed to obesity.
- Overweight and obesity related conditions across the UK are costing the NHS £6.1 billion each year, a figure which is projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050.

Jenny's slides are available to WIG members as a pdf [here](#).

Obesity is the second-largest human-generated impact on the United Kingdom

Selected social issues, United Kingdom, 2012¹



Our members' questions

WIG members from across the sectors participated in the session, and posed some challenging questions.

Key issues raised included:

- The importance of early intervention and education to empower and support children, parents and caregivers in making healthy choices.
- The normalisation of unhealthy weights in the UK population, and sensitivities around having difficult conversations with individuals about weight in health and social care settings.
- Ongoing plans for stakeholder and business engagement.

WIG members can listen to Jenny's presentation [here](#)



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'Society' Series

What's Next for Higher Education in the UK?

17 November 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Professor Sir Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University, for a webinar discussing what lies ahead for the UK's higher education sector. Sir Chris' presentation covered five broad areas; the history and current 'state of play' in the sector, demographic shifts, economic factors, students, and funding.



He touched upon points including:

- Growth in higher education around the world has been fueled by a desire to drive forward innovation, and economic competitiveness.
- The higher education sector is a big success story for the UK, however universities have received mixed reports in the press recently; for example criticisms around responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, or the perception that grades are being inflated, versus recognition for the enormous contribution institutions such as Oxford and Imperial have made to biomedical research.
- The mode of delivery of universities hasn't changed much in hundreds of years, the gap between this traditional method and student or societal expectations has been getting bigger. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have had to catch-up at speed.
- Institutions cannot revert to the old approach, in part as the workplace for which universities are supposed to prepare students has fundamentally changed. What are the implications for the UK's largely residential model?
- UK higher education has received a net benefit from EU membership, through research funds from programs such as 'Horizon 2020'. Our exit from the EU potentially leaves a significant hole in research funding.

Presentation Spotlight

Sir Chris shared a number of illuminating statistics to give context to his insights:

- In 2018 there were 132 universities in the UK, almost a 300% increase in under 30 years, from 46 in 1990.
- The UK has a huge range in scale of institutions; from research intensive Russel Group universities with up to 40,000+ students, to an increasing number of specialist universities.
- UK export earnings from international student fees are larger than the UK pharmaceutical industry.
- Figures from The Economist show that globally, enrolment in tertiary education increased sixfold from 1970 - 2012
- Having seen an enormous increase in demand since 2000, China now has the world's biggest tertiary education system, with 47% of school leavers going into higher education last year.

Our members' questions

WIG members from across the sectors participated in the session, and posed some challenging questions.

Key issues raised included:

- Whether universities need to do more to assert their relevance, and the value they add to the UK; both in terms of the skills that students acquire, and the research outcomes universities achieve.
- The extent to which the higher education sector in the UK is dependent on international students, and the impact that both Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic might have on those numbers.
- The role of universities in achieving the UK's R&D investment target of 2.4% GDP.
- Whether we might see some mergers, federations, or even insolvencies as the sector adapts to new realities.

WIG members can listen to Sir Chris' presentation [here](#)



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'Society' Series

The Future of the NHS

25 November 2020

Expert Insight

The nation's health has perhaps never been so keenly observed, and discussed, as during the months since the UK's first lockdown in March. We were delighted to host a panel of senior stakeholders to share their thoughts on what's next for the NHS at this crucial juncture. Below we've touched on just some of topics covered by each of our expert panelists:

Dame Una O'Brien

Former Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, Trustee of Macmillan Cancer & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

- Any discussion on the NHS has to start with deep gratitude for all the health and social care staff on the front line throughout the pandemic
- 5 priorities to highlight:
 - Sustainable funding including addressing staff shortages
 - Concerted action to address health inequalities, directed at early years support
 - More assertive action on prevention and health and well-being, harnessing the recent renewed focus of employers on employee and customer health
 - Reform of social care and integration of services
 - Accelerating digital innovation including virtual consultations and wearable tech



Dr. Birju Bartoli

Executive Director of Performance and Improvement, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

- A key learning from the pandemic response is that we need to ensure staff wellbeing, track and respond to feedback utilising apps and other measures
- Decision to manufacture own PPE within the trust was key as part of broader connections built with local population, generating jobs has a positive knock on impact on wellbeing.

Prof. Amanda Howe OBE FRCGP

President, Royal College of General Practitioners

- Recommendations moving forward include: targeted urgent investment in primary care to improve health outcomes, and building our workforce through investment in training
- Need to build the bridge between data and action: ensuring fit-for-purpose, digitally-enabled GP premises and an evidence-based approach to innovation

Our members' questions

WIG members from across the sectors participated in the session, and posed some challenging questions.

Key issues raised included:

- Whether the NHS been able to share best practice and lessons learnt with other health services globally, both in terms in responses to the pandemic, and preparations for vaccination.
- How other priorities identified by the speakers might be impacted by diverting significant time, and resource, to COVID-19 mass vaccination, which the government hopes to roll out in Spring.
- What the way forward might be to prioritise social care reform in the UK, and work together across the sectors to solve the complex issue of funding.
- The challenges of taking a system leadership approach in the NHS, due to the federated nature of health care provision in the UK.

WIG members can listen to our panel's opening comments [here](#)



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'Society' Series

Lessons in public-private sector
collaboration - the UK's COVID-19
vaccination programme

9 June 2021

Expert Insight

We are delighted to welcome Madelaine McTernan, Director General for the Vaccine Taskforce, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, alongside other key stakeholders from the Department of Health and Social Care and Pfizer UK to share their thoughts on how a collaborative approach to research, manufacturing and deployment has enabled the largest-ever NHS vaccination programme, and supported the UK's status as a world-leader in life-sciences.

- The UK's ability to secure a vaccine and deliver vaccine programme illustrates lessons around collaboration.
- 68 million doses distributed, 77% of adults in the UK have had their first dose and over 50% of adults have had both doses.
- Joining up the differing skill sets and shared characteristics was a powerful combination mirrored by ministers ability to make decisions efficiently and swiftly which gave agility - the various voices helped to respond to the unique challenges.
- Civil service and industry united with focused preparation, planning and logistics to deliver vaccines to the NHS.
- If good communication and strong relationships are established in advance, then in times of crisis, teams work together well.
- Successful teamwork and results can be achieved with the right people, right mindset, listening, chance for new ideas, and approaches, when everyone is not afraid to challenge one another.
- Everyone had to be prepared to act and play a role in breaking down barriers.
- The ventilator programme is a good example of lots of different people collaborating.
- The best collaborations do not always come from the biggest organisations, small suppliers can be vital, as seen with the ventilator challenge. It is not always the traditional organisations who can be helpful.
- For the future we can learn from this experience and input these elements into forthcoming plans and build collaboration further.
- Criticising, finding faults and having mutual recognition can be helpful in collaboration, panel are proud of collaborative achievements and will try to continue this approach going forward.
- Unprecedented times deserve reflection and analysis.
- It took 269 days to receive temporary authorisation for the vaccine, normally takes 5-10 years. Under 18 months, shows what can be achieved with over 40% of UK population vaccinated and figure rising rapidly.
- UK's global leadership has become a beacon of best practice and the VTF model held up as a great model for other countries.





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Trade and International Affairs Series

- Page 27 **Virtual Live Briefing with Lord Mark Sedwill, Former Cabinet Secretary and National Security Adviser**
- Page 28 **Virtual Live Briefing with Paul Lincoln OBE, Director General, Border Force**
- Page 29 **International security and Climate Change with Lt Gen Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE, Non-Executive Director, MoD**
- Page 30 **Reflections on the future EU/UK relationship with Ambassador Vale de Almeida**
- Page 31 **Looking ahead to the UK's G7 Presidency with Jonathan Black, the Prime Minister's G7 & G20 Sherpa, Cabinet Office**
- Page 32 **Global Britain and multilateralism in a changing world with Professor Ngaire Woods CBE, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government and Professor of Global Economic Governance, Oxford University**



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Lord Mark Sedwill, Former Cabinet Secretary
and National Security Adviser

13 January 2021

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Lord Mark Sedwill, former Cabinet Secretary and National Security Adviser, for a webinar discussing the current global landscape, and Britain's role on the world stage:



- Joe Biden has picked a very experienced foreign policy team, they are emphasising re-engagement in the multilateral system including arms control negotiations with Iran and Russia, re-committing to the WTO and WHO, and rejoining the Paris Climate Change Treaty.
- The US's involvement in COP26 will be key. Their selection of John Kerry as envoy suggests an ambitious approach to the discussions.
- The new US National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan, has spoken of standing with allies against Chinese behaviour but has also criticized the EU's new investment agreement and has made clear he expects allies to stand with the US.
- Stabilising the Western relationship with China is key to global security, key to the world economy and key to the future of the planet - the big environmental questions cannot be addressed without China or the US.
- Western countries have swung between conciliating China, and then confronting China and thinking of ways of decoupling our economies, but the arguments for a hardline approach have strengthened.
- China is the 21st Century's "Workshop of the World": it is the engine of global economic growth and Chinese companies are competing very effectively worldwide.
- We must not underestimate the strength of the UK's own position or the Western model: the US, the EU and the "big five" (the UK, Canada, South Korea and Australia) still account for two-thirds of the global economy, we must build a consistent, coherent and a comprehensive allied consensus about the governance of the world system.
- There has been a period of fractious relationships that have made a consensus among western nations more difficult, but with Biden's presidency imminent, and the UK's transition period finalised with the passing of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, there is considerable scope for consensus.
- The UK has both the COP26 and the G7 presidency this year, an opportunity to try and shape the consensus with our Western allies which would be a great beginning to the post-Brexit global Britain.

Our members' questions

Over 400 attendees from WIG's cross-sector membership tuned in live and posed a number of important questions. Some of the key issues raised included:

- Increasing cybercrime/cyberattacks internationally and the UK's preparedness to fight these.
- Russia: a threat or a disruptor?
- The West's reaction's to China and the economic impacts that would come as a consequence.
- The future of EU member states military alignment.
- The UK's key priorities at COP26 later this year and the potential economic costs associated with COVID-19; will nations roll back their commitments?
- How the UK can best use it's COP26 and G7 roles to influence its global partners to achieve net-zero.
- The UK's current relationship with Commonwealth nations, and how can strengthen relationships with them.
- The key takeaways when working with allies that have "difficult or non-traditional" leaders.
- The UK's approach if Trump had been re-elected to serve a second term.



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Paul Lincoln OBE

Director General, Border Force

17 February 2021

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Paul Lincoln OBE, Director General, Border Force for a webinar discussing the priorities for the organisation following the UK's departure from the European Union:



- As the most visible and permanent organisation protecting UK's borders, Border Force is at the forefront of an evolving political landscape.
- Recognising the impact of COVID-19 on industry, a 3-stage process to full border controls has been introduced until July 1st. This will give businesses more time to adjust to the new trade environment.
- A cross-governmental approach has been integral for the preparation and implementation of new border operations. Partnership with industry has grown over this period.
- Border force has taken necessary steps to ensure that objectives can be achieved including: hiring 1500 additional staff, introducing nine new inland border sites, and taking a digitized approach to training.
- The UK has worked at pace to deliver a response to the Northern Ireland protocol which minimises disruption for local communities. Limited checks have been conducted in line with international conventions. The outcome of the supermarket grace period extension request, placed on 2nd February, will further inform Border Force's approach moving forward.
- New border controls offer significant opportunity to bolster security. Lower criminality thresholds and the declaration of safety and security documentation for goods will help to prevent illicit movement.
- COVID-19 has added to the responsibilities of the Border Force, whom are now responsible for checking passenger locator forms, pre-departure COVID testing, and handover to a managed quarantine service.
- The Border 2025 strategy outlines the government's ambition to provide a wholly digital customer journey, consisting of numerous intervention points, a swift identification of threats, and the facilitation of legitimate travel from start to finish.

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the key issues raised included:

- Striking the balance between facilitating flow and maintaining high security in a post-Brexit world
- Innovative technologies and effective collaboration with industry
- Introduction of outbound border checks
- Challenges for training and leadership, and the skills needed to deliver strategic aims



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

International Security & Climate Change

1 June 2021

Expert Insight

We were delighted to welcome Lt Gen Richard Nugee for this webinar exploring the implications of climate change for the UK defence sector, and how climate change is inextricably linked with the wider sphere of international security.



- A number of international and national security concerns surround climate change - the right apparatus alongside an effective government strategy will be important to minimise negative impact.
- The transition from oil and gas to greener energy sources will inevitably lead to geopolitical tensions, as countries dependent on oil exports will see their influence wane. Rare earth hotspots such as Congo will become areas of interest for superpowers such as China.
- The melting of the arctic is predicted to lead to free-flowing water in 15-20 years. This may trigger geopolitical conflicts, especially regarding fishing territories.
- Overheating of the regions due to climate change e.g. the Sahel, will contribute to further mass migration. As populations shift to different territories; unrest, poverty and chances of radicalisation will increase.
- The UK should look to play a more proactive role in addressing global climate issues, taking a leading role in reducing emissions and assisting with humanitarian disasters, as they have done in the Caribbean.
- Although the UK has shown a consistent capacity to respond to national climate threats, calls have been made to label climate change as a national security issue and allocate more government funds towards achieving national climate objectives such as Net-Zero.
- A successful approach going forward will rely on: horizon scanning - understanding and anticipating security issues; capacity building - building resilience and offering support in other countries; and building relationships - effective cooperation between national bodies and international players.

Presentation Spotlight



Defence is on the threshold of innovation and modernisation through the Integrated Review. The climate change and sustainability strategic approach is about embracing essential elements of this modernisation which Defence cannot afford to ignore. The imperative could not be clearer: Defence must and will act now.



Click [here](#) to read **The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach**

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions, key issues discussed included:

- Operational advantages from a military standpoint of environmentally friendly practices
- Russia's response as Europe becomes less reliant on gas
- Security of the supply of rare-earth materials
- A more equitable approach to climate change, as it does not recognise international boundaries

WIG members can listen to Lt Gen Nugee's presentation [here](#)



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Reflections on the future EU/UK relationship
23 June 2021

Expert Insight

The Trade and Cooperation agreement between the EU and UK was formally approved in April 2021, announced as a basis for a partnership 'amongst equals.' In light of this, we were delighted to be joined by Ambassador João Vale de Almeida, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom, to share his thoughts on how the EU/UK relationship might evolve. He touched on some key points:



- We are in the beginning phase of the governance of the relationship between the EU and the UK. The instruments (Withdrawal & Trade and Cooperation agreements) and bodies (the Joint Committee and the Partnership Council) are in place to guide this process going forward.
- Economic actors are confronted with a number of challenges that are characteristic of this transition e.g. changes to supply chains, changes to border controls.
- Whilst some changes may be temporary by nature, others will be structural, and will require long-term adaptation from both sides. Attentiveness to the quality of our relationship and building of trust is key.
- The relationship between the UK and the EU is by no means just bilateral in nature, it has a global dimension. There is an enormous responsibility for both actors to address global challenges.
- The EU and the UK must work towards having a common ground in our relationships with China, Russia, and those in the common neighbourhood.
- The UK was one of the most active members in tackling climate change within the EU. Cooperation between the actors must remain to ensure progress is made in this area, and the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November 2021 presents great opportunity for this.
- The EU and the UK share the same fundamental values. It is important to re-affirm commitment to democratic values and human rights through proactive action on the global stage.

Presentation Spotlight

We are in the beginning of a new cycle, a new process in our relationship, but this does not mean it will be less relevant or less important than it is today...our challenge is to make sure this transition is a productive and effective one.

This relationship has a great potential, and we should work to make the most out of this potential; economically, socially, and strategically.

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, key issues raised included:

- The impact of the pandemic on shared approach to biosecurity challenges
- Informal leadership in the EU now that the UK has left
- Opportunities for technology sharing and industrial collaboration programmes
- The complexity of the EU's relationship with Turkey

WIG members can listen to the Ambassador's presentation [here](#)



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Reflections on the G7 summit
20 July 2021

Expert Insight

Following the UK's successful hosting of the G7 2021 summit in Carbis Bay this June, WIG was delighted to welcome Jonathan Black, the Prime Minister's G7 & G20 Sherpa, for a webinar reflecting on the crucial discussions that took place. Jonathan touched on the points below:



- This year's G7 summit represented the first physical meeting of world leaders in the best part of two years.
- As chair of this year's summit, the UK invested time in order to reinvigorate the G7 format. Special emphasis was placed on addressing ministers in discussion, and creating a communique which would reflect the agreements made.
- The policy agenda covered a number of important topics, such as climate change, vaccine rollout, and support for the economy during the COVID recovery phase.
- The summit also focused on the forward agenda, setting the foundations to tackle topics such as global tax reform, finance and gender.
- The G20 has rightly become the primary forum for global economic issues given its make up of the most advanced economies.
- The G7 is not only a group of advanced economies, but of countries with shared democratic values. A major theme of this year's summit was returning to this original purpose, and the invitations of India, South Korea, South Africa, and Australia reinforced this.
- World leaders really appreciated the chance to come together in person. A monumental effort was made by those in charge of operations and logistics to make this happen safely during the pandemic.



The summit [in Carbis Bay] at leader level achieved what we are looking for it to achieve, a renewed unity and renewed purpose was demonstrated amongst the G7



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions, key issues raised included:

- Challenge of taking forward G7 aspirations into G20 negotiations, especially around issues that have historically met with some resistance e.g. ambitious conservation targets
- The likelihood of a collective international response to economic challenge posed by the COVID pandemic
- The government's top policy priorities regarding 'regulatory diplomacy'
- The pros and cons of digital diplomacy, and any positives aspects that could be retained moving forward

WIG members can listen to Jonathan's presentation [here](#)



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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Global Britain and multilateralism in a
changing world

1 September 2021

Expert Insight

This has been a pivotal year for the UK to establish itself as an independent international actor. The Integrated Review set out a vision for 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age', which included "an increased determination to seek multilateral solutions to challenges like climate change". We were delighted to host Professor Ngaire Woods CBE, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government and Professor of Global Economic Governance at Oxford University for a webinar to discuss what this might look like in a constantly evolving international context.



Some of the key issues Prof Woods highlighted included:

- The old world order has left leaders with habits or mindsets which make it difficult to navigate the new world order; namely the idea that there is one world system under US leadership, backed by common institutions and rules which can be used for expansive goals e.g. SDGs, open market economies, liberal democracy
- The world has now changed, not only due to the rise of China, but significantly as a result of divisive domestic politics fueled by misinformation
- Western governments have not yet managed to catch up and regulate the tech sector
- Mastery and deployment of AI positively as well as defensively will be crucial, and Britain needs to work with likeminded countries to develop capabilities with them while retaining an effective domestic ecosystem
- The integrated review proposes a Britain that will lead in shaping an open international order of the future, however there is a need to address contradictions at the operational level, such as recently seen in Afghanistan

Prof Woods set out a world of three different multilateralisms that are going to coexist:

- 1 International action which will be much more ad hoc coalitions of the willing. Behind that system is the summitry, G7 and G20, which are the most likely areas of coordination
- 2 Re-emergence of alliance multilateralism similar to Cold War era, with US and China working with development banks etc, and seemingly multilateral institutions are being drawn into one alliance or another
- 3 The existing international institutions in which Britain has historically had a leading role. There is a need to consider which of these institutions can be the most nimble in trying to navigate the new kind of multilateralism emerging

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions, key issues discussed included:

- The role and importance of 'soft power'
- The extent to which 'soft power' actors such as the BBC, universities, and cultural institutions can act independently of the UK government.
- Whether the occurrence of 'ad-hoc' international alliances is as a result of the existing economic institutions not being able to adapt to the changing economic landscape?
- What are the barriers to entry for new players or states engaging with existing international institutions, and should they be further opened up?

WIG members can listen to Prof. Ngaire Woods's presentation [here](#)



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People Series

- Page 34** **Taking Action on Social Mobility with Shaun McNally CBE, Social Mobility Champion, Ministry of Justice**

- Page 35** **D&I in 2020: A Year in Review**

- Page 36** **An Intersectional Approach to D&I with Sarah Churchman OBE, Chief Inclusion, Community & Wellbeing Officer, PwC**

- Page 37** **The Business Case for D&I**

- Page 38** **Managing a Dispersed Workforce**



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'People' Series

Taking Action on Social Mobility

4 November 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Shaun McNally CBE, Social Mobility Champion, Ministry of Justice to discuss ways in which the MoJ have tried to tackle the issue of social mobility. Some of the areas covered included:

- The importance of why the Ministry of Justice should reflect the society they serve. To do this, they need to attract people based on merit and potential, and on capability rather than cultural capital.
- The MoJ's work on social mobility has developed through three stages: learning about and building awareness of the issues; planning and engagement with experts; and delivery of a programme of activity to promote greater socio-economic diversity and inclusivity across the department.
- They have launched a three-year Social Mobility Strategic Plan. This aims to transform culture and link key people processes with a commitment to attracting, recruiting and developing a diverse population of talented staff.
- Their ambitions with this are to: link outreach to our talent pipeline; change mindsets alongside processes; find data-driven approaches; and to take a lead role in the UK social mobility movement.
- The key themes within this are: aspiration; confidence; opportunity; and progression.
- To date, the Ministry of Justice have achieved some large milestones when it comes to Social Mobility. These include:
 - Over 65,000 students engaged
 - Over 1,000 Work Experience Placements
 - Over 3,000 Mentoring connections
 - A network of over 1,250 Social Mobility Ambassadors
 - Senior Leader Champions across the Department



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- The Ministry of Justice's data driven approach and how they were able to use it to inform direction with their social mobility work.
- The extent of support and collaboration from flagship development schemes in the civil service such as the Fast Stream.
- Feedback from staff from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the Ministry of Justice around opening up opportunities.
- The work with external experts and academics and what learnings were taken from these collaborations.
- The scope for further collaboration with the private sector, perhaps some of the MoJ's delivery partners, to address social mobility.

WIG members can listen to Shaun's presentation [here](#)



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'People' Series

D&I in 2020: A Year in Review

16 December 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Charmaine De Souza, Assistant Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, Greater London Authority; Raj Morjaria, Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Direct Line Group; Lynne Connolly, Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Standard Life Aberdeen and Sanjay Aeri, Head of Diversity & Inclusion, HM Treasury to touch upon some of their key learnings from 2020, how the year has changed their approach to D&I and what needs to happen going forward.

Some of the areas that were touched upon included:

- COVID-19 and the subsequent move to working from home has helped to reinforce pre-existing inequalities. This includes the disproportionate share of caring responsibilities borne by women, health impacts experienced by ethnic minority communities and societally, between high and low-income roles.
- This has accelerated the digitalisation and hybridisation of working ways and has led to greater empathy. Individuals have been opening up their homes to colleagues, which has required greater understanding and has led to "more human" conversations. This has consequently led to increased safe spaces where individuals can discuss their experiences and issues they may not have previously
- Data-driven approaches are important but sharing people's lived experiences and adding colour to the data is very important and impactful in sparking awareness and creating change.
- Businesses are really starting to prioritise social impact and purpose, there has been a real push towards businesses operating in a more purposeful and ethical way. Wellbeing and equality have come to the forefront of priorities and it needs to be kept this way even as we transition back to the workplace.
- Senior leaders in business sometimes cannot relate to the barriers faced by more junior staff, especially from minority groups. Trialling initiatives, such as reverse mentoring, to try and help leaders gain broader perspectives have been successful in many organisations.
- The role of the line manager has also become increasingly important as one-size has not been able to fit all and the traditional office support network has changed considerably.
- 2020 has started many conversations but changing outcomes depends on hearing uncomfortable truths - debates need to be entered with honesty, and that is just the beginning.



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- What does it look and feel like when organisations are "leading the way" on diversity issues
- The best value that employee networks can add when time and resources are limited
- What is the future of diversity and inclusion as we enter 2021 and are post-transition period with Brexit
- How to introduce positive D&I cultures within businesses
- The common themes where culture change has been less successful

WIG members can listen to this panel discussion [here](#)



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'People' Series

An Intersectional Approach to D&I

19 January 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Sarah Churchman OBE, Chief Inclusion, Community & Wellbeing Officer, PwC to discuss best practice for building an understanding of intersectionality in an organisation and the main challenges that organisations face in creating a culture of intersectionality. Some of the areas that were touched upon included:



- Intersectionality as a concept is a useful bridge between early D&I efforts which focus on differences relative to a more mature approach which seeks to include those differences - no person is defined by one aspect of their personality and intersectionality acknowledges this.
- All organisations believe they are compliant with legislation but a simple compliance approach doesn't reap the benefits and the results that are needed to make true progress.
- Data has its pros and its cons. Whilst quantitative data is important it has to be equally balanced by qualitative insights - what are people really saying? Qualitative data insights engage people emotionally and we need to engage people both in their heads and in their hearts if people are going to commit to unpicking some of their thought processes and behaviours.
- Until people understand the science of decision making and how they may have made decisions in the past, particularly when it comes to people and talent, we are not going to move forwards.
- Most people believe that they are inclusive, but people don't know what they don't know - we only know our own experience - we need to understand the experience of others and that requires curiosity.
- The pandemic has proven that we need to improve our listening skills. Listening skills have been honed and this will be good for inclusion in the long term.

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Examples and guidance on how to undertake cultural assessments.
- Moving leaders away from tick box and data-only approach.
- Identifying and addressing gaps in financial/commercial literacy and cultural capital to make more inclusive hiring decisions.
- Unconscious bias training and how to improve its delivery.
- The use of supply chain management to drive diversity and inclusion, what works well and what is less successful.

WIG members can listen to Sarah's presentation [here](#)



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'People' Series

The Business Case for D&I

15 March 2021

Tara McGeehan, President, CGI UK & Australia

Tara started the day with a presentation looking at how D&I can have a clear impact on the performance of an organisation. There were three key takeaways from Tara's presentation:

- A focus on D&I makes financial sense for businesses – organisations with diverse executive teams outperform competitors by 36% on profitability (CBI 2020)
- Diversity at a senior level has a positive influence on the share performance of FTSE-250 organisations
- Choose to challenge! It is important to challenge organisations that you work with on their D&I agendas to see real change



Sir Ian Cheshire, Non-Executive Director, Barclays



Sir Ian Cheshire, Non-Executive Director, Barclays, spoke about the role of the Board in the D&I Agenda. Sir Ian focussed on three areas:

- The board is vital in setting the tone on inclusion, and it has a duty to ensure the organisation has a strategy with a clear roadmap that has been properly challenged and developed with the Senior Management Team, who then must implement the strategy – this is not for the Board to do
- The challenge of inclusion – if you have a truly inclusive culture, diversity will follow
- Culture - Sir Ian shared examples from his experience of mentoring and reverse mentoring, and the use of data to track and understand how an organisation is progressing with their D&I strategy

Panel Discussion - Developing Inclusive Talent Strategies

This was an expert panel featuring representatives from across the sectors; Abu Bundu-Kamara, Global Equity, Diversity & Inclusion International Leader, Boeing; Rebecca Jeffs, Colleague Experience Director, Serco; Lee Elliot Major OBE, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter; and Kerri-Ann O'Neill, People and Transformation Director, Ofcom. Some of the key topics of discussion included:

- How the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their organisations, and accelerated change to create a more inclusive culture
- Examples of how their organisations have developed and adapted talent strategies to reach a more diverse range of applicants
- The influence that COVID-19 has had on Social Mobility, and what steps organisations can take to minimise the negative impact





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'People' Series

Managing a Dispersed Workforce

8 September 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Kate Caulkin, Group HR Director, Department for Transport, and Louisa Bench, Director Global Talent and Development, British Council to discuss the challenges and opportunities that come with managing a dispersed workforce. They touched upon points including:

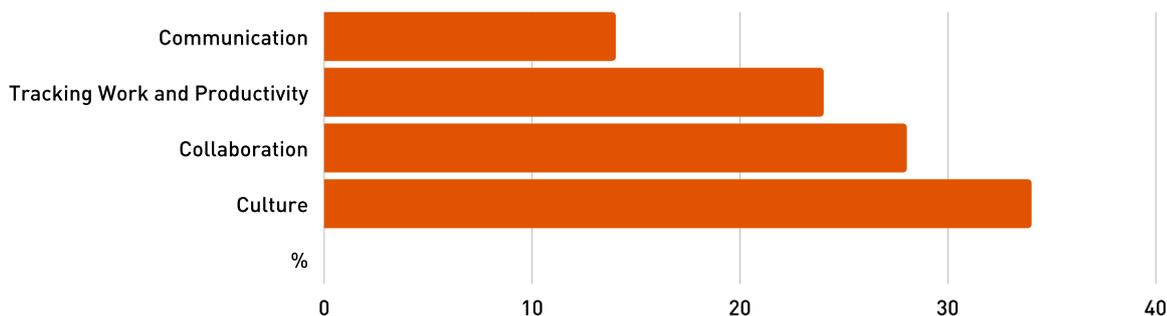
- Implementing a trust-based leadership style and a focus on outputs rather than time spent working can help with motivation and allows for external factors such as school closures and caring responsibilities
- The need to take a 'whole person' approach to line management, building informal connections to understand each individuals' lived experiences
- As organisations begin to return to some office-based activity, it is important to reflect on where certain tasks can be done, and to divide them by location e.g. workshop-style meetings can be office-based, whereas interviews can take place remotely
- Online meetings have levelled the playing field with colleagues of all seniority levels working by the same rules. It is important to keep this as we transition to hybrid meetings e.g. everyone joining a team call from their own desk rather than a group in one room with a screen in the corner for those who have joined remotely



Cross-sector Opinion

Our cross-sector membership listened in to the event, and we asked them:

What is the biggest challenge area that you and your line managers face in leading a dispersed workforce?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Ways for managers to facilitate hybrid meetings effectively
- How strict the divide is between roles that can and can't be done from home
- Managing the balance of understanding your team on an individual basis without being perceived as intrusive
- Addressing line management issues in leading teams remotely when they have been so used to supervising face-to-face

WIG members can watch the recording of the webinar [here](#)



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Technology and Digital Series

- Page 40 **Update on the Independent Fintech Strategic Review with Ron Kalifa, OBE**
- Page 41 **Virtual Live Briefing with Sana Khareghani, Head of UK Government Office for Artificial Intelligence**
- Page 42 **Reshaping Health and Social Care with Data: A Virtual Live Briefing with Simon Madden, Director of Policy & Strategy, NHSX**
- Page 43 **Virtual Live Briefing with Rob Shuter, CEO Enterprise, BT**



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'Technology & Digital' Series Update on the Independent Fintech Strategic Review 26 November 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Ron Kalifa OBE, Non-Executive Director at the Bank of England, and Chairman of Network International and FutureLearn, to discuss the state of play in the UK Fintech sector, and the Independent Strategic Fintech Review which he is leading.



Some of the key points he touched upon include:

- The UK is at the heart of Fintech growth and innovation. A well developed eco-system with strong venture capital funds and access to talent, make the UK an attractive base for Fintech start-ups.
- Despite having a leading number of start-ups, the UK is not attracting the same level of scale-up businesses - only 8 of 66 global Fintech unicorns are based in the UK.
- Absence of a centrally coordinated strategy, numerous barriers to investment, and rising global competitiveness are key challenges faced by the sector.
- The strategic Fintech review will outline priority areas in need of support, providing recommendations based on 5 workstreams: skills, talent, policy, national connectivity and global competitiveness.
- International collaboration is vital, particularly in the context of Brexit and COVID-19.
- Since 2016, Fintech bridges have been agreed with Singapore, China and Australia, signalling positive developments in cross-government and cross-sector cooperation.

Presentation Spotlight

A thriving Fintech sector could play a major role in our post-COVID economic recovery:

- The Fintech sector is worth around **£7 billion** to the UK economy annually, and employs approximately **60,000 people**.
- The UK is home to more than **1600 Fintech businesses**, the most of any European Country.
- The UK currently holds around **10% of global Fintech market share**, translating in a GVA (Gross Value Added) of **£9 billion** in 2019.

Our members' questions

A number of interesting questions were raised by our members. Some of the topics included:

- The impact of Brexit on the Fintech industry
- Barriers faced by Fintech businesses looking to invest in the UK
- The extent to which the UK government's Fintech ambitions work in tandem with strategies such as AI, and the National Data Strategy
- How the review will support the creation, and continued success, of Fintech hubs outside of London

WIG members can listen to Ron's presentation [here](#)



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'Technology & Digital' Series

Sana Khareghani, Head of the UK

Government's Office for Artificial Intelligence

3 March 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Sana Khareghani, Head of the UK Government's Office for Artificial Intelligence, to discuss the recent AI Roadmap report carried out by the AI Council. Sana started with an overview of the importance of AI. A few key points included:



- AI could contribute \$15.7tn to the global economy by 2030. The UK is one of the global leaders in the development of world class AI and is now number 3 in the global AI race, behind only the USA and China
- In 2018, the UK Government and AI community agreed the near £1bn AI Sector Deal to boost the UK's global position as a leader in developing AI technologies
- The AI Council was established in 2019 to provide dialogue between industry, academia, and government. The expert independent committee is made up of 21 of the UK's leading thinkers in AI from industry, academia, and civil society with a diverse range of experience and skills
- There are currently 5 priority areas for the Office for Artificial Intelligence; leadership and society, skills and talent, access to data, supporting adoption, and international engagement

Presentation Spotlight

Released in January 2021, the [AI Roadmap](#) sets out a collective vision to Government on the future direction of AI policy in the UK. Sana added that there are two fundamental messages in the Roadmap:

- Government must “double down” on recent investments made in AI
- We must look to the horizon and remain adaptable to disruption, responding to the rapid pace and evolution of science and technology and its application

The Government is now considering the recommendations made from the Roadmap on how best to move the UK towards the next chapter of its AI journey.

To sign-up to the Office for AI and AI Council newsletter, [click here](#).



Our members' questions

A number of interesting questions were raised by our members. Some of the topics included:

- The social acceptance of AI technologies
- Work on the underlying data infrastructure across Government
- What can be done to improve the digital foundations that AI depends on
- How the Roadmap will support understanding and collaboration across the sectors

WIG members can listen to Sana's presentation [here](#)



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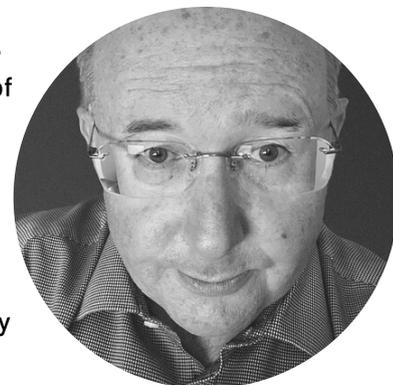
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'Technology & Digital' Series Reshaping Health and Social Care with Data 24 August 2021

Expert Insight

Following the recent announcement of a new health and social care data strategy, we were joined by Simon Madden, Director of Policy & Strategy at NHSX, to share some of the key thinking behind the strategy and to discuss next steps. He focused on three key areas:



- The power of data to improve outcomes for patients and service users: Simon outlined how everything we know about treating and caring for people today, has been learnt from caring for previous patients. Putting the right information in the hands of healthcare professionals at the right time, gives them the information they need to save lives. There is now greater transparency and public awareness of the role that their own data plays in improving the health and social care system
- Lessons learnt from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Simon spoke to how the pandemic has revolutionised the way we use health and adult social care data. The public has seen how data has been used to improve decision making at local, regional, and national levels, and that it is our duty to ensure the benefits and lessons learnt from the pandemic response are not lost
- Locking in beneficial change: To continue the momentum around better use of data, Simon outlined the need to build staff, and public confidence that the system is trustworthy. To do so, the improvements in data sharing, access, and use prompted by COVID-19, must become business as usual across the system. NHSX wants to ensure the sector is increasingly able to harness data safely, securely, ethically, and effectively for the benefit of patients and the system as a whole

Cross-sector Opinion

150 WIG members from across the sectors tuned in live, we asked them: what is the biggest data sharing challenge faced by organisations from across the sectors?



Our members' questions

The attendees raised a number of important questions, including:

- How is NHSX working together with local authorities to gather or share data?
- What work is NHSX planning to do with education providers, and by extension professional regulators, on embedding data skills in healthcare curricula?
- How will you gather front line, and patient/service user experience to drive innovation to simplify policy & process to enhance data sharing?
- Will NHSX have some levers to hold system providers to account for provision of standards in their systems?

WIG members can listen to Simon's presentation [here](#)



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'Technology & Digital' Series

Rob Shuter, CEO Enterprise, BT

2 September 2021

Expert Insight

We were joined by Rob Shuter, CEO Enterprise, BT to discuss the future of 5G in the UK. Rob started by setting the scene, then detailed when and how businesses can expect to implement 5G into their operations:

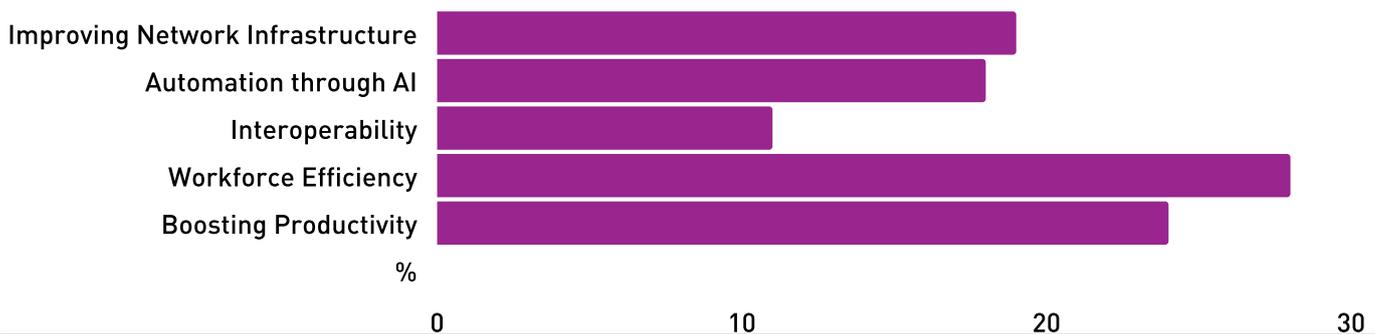


- We are on the cusp of the 5G revolution and won't understand its full impact for a few years to come. To get the most out of the technology, there is a need for the sectors to work hand-in-hand in a structured innovation process.
- 5G is designed for a completely different world with a diverse and large volume of devices that need to connect with high download and upload speeds, much greater reliability and low latency to allow realtime response
- The UK Government's ambition is to give the majority of the public access to 5G by 2027
- By 2023, EE's 5G network will cover more than half of the UK's population. By 2028, 5G will be available anywhere in the UK – through a combination of permanent 5G macro-networks, and a range of on-demand coverage solutions
- The most common problems that can be solved with 5G include; operational efficiency; productivity; safety; automation of operations; eliminating manual repetitive tasks; and, delivering staff training in efficient ways

Rob finished by saying that there is a need for greater awareness of the power of 5G, with only 30% of businesses currently see 5G playing a role in their roadmap. However, a recent Nokia survey revealed that 80% of people want to use 5G once they understand what it can do.

Cross-sector Opinion

We surveyed our members during the webinar, asking them: "Where do you see 5G playing a role in solving challenges faced by you organisation today?"



Our members' questions

A number of interesting questions were raised by our members. Some of the topics included:

- What kind of companies BT is looking to collaborate with in terms of developing 5G further in the UK
- How critical is the rollout of 5G for the roll out of autonomous vehicles?
- Which industry verticals are expected to benefit most from 5G use-cases and why
- The potential challenges to a successful rollout
- Developing the skills required to maximise 5G

WIG members can listen to Rob's speech [here](#)



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Economic Growth and Prosperity Series

- Page 45 **The Economic Landscape throughout the COVID-19 recovery period with Yael Selfin, Chief Economist, KPMG**
- Page 46 **COVID-19 Sector Updates: Automotive with Ian Howells, Senior Vice President, Honda Motor Europe**
- Page 47 **Industrial Strategy Council: Approaches to UK's Sectoral Landscape with Andy Haldane, Chair, Industrial Strategy Council**
- Page 48 **The Future of the High Street with Steve Rowe, Chief Executive, Marks & Spencer**
- Page 49 **Virtual Live Briefing with Chris Giles, Economics Editor, Financial Times**
- Page 50 **Webinar: Cross-Sector Collaboration in Focus: The Ventilator Challenge**



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'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

The Economic Landscape throughout the COVID-19 recovery period

3 September 2020

Expert Insight

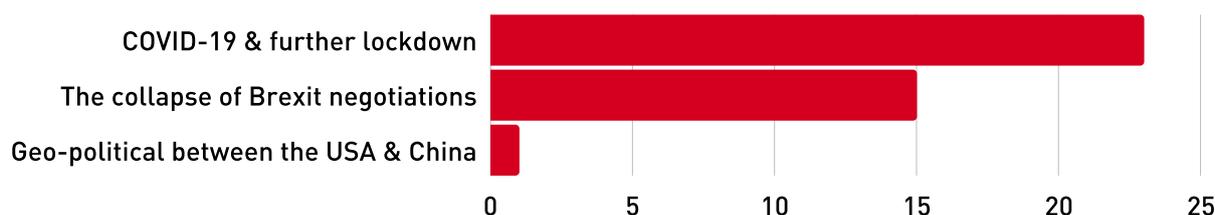
We were joined by Yael Selfin, Chief Economist at KPMG to discuss the impact that COVID-19 has already had on our economy and what further consequences we can expect. Yael touched on many points, including:



- Travel agency, air transport, hotels, rail, transport, bars and restaurants & other personal services have been the hardest hit sectors during this period.
- Some of these industries have been helped by people taking holidays within the UK or "staycations" however, this is expected to decline as we enter September and most people return to work.
- In terms of COVID-19's impact on regional output, the West Midlands (-10.6%), the East Midlands (-10%) and the East of England (-10%) have been the hardest hit in terms of % change of Gross Value Added.
- The GDP of next year will ultimately depend on when a vaccine is made available. KPMG have completed economic analysis on both a vaccine being made available in January and then later in April.
- The UK has likely seen the lowest dip in GDP as productivity continues to pick up again, however, it is likely that unemployment will peak in the coming months due to the end of the furlough scheme.
- Unemployment could rise to over 10% and it could take up to 5 years for unemployment levels to go back to pre-COVID levels, which were low at 3.9%. This will consequently have a knock-on effect on both consumer confidence and spending.
- Inflation is likely to remain under the Bank of England's target of 2%, with interest rates also looking likely to remain at a low level.

Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in. We asked them: What do you think poses the biggest risk to the economy in the next six months?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- What impacts COVID-19 may have on people's spending habits, specifically in terms of the UK retail industry and the UK property market.
- The effect on savings, both by generation and employment sector .
- Potential post-COVID boosts for regional centres, like Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle.
- What areas could be targeted when thinking about a green recovery post-pandemic.

WIG members can listen to Yael's presentation [here](#)



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'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

COVID-19 Sector Updates: Automotive

8 September 2020

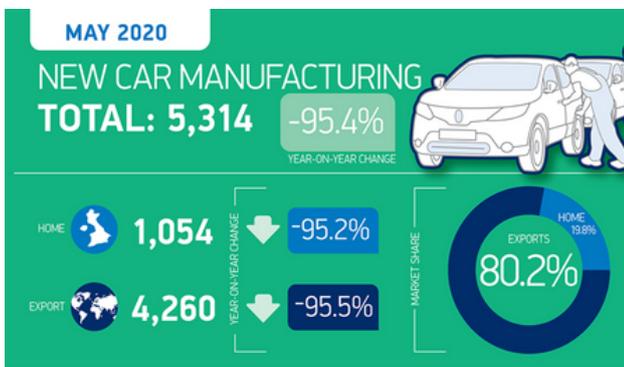
Expert Insight

We were joined by Ian Howells, Senior Vice President at Honda Motor Europe to discuss the impact that COVID-19 has had on Honda and the Automotive sector. Ian touched on many points, including:



- The crisis impacted the automotive sector on a global scale. The earliest impacts disrupted supply chains before the outbreak reached Europe– the recovery of the UK is linked to global conditions.
- The combination of a focus on employee safety, lockdown measures, lower consumer demand and economic uncertainty have resulted in a sharp decrease in UK car sales and manufacturing.
- Manufacturing in May 2020 decreased to -95.4% year on year. By July 2020, year on year, this was down to -20.8%. Plants are now up and running, with social distancing introduced. Capacity has been reduced slightly but overall, Honda are now manufacturing at target levels.
- A recovery has started as dealerships reopened and social distancing measures were clarified, but there remains ongoing uncertainty. The UK Government has a significant role to play in ensuring that the UK automotive sector remains productive and competitive, while meeting decarbonisation ambitions.

Presentation Spotlight



Our members' questions

Attendees from WIG's cross-sector membership tuned in live, and posed a number of important questions. Some of the key issues raised included:

- The pre-COVID-19 expectations for growth across Honda's range of vehicle types.
- Learnings around transitioning the workforce back to the workplace.
- If COVID-19 has given the sector a unique opportunity to approach the 2035 Electric Vehicle Ambition from a new starting point or if the priority recouping losses.
- Possible public and private sector collaboration to help accelerate Electric Vehicles to ICE baseline more efficiently and effectively.
- Honda's involvement with the innovation consortia and how they collaborate effectively with other organisations.

WIG members can listen to Ian's presentation [here](#)



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'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

Industrial Strategy Council: Approaches to the
UK's Sectoral Landscape

9 October 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Andy Haldane, Chair, Industrial Strategy Council and Chief Economist, Bank of England, Charlie Mayfield, Member, Industrial Strategy Council and Chair, Be the Business and Rebecca Riley, Director, The Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence. They discussed the UK's Sectoral Landscape and focused on areas, such as:

- For any industrial strategy to be successful, it needs to be relevant both to the nearer term challenges that we face but also an ambitious response to future opportunities.
- Next steps include: to review the current sectoral elements of the Industrial Strategy; to reframe the purpose of each sectoral intervention; choose which strategic and defensive priorities will be the focus for the next 10 years; and establish appropriate leadership and governance structures.
- The need for a services-focused intervention is now more necessary as manufacturing and service industries are more interdependent than ever before.
- An example of this is technology - technology is now so integral to competitiveness that there are few manufacturing or technology interventions that don't have a strong services dimension.
- Sectors are interlinked so to complement the sectoral lens, a task focused lens and an occupational lens will be important to help understand where the UK sits in global value exchange.
- This is a true collaboration between government and industry, and will require mutual understanding on both sides.



Our members' questions

Attendees from WIG's cross-sector membership tuned in live, and posed a number of important questions. Some of the key issues raised included:

- The links between the current thinking around the industrial strategy and other key priorities such as FTAs under negotiation and the levelling up agenda
- Sector strategies agreed for retail and hospitality and the challenges in agreeing these strategies
- Speaking to sectors that are not currently included and how this can be changed
- Mechanisms that can be deployed to drive stronger leadership, engage business in scale, support co-investment and build capacity in the system given sometimes weak local infrastructure

WIG members can listen to this presentation [here](#)



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'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

The Future of the High Street

14 October 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Steve Rowe, Chief Executive, Marks & Spencer who discussed his thoughts on the future of the high street. Steve touched on many points, including:



- COVID has accelerated a number of trends that have been happening for a long time, namely, shopping online. In the past five years, online shopping has increased by 80%.
- In the past five years there have also been 3500 'change of use' applications from retail to hospitality. In London alone, around 1/3 of shopping centres where M&S have a presence have had residential applications.
- Wages have continued to rise at a slower pace than inflation, meaning shoppers have less disposable income to spend. How that disposable income is being spent has also changed hugely, with an increased focus on the likes of technology.
- Before the start of COVID-19, 9.8% of retail space was empty and at the beginning of September, that had already moved to 10.8%.
- A good mix of retail, residential, hospitality and community hubs will be important - this will help to ensure that these are places that people do want to go to.

High Streets have been around in some format for around 1500 years and over that period they have repurposed continually - so the first thing I would say is that when people say to me 'is the High Street dead' I would say no, just changing.

Our members' questions

Attendees from WIG's cross-sector membership tuned in live, and posed a number of important questions. Some of the key issues raised included:

- Marks & Spencer's active online presence and the customer consequences of that shift.
- What can the government do to help the High Street and businesses thrive.
- The likely impact of Brexit on Marks & Spencer and the preparations taking place in the lead up.
- Areas that are adopting faster to the evolution of the High Street and how those local authorities are supporting these changes.
- The approach in regards to local planning to enable a successful High Street.
- How Marks & Spencer's views the transition of the UK economy to net-zero carbon emissions and the impact that it will have on M&S practices.

WIG members can listen to Steve's presentation [here](#)



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The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

Chris Giles, Economics Editor, Financial Times

17 March 2021

Expert Insight

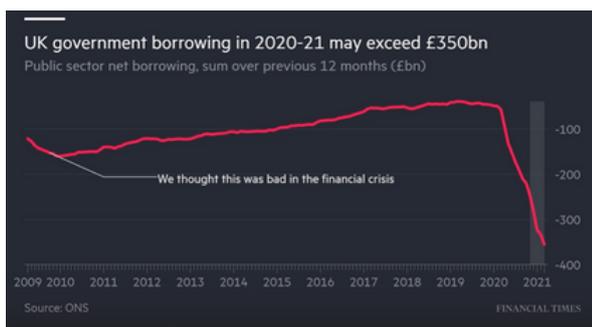
We were joined by Chris Giles, Economics Editor at the Financial Times, to discuss his thoughts on the UK's economic outlook and his predictions on what COVID recovery may look like. Chris touched on many points, including:



- Coronavirus has had an extraordinary impact on the economy, with GDP falling by 9.9% in 2020. Although recovery is underway, the economy remains 9.0% worse off than February 2020.
- Incomes have grown as forecasted before the pandemic, largely down to the implementation of various economic support measures by the government.
- The pandemic has discriminated across the sectors, with transport and hospitality suffering over 50% loss in output. In contrast, pharmaceuticals, research and delivery services have seen a growth in output.
- The current success of the domestic vaccine programme suggests short-term supply will recover quickly. However, in the long-run, uncertainty remains surrounding the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, future travel restrictions, and the impact of Brexit.
- Businesses and government have to cooperate to find ways of improving the long-term capacity of the economy. Areas for collaboration include levelling up, infrastructure projects such as HS2, and future trade agreements.

Presentation Spotlight

- The UK has plunged into the worst budget deficit outside the two World Wars, approaching £350bn.
- The government plans to make big cash cuts to get rid of the surge of spending caused by the crisis.



Our members' questions

Attendees from WIG's cross-sector membership tuned in live, and posed a number of important questions. Some of the key issues raised included:

- The implications of a rising budget deficit for UK citizens
- How differential global vaccine rollouts will impact the UK economy
- The impact of changes in high street culture on the economy

WIG members can listen to Chris' presentation [here](#)



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'Economic Growth & Prosperity' Series

Webinar: Cross-Sector Collaboration in Focus:

The Ventilator Challenge

29 June 2021

The panel discussed why The Ventilator Challenge was an important success story in the initial COVID-19 response period.



Dan Webster,
Deputy Director & Technology
Practice Lead, Complex
Transactions Team,
Cabinet Office



Clare Gibbs OBE,
Director of
Outsourcing,
Cabinet Office



Barbara Bradley,
Partner,
PA Consulting



Claire Walters,
Chief Commercial
Officer,
Unipart

Key statistics

The Ventilator Challenge was hailed a success and some important statistics are:

- Over 15,000 ventilators were designed, scaled and built in four and a half months
- The average cost per ventilator was c. 20% lower than the price paid on the market
- Value recovery delivered over £20m back to the taxpayer

Expert Insight

There were a number of points raised during the discussion, and below are a handful of the key learnings:

- The scale and speed required was a challenge as ventilators were needed in weeks not months, traditionally taking 3-5 years to design and an average 9 months for regulatory approval
- Further issues were faced in procurement and supply chain along with trying to understand the scale of the team required
- Trying to do it virtually was a challenge
- Solutions came from securing funding, collating a multidisciplinary team by matching subject matter experts and vetting suppliers efficiently
- Important to get the right cadence and daily rhythm, the team spoke to senior decision makers every evening regarding priorities and how to solve problems
- There was an element of creativity that came from adversity – especially in the transportation of parts
- Recognising the importance of looking after one another, and celebrating success when achieving something that has been incredibly hard
- Setting up the program with strong audit trails, clarity on decision making, and taking minutes from team meetings
- Understanding the possible need to stop and re-evaluate tasks, and make changes
- Agile response to unforeseen challenges
- Incredibly impressed with everyone involved with this process, the experience of collaboration was fantastic, and provides excellent hope for future projects

To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk