

Terms of Reference: Co-operatives and Mutuels Champion

Sponsor: HM Treasury

Reporting to: the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Small Business and Enterprise

Duration: 18 months from date of appointment

1. Role

Andrew Pakes MP is appointed as the Government's Co-operatives and Mutuels Champion.

2. Context and ambition

Co-operatives and mutuals have a valuable and distinct model of business ownership, operating across sectors including retail, agriculture, energy, housing, finance, and professional services. The Government has made a manifesto commitment to double the size of the co-operative and mutual sector, recognising its important contribution to inclusive economic growth, regional development, and community wealth building. The Government is committed to the growth of the sector and to creating an environment that facilitates and supports that growth.

3. Purpose

The role of the Co-operatives and Mutuels Champion ("the Champion") is to act as a conduit for the co-operative and mutual sector within government. The Champion will engage with the sector and its representatives, support the sector to raise opportunities and barriers to the sector's growth, and liaise with and between relevant government departments, including HM Treasury, to communicate priorities.

4. Role specification

The Champion will:

- Liaise with the sector to identify opportunities for, and barriers to, the growth of the sector, in line with the manifesto commitment.
- Communicate those opportunities and barriers to government and assist in developing relevant policy.
- Raise the profile across government and in Parliament of the co-operative and mutual model as a driver of inclusive economic growth, regional development, and community wealth building.
- Represent the interests of the sector in relevant government discussions and forums.

5. Duties and Activities

5.1 Stakeholder Engagement

The Champion will conduct ongoing consultation with trade bodies, industry representatives, and sector stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- Co-operatives UK
- The Building Societies Association, including the National Credit Union Forum (NCUF)

- All Together Money – The Credit Union Movement (formerly ABCUL)
- The Association of Financial Mutuals
- The Employee Ownership Association
- The Mutual and Co-operative Sector Business Council
- Relevant academic institutions and think tanks
- Mutual businesses of varying sizes and sectors

It is particularly important that engagement should be geographically representative and include voices from across the devolved nations and English regions.

5.2 Government Engagement

The Champion will:

- Act as an advocate for the sector in relevant ministerial and official-level discussions
- Engage with relevant government departments including HMT, BIST, MHCLG, DfE, DESNZ, and DEFRA as appropriate.

5.3 Ministerial Engagement

The Champion will meet with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Small Business and Enterprise at regular agreed intervals for the duration of the appointment to brief on sector interests, emerging issues, and the progress of their engagement activities.

6. Governance and Accountability

- The Champion will report directly to the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Small Business and Enterprise and will meet at least quarterly to ensure delivery of these Terms of Reference.
- The Champion will operate within the bounds of these Terms of Reference. Tax policy is outside the scope of the role.
- As with all such appointees, the Champion will follow the Seven Principles of Public Life and adhere to the Cabinet Office Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.
- The Champion is required to protect all official, confidential and privileged information obtained through their role. They must not, without appropriate authority, disclose or make use of such information for their own benefit or the benefit of others. These obligations continue after the appointment has ended. The Champion's activities are to be kept separate from any engagement that they carry out on a personal basis with the sector and other organisations.
- The Champion is not an employee of HM Government. Accordingly, nothing in these terms shall be construed as, or take to create, a contract of employment between the Champion and the Department.
- The role of the Champion is unpaid. HM Government will not provide any funding, remuneration or expenses to the Champion for their activities.

7. Review

These Terms of Reference may be amended by mutual consent of authorised officials from HM Treasury and the Champion. Any material change to scope or duration will be subject to ministerial approval.

The appointment of the Champion shall become effective upon signature of these Terms of Reference by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the Champion. The appointment may be terminated by either party or by mutual consent. These Terms of Reference and the Champion's appointment shall be reviewed after 18 months, on 28 April 2028, or at the end of the Parliament, whichever comes sooner.

8. Conflicts of Interest

Any significant conflicts of interest must be declared to HM Treasury at the outset and on an ongoing basis. A full declaration of interest process has been conducted in the usual way for direct ministerial appointments. The Champion will comply with any measures and mitigations set out by HM Treasury's Permanent Secretary, with support from the Propriety and Ethics Team if required.