



## PRESS NOTICE

4 July 2017

### **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMISSIONER - ANNUAL REPORT AND STATISTICS 2016-17**

Peter Riddell, Commissioner for Public Appointments, today published his [annual report](#) for the year 2016-17 detailing his work overseeing appointments made by ministers to the boards of public bodies to ensure they are made on merit after a fair and open process.

The [annual statistical survey of ministerial appointments and reappointments in 2016-17](#) is also published today in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The data in the survey refers exclusively to appointments and reappointments made under the 2012 Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies which expired at the end of December 2016.

Peter Riddell said:

“The survey data continues to show positive progress on the number of women appointed and reappointed which reached 48.5 per cent. There was also an increase in the number of appointments and reappointments of black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) candidates to a new high of over 9 per cent - though this remains below their proportion in the population. There was also an increase in the appointment of candidates declaring a disability, to around 6 per cent. The proportion of women, BAME candidates and those declaring a disability who are appointed chairs is, however, roughly half those chosen as members of boards, a disappointingly low figure which requires an active response from the Government. The overall trends are, nonetheless, positive and in the right direction thanks to the hard work of department and decisions of ministers. But there remains much more to do.’

“This year has been one of transition – as all those involved in appointments to public bodies adjust to the government’s new [Governance Code](#), introduced from 1st January, following the [Grimstone review](#). My experience, having been in post for a year, is that

both under the old Code of Practice and during the short time the new Code has been in operation, there have so far been fewer problems than many feared, or had been previously experienced. In particular, the new senior independent panel members have been people of similar calibre to the former public appointment assessors appointed by my office and the new transparency regime for appointments processes has been well-received by those applying for these important posts.

“My main concern, like my predecessors, is not just to ensure independent assurance about the process of making appointments on merit, but also to encourage a wide range of high quality applicants. The accompanying statistics are encouraging but there is still a long way to go, notably for BAME candidates and those declaring disabilities. The main responsibility lies with Ministers and departments, while my role lies more in monitoring and in highlighting good practice and innovations. I intend to feature these more on my website [link] following a series of meetings I have held this year with individuals and organisations with an interest in, and knowledge of, appointments for women, BAME and disabled groups

“I also want to improve the quality of the statistics which are the key to understanding the pattern of appointments. I am exploring the advantages of making the return of a diversity monitoring form compulsory, with the inclusion of a ‘prefer not to say’ answer among the options and encouraging the Cabinet Office to produce a stocktake or ‘snapshot’ of the composition of Boards. The Cabinet Office is, I am pleased to say, committed to making early progress here.

“Looking ahead, I am hopeful that the distraction of the lengthy discussions over changes in the Code is behind us and we can concentrate on ensuring that appointments to public bodies continue to be made on the basis of merit and fair and open competition from a broader and more diverse range of high quality candidates.

“Moreover, Brexit will create fresh challenges over the next few years as regulatory and other functions carried out by EU institutions will over time be repatriated. As yet it is unclear how many new public bodies will have to be created or how many existing ones will have their remits changed. Over the course of this Parliament, there is likely to be a need for Ministers to appoint a sizeable number of chairs and members to non-executive roles to run these bodies. “

**You can download the [Commissioner's annual report](#) and the [annual survey of ministerial appointments and reappointments 2016-17](#)**

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**Notes to Editors**

1. Media enquiries about the work of the Commissioner for Public Appointments should go to Maggie O'Boyle on 07880 740627.
2. Peter Riddell was appointed as Commissioner for Public Appointments on 20 April 2016.
3. The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates the processes by which Ministers in the UK and Welsh Governments make appointments to the boards of national and regional public bodies.
4. The post of Commissioner for Public Appointments was created in 1995 following a report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, chaired by Lord Nolan.
5. For more information about the work of the Commissioner go to: <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk>
6. You can follow the Commissioner for Public Appointments on twitter @publicapptscomm
7. You can also read Peter Ridell's blog: <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/news-blog/>