



Immigration Advice Authority Newsletter

May 2025



Welcome



Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter. We've introduced this to keep our stakeholders and partners informed of the latest news and developments across the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA).

In March we announced the permanent appointment of Heather Laing as the IAA's new Chief Executive. I would like to formally welcome Heather to her new role. Having been in post as the interim Chief Executive since January, her leadership, expertise, and commitment have already made a significant impact, and I have every confidence that she will continue to drive the organisation forward.

You can read more about Heather's background in this newsletter. You can also find out more about the appointment of our six new Non-Executive Directors, as well as important information on the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill.

With thanks for your continued support,

John Tuckett
Immigration Services Commissioner

Border Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill

The Home Office has tabled important amendments to the [Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill](#), which will provide the IAA with enhanced legislative powers for regulation and enforcement.

The [amendments](#) build upon the Bill's core aim to strengthen law enforcement's ability to identify, disrupt and prevent serious and organised immigration crime across the UK.

Furthermore, the changes align our powers with those of other regulatory bodies. They offer an opportunity to enhance our regulation and enforcement capabilities and to disrupt poor or illegal practices.

[More information about these changes and what they mean for the IAA is available on our website.](#)

New Non-Executive Directors appointed

Six Non-Executive Directors have been appointed for a three-year term to support our work.

Eni Bankole-Race, Susan Giles, Caroline Hattersley, Stephen McMahon, Julie Parker and Mike Venables will serve a three-year term, bringing their expertise to key governance bodies within the IAA. They join existing Non-Executive Director, Simon Smith, Chair of the Advisory Board and ARAC.



Top row (left to right): Caroline Hattersley, Eni Bankole-Race, Mike Venables.
Bottom row (left to right): Stephen McMahon, Susan Giles, Julie Parker.

[Read more about the background of our new Non-Executive Directors on our website.](#)

Latest publications

- [New sample Level 1 immigration assessment \(January 2024\)](#)

Meet our new Chief Executive

Following [our announcement of the permanent appointment of Heather Laing as Chief Executive](#), we caught up with Heather to find out more about her and her ambitions as she takes on the new role.



Tell us a bit about your background before joining the IAA

I have enjoyed a diverse career in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to joining the IAA, I spent nine years in the Home Office, where I had a number of high-profile roles in immigration. A graduate counter fraud specialist, a significant chunk of my pre-Home Office career was spent in fraud prevention, detection and deterrence with a number of public sector and outsource banking operations and as a Non-Executive Director for Cifas, a fraud prevention agency.

A few years ago, I completed a year-long post grad course at the Royal College of Defence studies, which allowed me to spend a little time in South Asia. Amongst other global issues encountered there, I met people who were displaced not only by conflict, but also by climate change. That experience challenged and changed my thinking on the impact of global issues on migration.

How have you spent your first few months in post?

Since joining the IAA, I have immersed myself in learning how the organisation works to ensure advice seekers are getting the best service possible from advice providers. This has helped me understand where we need to focus our efforts to become a more outward-looking and supportive regulator. I've had interesting, challenging and thought-provoking conversations with passionate, professional colleagues across the IAA and with representatives of the commercial and not-for-profit advice providing sectors.

I've been engaging with stakeholders, advisers and advice seekers to understand their challenges and how the IAA can support them. I'm also exploring how we can support development of the sector and where we can become more efficient and effective in regulating advice provision. I am a passionate collaborator, keen to keep exploring how we work together to understand and solve our challenges, whilst ensuring we remember people are at the heart of the immigration system.

Finally, what do you see as the biggest opportunity for the IAA over the next few years?

I see a huge opportunity in working together to create effective sector development programmes and build a community of practitioners that are committed to excellence in immigration advice provision. I look forward to working with all of you to facilitate, support and enable such a community.

Immigration Advice Authority

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