

## **Appendix A: Commissioner Biographies**

### **Darra Singh, OBE – Chair**

Darra is a member of EY's leading local public sector advisory team. In his role as partner he leads in advising local authorities on how to achieve efficient and enhanced services in the face of financial and delivery challenges. Darra is also a member of the Advisory Government leadership team leading on strategy.

Darra was previously Chief Executive at Job Centre Plus, also of Ealing and Luton Councils, and chaired the government-appointed Communities and Victims Panel, which investigated the London riots.

Before joining the DWP, in November 2009, Darra had been the Chief Executive Officer of Ealing Council for four years and prior to that had been the Chief Executive of Luton Council.

He started as a housing case worker in Tyneside and London in 1984, and then worked for a variety of housing bodies in the voluntary sector before becoming a director of the North British Housing Association in 1991. He was later appointed Chief Executive of the Asra Greater London Housing Association, which specialises in housing ethnic minority tenants, and then worked for Hexagon, another London-based housing association.

In 2004 Darra was awarded an OBE for services to local government.

### **Alan Downey**

Alan Downey began his career in 1981 as a fast-stream civil servant at the Department of the Environment, where he worked in a number of policy areas, including local government finance, housing, inner cities and environmental protection, and was private secretary to successive Ministers of Local Government.

He left the civil service in 1989 to join KPMG, spending the next 25 years as an adviser to numerous public sector clients, including government departments, arm's length bodies, local authorities and NHS trusts. He became a partner in 1997 and held various leadership positions, including Chief Operating Officer of the Management Consulting practice and latterly Head of Public Sector for Europe, Middle East & Africa.

He retires from KPMG in June 2014 and is taking up a number of non-executive positions on the boards of public sector and charitable organisations.

### **Anita Charlesworth**

Before joining the Health Foundation Anita worked at the Nuffield Trust as Chief Economist from 2010. She led the Trust's work on health care financing and market mechanisms.

Previously Anita was Chief Analyst and Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Director of Public Spending at the Treasury, where she led the team working with Sir Derek Wanless on his reform of NHS funding in 2002. Anita has a Masters in Health Economics from York University and has worked as an

Economic Advisor in the Department of Health and for SmithKline Beecham pharmaceuticals in the UK and USA.

Anita is a non-executive director of the Whittington NHS Trust and a Trustee of Tommy's, the baby charity (charity number: 1060508).

Anita is a member of the Outcomes Framework Technical Advisory Group, the Social Investment Advisory Group and the Economics of Social and Health Care Research Unit Advisory Group.

**Bridget Rosewell, OBE**

Bridget is a professional economist and business woman.

She has founded several economic consultancies, all of which are still successfully operating, and also has several non-executive roles with major organisations.

Her interests include risk and risk management, infrastructure and its funding, public and private sector co-operation, planning policy and corporate management. She publishes and presents in these areas as well as working with clients.

Bridget's current business interests include chairing Volterra Partners, Chair of Audit for Network Rail, Chair of Risk for Ulster Bank, With Profits Committee for the Co-operative Bank, and providing professional assistance to a variety of clients.

Bridget was the Consultant Chief Economic Adviser to the Greater London Authority from 2009 to 2012 and between 2002 and 2008 she was the Chief Economist to the GLA.

Her research interests focus on the economic performance of local economies, the role of infrastructure, the performance of markets, and business organisations. She is especially interested in the application of the tools of complex systems analysis to these issues.

Bridget was awarded an OBE in the 2013 Birthday Honours list for services to the economy.

**Jonathan Portes**

Jonathan is the Director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

Previously, he was Chief Economist at the Cabinet Office, where he advised the Cabinet Secretary, Gus O'Donnell, and Number 10 Downing Street on economic and financial issues.

Since joining HM Treasury in 1987, he has held various positions in the civil service and the private sector. He was Chief Economist at the Department for Work and Pensions and Chief Economist at the Cabinet Office before becoming the director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in February 2011.

His main areas of interest include fiscal policy, labor markets and immigration.

**Paul Gray CB**

Paul Gray CB, currently the Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee, is a retired Civil Servant who was formerly Executive Chairman of HM Revenue and Customs and, before that, the Second Permanent Secretary in the Department for Work and Pensions.

He originally trained as an economist, and his earlier career included a wide range of posts in HM Treasury and periods as the Economic Affairs Private Secretary to the Prime Minister and as a corporate planner in the private sector.

Paul is now an associate of Praesta Partners LLP, an executive coaching and mentoring firm. He also serves as Chair of Governors of a comprehensive secondary academy, and as a member of the Council, and its Strategy and Resources Committee, at the University of Essex.

**Stephen Hughes**

Stephen Hughes is a strategic adviser to CIPFA on local government after leaving the post of Chief Executive at Birmingham City in February which he held for eight and half years.

At Birmingham he led the ambitious Business Transformation process and drove the Council's commitment to the local economy. Prior to that, Stephen's career was in finance, having led the Finance function at Islington and Brent councils and gone to Birmingham as Director of Resources. He has also been a finance policy officer at two local authority associations and spent a year on secondment managing Council Tax and Business rates policy for the then DETR. Apart from CIPFA, Stephen has a number of other roles including as a Board Member of Housing and Care 21.

**Stephen Lewis**

Steve Lewis became CEO, UK & Western Europe, RSA in January 2015. Previously he was CEO of Zurich's UK General Insurance business,

Steve is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, having qualified in 1990.

**Professor Tony Travers**

Tony Travers is Director of LSE London, a research centre at the London School of Economics. He is also a Visiting Professor in the LSE's Government Department. His key research interests include local and regional government and public service reform.

He is currently an advisor to the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee and the Communities and Local Government Select Committee. He has published a number of books on cities and government, including Failure in British Government, The Politics of the Poll Tax (with David Butler and Andrew Adonis), Paying for Health, Education and Housing: How does the Centre Pull the Purse Strings (with Howard Glennerster and John Hills) and The Politics of London: Governing the Ungovernable City.



**LGA Executive**

22 January 2015