



Department for
Business & Trade



Competition & Markets Authority, Panel Members

Candidate Information Pack

Spring 2026

Ministerial Message to Candidates

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Panel Member at the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA).

The CMA is the UK's independent competition and consumer agency, promoting competition for the benefit of consumers, businesses and the UK economy. The CMA plays a crucial role in supporting the government's growth mission. Free and fair competition and effective consumer protection support growth by driving forward innovation, increasing productivity, and encouraging investment – including international direct investment – into the UK.

The CMA is implementing an exciting change programme based around delivering the “4Ps” – improved Pace, Predictability, Proportionality and Process. In doing so the CMA has taken a leading role in driving the regulatory reform agenda, a key priority for the government.

As made clear in our recently published proposals [to refine our competition regime](#), this government recognises the need to introduce legislative reform that will further facilitate the CMA's 4Ps programme. The aim is to ensure the framework continues to promote effective competition, support economic growth, and deliver benefits for consumers and businesses, while maintaining the independence of the CMA.

Our proposals maintain the importance of dedicated expert decision-makers at the heart of determining outcomes in the UK competition regime, whilst bringing accountability for merger control and markets case outcomes within the purview of the CMA Board.

Under the current system, joining as a Panel Member, you will play a critical role as a decision-maker in complex, high-profile competition and regulatory cases covering a wide range of subject areas. Should our proposed model come into law, there will be a similar need for expert decision-makers bringing the same level of skill, expertise, diversity of thought, critical thinking and influence. I would very much expect that, as an existing CMA Panel Member, you would be in a very strong position to be appointed to this new expert pool under the revised regime.

We are looking to appoint exceptional individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experience who can maintain the CMA's well-earned reputation for sound,

evidence-based decision-making, under the current regime and potentially into the new decision-making model.

If you have the qualities we are seeking and are keen to play a central role in ensuring the CMA delivers for businesses and consumers across the UK, we look forward to hearing from you.

Kate Dearden, MP

VACANCY DESCRIPTION

The Organisation:

The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer body. It promotes competition for the benefit of consumers, both within the UK and internationally, and its aim is to ensure that markets work well for consumers, businesses and the economy.

The CMA is a non-Ministerial department established by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 on 1 April 2014, merging the Office for Fair Trading and the Competition Commission. The CMA has staff in London, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff, Manchester and Darlington.

The Secretary of State for Business and Trade sets the policy framework for competition which gives the CMA powers to investigate mergers, breaches of the Competition Act 1998 (CA98) prohibitions, poorly functioning markets and to protect consumers from unfair trading practices. The CMA also enforces the new pro-competition digital markets and strengthened consumer regimes under the Digital Markets Competition and Consumers Act 2024 and considers appeals against the economic regulators' price control decisions.

The CMA is directly funded by His Majesty's Treasury and is accountable to Parliament. At the beginning of each Parliament, a non-binding Strategic Steer to the CMA is published by the government outlining the key focuses and challenges for competition and consumer protection. Sponsorship for the organisation is shared between HM Treasury in relation to funding and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) in relation to policy and Board level appointments.

The Role: Panel Member

The CMA is seeking up to 12 Panel Members to sit on Inquiry Groups comprising Panel Members that will make decisions on cases.

Members of the CMA's Panel conduct inquiries and make decisions on some of the most significant, complex and high-profile investigations that the CMA is responsible for including phase 2 merger investigations, market investigations and appeals from the UK's economic regulators. Members of the Panel may also be decision-makers on cases concerning alleged breaches of the prohibitions on anti-competitive agreements and

abuse of dominance, alleged breaches of consumer protection and investigations of whether to designate a firm with strategic market status.

Current Panel Members have described their experience with the CMA as one of the “most intellectually stimulating, important and satisfying roles” that they have performed during their careers.

The government is currently consulting on a range of proposed reforms to the competition regime, which include changes to decision-making in the most significant mergers and markets decisions that would ensure that those ultimately accountable to Parliament (or their delegates) are able to be directly involved in decision-making. The proposed changes are expected to further enhance the efficiency, timeliness and predictability of decision-making in the mergers and markets regimes, while also ensuring that the vital independence of CMA decision-making is safeguarded. They also align the CMA’s approach with that already adopted for its digital markets functions. Specifically, the government is proposing to replace Panel-led Inquiry Groups with decision-making involving sub-committees of the Board, appointed by a Mergers Board Committee and a Markets Board Committee.

Under this proposed reform the CMA Board sub-committees would each be comprised of at least 50% non-staff members, drawn from either the CMA’s Board or from a pool of expert decision-makers who will provide diversity and experience across decision-making (the Pool). The government anticipates that members of the Pool will be drawn from the CMA’s Panel Members, and from candidates who are successfully appointed to the CMA’s Panel as a result of this campaign.

Changes to the decision-making model will be subject to the passage of legislation and will take time. In the meantime, current and new Inquiry Groups under the merger and markets regime will continue and will require the CMA to maintain a sufficient number of Panel Members. Panel Members will continue to be involved in decision-making across the CMA’s other functions, including under the Competition Act, consumer enforcement, and the digital markets competition regime.

Over the coming months, government intends to review the role played by the CMA Panel in regulatory appeals, including reviewing price determinations and decisions by sectoral regulators such as those in the energy and water sectors. This review will be informed by decisions in sector specific reviews and take account of cross-cutting work on the updated approach to economic regulation as set out in the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy.

Person Specification:

The current Panel comprises people from across the UK with a broad range of experience, expertise and professional backgrounds including competition law, economics, business, investment, professional services, consumer advocacy and academia.

We are seeking to refresh the Panel with people who bring a diverse range of experience and backgrounds. In addition to those with experience in competition and consumer law, economics, business, digital and technology, we are particularly interested to hear from people with backgrounds in finance or accountancy and specialists in news and media, communications, payment systems and utilities.

All appointees will serve as a member of the Panel. Panel Members are selected to serve on Inquiry Groups. Some members may also be appointed to specialist panels from whom members are selected for certain inquiries relating to news and media, communications, payment systems or utilities.

Inquiry Groups are chaired by Inquiry Chairs who usually serve for three or four days a week and are remunerated accordingly. There will be a need to appoint new Inquiry Chairs as some appointment terms are due to end. Panel Members may be eligible to be considered for such roles when they become available.

It is essential that your application **demonstrates substantial evidence of achievement** in the following areas:

Essential Criteria

- Experience at a senior level in the private, public or third sector.
- A broad understanding of consumer, business, and economic matters.
- The ability to think strategically, to offer direction on the analysis of issues, and questioning skills to probe the detail of the matter at hand.
- The ability to absorb and utilise large quantities of detailed information and to assess and analyse complex economic, legal and regulatory arguments from a competition perspective.
- The ability to work to tight timescales in considering evidence, offering consistency and logical analysis.
- The ability to assess and weigh sometimes conflicting, often complex, technical, evidence and arguments and reach fair judgements based on sound reasoning.
- Strong team-working and interpersonal skills to work collaboratively with other group members and staff to explore the issues, with the aim of reaching collective agreement on the matter at hand.

Desirable Criteria

- Recent experience in one or more of these areas: business and finance, digital and technology, competition and/or consumer policy and enforcement, public or regulatory policy, professional services (including legal services), and working with the devolved administrations.
- For specialist roles, relevant experience and skills in one of the following sectors: news and media, communications, payment systems or utilities.

Terms of Appointment:

Panel Members are appointed by the Secretary of State for the Department for Business and Trade for up to eight years, which is non-renewable.

Remuneration

Panel Members work according to the caseload and their own availability and are paid a daily rate of £400, which is set by the Department; there is no pension provision.

Time Commitment

Panel Members are expected to commit on average 2 days per week when assigned to an Inquiry Group, though this may not be evenly spread across the year or the period of an inquiry with some phases of an inquiry requiring a more intensive commitment. The overall time commitment varies depending on the assignment:

- a phase 2 merger reference has a statutory time limit of 24 weeks (with a possible extension of up to 8 weeks), although some cases may be determined more quickly where appropriate
- regulatory appeals on price controls generally last 6 months (energy appeals can extend by a month to 7 months and references up to 12 months)
- market investigations have a statutory time limit of 18 months (with a possible extension of up to 6 months)

There will be times when a Panel Member's work is intensive and other times when a Panel Member may have to wait for a case. Panel Members are expected to attend regular seminars and additional training when offered and will be able to claim for this time. Appointment to an Inquiry Group may depend on availability.

Panel Members will be expected to travel within the UK for significant case meetings, site visits, and training. They are eligible to claim for receipted travel expenses in line with CMA policies.

Panel Members must demonstrate a high standard of corporate and personal conduct and will be expected to meet the ethical standards expected of public office holders embodied in the [seven principles of public life](#) in all aspects of the role and abide by relevant CMA values, policies and procedures.

You should particularly note the requirement to declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest that arises in the course of the office's operations and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies. Panel Members' relevant interests will be disclosed as part of the appointment process for the inquiries in which they are involved.

Compliance with the CMA's [conflict of interest policy](#), and the principles for [Business Appointment Rules for Civil Servants](#) will apply for up to two years post appointment.

Full Terms and Conditions will be issued with the successful candidates' appointment letters.

DBT is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, transgender and working patterns and to the principle of public appointments on merit with independent assessments, openness and transparency of process.

HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is: **11:00 on Monday 27 April 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you are shortlisted for the role, due diligence will be carried out using publicly available information.

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process, requisite security clearance, and the Advisory Assessment Panel can be found on the Public Appointments webpage for this vacancy.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the role or the process further, please email Lucia Powell (Campaign Manager) dbtappointments@businessandtrade.gov.uk who can direct your enquiry.

To apply for this post please the following documents to via the [Public Appointments Digital Service](#). The deadline for applications is **Mon 27 April 2026 at 11:00**.

In order to apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#).

1. Submit a **Supporting Statement** which addresses the criteria in the Person Specification, and which demonstrates evidence of your suitability for the role against these criteria (*max length 2 sides A4*)
2. **A CV** – (*max 2 sides of A4*)
3. Complete your **Equality Information** and **Declaration of Outside Interests**.

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process, requisite security clearance, and the Interview Panel can be found on the Public Appointments webpage for this vacancy at <https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>.

INDICATIVE CAMPAIGN TIMETABLE AND SELECTION PROCESS

Indicative timetable

Online briefing with senior CMA and DBT staff: 20 April 2026 15:00

Register to attend/receive a recording of the event [HERE](#).

Closing date for applications: **Monday 27 April 2026 at 11am**

Panel sift: Week commencing **11 May 2026**

Informal conversations (not assessed) with Senior CMA Executives: Late May 2026

Interviews: due to be held between **Fri 5 June** and **Wednesday 10 June** in person at the CMA, Canary Wharf, London.

Appointment Announced: **June or July 2026.**

Start date: by agreement

Selection Process

1. Applications will be sifted by the Advisory Assessment Panel and a shortlist of candidates for interview drawn up.

2. A formal interview with panel of four interviewers comprising a presentation task, questions, and discussion.

Please note that shortlisted candidates may be offered informal call with the CEO of the CMA and possibly also a senior member DBT or the CMA – *these will not be assessed.*

Recruitment Panel:

The Assessment Panel will comprise:

- **Panel Chair:** Alex Williams, Deputy Director, Competition Policy, DBT
- **CMA Board Representative:** Cyrus Mehta, Non-Executive Director, and Panel Inquiry Chair
- **CMA Executive representatives:** Joel Bamford, Executive Director for Mergers or Chris Prevett, General Counsel (*splitting interview time*)
- **Independent Panel Member:** Rebecca Benneyworth, ICAEW Council Member

DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve and this is an important part of the government's levelling up agenda.

We collect data about applicants' characteristics and backgrounds, including information about people's educational and professional backgrounds, so that we can make sure we are attracting a broad range of people to these roles and that our selection processes are fair for everyone. Without this information, it makes it difficult to see if our outreach is working, if the application process is having an unfair impact on certain groups and whether changes are making a positive difference.

When you submit your application, your responses are collected by the Cabinet Office and the government department(s) managing your application. The data is used to produce management information about the diversity of applicants. You can select "prefer not to say" to any question you do not wish to answer. **The information you provide will not be seen by the Advisory Assessment Panel who review applications against the advertised criteria and conduct interviews.**

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

What is a conflict of interest?

Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for actual or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as a perceived conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of an actual conflict. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a board member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give the Selection Panel as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

No - each case is considered individually. If you are short listed for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment; they can withdraw your application from the competition.

What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?

Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

This situation may arise where the applicant is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the board the Chief Executive and the General Counsel of the body concerned, (and if necessary, they may consult with the Sponsoring Department) to decide whether or not the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.



It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such, cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.

Areas where a conflict could arise

Conflict risk may arise in relation to financial and non-financial interests. For example, it may arise due to investments that an individual holds, or in relation to relationships that the individual has, both in personal and professional terms. Full details of the CMA's approach to conflicts management of relevant interests can be found in the [Conflicts of Interest policy](#).

PRIVACY NOTICE

The Cabinet Office will use your data in line with our [privacy policy](#).

You can also access the Department for Business and Trade's [public appointments privacy notice](#).

MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you feel your application has not been treated fairly and you wish to make a complaint, you should initially send an email to: dbtappointments@businessandtrade.gov.uk

If you are not content with our response, please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at: publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Further information on complaints procedure can be found on the [Commissioner for Public Appointment's website](#).