

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE - SPRING 2019

Compliance and Financial Regulation

Caroline Bradley¹

Milton Regan. [3](#)

Report of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards :. [5](#)

Banking Standards Board.. [34](#)

Transforming Culture in Financial Services (FCA). [37](#)

Kevin Stroh, FRBNY. [38](#)

FSB’s Guidance on Risk Culture. [42](#)

Strengthening Governance Frameworks to Mitigate Misconduct Risk: A Toolkit for Firms and Supervisors. [44](#)

Questions. [44](#)

We have seen two examples of non-compliance² with sanctions measures so far (Standard Chartered and Société Générale). And the Danske Bank scandal illustrates issues relating to anti-moneylaundering (AML) compliance, which are transnational, and which have led to Danske Bank being excluded from Estonia,³ and to investigations by

¹ Professor of Law, University of Miami School of Law, PO Box 248087, Coral Gables, FL, 33124, cbradley@law.miami.edu ; <http://blenderlaw.com/> . © Caroline Bradley 2019. All rights reserved.

² In this section of the materials I am focusing on issues of non-compliance and misconduct by people working in finance, rather than on more general issues of economic crime and corruption, as to which see, e.g., Henry E. Hockeimer, Jr., FBI Establishes Anti-Corruption Team in Miami, National Law Review (Mar. 5, 2019); FinCen, Advisory on Human Rights Abuses Enabled by Corrupt Senior Foreign Political Figures and their Financial Facilitators (Jun. 12, 2018); House of Commons Treasury Committee, Economic Crime - Anti-money Laundering Supervision and Sanctions Implementation, HC 2010 (Mar. 8, 2019).

³ Martin Selsoe Sorensen, Estonia Orders Danske Bank Out After Money-Laundering Scandal, New York Times (Feb. 20, 2019).

the SEC, US Department of Justice, and regulators in the UK, France and Denmark.⁴ The European Banking Authority launched an investigation into whether the Estonian and Danish regulators breached their obligations under EU law relating to the Danske Bank AML issues.⁵ In March 2019 there were news stories about a “Troika Laundromat” implicating a number of financial institutions,⁶ and the CFTC published an Enforcement Advisory relating to foreign corrupt practices.⁷

Within domestic regulatory regimes compliance is a perennial issue,⁸ but firms carrying on business in multiple jurisdictions through subsidiaries and branches raises some additional questions about the possibility of effective cross-border supervision.⁹ And, examples of transnational non-compliance raise some additional questions about fixing the culture of finance. A concern about the culture of finance has been expressed in the US,¹⁰ as well as in the UK and in other markets.¹¹ Regulatory responses to the issue of misconduct range from rules designed to limit the possibility of misconduct, such as reforms to benchmarks,¹² to new regimes for regulating senior employees in

⁴ Erik Sherman, Danske Bank Now Faces SEC Money Laundering Investigation, *Fortune* (Feb. 21, 2019).

⁵ European Banking Authority Press Release, EBA Opens Formal Investigation into Possible Breach of Union Law by the Estonian and Danish Competent Authorities Regarding Money-laundering Activities Linked to Danske Bank (Feb. 19, 2019).

⁶ See, e.g., Juliette Garside, Q&A: What Is the 'Troika Laundromat' and How Did it Work?, *The Guardian* (Mar. 4, 2019).

⁷ CFTC, Enforcement Advisory: Advisory on Self Reporting and Cooperation for CEA Violations Involving Foreign Corrupt Practices
<https://www.cftc.gov/sites/default/files/2019-03/enfadvisoryselfreporting030619.pdf>

⁸ See, e.g., Mark Egan, Gregor Matvos & Amit Seru, *The Market for Financial Advisor Misconduct*, 127 *JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY* 233 (2019) (noting that 7% of financial advisors have misconduct records).

⁹ We have previously considered the issue of difficulty of compliance with inconsistent regulations in different jurisdictions.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Kevin J. Stiroh, Executive Vice President, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *The Complexity of Culture Reform in Finance*, Remarks at the 4th Annual Culture and Conduct Forum for the Financial Services Industry, London (Oct. 4, 2018).

¹¹ See, e.g., High-level summary: BCBS SIG industry workshop on governance, culture and conduct at https://www.bis.org/bcbs/events/20181107_sig_summary.htm; Financial Stability Board, *Strengthening Governance Frameworks to Mitigate Misconduct Risk: A Toolkit for Firms and Supervisors* (Apr. 2018).

¹² Regulation 2016/1011 on Indices Used as Benchmarks in Financial Instruments and Financial Contracts or to Measure the Performance of Investment Funds, O.J. No L 171/1 (Jun. 29, 2016). Recital 1

financial institutions.¹³

In 2012, the UK established a Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards to examine the culture of banking.¹⁴ The Commission carried out a wide-ranging review of banking in the UK, was critical of banks, regulators, governments and investors, and made a number of suggestions for reforms. One of the suggestions involved increasing competition in banking, in part to reduce reliance on a small number of institutions (which could be seen as too big to fail). At the same time, the Commission argued that seeing banking as a profession could improve the situation. What do you think of this idea? Does the Commission have too much faith in the idea of professional self-regulation? Traditionally the idea of a (learned) profession has involved two main components: knowledge which was not generally available, combined with an expressed commitment to high standards of behavior.

In the twenty-first century there are reasons to be skeptical of these two characteristics of professions: professionals are subject to increasing competition from people outside the profession (for example, legal services outsourcing), and in many ways professional activities seem hard to distinguish from business activities which may undermine the idea of high standards.

In the US, scholars of the legal profession have thought about how professional self-regulation should be adapted to fit new models of law practice.¹⁵ **Milton Regan** has

of the Regulation states: “The pricing of many financial instruments and financial contracts depends on the accuracy and integrity of benchmarks. Serious cases of manipulation of interest rate benchmarks such as LIBOR and EURIBOR, as well as allegations that energy, oil and foreign exchange benchmarks have been manipulated, demonstrate that benchmarks can be subject to conflicts of interest. The use of discretion, and weak governance regimes, increase the vulnerability of benchmarks to manipulation. Failures in, or doubts about, the accuracy and integrity of indices used as benchmarks can undermine market confidence, cause losses to consumers and investors and distort the real economy. It is therefore necessary to ensure the accuracy, robustness and integrity of benchmarks and of the benchmark determination process.”

¹³ For example, the UK’s Senior Managers and Certification Regime. See <https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/senior-managers-certification-regime>.

¹⁴ Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards Appointed (Jul. 17, 2012) at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/professional-standards-in-the-banking-industry/news/appointment-of-commission/>. Members of the Commission were: Andrew Tyrie MP, Chairman, Mark Garnier MP, Andy Love MP, Pat McFadden MP, John Thurso MP, Lord Turnbull, Baroness Kramer, Lord Lawson, Lord McFall, and the Bishop of Durham.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Ted Schneyer, *On Further Reflection: How “Professional Self-Regulation” Should Promote Compliance with Broad Ethical Duties of Law Firm Management*, 53 ARIZ. L. REV. 577, 589 (2011) (“ Since the vast majority of lawyers in 1908 practiced alone and had few, if any, lay employees, the absence of references to firms or firm governance in the 1908 Canons was hardly surprising. By the 1980s, however, law practice was very different. Two-thirds of the bar practiced in multi-lawyer workplaces, and well over half the lawyers in private practice worked in multi-lawyer firms. Many firms had branch offices, making intra-firm coordination both more difficult and more important. The ratios of

described law firm ethics as “nested”:¹⁶

... we can conceptualize the components that influence ethical behavior as nested inside one another. The first level is the individual who engages in decision-making, who may receive advice from colleagues who act informally to provide ethical guidance. The second level, which provides the larger context for the first, is a firm’s ethical infrastructure, which attempts in various ways to shape and channel that behavior. The third level, which provides the larger context for the first two, is a firm’s ethical culture. This can prompt an individual to embrace ethical values to which a firm is committed, which provides intrinsic motivation to comply with the procedures and policies that make up the firm’s infrastructure. ...

The ethical culture in a law firm thus provides the larger context in which individual action and the firm’s ethical infrastructure operate. Ideally, it communicates that a firm is committed to practicing law consistently with the values reflected in the professional responsibilities of lawyers. While this can be crucial in strengthening ethical behavior, there still may be limits to its effectiveness. First, members of an organization are more likely to be receptive to its ethical culture as they identify more with the organization. An expanded sense of identity more closely aligns individuals’ self-interest with that of the organization, so that they see their own success as tied to the success of the larger entity. Prompting this identification, however, can be a challenge for a contemporary law firm. Most firms are extraordinarily fragile, vulnerable to the departure of their most profitable partners in the lateral market. This fragility may make partners feel that it is hazardous to act as if their long-term self-interest is tied to that of the firm. In addition, competitive pressures now prompt many firms to terminate lawyers who are not performing at a level that the firm deems adequate. This heightened vulnerability also can prevent the formation of any deep sense of attachment to a firm.

A second potential limit to the effectiveness of efforts to promote an ethical culture is that when individuals in an organization think of ethics, what tends to come to mind is behavior broader than the type that is the focus of an ethics program. For members of an organization, ethics relates most prominently to how fairly the organization treats the people who work there. Research indicates that there is a strong connection between this assessment and ethical attitudes and behavior. The greater the perception of fairness, the more credible an organization’s professed commitment will be to ethical values and the more successful it will be in prompting its members to identify with it. This directs attention to policies and practices that we may not even think of as relating to ethics. They include matters such as promotion, compensation, and whether people who are generous or selfish tend to get ahead in the organization. These issues relate to the broader culture of an organization, which in turn affects the ability to promote an ethical culture. We therefore can conceptualize organizational culture as an additional component to our model within which the others are nested..

associates to partners had also risen markedly, underscoring the need for supervision. And firms were hiring more nonlawyers who required training and supervision, including lay administrators.” (Footnotes omitted))

¹⁶ Milton C. Regan, Jr. *Nested Ethics: A Tale of Two Cultures*, 42 HOFSTRA L. REV. 143 (2013).

Here is an excerpt from the **Report of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards** .¹⁷

Our approach

The UK banking sector's ability both to perform its crucial role in support of the real economy and to maintain international pre-eminence has been eroded by a profound loss of trust born of profound lapses in banking standards. The Commission makes proposals to enable trust to be restored in banking. These proposals have five themes:

- making individual responsibility in banking a reality, especially at the most senior levels;
- reforming governance within banks to reinforce each bank's responsibility for its own safety and soundness and for the maintenance of standards;
- creating better functioning and more diverse banking markets in order to empower consumers and provide greater discipline on banks to raise standards;
- reinforcing the responsibilities of regulators in the exercise of judgement in deploying their current and proposed new powers; and
- specifying the responsibilities of the Government and of future Governments and Parliaments.

No single change, however dramatic, will address the problems of banking standards. Reform across several fronts is badly needed, and in ways that will endure when memories of recent crises and scandals fade.

Making individual responsibility a reality

The problem

Too many bankers, especially at the most senior levels, have operated in an environment with insufficient personal responsibility. Top bankers dodged accountability for failings on their watch by claiming ignorance or hiding behind collective decision-making. They then faced little realistic prospect of financial penalties or more serious sanctions commensurate with the severity of the failures with which they were associated. Individual incentives have not been consistent with high collective standards, often the opposite.

A new framework for individuals

The Approved Persons Regime has created a largely illusory impression of regulatory control over individuals, while meaningful responsibilities were not in practice attributed to anyone. As a result, there was little realistic prospect of effective enforcement action, even in many of the most flagrant cases of failure. The Commission proposes a new framework for individuals with the following elements:

- a Senior Persons Regime, which would ensure that the key responsibilities within banks are assigned to specific individuals, who are made fully and unambiguously aware of those responsibilities and made to understand that they will be held to account for how they carry them out;

¹⁷ Report of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards, Changing Banking for Good, Vol. 1, HL Paper 27-I, HC 175 -I (Jun. 2013) at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/banking-commission/Banking-final-report-volume-i.pdf>

- a Licensing Regime alongside the Senior Persons Regime, to apply to other bank staff whose actions or behaviour could seriously harm the bank, its reputation or its customers;
- the replacement of the Statements of Principles and the associated codes of practice, which are incomplete and unclear in their application, with a single set of Banking Standards Rules to be drawn up by the regulators; these Rules would apply to both Senior Persons and licensed bank staff and a breach would constitute grounds for enforcement action by the regulators.

Incentives for better behaviour

Remuneration has incentivised misconduct and excessive risk-taking, reinforcing a culture where poor standards were often considered normal. Many bank staff have been paid too much for doing the wrong things, with bonuses awarded and paid before the long-term consequences become apparent. The potential rewards for fleeting short-term success have sometimes been huge, but the penalties for failure, often manifest only later, have been much smaller or negligible. Despite recent reforms, many of these problems persist.

The Commission proposes a radical re-shaping of remuneration for Senior Persons and licensed bank staff, driven by a new Remuneration Code, so that incentives and disincentives more closely reflect the longer run balance between business risks and rewards. The main features of the redesign are as follows:

- much more remuneration to be deferred and, in many cases, for much longer periods of up to 10 years;
- more of that deferred remuneration to be in forms which favour the long-term performance and soundness of the firm, such as bail-in bonds;
- the avoidance of reliance on narrow measures of bank profitability in calculating remuneration, with particular scepticism reserved for return on equity;
- individual claims on outstanding deferred remuneration to be subject to cancellation in the light of individual or wider misconduct or a downturn in the performance of the bank or a business area; and
- powers to enable deferred remuneration to Senior Persons and licensed individuals, as well as any unvested pension rights and entitlements associated with loss of office, to be cancelled in any case in which a bank requires direct taxpayer support.

A new approach to enforcement against individuals

A more effective sanctions regime against individuals is essential for the restoration of trust in banking. The current system is failing: enforcement action against Approved Persons at senior levels has been unusual despite multiple banking failures. Regulators have rarely been able to penetrate an accountability firewall of collective responsibility in firms that prevents actions against individuals. The patchy scope of the Approved Persons Regime, which has left people, including many involved in the Libor scandal, beyond effective enforcement.

The Commission envisages a new approach to sanctions and enforcement against individuals:

- all key responsibilities within a bank must be assigned to a specific, senior individual. Even when responsibilities are delegated, or subject to collective decision making, that responsibility will remain with the designated individual;
- the attribution of individual responsibility will, for the first time, provide for the full use of the

range of civil powers that regulators already have to sanction individuals. These include fines, restrictions on responsibilities and a ban from the industry;

- the scope of the new licensing regime will ensure that all those who can do serious harm are subject to the full range of civil enforcement powers. This is a broader group than those to whom those powers currently extend;
- in a case of failure leading to successful enforcement action against a firm, there will be a requirement on relevant Senior Persons to demonstrate that they took all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the effects of a specified failing. Those unable to do so would face possible individual enforcement action, switching the burden of proof away from the regulators; and
- a criminal offence will be established applying to Senior Persons carrying out their professional responsibilities in a reckless manner, which may carry a prison sentence; following a conviction, the remuneration received by an individual during the period of reckless behaviour should be recoverable through separate civil proceedings.

Reforming governance to reinforce individual responsibility

The financial crisis, and multiple conduct failures, have exposed serious flaws in governance. Potemkin villages were created in firms, giving the appearance of effective control and oversight without the reality. Non-executive directors lacked the capacity or incentives to challenge the executives. Sometimes those executives with the greatest insight into risks being added to balance sheets were cut off from decision-makers at board level or lacked the necessary status to speak up. Poor governance and controls are illustrated by the rarity of whistle-blowing, either within or beyond the firm, even where, such as in the case of Libor manipulation, prolonged and blatant misconduct has been evident. The Commission makes the following recommendations for improvement:

- individual and direct lines of access and accountability to the board for the heads of the risk, compliance and internal audit functions and much greater levels of protection for their independence;
- personal responsibility for each individual director for the safety and soundness of the firm and a Government consultation on amending the Companies Act to prioritise financial safety over shareholder interests in the case of banks;
- direct personal responsibility on the Chairman to ensure the effective operation of the board, including effective challenge by non-executives, and on the Senior Independent Director, supported by the regulator, to ensure that the Chairman fulfils this role; and
- individual responsibility for a named non-executive director, usually the Chairman, to oversee fair and effective whistle-blowing procedures, and to be held accountable when an individual suffers detriment in consequence of blowing the whistle.

Better functioning markets

The UK banking sector is not as competitive as it should be. Retail and business customers alike are often denied sufficient choice or access to enough information to exercise effective judgement. Greater market discipline can help address the resulting consumer detriment and lapses in standards, and buttress regulation. Where such remedies can be found they should be deployed. The Commission proposes that:

- the Government immediately establish an independent panel of experts to assess means of

- enabling much greater personal bank account portability;
- the Treasury examine the tax treatment of peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding firms to ensure a level playing field with established competitors and review the effectiveness of tax incentives intended to encourage investment in Community Development Finance Institutions;
 - the major banks come to a voluntary agreement on minimum standards for the provision of basic bank accounts, including access to the payments system and money management services, and free use of the ATM network, within 12 months or be subject to a new statutory duty;
 - competition be an objective of the PRA, subject to its overriding responsibility for financial stability;
 - the Competition and Markets Authority immediately commence a full market study of competition in the retail and SME banking sectors to be completed on a timetable consistent with a Market Investigation Reference by the end of 2015; and
 - the Government should immediately announce a process for considering alternative strategies for the future of RBS, including splitting the bank and putting its bad assets in a separate legal entity (a 'good bank / bad bank' split), to report by September 2013.

Reinforcing the responsibilities of the regulators

Serious regulatory failure has contributed to the failings in banking standards. The misjudgement of the risks in the pre-crisis period was reinforced by a regulatory approach focused on detailed rules and process which all but guaranteed that the big risks would be missed. Scandals relating to mis-selling by banks were allowed to assume vast proportions, in part because of the slowness and inadequacy of the regulatory response.

Our proposed emphasis on individual responsibility within banks needs to be matched by the replacement of mechanical data collection and box ticking by a much greater emphasis on the exercise of judgement by the regulators, supported by more effective oversight and empowerment tools. In particular:

- supervisors need to be close enough, and have a detailed enough understanding, of businesses to take swift decisions based on up-to-date information, rather than belated actions with the benefit of hindsight;
- the most senior regulatory staff should be expected to use judgement, rather than relying on procedures, and to take direct personal responsibility for ensuring that their engagement with individual banks, and the CEO, Chairman and the Board in particular, is securing the information required best to assess risk. They should expect to be held accountable, ultimately to Parliament, for this crucial role;
- a new tool proposed by the Commission, "special measures", will provide for the deployment of a broader range of regulatory powers when the FCA and PRA are concerned that systemic weaknesses of leadership, risk management and control leave a bank particularly prone to standards failures;
- regulators need to remove obstacles to a more competitive market in banking, including through steps to support the development of a more diverse banking market;
- regulators should identify the risks to a judgement-based approach from overly prescriptive international rule books and ensure that Parliament is kept fully informed of them; and
- there should be mandatory dialogue between supervisors and external auditors and a

separate set of accounts for regulatory purposes.

The responsibilities of Governments and Parliaments

There were many players in the development of the crisis in banking that has unfolded since 2007. The behaviour of bankers was appalling, but regulators, credit ratings agencies, auditors, governments, many market observers and many individual bank customers in their approach to borrowing created pressures in the same, and wrong, direction. Governments have a particular responsibility, many of them having been dazzled by the economic growth and tax revenues promised from the banking sector. Implementing the recommendations of the Commission would signal a fresh approach.

The current Government's particular priorities must include:

- taking swift and decisive action to place RBS in a position where it can make a full contribution to a better functioning market that, in particular, supports lending to businesses;
- ensuring that changes to regulatory objectives entrench a change in regulatory approach towards competition; and
- relinquishing political control over decisions over the leverage ratio, the single most important tool to deliver a safer and more secure banking system, which is properly a matter for regulators.

Future Governments and Parliaments have important roles in ensuring that reform is sustained. In particular, this will mean:

- holding regulators more meaningfully to account for their decisions, while avoiding knee-jerk assumptions either that regulators are acting as an unnecessary constraint on the actions of bankers or that regulators are culpable for every standards failure; and
- resisting the arguments from opponents of reform who will claim that any further change to banking will represent an upheaval too far or that risks have been eliminated and "this time is different".

The banking industry can better serve both its customers and the needs of the real economy, in a way which will also further strengthen the position of the UK as the world's leading financial centre. To enable this to happen, the recommendations of this Commission must be fully implemented in a coherent manner. They complement reforms already proposed by Parliament and by the Independent Commission on Banking. If fully implemented, the proposals of this Commission's Reports can change banking for good...

Banks in the UK have failed in many respects. They have failed taxpayers, who had to bail out a number of banks including some major institutions, with a cash outlay peaking at £133 billion, equivalent to more than £2,000 for every person in the UK. They have failed many retail customers, with widespread product mis-selling. They have failed their own shareholders, by delivering poor long-term returns and destroying shareholder value. They have failed in their basic function to finance economic growth, with businesses unable to obtain the loans that they need at an acceptable price. (Paragraph 1)

Banks have a crucial role in the economy. Banking can make an immense contribution to the economic well-being of the United Kingdom, by serving consumers and businesses, and by contributing to the United Kingdom's position as a leading global financial centre. The loss of trust in banking has been enormously damaging; there is now a massive opportunity to reform banking standards to strengthen the value of banking in the future and to reinforce the UK's

dominant position within the global financial services industry. A reformed banking industry with higher levels of standards has the potential, once again, to be a great asset to this country...

The restoration of trust in banking is essential not just for banks. It is essential to enable the industry better to serve the needs of the real economy and to contribute effectively to the UK's role as a global financial centre...

The UK is a global financial centre, but a medium-sized economy. The benefits of being a global financial centre are very important in terms of jobs, investment, tax revenue and exports. In finance, the UK is a world leader. But being a global financial centre with a medium-sized wider economy also poses risks, as was seen in the bail-outs and huge injections of taxpayers' money which took place during the financial crisis. It is essential that the risks posed by having a large financial centre do not mean that taxpayers or the wider economy are held to ransom. That is why it is right for the UK to take measures, some already taken or in prospect, which not only protect the UK's position as a global financial sector, but also protect the UK public and economy from the associated risks....

Banking history is littered with examples of manipulative conduct driven by misaligned incentives, of bank failures born of reckless, hubristic expansion and of unsustainable asset price bubbles cheered on by a consensus of self-interest or self-delusion. An important lesson of history is that bankers, regulators and politicians alike repeatedly fail to learn the lessons of history: this time, they say, it is different. Had the warnings of past failures been heeded, this Commission may not have been necessary.,,,

One of the most dismal features of the banking industry to emerge from our evidence was the striking limitation on the sense of personal responsibility and accountability of the leaders within the industry for the widespread failings and abuses over which they presided. Ignorance was offered as the main excuse. It was not always accidental. Those who should have been exercising supervisory or leadership roles benefited from an accountability firewall between themselves and individual misconduct, and demonstrated poor, perhaps deliberately poor, understanding of the front line. Senior executives were aware that they would not be punished for what they could not see and promptly donned the blindfolds. Where they could not claim ignorance, they fell back on the claim that everyone was party to a decision, so that no individual could be held squarely to blame—the Murder on the Orient Express defence. It is imperative that in future senior executives in banks have an incentive to know what is happening on their watch—not an incentive to remain ignorant in case the regulator comes calling....

The professions may not be paragons, but they do at least espouse a strong duty of trust, both towards clients and towards upholding the reputation of the profession as a whole. In contrast, bankers appear to have felt few such constraints on their own behaviour. Few bankers felt a duty to monitor or police the actions of their colleagues or to report their misdeeds. Banking culture has all too often been characterised by an absence of any sense of duty to the customer and a similar absence of any sense of collective responsibility to uphold the reputation of the industry....

That regulation is well-intentioned is no guarantee that it is a force for good. Misconceived and poorly-targeted regulation has been a major contributory factor across the full range of banking standards failings. Regulators cannot always be expected to behave as disinterested guardians who will pursue the "right" approach. They are faced with complex

challenges to which the appropriate solutions are ambiguous and contested. They have not in the past always risen to those challenges satisfactorily. They need to resist the temptation to retreat into a comfort zone of setting complex rules and measuring compliance. They also need to avoid placing too much reliance on complex models rather than examining actual risk exposures. Regulators were complicit in banks outsourcing responsibility for compliance to them by accepting narrow conformity to rules as evidence of prudent conduct. Such an approach is easily gamed by banks, and is no substitute for judgement by regulators....

The favourable treatment of banking by regulators and governments has not merely been the consequence of smooth lobbyists seducing naive politicians. The economic growth and tax revenues promised by a booming sector over the relatively brief political cycle dazzled governments around the world. This encouraged excess and undermined regulators. Public anger with bankers has now dimmed this effect, but its possible revival in calmer economic times, when bankers are off the front pages, should remain a deep concern...

The distorted incentives in banking are nowhere more apparent than in the asymmetry between the rewards for short-term success and costs of long-term failure for individuals. Many bankers were taking part in a one-way bet, where they either won a huge amount, or they won slightly less and taxpayers and others picked up the tab, even if some individuals paid a large reputational price. Many have continued to prosper while others, including the taxpayer, continue to foot the bill for their mistakes. There have been a few isolated instances of individual sanction, but these have rarely reached to the very top of banks. This sanctioning of only a few individuals contributes to the myth that recent scandals can be seen as the result of the actions of a few 'rotten apples', rather than much deeper failings in banks, by regulators and other parts of the financial services industry...

Banking has been a great British strength, but for that reason is also an important source of risk to Britain. A series of factors, considered below, combine to give the UK an inherent advantage as a place to do financial business. Properly harnessed, finance can greatly add to nationwide prosperity. However, recent history has demonstrated that, whether or not the benefits of a large banking sector have been overstated, the risks were certainly understated. Given the huge size of the banking sector in the UK relative to the overall size of the economy, it is important that policy-makers and regulators balance support for the sector with proper safeguards to limit the potential damage it can do to the UK economy and to taxpayers if things go wrong. The banking collapse of 2008 shows these risks are very real...

Policy-makers should be aware of the risks of relocation, but should not be held hostage by them. Around the world there is a move to stronger regulation and to learning the lessons of what happened in the run up to 2008. The UK must not be intimidated out of making the changes necessary to protect the public by threats of bank relocation. ..

The UK should do what is necessary to secure London's position as a pre-eminent and well-regulated financial centre in order to make sure that it represents an attractive base for whatever tomorrow's financial sector may look like. High standards in banking should not be a substitute for global success. On the contrary, they can be a stimulus to it...

Policy-makers in most areas of supervision and regulation need to work out what is best for the UK, not the lowest common denominator of what can most easily be agreed internationally. There is nothing inherently optimal about an international level playing field in regulation. There may be significant benefits to the UK as a financial centre from demonstrating

that it can establish and adhere to standards significantly above the international minimum. A stable legal and regulatory environment, supporting a more secure financial system, is likely to attract new business just as ineffective or unnecessarily bureaucratic regulation is likely to deter it...

The UK's ability to make necessary reforms to financial regulation risks being constrained by the European regulatory process, which is developing rapidly as Eurozone countries move towards banking union. Some new financial regulation across the EU may be desirable as a support for the Single Market. However, there are at least two dangers for the UK. The first is that the prescriptive and box-ticking tendency of EU rules designed for 27 members will impede the move towards the more judgement-based approach being introduced in the UK in response to past regulatory failures. The second is that some EU regulations may limit the UK's regulatory scope for unilateral action. This could mean moving at the speed of the slowest ship in the convoy. This is a risk which the UK, as a medium-sized economy hosting one of the world's two most important financial centres, cannot afford.

The potential for regulatory reforms to drive some activities out of banks and into "shadow banking" should not be viewed as a reason not to act. The migration of some of the higher risk activity currently conducted by banks to non-bank companies is already happening on a large scale and, in many cases, this is welcome. It is making some big banks smaller and simpler, shifting some risks to structures better suited to handling them, and weakening the links between these risks and the core of the banking system. Shadow banks do not believe that they will be bailed out by the taxpayer and those that run them often have their shirts on the line. This move would, however, become problematic if, as happened in the United States in 2008, highly-leveraged shadow banks became over-exposed to core banking risks, for example related to maturity transformation, and themselves become too big and interconnected to fail. It is therefore essential that the Bank of England, FPC and PRA take seriously the task of monitoring shadow banking...

... for a very long time, the regulatory authorities in the UK have displayed an instinctive resistance to new entrants. This conservatism must end. The regulators' approach to authorising and approving new entrants, particularly those with distinct models, will require close monitoring by the Government and by Parliament, and the regulator should report to Parliament on progress in two years time...

... Peer-to-peer and crowdfunding platforms have the potential to improve the UK retail banking market as both a source of competition to mainstream banks as well as an alternative to them. Furthermore, it could bring important consumer benefits by increasing the range of asset classes to which consumers have access. This access should not be restricted to high net worth individuals but, subject to consumer protections, should be available to all. The emergence of such firms could increase competition and choice for lenders, borrowers, consumers and investors....

Alternative providers such as peer-to-peer lenders are soon to come under FCA regulation, as could crowdfunding platforms. The industry has asked for such regulation and believes that it will increase confidence and trust in their products and services. The FCA has little expertise in this area and the FSA's track record towards unorthodox business models was a cause for concern. Regulation of alternative providers must be appropriate and proportionate and must not create regulatory barriers to entry or growth. The industry recognises that

regulation can be of benefit to it, arguing for consumer protection based on transparency. This is a lower threshold than many other parts of the industry and should be accompanied by a clear statement of the risks to consumers and their responsibilities. ...

What's wrong with the Approved Persons Regime

As the primary framework for regulators to engage with individual bankers, the Approved Persons Regime is a complex and confused mess. It fails to perform any of its varied roles to the necessary standard. It is the mechanism through which individuals can notionally be sanctioned for poor behaviour, but its coverage is woefully narrow and it does not ensure that individual responsibilities are adequately defined, restricting regulators' ability to take enforcement action. In principle, it is the means by which the regulator can control those who run banks, but in practice it makes no attempt to set clear expectations for those holding key roles. It operates mostly as an initial gateway to taking up a post, rather than serving as a system through which the regulators can ensure the continuing exercise of individual responsibility at the most senior levels within banks. The public are rightly appalled by the small number of cases in which highly-paid senior bankers have been disciplined for the costly mistakes they have allowed to occur on their watch.

Faced with the weaknesses of the Approved Persons Regime laid bare by the failures of individuals in recent years, the FSA responded to the need for reform with dilatoriness, seemingly paralysed by the operational deficiencies of the existing system and unwilling to contemplate moving away from the familiarity it represents. Changes first mooted in January 2010 and agreed in September that year have gone back to the drawing board and been made subject to a further consultation, preceded by a pilot review and then a full review.

The FSA and its successors have proposed changes to the Approved Persons Regime, but there is a risk that these may be pursued with the timid approach of recent years. We have considered the case for reform of the Approved Persons Regime, but have concluded that incremental change will no longer suffice. A new regulatory framework for individuals within banking is urgently needed, and it cannot be secured by adding new layers on the rickety foundations of the Approved Persons Regime....

Making a choice

Poor standards in banking and the public's response to them have generated an impetus within the banking industry to make proposals for professional banking standards. This impetus is welcome and must be harnessed. Some progress can be achieved through the emergence of a credible professional body in banking, and the next section identifies important milestones in such a process.

However, it is questionable whether the business of banking possesses sufficient characteristics of a profession to lend itself to direct control through a professional body. "Banking" involves a wide range of activities and lacks the large common core of learning which is a feature of most professions. It is a long way from being an industry where professional duties to customers, and to the integrity of the profession as a whole, trump an individual's own behavioural incentives. A professional body alone does not guarantee high standards, as illustrated by the varied scandals in a range of other sectors where such bodies exist.

There are also very substantial risks of duplication between the powers and role of a

professional standards body and those of regulators, as well as risks that the creation of such a body could become a focus of public policy, diverting attention from the changes that are urgently needed within the existing regulatory framework.

Milestones for a professional body

If a unified professional body for banking in the UK is to emerge, the onus should lie on the industry itself to maintain the impetus for its development. Such a body needs first and foremost to be created through the will, and with the resources, of banks and those who work in the UK banking sector. The Commission's aim in this section is to identify milestones for its development and to assist in fostering its establishment and growth. However, the emergence of a professional body should be consistent with the wider regulatory and legislative reforms needed in banking. It must not be seen as a necessary precursor to those reforms, still less as a substitute for them.

Banks maintain that there would be benefits if they were to adopt, implement and commit to enforce a single code of conduct prepared by a unified professional body, which reflected a higher set of standards and expectations for individual behaviour than those required by the regulator. Providing statutory powers to a professional body would mean either stripping away many powers from the regulators, including the new powers that we propose in this and subsequent chapters, or risking double jeopardy for individuals. No proponents of a professional body have come forward with a plan which the Commission believes is credible for how to address this problem.

While we support the creation of a professional standards body to promote higher professional standards in banking, the case for it to share or take over formal responsibility for enforcement in banking will only gradually be able to prove itself and so we do not recommend the establishment of such a body as an alternative to other regulatory measures. However, preliminary work to establish a professional body should begin immediately as a demonstration that commitment to high standards is expected throughout banking and that individuals are expected to abide by higher standards than those that can be enforced through regulation alone. On the basis of our assessment of the nature of the banking industry, we believe that the creation of an effective professional body is a long way off and may take at least a generation. It is therefore important that the trajectory towards professionalisation is clearly signalled immediately and that initial practical proposals for such a body are tabled at an early stage. Work can begin immediately on bodies for the most readily identifiable parts of banks which would benefit from professional standards. These include retail banking, the most senior levels and specialist areas such as insolvency and debt recovery.

An important milestone on the road to the successful development of a professional standards body would be that it could claim comprehensive coverage of all banks with operations in the UK. If banks were to decline to assist in a body's development, or to seek to resile from participation in due course, the credibility and effectiveness of the body would be significantly damaged.

A unified professional body for banking should have no need of public subsidy, either directly or indirectly. We would expect such a body to be funded by participating banks and individual qualified members. However, it would also need to establish independence from the outset, through its forms of governance, its disciplinary procedures and through the personnel

at senior levels. The body must never allow itself to become a cosy sinecure for retired bank chairmen and City grandees. Just as importantly, it must eschew from the outset and by dint of its constitution any role in advocacy for the interests of banks individually or collectively...

The Senior Persons Regime

In the remaining sections of this chapter we set out the three main pillars of a new system to replace the Approved Persons Regime:

- A Senior Persons Regime to replace the Significant Influence Function element of the Approved Persons Regime. This should provide far greater precision about individual responsibilities than the system that it replaces, and would serve as the foundation for some of the changes to enforcement powers and approach that we recommend in Chapter 10;
- A Licensing Regime to replace the Approved Persons Regime as the basis for upholding individuals' standards of behaviour, centred on the application of a revised set of Banking Standards Rules to a broader group than those currently covered by the Statement of Principles for Approved Persons; and
- Reform of the register to support the first two pillars and ensure that relevant information on individuals can be captured and used effectively.

The Commission recommends that the Approved Persons Regime be replaced by a Senior Persons Regime. The new Senior Persons Regime must ensure that the key responsibilities within banks are assigned to specific individuals who are aware of those responsibilities and have formally accepted them. The purposes of this change are: first, to encourage greater clarity of responsibilities and improved corporate governance within banks; second, to establish beyond doubt individual responsibility in order to provide a sound basis for the regulators to impose remedial requirements or take enforcement action where serious problems occur. This would not preclude decision-making by board or committee, which will remain appropriate in many circumstances. Nor should it prevent the delegation of tasks in relation to responsibilities. However, it would reflect the reality that responsibility that is too thinly diffused can be too readily disowned: a buck that does not stop with an individual stops nowhere.

The Senior Persons Regime should apply to all banks and bank holding companies operating in the UK. The Commission would expect that the Senior Persons Regime would cover a narrower range of individuals than those currently in Significant Influence Functions. Many of the people in these functions are not really senior decision-takers. Taking them out of scope, though still subject to the Licensing Regime that we propose below, would allow the Senior Persons Regime to focus much more clearly on the people who really run banks and who should stand or fall by their role in decision-making. Beyond board and executive committee members, who should always be within scope, primary responsibility for identifying which individuals fall within the regime and how their responsibilities are defined should rest in the first instance with the banks themselves. We would expect such responsibilities to cover both prudential and conduct issues, such as product design. It should not be for the regulator to prescribe how banks structure their management, because it is important that banks retain the flexibility to do this in the most appropriate way for their business.

The Commission recommends that regulators set out in guidelines how responsibilities are to be identified and assigned, and should have the power to take action against firms when

it is satisfied that they are not following these guidelines. We would expect these to include the points below:

- All key activities that the business undertakes or key risks to which it is potentially exposed should be assigned to a Senior Person;
- The assignment of formal responsibilities should be aligned with the realities of power and influence within a bank and should reflect the operation of collective decision-making mechanisms;
- Individuals should be fit and proper to carry out responsibilities assigned to them, and be able to demonstrate the necessary skills and experience;
- Responsibilities may be shared only where they are generic to the office, such as a non-executive member of the board; otherwise, they should be specific to an individual;
- A Senior Person cannot report directly to anyone within a UK-based organisation who is not themselves a Senior Person; and
- A bank's board should have a duty to regularly certify to the regulator that their firm is fulfilling its obligations under the Senior Persons Regime.

Regulators will need to show judgement and realism in exercising their enhanced powers. The Commission recommends that the regulators also be given a power to designate time-limited or remedial responsibilities that must be assigned to an individual within or thereby brought within the Senior Persons Regime.

It would be a mistake to prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach to the assessment of fitness and properness to assume a position as a Senior Person. What matters more is that the checks are geared to the responsibilities proposed for the individual and reflect supervisory judgement by senior regulators with involvement in the supervision of the bank concerned, rather than a box-ticking exercise by an isolated unit. The stated intention of regulators to focus more rigorous pre-approval checks on a smaller number of key individuals is to be welcomed.

The Commission considers that it would be unduly onerous for both the regulators and the regulated to make Senior Person status subject to periodic review. However, the Commission recommends that the regulators be given clear discretionary powers to review the assignment of responsibilities to a particular individual and require the redistribution of certain responsibilities or the addition of certain conditions. We would expect these powers to be exercised where, for example, a bank undergoes rapid expansion or where the regulators have reason to question a bank's approach to the allocation of responsibilities. We also recommend that the regulators be able to make approval of an individual Senior Person subject to conditions, for example where it is felt that they need to acquire a certain skill to carry out the job well. It is essential that the regime evolve and adapt over time. It would be a disaster if it were to relapse back into a one-off exercise that applied, in practice, only on entry, as with the Approved Persons Regime.

Arrangements for the allocation of individual responsibilities within banks will need to take account of changes in personnel. The Commission recommends that it be a requirement of those in the Senior Persons Regime that, before relinquishing any responsibilities that are to be passed to a successor, they prepare a handover certificate outlining how they have exercised their responsibilities and identifying the issues relating to their responsibilities of which the next person holding them should be aware. Such handover certificates should be held by banks as a matter of record, and should be available to the regulators both to assess

the effectiveness of the Senior Persons Regime within a particular bank and to assist with the attribution of responsibility in the event of subsequent enforcement action. Such a certificate could also serve as an important source of information in recouping remuneration in accordance with our proposals in Chapter 8.

The Licensing Regime

Regulators' ability to take enforcement action only against individuals who are covered by the Approved Persons Regime results in inadequate coverage, notwithstanding the fact that, in practice, such enforcement action has seldom been taken. Additionally, requiring that only this relatively small sub-set of bankers needs to uphold the Statements of Principle for Approved Persons undermines a wider sense of responsibility and aspiration to high standards throughout the banking sector. We have already considered and rejected proposals to rely solely on a professional standards body and a code of conduct to address these problems. Instead, the Commission recommends the establishment of a Licensing Regime alongside the Senior Persons Regime. Under this a broader set of bank staff would be contractually obliged to adhere to a set of Banking Standards Rules, which the regulators could enforce against and which would replace the existing statements of principle.

The Commission recommends that the Licensing Regime cover anyone working in banking, including those already within the Senior Persons Regime, whose actions or behaviour could seriously harm the bank, its reputation or its customers. It would not need to cover staff working in auxiliary or purely administrative roles, or those in junior positions whose autonomy and responsibility is very limited. Such a scope is likely to include all staff currently covered by the Approved Persons Regime, including those in customer dealing functions.

Because the Licensing Regime will be broader in its application than the Approved Persons Regime it is important that it operate with a minimum of bureaucratic process. Entry should not require pre-approval by the regulators, but should require employers to verify the fitness and propriety of staff, including checking the register for any record of past disciplinary action. The existing Statements of Principle for Approved Persons and the accompanying code of conduct are not intrinsically wrong, but they do not constitute a sufficiently robust foundation for improving banking standards. The Commission recommends that regulators develop, after consultation with banks, staff, unions and those bodies already working on codes of conduct, a new set of Banking Standards Rules. These should draw on the existing principles and apply to a wide group of individuals, forming the foundation of their understanding for how they are expected to behave: the rules should be written in a way which is readily meaningful for those who must adhere to them, unlike the current statements and code which are complex and heavy with legalistic cross-references to other regulations. The rules should be generally applicable to all individuals within the Licensing Regime, rather than sub-divided depending on category of employee. The rules should explicitly encapsulate expectations about behaviour which are currently absent from the statements of principle for individuals, such as treating customers fairly and managing conflicts of interest and a requirement to draw to the attention of senior management and regulators conduct which falls below the standards set out.

Banks should not be able to offload their duties and responsibilities for monitoring and enforcing individual behaviour on to the regulator or on to professional bodies. The tools at their

disposal have the potential to be much more usable, effective and proportionate for the majority of cases than external enforcement, which should remain the backstop for more serious breaches.

The new licensing duty should not be unduly onerous. Some banks may already, in practice, have in place much of the control framework required to implement the Licensing Regime. Banks should already know the employees whose actions or behaviour could seriously harm the bank, its reputation or its customers. Banks should also already monitor their work closely and fully explain to individuals their contractual responsibilities. Many banks have already acknowledged that they need to do more in this area, but the incentives for them to translate this into action are not apparent.

The new Licensing Regime should therefore not only ensure that all relevant staff are covered by a common set of rules which are enforceable by the regulators, but should also formalise banks' responsibilities for ensuring that staff understand and demonstrate the high standards set out in the regime. This should make clear banks' primary responsibility for taking disciplinary action under an employee's contract of employment when standards are breached. Banks' implementation of the Licensing Regime should be subject to monitoring by regulators and enforcement action where firms are found to be failing in their duties.

It should be the job of the bank as employer to inform and instruct each licensed person of his or her responsibilities and to keep accurate records. Individuals within the Licensing Regime who are not Senior Persons can nevertheless have important responsibilities which could have a significant impact on the bank or its customers. The Commission recommends that the regulators have the discretionary power to require those leaving such posts to prepare handover certificates in line with our earlier recommendation in relation to Senior Persons. Banks may want to provide training and support to employees to help them understand how the banking standards rules translate to an individual's specific role, and reflect the rules in their own appraisal processes. Professional standards bodies may be able to play a valuable role in this area. However, the creation and implementation of such a process should not be held by the regulator to be a substitute for compliance with the substance of the standards rules. Most bankers may behave honourably "when no-one is watching", but some will do so only if there is a genuine prospect that someone might in fact come looking. Banks need to maintain and where necessary implement systems that include checks and random audits, rather than simply addressing standards issues with process-driven training or when those issues hit the front pages and threaten the brand. In support of these responsibilities of the firm, we would expect a Senior Person to be directly responsible for the performance by a bank of its licensing responsibilities.

This proposal builds on the ideas put forward by senior bankers for banks to improve individual standards through self-regulation. However, the Licensing Regime benefits from robust regulatory underpinning. This is essential, in view of the shortcomings of self-regulatory arrangements in financial services in the past.

The Commission is well aware that neither the Senior Persons Regime nor the Licensing Regime can resolve the multi-faceted problems of banking standards. But they can make a contribution. They give banks an opportunity to demonstrate that they are putting their houses in order, in a way which could reduce the costly bureaucracy inherent in the ever more complex reforms of the Approved Persons Regime currently being considered. They also give

regulators more effective tools to hold individuals to account and, through them, unambiguous responsibility for ensuring that banks adhere to higher standards.

Reforming the register

It will be important for the register underpinning the current Approved Persons Regime to be reformed to take account of the Commission's recommendations. A single register should cover both the Senior Persons Regime and the Licensing Regime, although for individuals covered only by the Licensing Regime it is likely to be more proportionate only to include their details where there has been enforcement action against them. Banks should be required to inform regulators if they take disciplinary action against an employee for reasons related to a breach of the banking standards rules. In such cases regulators should assess whether any further sanction is merited. Regulators should be able to retain such information for their own purposes even where they decide not to proceed with enforcement action. The regulators should explore whether information about disciplinary dismissals could also be communicated to prospective employers, although the Commission recognises the potential legal difficulties with such an approach.

Sanctions imposing restrictions on practising can only be effective if they cannot be circumvented by moving within the industry. Strengthening the register will address this domestically, but much more should also be done to move to mutual recognition of sanctions between jurisdictions. Of particular benefit would be an obligation on firms to take account of any misdemeanours recorded on the register in other jurisdictions before hiring staff. The need for such an obligation between the US and UK is particularly important. The development of such an obligation, and in particular comprehensive coverage, may take time. It might ultimately require legislative change both here and in the US to be effective. The Commission recommends that the Government and the UK regulators initiate early discussions with US counterparts on this issue. Subsequent discussions with the EU and other financial centres may also be appropriate...

Internal controls and disciplines

Each bank board should have a separate risk committee chaired by a non-executive director who possesses the banking industry knowledge and strength of character to challenge the executive effectively. The risk committee should be supported by a strong risk function, led by a chief risk officer, with authority over the separate business units. Boards must protect the independence of the Chief Risk Officer, and personal responsibility for this should lie with the chairman of the risk committee. The Chief Risk Officer should not be able to be dismissed or sanctioned without the agreement of the non-executive directors, and his or her remuneration should reflect this requirement for independence. The Chief Risk Officer should be covered by the Senior Persons Regime, and the responsibilities assigned to the holder of that post should make clear that the holder must maintain a voice that is independent of the executive.

It is important that banks have clear lines of accountability for the assurance of overall regulatory compliance. A blurring of responsibility between the front line and compliance staff risks absolving the front line from responsibility for risk. Compliance involvement in product development can make it more difficult for compliance staff subsequently to perform their independent control duties. Their involvement needs careful handling. Responsibility for acting

in accordance with the letter and spirit of regulation should lie with every individual in a bank. This responsibility should not be outsourced to a compliance function, any more than to the regulator itself, particularly in the light of the fact that, owing to the complexity of banks, the compliance function would face a very difficult task were this responsibility to lie solely with it.

The Commission notes with approval measures taken by banks to involve control functions in the performance assessment of senior and front-line staff. There is a strong case for extending this further. To have a strong impact on behaviour, clarity in how such mechanisms operate is desirable. The involvement of the front-line in assessing second-line performance threatens to further undermine the independence of the second line. This effect can be exacerbated by ingrained status differences between staff in different functions.

We do not wish to be prescriptive about the role of the Head of Compliance. We see parallels with the role of the Chief Risk Officer, insofar as protecting the independence of the Head of Compliance role is paramount. This should be a particular responsibility of a named individual non-executive director. The Commission recommends, as with the Chief Risk Officer, that dismissal or sanctions against the Head of Compliance should only follow agreement by the non-executive directors. Such an action would, under existing arrangements, also need to be disclosed to the regulator.

Internal audit's independence is as important as that of the Chief Risk Officer and the Head of Group Compliance, and its preservation should similarly be the responsibility of a named individual non-executive director, usually the chairman of the audit committee. Dismissal or sanctions against the head of internal audit should also require the agreement of the non-executive directors.

The "three lines of defence" have not prevented banks' control frameworks failing in the past in part because the lines were blurred and the status of the front-line, remunerated for revenue generation, was dominant over the compliance, risk and audit apparatus. Mere organisational change is very unlikely, on its own, to ensure success in future. Our recommendations provide for these lines to be separate, with distinct authority given to internal control and give particular non-executive directors individual personal responsibility for protecting the independence of those responsible for key internal controls. This needs to be buttressed with rigorous scrutiny by the new regulators of the adequacy of firms' control frameworks.

Standards and culture

Profound cultural change in institutions as large and complex as the main UK banks is unlikely to be achieved quickly. Bank leaders will need to commit themselves to working hard at the unglamorous task of implementing such change for many years to come.

Poor standards in banking are not the consequence of absent or deficient company value statements. Nor are they the result of the inadequate deployment of the latest management jargon to promulgate concepts of shared values. They are, at least in part, a reflection of the flagrant disregard for the numerous sensible codes that already existed. Corporate statements of values can play a useful role in communicating reformist intent and supplementing our more fundamental measures to address problems of standards and culture. But they should not be confused with solutions to those problems.

The appropriate tone and standard of behaviour at the top of a bank is a necessary

condition for sustained improvements in standards and culture. However, it is far from sufficient. Improving standards and culture of major institutions, and sustaining the improvements, is a task for the long term. For lasting change, the tone in the middle and at the bottom are also important. Unless measures are taken to ensure that the intentions of those at the top are reflected in behaviour at all employee levels, fine words from the post-crisis new guard will do little to alter the fundamental nature of the organisations they run. There are some signs that the leaderships of the banks are moving in the right direction. The danger is that admirable intentions, a more considered approach, and some early improvements, driven by those now in charge, are mistaken for lasting change throughout the organisation.

We believe that the influence of a professional body for banking could assist the development of the culture within the industry by introducing non-financial incentives, which nonetheless have financial implications, such as peer pressure and the potential to shame and discipline miscreants. Such a body could, by its very existence, be a major force for cultural change and we have already recommended that its establishment should be pursued as a medium to long term goal alongside other measures such as new regulatory provisions.

There is little point in senior executives talking about the importance of the customer and then putting in place incentive and performance management schemes which focus on sales which are not in the interests of the customer. As long as the incentives to break codes of conduct exceed those to comply, codes are likely to be broken. Where that gap is widest, such as on trading floors, codes of conduct have gained least traction. This betrays a wider problem with stand-alone programmes to raise standards and improve culture. Attempts to fix them independently of the causes are well-intentioned and superficially attractive, but are likely to fail.

The culture on the trading floor is overwhelmingly male. The Government has taken a view on having more women in the boardroom through the review carried out by Lord Davies of Abersoch and his recommendations that FTSE 100 companies increase the number of women directors who serve on their boards. If that is beneficial in the boardroom so it should be on the trading floor. The people who work in an industry have an impact on the culture of that industry. More women on the trading floor would be beneficial for banks. The main UK-based banks should publish the gender breakdown of their trading operations and, where there is a significant imbalance, what they are going to do to address the issue within six months of the publication of this Report and thereafter in their annual reports.

In order for banks to demonstrate to the public that they have changed their standards and culture, they will need to provide clear evidence of such change. Banks are well aware of their past failings. They should acknowledge them. Further opportunity to demonstrate change is offered by ongoing concerns, such as approaches taken to customer redress or involvement in activities inconsistent with a customer service ethos. The clearest demonstration of change will come with the avoidance of further standards failings of the sort that led to the creation of the Commission.

Driving out fear

The Commission was shocked by the evidence it heard that so many people turned a blind eye to misbehaviour and failed to report it. Institutions must ensure that their staff have a clear understanding of their duty to report an instance of wrongdoing, or 'whistleblow', within the firm. This should include clear information for staff on what to do. Employee contracts and

codes of conduct should include clear references to the duty to whistleblow and the circumstances in which they would be expected to do so.

In addition to procedures for formal whistleblowing, banks must have in place mechanisms for employees to raise concerns when they feel discomfort about products or practices, even where they are not making a specific allegation of wrongdoing. It is in the long-term interest of banks to have mechanisms in place for ensuring that any accumulation of concerns in a particular area is acted on. Accountability for ensuring such safeguards are in place should rest with the non-executive director responsible for whistleblowing.

A non-executive board member—preferably the Chairman—should be given specific responsibility under the Senior Persons Regime for the effective operation of the firm's whistleblowing regime. That Board member must be satisfied that there are robust and effective whistleblowing procedures in place and that complaints are dealt with and escalated appropriately. It should be his or her personal responsibility to see that they are. This reporting framework should provide greater confidence that wider problems, as well as individual complaints, will be appropriately identified and handled.

The Commission recommends that the Board member responsible for the institution's whistleblowing procedures be held personally accountable for protecting whistleblowers against detrimental treatment. It will be for each firm to decide how to operate this protection in practice, but, by way of example, the Board member might be required to approve significant employment decisions relating to the whistleblower (such as changes to remuneration, change of role, career progression, disciplinary action), and to satisfy him or herself that the decisions made do not constitute detrimental treatment as a result of whistleblowing. Should a whistleblower later allege detrimental treatment to the regulator, it will be for that Board member to satisfy the regulator that the firm acted appropriately.

Whistleblowing reports should be subjected to an internal 'filter' by the bank to identify those which should be treated as grievances. Banks should be given an opportunity to conduct and resolve their own investigations of substantive whistleblowing allegations. We note claims that 'whistleblowing' being treated as individual grievances could discourage legitimate concerns from being raised. (Paragraph 792)

The regulator should periodically examine a firm's whistleblowing records, both in order to inform itself about possible matters of concern, and to ensure that firms are treating whistleblowers' concerns appropriately. The regulators should determine the information that banks should report on whistleblowing within their organisation in their annual report.

All Senior Persons should have an explicit duty to be open with the regulators, not least in cases where the Senior Person becomes aware of possible wrongdoing, regardless of whether the Senior Person in question has a direct responsibility for interacting with the regulators.

The FCA's evidence appeared to show little appreciation of the personal dilemma that whistleblowers may face. The FCA should regard it as its responsibility to support whistleblowers. It should also provide feedback to the whistleblower about how the regulator has investigated their concerns and the ultimate conclusion it reached as to whether or not to take enforcement action against the firm and the reasons for its decision. The Commission recommends that the regulator require banks to inform it of any employment tribunal cases brought by employees relying on the Public Interest Disclosure Act where the tribunal finds in the employee's favour. The regulator can then consider whether to take enforcement action

against individuals or firms who are found to have acted in a manner inconsistent with regulatory requirements set out in the regulator's handbook. In such investigations the onus should be on the individuals concerned, and the non-executive director responsible within a firm for protecting whistleblowers from detriment, to show that they have acted appropriately.

We note the regulator's disquiet about the prospect of financially incentivising whistleblowing. The Commission calls on the regulator to undertake research into the impact of financial incentives in the US in encouraging whistleblowing, exposing wrongdoing and promoting integrity and transparency in financial markets.

We have said earlier in this Report that the financial sector must undergo a significant shift in cultural attitudes towards whistleblowing, from it being viewed with distrust and hostility to one being recognised as an essential element of an effective compliance and audit regime. Attention should focus on achieving this shift of attitude.

A poorly designed whistleblowing regime could be disruptive for a firm but well designed schemes can be a valuable addition to its internal controls. The regulator should be empowered in cases where as a result of an enforcement action it is satisfied that a whistleblower has not been properly treated by a firm, to require firms to provide a compensatory payment for that treatment without the person concerned having to go to an employment tribunal.

Remuneration

Rewards out of kilter

Remuneration lies at the heart of some of banks' biggest problems. Risk and reward are misaligned, incentivising poor behaviour. The core function of banks should be to manage and price the risk inherent in the taking of loans and deposits and in holding other financial products over different time periods. One effect of limited liability is to enable individuals to extract high rewards predicated on disproportionate risks, sheltered from exposure to commensurate potential losses. This misalignment has been further reinforced by the implicit taxpayer guarantee and by the practice of making pay awards over a relatively short period. This has included remuneration for the creation and marketing of products, to retail and wholesale customers, for which the full costs and benefits may not be clear for many years. The risk inherent in complex derivatives is particularly hard to assess.

Aggregate remuneration continues to consume a high share of returns relative to shareholder dividends and capital. From this share, a relatively small proportion of senior management and supposedly irreplaceable key staff have received very large rewards. Banks should be free to compete in the global market: the use of remuneration to retain the most productive staff is a legitimate management tool. However, the financial crisis and its aftermath have exposed the extent to which many of the highest rewards were unjustified. Senior bankers have also benefited from a remuneration consultancy industry whose advice may itself have been distorted by conflicts of interest and by board Remuneration Committees trapped into ever higher awards by allegiance to colleagues and the ratchet effect of industry competitors. A culture of entitlement to high pay developed which has yet fully to be dispelled.

Over time, increased capital ratios, lower levels of leverage and structural changes to reduce the scale of the implicit taxpayer guarantee through ring-fencing will help to redress the misaligned incentives. However, these measures will not address all the problems that remain. Further public policy intervention is required.

The purpose of the Commission's proposals is, as far as possible, to address the misalignment of risk and reward, and in doing so, reduce the extent to which remuneration increases the likelihood of misconduct and of taxpayer bailout. The Commission's intention is not to prevent rewards when merited—and still less to exert retribution on a group or industry—but to ensure that the rewards of banking flow only in accordance with the full long-term costs and benefits of the risks taken.

Fixed and variable remuneration

The scale and forms of variable remuneration as they have been paid to staff at senior levels in banks, and investment banking in particular, have encouraged the pursuit of high risks for short-term gain, at times seemingly heedless of the long-term effects. The high levels of variable remuneration that persisted in the sector even after 2008 are difficult to justify.

There are distinct advantages to a significant proportion of banking remuneration being in variable rather than fixed form. It is easier to adjust variable remuneration to reflect the health of an individual bank. The use of variable remuneration also allows for deferral and the recouping of rewards in ways which better align remuneration with the longer term interests of a bank. There are signs already that the fall in bonuses in recent years has been offset by an increase in fixed remuneration. We note that Andrew Bailey considered that the EU bonus cap would "push up fixed remuneration" rather than act to reduce overall pay. We are not convinced that a crude bonus cap is the right instrument for controlling pay, but we have concluded that variable remuneration needs reform.

Yardsticks for variable remuneration

Many of the so-called profits reported by banks in the boom years turned to dust when markets went into reverse. However, for some individual bankers, they had served their purpose, having been used in calculations leading to huge bonuses which could not be recouped. The means by which profits are calculated for remuneration purposes needs to change, even if there is no change in the accounting standards which underpin reported profits and losses. Unless they change, incentive structures will continue to encourage imprudent banking. In Chapter 9 we consider the case for the introduction of regulatory accounts. Alongside any change in this area, the Commission recommends that regulators set out, within the new Remuneration Code, criteria for the determination of profits for remuneration purposes, at company level and from business units. We would expect that unrealised profits from thinly traded or illiquid markets would usually not be appropriate for this purpose.

Banks and regulators should avoid relying unquestioningly on narrow measures of bank profitability in setting remuneration. One measure which has commonly been used—return on equity—creates perverse incentives, including the incentive to use debt rather than equity to finance bank activity, thus increasing leverage. Using return on assets as an alternative measure would remove the incentive towards leverage, but carries its own problems, including an incentive to hold riskier assets. While a measure based on risk-weighted return could help address this, we have noted the severe limitations of risk-weighting in the context of the Basel II and Basel III framework.

The Commission recommends that bank remuneration committees disclose, in the annual report, the range of measures used to determine remuneration, including an explanation

of how measures of risk have been taken into account and how these have affected remuneration. The regulators should assess whether banks are striking an appropriate balance between risk and reward. They should be particularly sceptical about reliance on return on equity in calculating remuneration. The regulators should also assess whether the financial measures that are used cover adequately the performance of the entire bank as well as specific business areas. The former serves to create a collective interest in the long-term success of the institution. Where it is not satisfied, the regulator may need to intervene. It is for banks to set remuneration levels, but it is for regulators to ensure that the costs and benefits of risks in the long term are properly aligned with remuneration. This is what judgement-based regulation should mean.

Misaligned remuneration incentives have also contributed to conduct failure, including scandals such as PPI. The Commission welcomes announcements by some banks that retail staff will no longer be rewarded based on their sales, but notes the widespread warnings that sales-based rewards may persist informally even where their explicit inclusion in incentive schemes is removed. The Commission recommends that the new Remuneration Code include a provision to limit the use and scale of sales-based incentives at individual or business unit level, and for the regulator to have the ability to limit or even prohibit such incentives.

Reforming variable remuneration

Variable remuneration does not form a large proportion of total pay for the vast majority of bank staff. However, the use of very high bonuses, both in absolute terms and relative to salaries, is more prevalent in banking than in other sectors. As we have already noted, there are advantages to variable rather than fixed remuneration, but it is essential that the use of variable remuneration is far better aligned with the longer term interests of the bank. The Commission's proposals which follow do not relate simply to investment bankers or directors, but should apply to all those whose actions or behaviour could seriously harm the bank, its reputation or its customers. They should apply not only to all Senior Persons but also to all licensed staff receiving variable remuneration...

The remuneration of senior bankers has tended to suffer from the fundamental flaw that annual rewards were not sufficiently aligned with the long-term interests of the firm. Bankers often had something akin to "skin in the game" through payment of part of bonuses and long term incentive plans in equity. But this provided unlimited upside but with the limited liability that comes with equity putting a floor under the downside. The Commission recommends that there should be a presumption that all executive staff to whom the new Remuneration Code applies receive variable remuneration and that a significant proportion of their variable remuneration be in deferred form and deferred for longer than has been customary to date. In some cases, there is a danger that individuals will be penalised for the poor performance of their colleagues or successors. However, such concerns are outweighed by the advantages of ensuring that these staff have a bigger personal interest in, and responsibility for, the long-term future of the bank. This will change behaviour for the better. It is particularly important for some of the team-based functions where members have often felt a greater loyalty to the small team than to the wider bank interest. By linking rewards much more closely to long term risks, deferral can recreate some of the features of remuneration structures characteristic of unlimited liability partnerships.

For the most senior and highest rewarded it is even more crucial that their remuneration

reflects the higher degree of individual responsibility expected of them. Flexibility on the part of firms, and judgement on the part of regulators, is essential to take account of wide variations of risk and time horizons of its maturity in different areas of banking. Poorly designed schemes may increase the risk of gaming or circumvention of regulations and will have adverse or perverse effects on behaviour.

Too high a proportion of variable remuneration in the banking sector is often paid in the form of equity or instruments related to future prospects for equity in the bank concerned. The path of share prices after remuneration has been awarded is unlikely to reflect accurately the quality of decisions made and actions taken in the period to which the award relates. Too much reliance on equity value creates perverse incentives for leverage and for short-termism. There are merits in the greater use of instruments such as bail-in bonds in deferred compensation. If senior staff are liable to lose their deferred pay if the bank goes bust, it will concentrate minds. In the event of capital inadequacy, such instruments would convert into capital available to absorb losses. However, there is no package of instruments which necessarily best matches risks and rewards in each case. Flexibility in the choice of instruments is vital. Banks should make this choice, dependent on particular circumstances. It is equally important that the supervisor assesses whether these choices are consistent with the appropriate balance of risks and rewards.

The ability to defer a proportion of an individual's bonus is an important feature of remuneration schemes for those in senior decision-making and risk-taking roles in banks. This is because bonuses are typically awarded annually, while profits or losses from banking transactions may not be realised for many years. Similarly, misconduct may be identified only some time after the misbehaviour has occurred. Deferral for two or three years is likely to be insufficient to take account of the timescale over which many problems come home to roost in banking, whether in the form of high risk assets turning bad or misconduct at individual or wider level coming to light. Deferral should be over a longer period than currently is the case. However, no single longer period is appropriate and flexibility in approach is required to align risk and rewards. This is the job of the bank, but the supervisor should monitor decisions closely, particularly where the individuals concerned pose the greatest potential risks. The Commission recommends that the new Remuneration Code include a new power for the regulators to require that a substantial part of remuneration be deferred for up to 10 years, where it is necessary for effective long-term risk management.

The deferral of variable remuneration for longer periods is so important because it allows that remuneration to be recouped in appropriate circumstances. Clawback or similar recovery is also an appropriate course of action in cases where fines are levied on the firm, such as for misconduct in relation to LIBOR. However, what matters more is the development of legal and contractual arrangements whereby deferred remuneration comes to be seen as contingent, so that it can be recouped in a wider range of circumstances. These might include not only enforcement action, but also a fall in bank profitability resulting from acts of omission or commission in the period for which the variable remuneration was initially paid.

In the most egregious cases of misconduct, recovery of vested remuneration may be justified. The Commission recommends that the regulator examines whether there is merit in further powers, in the cases of individuals who have been the subject of successful enforcement action, to recover remuneration received or awarded in the period to which the

enforcement action applied.

One of the fundamental weaknesses of bank remuneration in recent years has been that it lacked down-side incentives in the worst case scenarios that were remotely comparable to the upside incentives when things seemed to be going well. This disparity was laid bare by taxpayers bailing out failed banks while those responsible for failure continued to enjoy the fruits of their excess. We believe that the alignment of the financial interests of the most crucial bank staff with those of the bank is an important factor in addressing this imbalance. The Commission recommends accordingly that legislation be introduced to provide that, in the event that a bank is in receipt of direct taxpayer support in the form of new capital provision or new equity support, or a guarantee resulting in a contingent liability being placed on to the public sector balance sheet, the regulators should have an explicit discretionary power to render void or cancel all deferred compensation, all entitlements for payments for loss of office or change of control and all unvested pension rights in respect of Senior Persons and other licensed staff.

Our recommendations in this section are aimed at incentivising bank management and staff to prioritise appropriate conduct, and the safety and soundness of their organisation, by enabling some or all of the deferred remuneration to be recouped in the event of conduct or prudential failures emerging. Such deferral structures as the industry had prior to the financial crisis were intended as staff retention schemes, rather than to incentivise appropriate behaviour. Consequently, these awards are generally forfeited if an employee resigns from the firm during the vesting period. As a result, it is common practice for banks hiring staff from competitors to compensate recruits for the value they have forfeited, by awarding them equivalent rights in their own deferred compensation scheme. This is tantamount to wiping the slate clean and, if it continued, would blunt the intended effect of our recommendations. International agreement on this issue, while desirable, is unlikely. The Commission recommends that the regulators come forward with proposals for domestic reform in this area as a matter of urgency. Among possible proposals, they should consider whether banks could be required to leave in place any deferred compensation due to an individual when they leave the firm. The regulators should also examine the merits of a new discretionary regulatory power, in cases where a former employee would have suffered deductions from deferred remuneration, but does not do so as a result of having moved to another bank, to recover from the new employer the amount that would have been deducted. This would be on the understanding that the cost is likely to be passed on to the employee. The use of this power might be initiated by the former employer, or by the regulator, in specific instances such as company fines for misconduct.

The adoption of the proposals set out in this section would amount to a substantial realignment of the risks and rewards facing senior bankers. Even with legislative backing and Parliamentary support, there are considerable obstacles to their rapid and successful implementation. This area is subject to considerable international regulatory interest and there is a danger that further interventions could change the wider framework within which our recommendations would operate. The regulators should ensure that new employment contracts are consistent with effective deferral schemes and should be aware of the potential for gaming over-prescriptive rules, or encouraging the arbitrage of entitlements. In fulfilling these roles, the regulators should exercise judgement in determining whether banks are operating within the spirit of the Commission's recommendations as implemented.

Board remuneration

The Commission regards it as inappropriate for non-executives to receive some of their compensation in the form of shares or other instruments the aggregate amount of which could be influenced by leverage. A bank board should act as a bulwark against excessive risk-taking driven by individual rewards. The challenge and scrutiny responsibilities of non-executive directors are not consistent with the pursuit of additional awards based on financial performance. The Commission recommends that the new Remuneration Code prohibit variable, performance-related remuneration of non-executive directors of banks.

The international dimension

Remuneration requirements should, ideally, be mandated internationally in order to reduce arbitrage. The Commission expects the UK authorities to strive to secure international agreement on changes which are focused on the deferral, conditionality and form of variable remuneration, and the measures for its determination, rather than simply the quantitative relationship to fixed remuneration, because it is changes of this kind that will most improve the behaviour of bankers in the longer term. In particular, we expect the Government and the Bank of England to ensure that the technical standards under [the EU capital adequacy rules] contain sufficient flexibility for national regulators to impose requirements in relation to instruments in which deferred bonuses can be paid which are compatible with our recommendations.

It must be recognised, however, that international agreement on some of the changes we envisage may be neither fast nor complete. This may lead some to advance the argument that the UK will be placed at a competitive disadvantage. The extent to which this is true has been overstated. The UK has great strengths as a financial centre, but, partly because of those strengths, it also faces substantial risks. The PRA must adopt a common sense and flexible approach to handling these issues. However, its overriding objective of financial stability should not be compromised and, in fulfilling this objective, the risk of an exodus should be disregarded.

Getting it done

The current terms of the Remuneration Code do not provide a clear basis for full implementation of our proposals. The Commission recommends that a new Remuneration Code be introduced on the basis of a new statutory provision, which should provide expressly for the regulators to prescribe such measures in the new Code as they consider necessary to secure their regulatory objectives.

Our recommendations place undue additional burdens on neither banks nor regulators. The proposals require banks to identify which staff are associated with high prudential or conduct risks and assess how the structures and timings of incentive schemes may affect the behaviour of employees. This should be tantamount to routine risk management in a well-run bank and banks should already be doing it as part of their internal controls. The regulator will need to check that the bank has identified the key risk-takers and decision-makers and confirm that deferred rewards will flow only when the full, long-term consequences of their decisions have become evident. The proposals require the careful examination of the remuneration of the highest risk Senior Persons Regime staff and spot checks on other licensed employees. Incentives are fundamental to the behaviour of individual bankers. Regulators should already be undertaking these checks.

There is a risk that increased regulatory oversight could lead to banks outsourcing their remuneration policies to the PRA, in the same way they outsourced risk management before the financial crisis. However, we anticipate that other changes will, over time, have the effect of imposing more effective market discipline on remuneration. The PRA should monitor remuneration carefully and report on it as part of the regular reporting of its activities.

The Commission recommends that banks' statutory remuneration reports be required to include a disclosure of expected levels of remuneration in the coming year by division, assuming a central planning scenario and, in the following year, the differences from the expected levels of remuneration and the reasons for those differences. The disclosure should include all elements of compensation and the methodology underlying the decisions on remuneration. The individual remuneration packages for executive directors and all those above a threshold determined by the regulator should normally be disclosed, unless the supervisor has been satisfied that there is a good reason for not doing so. The Commission further recommends that the remuneration report should be required to include a summary of the risk factors that were taken into account in reaching decisions and how these have changed since the last report.

We do not recommend the setting of levels of remuneration by Government or regulatory authorities. However, banks should understand that many consider the levels of reward in recent years to have grown to grotesque levels at the most senior ranks and that such reward often bears little relation to any special talent shown. This also needs to be seen in the context of the fact that many people have seen little or no increase in pay over the same period. We would encourage shareholders to take a more active interest in levels of senior remuneration. Individual rewards should be primarily a matter for banks and their owners. Nonetheless, we recognise that the measures we propose will radically alter the structure of bank remuneration. They will also provide far greater information to shareholders in carrying out their role.....

Sanctions and enforcement

Enforcement against banks

Effective enforcement action against firms represents an important pillar of the overall approach to enforcement. In many cases, it serves as the gateway to enforcement action against responsible individuals, which is also necessary. It can draw wider attention to a failure, providing incentives for firms to strive to maintain high standards, and establishes penalties when banks depart from those standards. The record of the regulators in enforcement against firms is patchy at best. It is notable that both significant prudential failures, for example at RBS, and some widespread conduct failures in the selling of PPI did not lead to successful enforcement against banks. In the investigations those at the top often absolved themselves by attesting their ignorance about the organisation of which they were in charge. It would run contrary to the public interest if the idea were to gain currency that banks can be too big or complex to sanction.

It is to be hoped that the LIBOR investigations have set a pattern for the future. In relation to prudential failings, formal action will assist in determining what went wrong and help to provide the basis for pursuing responsible individuals. In relation to conduct failings, a visible and costly redress process may not be enough: enforcement has the benefit of more clearly

setting out where failures occurred and that rules were broken, so that culpability is not obfuscated and so that lessons can be learned.

It is right that an element of the fine should fall on shareholders, to provide a continuing incentive for them to monitor standards of conduct and supervision within the banks they own. However, our recommendations on recovery of deferred payments in Chapter 8 are designed to ensure that, in future, a significant proportion of fines on firms may be met from deductions from the remuneration of staff of the bank at the time of the misconduct, thereby making the prospect of fines on firms a more direct incentive on individuals to prevent it. There should be a presumption that fines on banks should be recovered from the pool of deferred compensation as well as current year bonuses. The recovery should materially affect to different degrees individuals directly involved and those responsible for managing or supervising them, staff in the same business unit or division, and staff across the organisation as a whole. The impact and distribution of fines on deferred compensation should be approved by the supervisors as part of a settlement agreement.

Firms cannot be permitted to regard enforcement fines as a "business cost". The FSA recognised that in the past the level of its fines was too low to prevent this. The reforms to its penalty policy are supposed to address this, but they have yet to be properly tested, and the credibility of enforcement has been damaged by a legacy of fines that were pitiful compared to the benefits banks gained from the misconduct. To provide greater incentives to maintain high levels of professional standards, both the FCA and the PRA should be prepared to review again their penalty setting framework in the future to allow for a further substantial increase in fines. They should ensure that in responding to any future failures they make full use of the new rules for calculating fines and build on the encouraging examples set by the LIBOR fines. If regulators believe that the current legal framework still inhibits them from imposing the necessary level of penalties, they should tell Parliament immediately.

In its Report on LIBOR, the Treasury Committee concluded that "the FSA and its successors should consider greater flexibility in fine levels, levying much heavier penalties on firms which fail fully to cooperate with them". We agree. Cooperation by firms in bringing issues to regulators' attention and assisting with their investigation should be a given. Regulators should make full use of the flexibility in their penalty policy to punish cases where this does not occur. However, regulators should also make it clear to firms that the same flexibility will be used to show leniency where inadvertent and minor breaches are swiftly brought to their attention and rectified, so that the fear of over-reaction does not stifle the free flow of information.

A protracted process of enforcement with a firm can delay enforcement against individuals, weakening the prospect of its success and of meaningful penalties, particularly if the delay means that the individual can continue lucrative work for several more years and approach retirement. The Commission recommends that the regulators bear in mind the advantage of swift resolution of enforcement action against firms, in particular in cases where settlement with the firm is a precursor to action against responsible individuals.

Civil sanctions and powers of enforcement over individuals

Faced with the most widespread and damaging failure of the banking industry in the UK's modern history, the regulatory authorities seemed almost powerless to bring sanctions

against those who presided over massive failures within banks. Public concern about this apparent powerlessness is both understandable and justified, but the need for a more effective enforcement regime does and should not arise from a public demand for retribution. It is needed to correct the unbalanced incentives that pervade banking. These unbalanced incentives have contributed greatly to poor standards. Redress of these is needed not merely as a step to restoring public confidence, but also to create a new incentive for bankers to do the right thing, and particularly for those in the most senior positions fully to fulfil their duties and to supervise the actions of those below them.

Later in this chapter, we consider the case for a new criminal offence specific to the banking sector. However, in the context of civil sanctions, the Commission has not heard the case advanced for a range of penalties which go beyond those already available. The problems, and the proposals for change which follow, reflect the fact that the sanctions already available to the regulators, such as very large fines and permanent disbarment from the UK financial services sector, have so rarely been applied.

The foundations for a new approach are laid in the Commission's recommendations in Chapter 6. In that chapter we recommended that a successor to the Statement of Principles in the form of Banking Standards Rules designed to ensure that the full range of enforcement tools could be applied to a wider range of individuals working in banking. This would be supported by a system of licensing administered by individual banks, under the supervision of the regulators, to ensure that all those subject to the Banking Standards Rules were aware of their obligations. This approach would prevent one barrier to effective enforcement that we identified, namely that regulators lacked effective powers to sanction misconduct by bankers who were not Approved Persons.

In Chapter 6 we made another proposal designed to address one of the most dismaying weaknesses that we have identified, whereby a combination of collective decision-making, complex decision-making structures and extensive delegation create a situation in which the most senior individuals at the highest level within banks, like Macavity, cannot be held responsible for even the most widespread and flagrant of failures. We proposed the establishment of a Senior Persons Regime to replace the Approved Persons Regime in respect of banks, whereby all key responsibilities within a bank would be assigned to a specific, senior individual. Even where certain activities in pursuance of the responsibility were either delegated or subject to collective decision-making that responsibility would remain with the designated individual. The Senior Persons Regime would be designed to ensure that, in future, it should be possible to identify those responsible for failures more clearly and more fairly. This should provide a stronger basis for the use of enforcement powers in respect of individuals.

These changes would also need to be accompanied by a change of approach from the regulators. In respect of insider trading, the increased effectiveness of criminal enforcement owes less to changes in the law than changes in the approach of the regulators, in particular to a realisation that a large-scale commitment of time, effort and resources to seeing cases through is both necessary and worthwhile. The same determination has not been so apparent in enforcement action relating to bank failures, LIBOR or mis-selling. At the root of this failure has been what the regulators themselves have characterised as a bottom-up approach. A key to success in the future is likely to be a top-down approach, drawing on the clarity that the Senior Persons Regime is intended to provide about who is exercising responsibility at the

highest levels, what they knew and did, and what they reasonably could and should have known and done.

The proposal to create a rebuttable presumption that directors of failed banks should not work in such a role again is a well-intentioned measure for addressing the difficulty of proving individual culpability, but it is a blunt instrument with several weaknesses. The blanket imposition of a rebuttable presumption risks having perverse and unfair effects; it will act as a disincentive for new directors to come to the aid of a struggling bank; it could encourage power structures in which key decision-makers eschewed the title and responsibility of director. Furthermore, the Government proposal as it stands is too narrow to be of significant use. Notably, it would probably not have been triggered in most of the recent scandals ranging from the bail-outs of RBS and HBOS to PPI mis-selling and LIBOR manipulation. We have concluded that a more effective approach than the blanket imposition of a rebuttable presumption would be one which reverses the burden of proof in a wider, but clearly defined, set of circumstances covering both prudential and conduct failures.

Greater individual accountability needs to be built into the FCA's and PRA's processes. The Commission recommends that legislation be introduced to provide that, when certain conditions are met, the regulators should be able to impose the full range of civil sanctions, including a ban, on an individual unless that person can demonstrate that he or she took all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the effects of a specified failing. The first condition would be that the bank for whom the individual worked or is working has been the subject of successful enforcement action which has been settled or upheld by tribunal. The second condition is that the regulator can demonstrate that the individual held responsibilities assigned in the Senior Persons Regime which are directly relevant to the subject of the enforcement action.

The FSA made the case for a power to impose an interim prohibition on individuals against whom enforcement action has been commenced. The case made by the FSA was not clearly targeted on banks. An interim prohibition could cause serious harm if used unfairly or arbitrarily. In the case of very small financial firms in particular, having a key individual prohibited for even a short period might cause irreparable damage to their reputation and see clients leave never to return, even though the case might be dropped or not upheld. Given that the FSA has only rarely taken public enforcement action against senior individuals in large banks, it may be that the cases through which they have identified the need for a suspension power involve smaller firms or non-bank financial institutions. Based on our consideration of issues relating to banking standards, the Commission has concluded that the case has not been made for providing the regulators with a general power to impose interim prohibitions on individuals carrying out controlled functions in the financial services sector.

The current time limit of three years between the regulator learning of an offence and taking enforcement action against individuals could act as a constraint on the regulators' ability to build credible cases. This could be a particular barrier to the regulators' ability to place greater priority on pursuing senior individuals in large and complex banks, as we are recommending. In view of our proposal that enforcement action against a firm must be completed before the regulator can deploy the new tool of a reversed burden of proof, more than three years may well be required to complete this process and make the new tool usable. The Commission recommends that the Government should address this problem by allowing

for an extension of the limitation period in certain circumstances. However, swift enforcement action should be the priority. Regulators should be required retrospectively to provide a full explanation for the need to go beyond three years. They can expect to be challenged by Parliament if it were to transpire that they were using this measure as an excuse for delaying enforcement action.

A new criminal offence?

The Commission has concluded that there is a strong case in principle for a new criminal offence of reckless misconduct in the management of a bank. While all concerned should be under no illusions about the difficulties of securing a conviction for such a new offence, the fact that recklessness in carrying out professional responsibilities carries a risk of a criminal conviction and a prison sentence would give pause for thought to the senior officers of UK banks. The Commission recommends that the offence be limited to individuals covered by the new Senior Persons Regime, so that those concerned could have no doubts about their potential criminal liability.

The Commission would expect this offence to be pursued in cases involving only the most serious of failings, such as where a bank failed with substantial costs to the taxpayer, lasting consequences for the financial system, or serious harm to customers. The credibility of such an offence would also depend on it being used only in the most serious cases, and not predominantly against smaller operators where proving responsibility is easier, but the harm is much lower. Little purpose would be served by the creation of a criminal offence if the only punishment available to the courts were the imposition of a fine, because substantial fines can already be levied as a civil sanction with a lower burden of proof. We would expect the determination of the available sentences to have regard to relevant comparable offences.

It is inappropriate that those found guilty of criminal recklessness should continue to benefit from remuneration obtained as a consequence of the reckless behaviour. Fines may not claw back the full amount. The Commission recommends that the Government bring forward, after consultation with the regulators and no later than the end of 2013, proposals for additional provisions for civil recovery from individuals who have been found guilty of reckless mismanagement of a bank.

The Commission's support in principle for a new criminal offence is subject to an important reservation. Experience suggests that, where there is the possibility of a criminal prosecution, public disclosure of failings might be greatly limited until the criminal case is finished. It is important to expedite any civil sanctions against individuals and to publish information into banking failures in a timely manner. The Commission recommends that, following a successful civil enforcement action against a bank, the decision on whether to bring criminal proceedings against relevant Senior Persons must be taken within twelve months.

Enforcement decision-making

There is an inherent tension between the role of real-time regulators and the enforcement function, which can involve reaching judgements about matters in which supervisors were involved at the time. Regulators are also focused on the big picture, such as maintaining financial stability. Greater priority needs to be placed on the role of enforcement, with adequate resources devoted to this function and leadership with a willingness to pursue

even the difficult cases, often involving the larger and more powerful players, in order to build up a credible deterrent effect.

A higher priority for the enforcement function could be achieved by replacing the Enforcement and Financial Crime Division of the FCA with a separate statutory body, which might also assume the enforcement functions of the PRA. However, we have concluded that to propose this change now would involve a new organisational upheaval for the financial services regulators, almost immediately after a major set of organisational changes have come into effect.

We have, however, concluded that the body responsible for making enforcement decisions arising from the work of the Enforcement and Financial Crime Division of the FCA, namely the Regulatory Decisions Committee, is not best-suited to the specific enforcement needs of the banking sector. At the moment, the Committee's composition seems to offer the worst of all worlds; it appears to contain neither a depth of banking expertise nor a clear lay element separate from banking and allied financial services sectors.

The Commission recommends the creation of an autonomous body to assume the decision-making role of the Regulatory Decisions Committee for enforcement in relation to the banking sector. The body should have a lay (non-banking or financial services professional) majority, but should also contain several members with extensive and senior banking experience. The body should be chaired by someone with senior judicial experience. The body should have statutory autonomy within the FCA. It should be appointed by agreement between the boards of the FCA and PRA. The body should also assume responsibility for decision-making in respect of enforcement action brought by or under the auspices of the PRA. The new body should publish a separate annual report on its activity and the lessons for banks which emerge from its decisions, and the chairman should appear before Parliament, probably the Treasury Committee, to discuss this report. The Commission further recommends that the FCA and the PRA be required to publish a joint review of the working of the enforcement arrangements for the banking sector in 2018. This should, as part of its work, consider whether a separate statutory body for enforcement as a whole has merit.

The chairmen of Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, Royal Bank of Scotland, Santander, Standard Chartered and Nationwide,¹⁸ subsequently asked Sir Richard Lambert to work on the development of a new self-regulatory regime for banking in a Banking Standards Review. The Review led to the establishment of the **Banking Standards Board**:¹⁹

The BSB began its work in April 2015. It is a private sector body funded by membership subscriptions and open to all banks and building societies operating in the UK. It is neither a regulator nor a trade association; it has no statutory powers, and it will not speak or lobby for the industry. It will,

¹⁸ Banking Standards Review, Consultation Paper, 2 (Feb. 2014).

¹⁹ See <https://www.bankingstandardsboard.org.uk/>.

instead, provide challenge, support and scrutiny for firms committed to rebuilding the sector's reputation, and it will provide impartial and objective assessments of the industry's progress.²⁰

The BSB carries out assessment exercises of the behavior of firms that sign up for the assessment (which in the last exercise was 25 firms),²¹ it consults on professional standards, and published standards. But in November 2018 the Chair of the BSB admitted that progress had been slow.²² In addition to the BSB there is also a Senior Managers and Certification Regime administered by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Here is the **Banking Standards Board's BSB Statement of Principles for Strengthening Professionalism: The Role of the Firm**

Principle 1: Customers, clients and wider society

Firms should ensure that every individual is motivated and equipped to act in the interests of customers, clients and wider society. This may be achieved by:

Communicating to all employees that the long-term sustainability of the firm and serving the interests of customers, clients and wider society are mutually dependent;

Ensuring that individuals know how their role contributes to the purpose of the organisation, and to the wider purpose of banking;

Considering how social, economic and technological change is likely to affect the provision of banking services and what will be required for professionalism in the future;

Making effective use, as appropriate, of apprenticeship schemes, graduate programmes, professional standards, professional qualifications, induction processes and the like to ensure that new recruits understand the social purpose of banking, have a strong ethical awareness and are encouraged to form attitudes that are conducive to continuous learning;

Discussing with staff mistakes or instances of poor behaviour within the firm or the sector and implementing lessons learnt.

Principle 2: Coverage

Activities aimed at strengthening professionalism should include all individuals whatever the stage of their career, including those moving between firms or into or out of the banking sector.

This may be achieved by:

Ensuring that efforts to strengthen professionalism go beyond traditional banking roles and are relevant to all those within scope of the Individual Conduct Rules (ICRs), across all business lines and functions;

²⁰ <https://www.bankingstandardsboard.org.uk/what-is-the-bsb/>

²¹ <https://www.bankingstandardsboard.org.uk/annual-review-2017-2018/>.

²² Kalyeena Makortoff, Overhaul of UK's Poor Banking Culture Is Slow, Admits Standards Chair, The Guardian (Nov.13, 2018).

Providing enhanced support for, and oversight of, individuals covered by the Senior Managers and Certification Regime (SMCR).

Principle 3: Regulatory context

Activities aimed at strengthening professionalism should build on relevant regulatory frameworks, in particular the SMCR and ICRs. This may be achieved by:

- Implementing the SMCR and ICRs consistently, proportionately and fairly and in ways that best support the letter and spirit of these regulations;
- Working with other firms to achieve consistency of implementation of the SMCR and ICRs across the sector;
- Ensuring that, where individuals' behaviour falls short of expectations, there is a fair and transparent process for investigating the circumstances and, where necessary, taking appropriate action;
- Encouraging individuals to learn from mistakes and share experiences;
- Sharing appropriate and required information in a timely way with organisations fulfilling roles prescribed by regulation g. with professional bodies that issue Statements of Professional Standing.

Principle 4: Learning

Learning and development should meet and go beyond regulatory requirements, encompassing the ongoing strengthening (by a variety of means) of technical knowledge, ethical judgement and people skills. This may be achieved by:

- Ensuring that leaders at all levels are role models in their behaviour and demonstrate a personal commitment to developing their own technical knowledge, judgement and people skills, and help others do the same;
- Developing, rewarding and celebrating technical knowledge and skills, good behaviour, ethical judgement and people skills such as leadership, empathy and emotional intelligence;
- Equipping individuals with the skills to serve their customers and clients well in a rapidly changing sector and technological environment;
- Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with relevant external bodies (e.g. professional bodies, standards setters and qualifications providers) to ensure that learning frameworks and standards meet current and future needs at the level of the individual practitioner, the firm and the sector;
- Making effective use, as appropriate, of formal training (such as initial and continuing professional development, including professional qualifications and standards), and other learning opportunities such as mentoring, professional body membership, reflective practice (e.g. through 360° and self-review), peer-group discussions, shadowing ;
- Supporting those individuals with specific CPD requirements set by a professional body;
- Maintaining up-to-date information across the firm on employees' skills, qualifications and development needs;
- Ensuring that individuals have the time and encouragement to learn as part of working life, not as an extra-curricular activity on top of a working day.

Principle 5: A culture of openness, honesty, challenge and support

Firms should foster a culture of openness, honesty, challenge and support. This may be achieved by:

Cultivating an environment in which individuals are confident to speak honestly and are supported when challenging the behaviour of colleagues;

Ensuring that senior staff lead by example in seeking challenge, speaking honestly and fostering a culture of openness and support;

Developing appropriate procedures to encourage individuals to speak up in a timely manner, and supporting them when they do;

Promoting both diversity and inclusion within the firm, using the drive towards this to ensure that the firm reflects the values of society and supports a culture of openness, honesty, challenge and support;

Allowing individuals to exercise appropriate autonomy and to deploy the judgement they have developed;

Prioritising the well-being of staff to ensure that they feel confident in performing their roles and in exercising their judgement.

Principle 6: Coherence, efficiency and effectiveness

Initiatives aimed at strengthening professionalism should be coherent, efficient and effective, not only at the level of the firm but across the sector. This may be achieved by:

Establishing sponsorship at a board and senior executive level for professionalism activities within the firm;

Ensuring consistency between such initiatives and a firm's purpose and values;

Collaborating with other firms to overcome common obstacles to raising standards of professionalism, recognising that different approaches are likely to be suitable for different firms;

Contributing to efforts to understand the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at strengthening professionalism, g. (sic) assessing the links between training/learning inputs and performance outputs and outcomes for customers and clients;

Sharing good practice and experience with other firms and encouraging and contributing to cross-sector initiatives to identify good practice, understand future requirements and promote professionalism.²³

As noted above, the Financial Conduct Authority administers a Senior Managers and Certification Regime which is meant to make individuals more accountable.²⁴ At the same time, the FCA has taken a broader approach to the issue of culture in finance, and published a discussion paper on this issue in 2018 - **Transforming Culture in Financial Services (FCA)**:

²³ See

<https://www.bankingstandardsboard.org.uk/bsb-statement-of-principles-for-strengthening-professionalism/>

²⁴ <https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/senior-managers-certification-regime> .

Two fundamental concepts underpin our thinking about culture and regulation. The first is that regulation has to hold the individual as well as the firm to account. This is why we consider it so important to define the 5 Conduct Rules²⁵ and have them apply to all financial services individuals in the firm.

The second concept is that leaders can manage culture even if they can't measure it very well. This is deeply embedded in the Accountability Regime too. The regime aims to hold firms' leadership to account for their own behaviour and for taking reasonable steps to manage the behaviour of those in their areas of responsibility. It also aims to ensure that leaders have clearly articulated what they are accountable for and that key responsibilities neither slip through the cracks nor end up too diffused. It provides a robust framework for a culture of accountability, bringing much needed clarity to the accountability of all individuals and a focus on behaviour that goes beyond simply complying with the rules

From start-ups to large corporations, clear accountability for individuals is fundamental. Our intention through the Accountability Regime isn't to change how firms organise themselves or impose a defined culture, but rather to develop a standard of accountability and conduct at all levels within a firm. Many firms have informally reported that this clarity of accountability has noticeably improved the effectiveness of their leadership...

.. the question remains – how can firms go beyond rules and standards to achieve real culture change? ...

Understanding the dynamics of culture facilitates progress, but firms' behaviour will only transform for the better if change is chosen rather than imposed. A focus on culture is the responsibility of everyone in a firm. It should be a collaborative effort, by all areas and at all levels – and industry must take responsibility for delivering the standards it aspires to. By doing so, firms help to mitigate the risk that old habits of behaviour will repeat themselves, and so play a vital role in reducing harm to consumers, markets, and themselves.

Given the complexity of human dynamics it is unlikely there will ever be a 'quick fix' for change at an organisational, much less a societal, level. However, the importance of generating a meaningful debate on this topic reinforces the interdependence between the impact of effective cultures and restoring public trust. That debate is central to this Discussion Paper.²⁶

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is also thinking about the misconduct issue. Here's a speech by **Kevin Stroh, FRBNY**:

... the issue of conduct and culture reform in the financial services industry is a "complex" problem and not simply a "complicated" one. Complicated problems have clear and relatively stable cause-and-effect patterns so that outcomes are largely predictable with the appropriate

²⁵ 1: You must act with integrity; 2 You must act with due skill, care and diligence; 3 You must be open and cooperative with the FCA, the PRA and other regulators; 4 You must pay due regard to the interests of customers and treat them fairly; 5 you must observe proper standards of market conduct.

²⁶ Financial Conduct Authority, Transforming Culture in Financial Services, DP 18/2 (Mar. 2018). The DP contains a number of different essays by different authors.

expertise and analysis. By contrast, complex problems are typically marked by interconnectedness of a large number of factors, constant evolution, feedback loops, “unknown unknowns”, and unpredictable outcomes. Culture reform is that type of problem.

A firm’s culture can be defined as the shared set of norms that influences decision-making and is evidenced through behavior. Now consider a global systemically important bank with trillions of dollars of assets; with operations that span diverse business lines, customers, counterparties, investors and regulators across multiple jurisdictions; and that competes in a global industry against similar firms. Add in tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of employees with a wide range of motivations and goals who interact in varied but interconnected operating environments with different regional, corporate and individual values, incentives, regulations, and laws, and the inherent complexity becomes clear.

This complexity makes it virtually impossible to fully comprehend the drivers of culture or predict its behavioral consequences. An implication is the need for a long-term, sustained commitment to addressing conduct and culture reform using a wide range of tools that are suitable for a complex problem.

Evolution of New York Fed’s Effort

In the ten years that followed the financial crisis, we have continued to see a stream of misconduct scandals and cultural failures, and a corresponding increase in significant litigation and enforcement activity, with costs estimated at an aggregate of \$320 billion worldwide.

At the New York Fed, our work in advocating culture and behavior reform in the financial sector started in late 2013 when our former President, Bill Dudley, delivered a speech on the “too-big-to-fail” problem. In that speech, he argued that “there is evidence of deep-seated culture and ethical failures at many financial institutions.” More recently, our current President John Williams concluded that “we have not yet fully addressed the root causes of many of the problems that have plagued the financial sector” and that there was still a “sense of urgency in addressing banking culture.”

Over the past five years, the New York Fed has focused on shining a spotlight on culture, behavior and conduct concerns, and pushed the industry to address these issues through a range of activities:

Engaging with diverse thinkers on governance, culture and organizational behavior to better understand the complexity of culture reform;

Convening academic experts, and leaders in finance and the official sector through conferences and workshops on culture and behavior reform;

Facilitating discussions among the supervisory community on assessing and influencing industry culture-related efforts;

Building a platform for a partnership between business schools and industry representatives to influence culture reform through training of future leaders in finance; and

Publishing a white paper on “Misconduct Risk, Culture and Supervision” that discussed a range of market failures that provide a conceptual rationale for intervention by bank supervisors.

Our white paper also summarizes work of supervisors from multiple jurisdictions around the world who are increasingly focused on the risks posed by poor culture and misconduct, and have developed a broad assortment of new tools and practices for identifying and supervising for misconduct risk. International efforts range from the creation of specialized units of

behavioral risk experts to risk culture assessment frameworks to supervisory guidance that directs supervised institutions to develop and promote a sound corporate culture.

I view this variation in approach as a feature and not a bug of the official sector focus on culture reform. There is rarely a single solution to a complex problem with many interdependencies and deep uncertainty. Rather, the official sector must experiment and innovate; probe and adapt; and try new approaches to foster a healthy culture that promotes appropriate conduct.

One common thread of the recent innovations, however, is that supervisors can provide a horizontal perspective on culture reform that reflects broad social goals in a way that the private sector cannot. To be clear, it is not the supervisors' job to dictate the internal culture of a firm, but when there are market failures such as externalities or information asymmetries, then there is a role for the official sector to push firms to do more to address these issues and mitigate misconduct risk.

We should be cautious, however, about our ability to influence precisely and predictably. Public health studies, for example, document "policy resistance" where interventions are defeated by the system's response to an intervention. As an example, a rules-based regime that focuses on reducing conduct risk by prescriptive regulatory fiat runs the risks of creating a "check-the-box culture" where everything not explicitly banned is considered acceptable behavior. This has the potential to facilitate exactly the wrong type of culture, conduct and risk-taking.

Challenges Related to Complexity

While I have spoken so far about work by the official sector, progress has also been made over the past few years by the industry in terms of senior management focus and commitment to culture reform. Some firms have created Board-level committees looking at culture, others have introduced behavioral risk into their audit programs, and still others have developed dashboards with a range of quantitative and qualitative factors to track their efforts and outcomes. Progress has been uneven, however, and there is still more to do. Let me identify several areas where I think additional work is needed—assessment, technology, and influence.

Assessment

Given the complexity of the problem, measuring and assessing progress is not straightforward. Assessment of culture and the factors needed to change it are difficult, but this should not deter us. Managers, investors, and the official sector all want to know what is changing and whether misconduct risk has been mitigated. The question then is, how will we really know whether change is happening and whether progress is sustainable?

I don't believe that there is a "silver bullet" for assessing culture change—no single solution, approach, or template will work for every firm in every circumstance. That said, standardized metrics will help in assessing changes over time and across firms. The UK Banking Standards Board (BSB), for example, provides one lens on assessing culture change for a broad cross-section of financial service firms operating in the U.K. I believe diagnostic tools like this are an important part of the cultural assessment toolkit.

Moreover, firms and the official sector need to evaluate a wide range of behaviors, signals, and outcomes to draw the most robust conclusions about the depth and pace of culture reform. I think it is critical for both firms and the official sector to continue to experiment with new

approaches to assessing culture change, to collect and build new forms of data and measurement, to develop qualitative assessments to complement quantitative ones, to use new techniques and technology to understand how a firm's culture and conduct are changing, and to continue adapting and course correcting to a sustainable business strategy as the operating environment evolves.

Influence

Fostering productive behavioral change is at the heart of culture reform. Behavior, in turn, is driven by a multifaceted set of factors including incentives, cues from peers, observations about leaders, and formal policies and procedures. Most of us are not experts in human behavior, so I believe we should be open to incorporating lessons from behavioral economics and other social sciences into programs to mitigate conduct risk and promote cultural change.

Behavioral economics blends psychology and economics to provide insight into why individuals may behave in a certain way and make decisions that may not be in their own economic best interest. For example, individuals often make choices that provide immediate recognition or satisfaction—higher status within a peer group, for example—often at the cost of a potentially better financial outcome in the long term.

This type of human behavior is at the core of the complexity of culture reform. Lessons from the field have increased understanding of where decision-making can depart from economic expectations. Sometimes, these lessons have been used to create circumstances and environments that positively influence individual outcomes by “nudging” individuals to better choices. These nudges, in turn, help reinforce acceptable behavioral norms, and ultimately a firm's culture. How can we nudge in order to reduce misconduct risk? More broadly, how can the financial services sector, including firms and supervisors, leverage insights from the social sciences to promote environments that foster healthy group behavioral patterns with better decision-making?

Technology

The promise of new technology and big data for financial institutions is everywhere we look. From artificial intelligence to machine learning to natural language processing, there seems to be unlimited potential for more efficient operations, better analytics and more accurate predictions, and more personalized product development. But, how will advances in technology, particularly the adoption of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, influence the behavioral risks associated with human decision-making? And how does technology introduce new risks that prompt a rethinking of responsibility and customer relationships—especially with regard to privacy and information security?

Moreover, the disruptive potential of innovation is likely to exacerbate an already complex environment as decision-making becomes more opaque and new roles and responsibilities are introduced. For example, what will effective governance and risk management look like? Do artificial intelligence and machine learning introduce new model risk? Or operational risk? Or conduct risk? What does it mean to supervise or regulate conduct if decisions are made by self-learning algorithms? More broadly, what culture and conduct risk will be embedded in technology-driven financial services in the future? These are hard questions for financial firms and for the official sector, and our approach to the reform of financial industry culture will need

to address them.

Conclusions

To return to the beginning of this discussion, culture reform in finance is a complex problem. Causal relationships are difficult to isolate, linkages are constantly changing, and accurate prediction is impossible. That does not mean that we are powerless, or that we should accept complexity as an excuse for not trying to foster change. Rather, we need a long-term commitment that brings the appropriate tools and approaches to bear. The costs and potential consequences of market failures associated with misconduct risk and culture suggests that it is vitally important that we do so.

Both financial firms and the official sector should focus attention on investigating and asking questions to better understand the underlying drivers, motivations and risks behind the behaviors of individuals and groups. We should ensure that we look at behaviors and outcomes from multiple perspectives, so we can gain a more robust understanding of the operating environment as a whole. No single perspective is likely to provide all of the insights.

Experimentation and iteration, use of narrative and story-telling, and innovative methods for harnessing diversity of perspective are thought to be effective ways of tackling complex problems and we all need to innovate, adapt and seek new approaches.

I think this focus on conduct and culture is entirely consistent with a traditional supervisory focus on resilience, both for individual firms and the financial system as whole. This can be resilience of a firm's balance sheet in response to financial risk or an unexpected loss that depletes a firm's equity capital or resilience of a firm's culture in response to conduct risk or an unexpected fraud that depletes its cultural capital. In all of these cases, a resilient firm will be better able to adapt and evolve in order to continue to function and provide the critical financial services necessary to support a growing and stable economy.

As part of its work the **Financial Stability Board** has focused on "Risk Culture."²⁷ Here is an excerpt from the FSB's Guidance on Risk Culture:

Weaknesses in risk culture are often considered a root cause of the global financial crisis, headline risk and compliance events. A financial institution's risk culture plays an important role in influencing the actions and decisions taken by individuals within the institution and in shaping the institution's attitude toward its stakeholders, including its supervisors.

A sound risk culture consistently supports appropriate risk awareness, behaviours and judgements about risk-taking within a strong risk governance framework. A sound risk culture bolsters effective risk management, promotes sound risk-taking, and ensures that emerging risks or risk-taking activities beyond the institution's risk appetite are recognised, assessed, escalated and addressed in a timely manner.

A sound risk culture should emphasise throughout the institution the importance of ensuring

²⁷ Financial Stability Board, Guidance on Supervisory Interaction with Financial Institutions on Risk Culture: A Framework for Assessing Risk Culture (Apr. 7, 2014) at <http://www.financialstabilityboard.org/publications/140407.pdf>.

that:

- (i) an appropriate risk-reward balance consistent with the institution's risk appetite is achieved when taking on risks;
- (ii) an effective system of controls commensurate with the scale and complexity of the financial institution is properly put in place;
- (iii) the quality of risk models, data accuracy, capability of available tools to accurately measure risks, and justifications for risk taking can be challenged, and
- (iv) all limit breaches, deviations from established policies, and operational incidents are thoroughly followed up with proportionate disciplinary actions when necessary.

Risk culture, as well as corporate culture, evolves over time in relation to the events that affect the institution's history (such as mergers and acquisitions) and to the external context within which the institution operates. Sub-cultures within institutions may exist depending on the different contexts within which parts of the institution operate. However sub-cultures should adhere to the high -level values and elements that support the institution's overall risk culture. First and foremost, it should be expected that employees in all parts of the institution conduct business in a legal and ethical manner. An environment that promotes integrity should be created across the institution as a whole, including focusing on fair outcomes for customers. Supervisors should consider whether an institution's risk culture is appropriate for the scale, complexity, and nature of its business and based on sound, articulated values which are carefully managed by the leadership of the financial institution. In this regard, supervisors should set expectations for the board to oversee management's role in fostering and maintaining a sound risk culture. This requires supervisors to effectively articulate these expectations to the board and senior management and ensure ongoing follow-up on whether these expectations are being met....

Assessing risk culture is complex. But given its importance attention must be paid to it. There are several

indicators or practices that can be indicative of a sound risk culture. Institutions and supervisors can build awareness of the institution's balance between risk-taking and control by considering such factors. These

indicators can be considered collectively and as mutually reinforcing; looking at each indicator in isolation will ignore the multi-faceted nature of risk culture....

These indicators include:

- **Tone from the top:** The board and senior management are the starting point for setting the financial institution's core values and expectations for the risk culture of the institution, and their behaviour must reflect the values being espoused. A key value that should be espoused is the expectation that staff act with integrity (doing the right thing) and promptly escalate observed non-compliance within or outside the organisation (no surprises approach) The leadership of the institution promotes, monitors, and assesses the risk culture of the financial institution; considers the impact of culture on safety and soundness; and makes changes where necessary.

- **Accountability:** Relevant employees at all levels understand the core values of the institution and its approach to risk, are capable of performing their prescribed roles, and are aware that they are held accountable for their actions in relation to the institution's risk-taking behaviour. Staff acceptance of

risk-related goals and related values is essential.

- Effective communication and challenge : A sound risk culture promotes an environment of open communication and effective challenge in which decision - making processes encourage a range of views; allow for testing of current practices; stimulate a positive, critical attitude among employees ; and

promote an environment of open and constructive engagement.

- Incentives: Performance and talent management encourage and reinforce maintenance of the financial

institution's desired risk management behaviour. Financial and non -financial incentives support the core values and risk culture at all levels of the institution....

Supervisors are in a unique position to gain insights on risk culture at financial institutions given their access to information and individuals across the institution, as well as the results of supervisory work. This unique view and the ability to gather observations across multiple institutions enable peer analysis

and suggest issues that both supervisors and institutions should look at.

Supervisors should adopt a process to synthesise periodically supervisory findings, look for common themes, aggregate informal observations they have about the institution and apply high -level judgement in deciding whether culture or undesired behaviour is a root cause of supervisory findings. Supervisors should recognise that every supervisory activity can add information that informs these periodic assessments, but that single supervisory results are rarely a definitive indicator of culture issues that need to be addressed. Evidence should be gathered from the full range of supervisory activities so as to avoid

the assessment of risk culture being perceived and managed as a compliance - driven exercise.

The lists of possible indicators should be treated as a starting point for those assessments.

Supervisors should avoid supervisory methodologies that treat these indicators as a checklist....

Discussions with boards and senior management will help form the supervisory view of the institution's risk culture. Supervisory observations on culture issues should be further discussed with members of the board and senior management so as to promote and develop a shared understanding of the institution's risk culture. Identification of a practice or attitude that is not supportive of sound risk management should be brought to the attention of the board or senior management, as appropriate, who have ultimate responsibility for outlining and overseeing the financial institution's risk culture, to influence change in a positive direction. The supervisor raising, and the financial institution acting early to address, the root causes of the behavioural weakness will aid in preventing (or mitigating the impact of) particular undesired cultural norms from taking root and growing.

In 2018 the FSB published **Strengthening Governance Frameworks to Mitigate Misconduct Risk: A Toolkit for Firms and Supervisors**.²⁸

The FSB conducted further work in three...areas... that were considered particularly important for mitigating misconduct risk from a financial stability perspective: (i) cultural drivers of misconduct; (ii) individual responsibility and accountability; and (iii) the “rolling bad apples” phenomenon, which refers to individuals who engage in misconduct but are able to obtain subsequent employment elsewhere without disclosing their earlier misconduct to the new employer.

The goal of this work has been to develop a toolkit that firms and national authorities can use to mitigate misconduct risk in these three areas. Given the interplay between cultural drivers of misconduct, individual responsibility and accountability, and the “rolling bad apples” phenomenon, it is important to look at these aspects of governance frameworks together. A firm’s culture plays an important role in influencing the actions and decisions taken by employees within the firm and in shaping the firm’s attitude toward its stakeholders, including supervisors and regulators. It also may allow or encourage misconduct by individuals, or large numbers of employees, particularly if instances of misconduct are overlooked. Insisting on clarity in individual responsibilities reflects the priority that the firm places on a culture of good conduct and the need for accountability. By contrast, a lack of clarity in individual responsibilities can make it difficult to hold individuals accountable for their actions and decisions, as well as for reasonably managing the actions and behaviours of those in their area of responsibilities. In some cases, individuals who are not held accountable for their misconduct at one firm surface at another firm (or another division of the same firm) and repeat their misbehaviour – the rolling bad apples phenomenon. ...

... To help give impetus to efforts underway, the FSB has developed a list of tools as options that firms and authorities can use, taking into account jurisdictions’ legislative, judicial and regulatory frameworks. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; some tools may not be relevant for certain authorities and firms, and some jurisdictions or authorities may not have the authority to implement some of these tools. The toolkit provides some points of consideration and does not represent an end-point for mitigating misconduct risk. While the onus is on firms to establish governance frameworks that take into account their business models as well as domestic legislative and regulatory regimes, authorities can play a role in addressing basic incentive problems (e.g. gaps between socially-desired outcomes and firms’ private incentives) and assessing whether a firm’s governance framework and processes are adequate and effective to support the sustained provision of financial services. As such, the toolkit is aimed at both firms and authorities. The toolkit will evolve as industry and supervisors alike learn from their experiences. For example, while some elements of approaches developed by supervisors and firms in response to recent instances of misconduct are included in the toolkit, many of them have not been in place long enough to establish a clear record of success. The tools do not constitute guidance and are not a recommendation for any

²⁸ Financial Stability Board, Strengthening Governance Frameworks to Mitigate Misconduct Risk: A Toolkit for Firms and Supervisors (Apr. 20, 2018), at <http://www.fsb.org/wp-content/uploads/P200418.pdf> .

particular approach. Nor are the tools meant to be taken as a package; firms and authorities may apply them separately or in combination to best conform to their business or supervisory approach and their legal and regulatory frameworks. They may also find that other tools are preferable. In sum, firms and authorities can decide whether and how to draw on this body of work to tackle the causes and consequences of misconduct. ...

Mitigating cultural drivers of misconduct

Firms

Tool 1: Senior leadership of the firm articulate desired cultural features that mitigate the risk of misconduct. A firm's senior leadership could articulate a clear cultural vision that will guide appropriate behaviour within the firm. To inform the cultural vision, leaders could adopt a risk-based approach that evaluates and prioritises the most significant cultural drivers of misconduct risk that may be inherent to their firm.

Tool 2: Identify significant cultural drivers of misconduct by reviewing a broad set of information and using multidisciplinary techniques. The senior leadership of the firm could strengthen its approach to mitigating misconduct risk by promoting the identification of significant cultural drivers of misconduct that are in conflict with the cultural vision articulated by the firm's leadership. The identification process could first involve collecting data and other information (from various sources and perspectives) that provide insight on behaviours that could lead to misconduct. Second, firms could apply multidisciplinary analytical techniques on the information gathered to obtain a more complete understanding of the drivers of these behaviours.

Tool 3: Act to shift behavioural norms to mitigate cultural drivers of misconduct. Senior leadership could take actions to shift attitudes and behaviours within the firm toward its cultural vision and to reinforce the governance frameworks designed to mitigate misconduct risk. Actions could be selected with reference to the most significant cultural drivers of misconduct identified by the firm (Tool 2) and based on the firm's operations. Such actions could include relevant informal and formal measures. Informal measures could include deliberate efforts by leaders to respond constructively to mistakes in order to create a safe environment for a candid dialogue and escalation of issues; more formal measures might include enhanced whistle blower protection, escalation procedures and effective compensation and related performance management mechanisms. Actions could also include monitoring the impact of interventions and making adjustments as necessary.

National authorities

Tool 4: Build a supervisory programme focused on culture to mitigate the risk of misconduct. National authorities could consider building a programme with a focus on supervising culture. Supervisory reviews of culture could be led by either firm-specific or subject-matter expert teams. Where an authority has governance or culture specialists, those specialists could work jointly with line supervisors to link observations related to culture with other supervisory issues at the firm.

Tool 5: Use a risk-based approach to prioritise for review the firms or groups of firms that display significant cultural drivers of misconduct. A risk-based approach to reviews could prioritise firms according to a comparative assessment of the cultural drivers of

misconduct risk present within each firm. The depth of review could depend upon both the size and complexity of a firm or groups of firms under review, as well as the authority's own resources and the magnitude of misconduct.

Tool 6: Use a broad range of information and techniques to assess the cultural drivers of misconduct at firms. Qualitative and quantitative information that supervisors obtain from a firm could not only help supervisors understand how governance processes work, but could also provide insight into the behavioural norms and culture of the firm. The information could be shared through the firm's documentation, supervisory dialogue, specific meetings on the topic and/or meetings on other topics, as all supervisory interactions can provide supervisors with insight and information on a firm's culture.

Tool 7: Engage firms' leadership with respect to observations on culture and misconduct. Supervisors could engage in a range of methods to convey supervisory observations on behaviour and culture to the firms they supervise. A dialogue between a firm's leadership and supervisors could be useful to understand and bolster a firm's proposed actions to strengthen culture, where necessary, to mitigate misconduct risk. Engaging in a dialogue about culture could encourage firms to consider the issue more seriously.

Strengthening individual responsibility and accountability

Firms and/or national authorities

Tool 8: Identify key responsibilities, including mitigation of the risk of misconduct, and assign them. Identifying key responsibilities and clearly assigning them to the holders of various positions within a firm promotes individual accountability and increases transparency both within a firm and to relevant stakeholders. The identification and assignment of key responsibilities may be achieved through legislative or regulatory requirements, firm-driven decisions on their preferred structure, or both.

Tool 9: Hold individuals accountable. Individuals could be held accountable through a combination of (i) legislative/regulatory provisions; (ii) a firm's internal processes, including employee contracts; (iii) supervisory action; and (iv) regulatory enforcement. Clearly assigning responsibilities reinforces individual accountability and allows authorities to identify the functions and business activities for which individuals are accountable.

Tool 10: Assess the suitability of individuals assigned key responsibilities. Firms and/or national authorities could undertake assessments of the suitability of individuals (integrity and professional competency, including qualifications and experience) who have been assigned key responsibilities. Such assessments could take place at the time those individuals first assume their responsibilities and periodically thereafter. National authorities

Tool 11: Develop and monitor a responsibility and accountability framework. National authorities could assess the implementation of a framework for responsibility and accountability that includes, inter alia, (i) the identification of key responsibilities for individuals in the firm, (ii) allocation of those responsibilities to specific individuals; and/or (iii) holding individuals accountable for the responsibilities to which they have been assigned.

Tool 12: Coordinate with other authorities. Supervisory techniques that aim to strengthen individual accountability through clearly assigned responsibilities could be deployed by more

than one authority in the same jurisdiction. Approaches applied by one authority may have consequences for approaches that other authorities are considering. As such, national authorities could engage and coordinate with those authorities to understand their approaches to individual accountability.

Addressing the rolling bad apples phenomenon

Firms

Tool 13: Communicate conduct expectations early and consistently in recruitment and hiring processes. Firms have many opportunities during the recruiting and hiring processes to address potential employee conduct issues. Communicating clear, consistent messages about conduct expectations could deter some bad apples from pursuing employment at a firm that emphasises both high integrity and high performance. Silence as to expected employee conduct could signal that the issue is less important to the firm.

Tool 14: Enhance interviewing techniques. In addition to assessing the technical competency, experience and qualifications of candidates, the recruitment process could consider their behavioural competency and conduct history as well as their potential for adhering to the firm's values. This broadened review could be accomplished by asking particular questions or even by conducting a separate interview focused entirely on behavioural and conduct matters. Training in interviewing techniques to assess behavioural characteristics and spot "red flags" could add value to the interview process.

Tool 15: Leverage multiple sources of available information before hiring. Firms could search both publicly available and proprietary data sources for information about candidates. Current employees could have personal knowledge of a candidate's conduct at a previous employer. Previous employers are another possible source of information, though the extent to which firms are allowed, required or willing to share such conduct information could differ. Such information could require subsequent verification, depending on the number and credibility of the sources.

Tool 16: Reassess employee conduct regularly. Firms could update or renew background checks on regular schedules; for example, after three months or a year of employment or at career milestones, including promotions or lateral moves within a firm. In some jurisdictions, institutions have to (re)assess the fitness and propriety of employees in functions deemed capable of causing significant harm to the firm or its customers.

Tool 17: Conduct "exit reviews". Without prejudice to applicable legal requirements, firms could implement "exit reviews" and maintain appropriate records on former employees for their own potential future benefit as well as for prospective employers.

National authorities

Tool 18: Supervise firms' practices for screening prospective employees and monitoring current employees. An assessment of firms' employment and disciplinary policies and practices could be embedded in the supervisory process. Supervisors could also require institutions to regularly reassess and revalidate the conduct or suitability of employees or a subset of them deemed to pose the greatest risk to the firm or its customers (see Tool 16).

Tool 19: Promote compliance with legal or regulatory requirements regarding conduct-related information about applicable employees, where these exist. Authorities could provide

methods for firms to exchange meaningful information on employees. This could include promoting consistent and more comprehensive information in databases of financial services professionals, where they exist.

Questions

Do you think that the documents quoted here have the same ideas about risk culture, or different ideas?

To the extent that you see differences, what might explain them?

Do you think it is a good idea for supervisors of financial institutions to examine risk culture?

Is there a difference between thinking about controlling risk culture to improve the relationships between financial institutions and customers and thinking about misconduct in terms of misconduct risk for a financial firm?