

Peter J Lawrence OBE
Chief Executive, Civil Service Commission

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Dear Susie,

RE: APPOINTMENTS TO THE PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

I am writing in respect of the appointments process for the Chair and Members of the Press Recognition Panel. As the current appointments approach the end of their initial terms in 2019, I thought it prudent to highlight the role of the Commissioner for Public Appointments as set out in the Royal Charter.

The Royal Charter dated 13 July 2011 placed on the Commissioner a number of duties.

First a duty to appoint the Appointments Committee; and to provide assurance that the initial appointments were made following a fair, open and merit based process. The initial process was therefore conducted through the Commissioner's office, with a panel led by a Public Appointments Assessor.

Second a duty that when any further appointments were made to provide assurance that a fair process was conducted by the serving members of the PRP Board. This duty does not necessitate the Commissioner's extensive involvement in the process. However, the Charter does provide for the Commissioner to advise the PRP on running the appointments, process if so required.

I have agreed with the current Commissioner, in the event that between now and 31 March 2021 any further appointments were made to the PRP in line with Schedule 1 to the Charter, that I, or my successor, would provide assurance on behalf, but independent, of the Commissioner under delegated authority. We have taken this decision in light of the Commissioner's previous roles as a journalist and editor with press media organisations and to remove any perception of conflict of interest.

I would be grateful if you could confirm whether the PRP is minded to re-appoint the current members when their terms expire, or run a competition to select new members, bearing in mind the recommendation that appointments end dates should be staggered. It is helpful that we have on file a letter, dated 30 March 2016 from Holly Perry, Head of Governance, which suggests

that the PRP would provide a written summary of the selection process, before it begins. I am content that that provides a pragmatic approach and the Commissioner's office would be happy to begin by having a conversation in the first instance, to offer any advice on running a fair and open process, or talk through standard practice for reappointments, if that would be helpful.

I have recently written to Sue Owen, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to notify her of the above.

I am copying this letter to Peter Riddell Commissioner for Public Appointments and Jennifer Smith OCPA.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter J. Lawrence', written in a cursive style.

Peter J. Lawrence OBE