



EQ BOARDROOM

Bulletin

Welcome to our monthly bulletin of what's happening within the financial services industry that will impact our EQ Boardroom clients.



This month we cover...

Dates for your diary

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER, 2018
IR Society Best Practice Awards Dinner

TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2018
ICSA Awards

TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER
Equiniti end of year Drinks Reception at St Pauls Cathedral

WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER
ProShare Awards

The Financial Reporting Council's drive to improve the quality of audits

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has announced a review set out in its recently published 'Developments in Audit' report with the objective of delivering high-quality audits by UK audit firms.

The key themes highlighted in the report for review include:

- Independence – a review of whether further actions are needed to prevent auditor independence being compromised.
- Viability – development of proposals to strengthen requirements on auditors when considering whether an organisation is a going concern.
- Investor needs – review of the work auditors do on the front half of the annual report to ensure that it is consistent with the financial statements
- Audit quality – the FRC has adopted an enhanced programme of audit firm monitoring and strengthened its enforcement capacity.

The Developments in Audit Report is available [here](#).

Financial Reporting Council's list of company report and accounts reviewed

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has published a list of companies whose report and accounts have been reviewed, mainly for the year ending March 2017, by its Corporate Reporting Review function.

The FRC carries out both routine reviews of annual reports and limited and thematic reviews for particular purposes.

The FRC's list is available [here](#).

Climate related financial disclosures reviewed by the Financial Stability Board

The Financial Stability Board (FSB) is an international body that monitors and makes recommendations about the global financial system.

An FSB Task Force (TCFD) on climate related financial disclosures has recently published a status report looking at the extent to which companies in 2017 annual reports included climate-related information in alignment with the task force's recommendations.

The report notes that a majority of the 1,700 companies surveyed were disclosing information in accordance with one or more of their recommendations. Key areas highlighted by the TCFD are:

- While many companies describe climate-related risks and opportunities, few disclose the financial impact of climate change on the company.
- A minority of companies disclose forward-looking climate targets or the resilience of their strategies under different climate-related scenarios, including a 2°C or lower scenario, which is a key area of focus for the Task Force.
- Disclosures vary widely across industries. For example, more non-financial companies reported their climate-related metrics and targets; than did financial companies. However, financial companies were more likely to disclose how they had embedded climate risk into overall risk management.
- Disclosures are often made in sustainability reports or spread across financial filings, annual and sustainability reports.

The TCFD's report is available [here](#).



Consultation announced into ethnicity pay reporting by employers

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has announced a consultation seeking views on ethnicity pay reporting by employers.

This follows the McGregor-Smith review into race in the workplace which recommended that businesses with more than 50 employees should be required to publish ethnic pay data.

This consultation seeks views on:

- What ethnicity pay information should be reported by employers to allow for meaningful action
- Who should be expected to report
- Next steps

The consultation closes on 11 January 2019 and is available [here](#).

QCA Employee Share Schemes Survey

The Quoted Companies Alliance is an independent membership organisation that champions the interests of small to mid-size quoted companies.

At the end of October they issued an Employee Share Schemes Survey to help support the work of their Share Schemes Expert Group. If you represent a small or mid-size quoted company and wish to participate, the survey can be found [here](#).

It only takes a few minutes and needs to be completed by 9 November 2018.

How to set up a Global Share Plan

Advice on share plans in international workforces, based on best practice recommendations made at Equiniti's Employee Services Forum 2018.

Read the article [here](#).

Equiniti launches new Executive and Discretionary Portal (V3)

Following feedback from our clients and their employees, we have been working hard to make significant improvements to the employee experience when using our Employee Share Plans Portal.

The executive and discretionary modules of ESP Portal (V3), used for Equiniti Premier services, is designed to enable employees to access information quickly and intuitively across all major devices.

We have listened to the requirements of our clients, as well as researching the wider market, to create a fresh, simple to use portal, with key concepts such as:

- User centred design process
- Fully responsive design across desktop, mobile and tablet
- Conversational based interactions
- Quick access to relevant information through improved signposting
- Enhanced branding capabilities

To find out more about the portal, speak to your Relationship Manager, who will be able to arrange a demonstration.

Boudicca wins 41 new clients in six months

Boudicca, Equiniti's proxy solicitation business specialising in shareholder communications and corporate governance advisory, has won 41 new mandates since it was acquired in May.

This activity reflects the growing pressure on both companies and institutional investors who are feeling the need to act responsibly, particularly when the latter are exercising voting rights. Equiniti says social and political pressure is changing the way companies approach governance, which has led to unprecedented growth at new acquisition, Boudicca. Read the news release [here](#).

'Win-Win' claim for expanded Dormant Assets Scheme

After unlocking or retracing £1.1bn from untouched bank and building society accounts in less than seven years, Robert Welch explained why the Dormant Assets Scheme is being expanded across more financial services at the recent Equiniti Share Registration Conference. Read the article [here](#).

Is the new UK Corporate Governance Code good for business?

Anna Colban from the Financial Reporting Council explained the thinking behind the 2018 UK Corporate Governance Code at this year's Equiniti Share Registration Conference.

Read the article [here](#).

Equiniti steers Aston Martin Lagonda on to main market

Equiniti is delighted to confirm its ongoing role as share registrar to Aston Martin Lagonda following its IPO. Utilising our bespoke and market leading online subscription portal, Equiniti, acting as registrar and receiving agent, supported the delivery of 57m shares to institutional and retail investors, including Aston Martin owners and employees.

Read the news release [here](#).

Sunday Times Non-Executive Directors Awards

Boudicca is a sponsor of the Sunday Times Non-Executive Directors Awards which seek to recognise the achievements of Non-Executive Directors who contribute daily to the success and growth of businesses and organisations on whose boards they serve.

Awards are made for the categories FTSE 100, FTSE All Share, FTSE AIM, Private/Private Equity backed, Dame Helen Alexander NED to Watch and Not for Profit/ Public Service Organisation.

As one of the Judges, Sheryl Cuisia, Managing Director of Boudicca, will present the NED Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2019 Awards reception evening at Claridges Hotel in late March in front of an audience of some 400 leading NEDs. The event will be reported in a full feature supplement in the following weekend's Sunday Times business section. Editor Oliver Shah is also one of the Award Judges.

This sponsorship provides a great opportunity to position Boudicca's shareholder engagement and corporate governance advisory work directly with a number of leading and influential NEDs firmly putting proxy solicitation on the board agenda.

The first call for Nominations for the 2019 Awards were made in September in a Sunday Times feature article and advertisement.

Nominations are now open until Sunday 25 November 2018 and may be submitted [here](#).

Equiniti up for three awards at the annual Shares Awards

Equiniti have been nominated for three awards at the Shares Awards on 8 November; Best Share Registrar, Best Investor Education and Best Customer Service.