

# Future paths for Money and Pensions

Coin Street Community Builders - 108 Stamford Street - SE1  
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Introduction and welcome: The future path for money and pensions – Sir Hector Sants (Chair, Money and Pensions Service)

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Good afternoon friends, colleagues and associates.

I am delighted to be the first to introduce you to the new permanent name of the UK's Single Financial Guidance Body: ***the Money and Pensions Service***.

This name was chosen to be clear, straightforward and effective. This is what we intend to be.

We also have a clear mission – given to us by parliament:

***“A society where everyone makes the most of their money and pensions.”***

We are here today to outline the first steps our new organisation is taking as we seek to complete that ambitious mission.

We had invited the man who set us on our mission to speak today. Unfortunately, the significant demands currently being placed on parliamentarians means the Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion could not be here. But if he was here, I know the minister would be too modest to claim the great credit he deserves in leading

the Financial Guidance and Claims Act – which established our organisation – into a reality.

Yet he also deserves gratitude for securing a clear parliamentary mandate for us, which puts financial wellbeing at its heart: because financial wellbeing matters.

If everyone were to truly make the most of their money and pensions, it would not just transform the state of the nation's financial wellbeing, but our overall levels of wellbeing.

I believe financial health should be considered just as important to personal wellbeing as physical and mental health. Our ambition is to make people think of financial wellbeing as a crucial part of living a happy and contented life.

Of course, our vision is not a complete solution to financial wellbeing – as those who just do not have enough will struggle even if they are financially capable – but everyone making the most of their money and pensions would be a significant step forward.

The vision may be clear, but we have much work to do to be sure of the best way forward or, in formal terms, to articulate a clear achievable strategy.

Our Strategy and Insights Director, Sarah Porretta, will speak in more detail later about how we will engage with you to help formulate the Money and Pensions Service 3-year Corporate Plan and longer-term National Strategy; which are to be published in November 2019.

But from my perspective, we already have a broad understanding of our direction of travel for the next five years, namely:

1. To “Raise awareness” - of the importance of financial wellbeing through:

- establishing the importance of financial wellbeing as a top priority for policy makers; and
- raising its awareness in society to a level comparable to that of mental and physical health.

2. To significantly increase capacity for remediating financial distress – “help the vulnerable” – through:

- ensuring all those who need guidance on retirement planning receive it;
- ensuring all those who are in problem debt can access free debt advice; and
- working to ensure that we help those individuals where financial distress impacts their mental and physical health.

3. To “establish a credible National Strategy” to achieve our vision of a society where everyone makes the most of their money and pensions.

Achieving the vision will require individuals to:

- be financially educated, and
- be equipped with the necessary tools, guidance and advice, and

- have access to the necessary services; which should be both affordable and ethical, **and**
- have the right behavioral attitude to money.

The last point is crucial to achieving the Strategy. Currently the issue of shame about problem debt and poor financial decision making, and the lack of individuals willingness to engage with money matters, are significant barriers to progress. It is essential society confronts the issue of financial shame if we are to progress.

4. Our final objective is an internal one - “establish an efficient, sustainable and respected organisation”.

Whilst this is self-evident, it is a vital piece of the puzzle. I am therefore pleased we have in place such a driven and passionate Chief Executive as John Govett.

John has worked tirelessly with his team over the past 6 months to make the theoretical tangible and develop theory into reality. He deserves great credit in getting us this far.

But as John will outline to you, there is much work left to do to maximise our impact and empower people to make the most of their money and pensions. I look forward to working with you to make that vision reality and make a difference to millions of lives.

Thank you