

Business plan objectives April 2021-March 2022

This is my Business Plan for my remaining months as Commissioner for Public Appointments. It takes into account the latest iteration of the Order in Council, November 2019 and the government's Governance Code for Public Appointments.

My five year term as Commissioner was scheduled to end on 23 April 2021. As such, 2020-21 activity detailed in last year's Business Plan around compliance (Objective 3) and understanding (Objective 4) was completed to this timescale. My term as Commissioner was then extended until 30 September 2021, so I will continue to undertake my duties and handover to a new Commissioner from 1 October 2021.

This plan was drafted as the UK was beginning to ease the Covid-19 restrictions of the previous 12 months. Actions marked with asterisks may need postponement or adaptation as the public health advice develops over the coming months.

Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE
Commissioner for Public Appointments

OBJECTIVE ONE: Providing independent assurance that appointing authorities act in accordance with the Governance Code and the principles of public appointments (Article 4(1) of the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019)	
What	When
The Commissioner will respond to:	Timescale for OCPA to conclude:
Consultations from departments when Ministers make exceptional appointments without holding a fair and open competition (Governance Code paragraph 3.3), and where Ministers choose to reappoint said appointees on the basis of further exceptional circumstances	Record all details on OCPA's internal system within 1 working day; Respond to all consultations in 2 working days ¹ Decision notices following announcement of appointment published monthly on OCPA website.
Consultations on Senior Independent Panel Members in advance of competitions (Governance Code paragraph 6.2)	Record all details on OCPA's internal system within 1 working day; Respond to all

¹ Average time to respond to consultations and notifications under Section 3.3 and 3.6 of the Code was 2.2 days for April 2020 - March 2021.

	consultations in 2 working days
Notifications of exceptional reappointments of appointees beyond two terms or extension of their tenure in office beyond 10 years (Governance Code paragraph 3.6). <i>Note:</i> Cabinet Office advice to Departments is that extension to terms should usually not exceed 12 months, OCPA agrees.	Record all details on OCPA's internal system within 1 working day; Reply with any comments from the Commissioner within 2 working days ²
Agree any changes to delegations and exemptions from the Governance Code with him (Governance Code paragraph 3.1)	Record all details on OCPA's internal system within 1 working day; Within 5 working days
Agree any changes to the list of Significant Appointments with Cabinet Office and Welsh Ministers with him (Governance Code paragraph 6.1)	Record all details on OCPA's internal system within 1 working day; Within 5 working days

OBJECTIVE TWO: Being an active advocate for diversity (Paragraph 4.7 of the Governance Code)	
The Commissioner will:	Timescale for OCPA to conclude:
Monitor the performance and recruitment practices of government departments by analysing diversity statistics submitted by departments and publish a statistical report relating to ministerial appointments and reappointments (Governance Code paragraph 4.2)	In Commissioner's 2020-21 Annual report, by October 2021
Meet with organisations representing ethnic minority, disabled and other community groups in order to inform him of the views and needs of potential applicants for public appointments that those groups represent.	Ongoing*
Disseminate best practice to government departments in order to encourage them to advertise and recruit Public Appointees in a way that ensures as diverse a field as possible, including a dedicated section on the OCPA website.	Ongoing
Collaborate with the Cabinet Office and Welsh Government on shared objectives in respective Diversity Action Plan/Strategy, including actions on mentoring and improving data collection.	Timescales are specified in respective Diversity Action Plans/Strategies*
Meet with Permanent Secretaries and Departments to discuss and share best practice on increasing diverse representation in public appointments.	March and April 2021; Autumn 2021 with new Commissioner in place

OBJECTIVE THREE: Monitoring Compliance with the Governance Code & the principles of public appointments and improving capability (Paragraph 4.2 of the Governance Code)	

² Average time to respond to consultations and notifications under Section 3.3 and 3.6 of the Code was 2.2 days for April 2020 - March 2021.

The Commissioner will:	Timescale for OCPA to conclude:
Undertake an audit of the procedures and practices, relating to specific competitions to provide independent verification of departmental compliance	September 2021 to February 2022*
Share and agree findings of the audits with Permanent Secretaries and Departments	February 2022
Carry out spot checks of Departments' paperwork as required (Governance Code paragraph 4.3)	Ongoing
Gather and issue best practice information in respect of matters (including any that require improvement) identified from compliance monitoring	Ongoing
Deal with all complaints in a timely and efficient way (Governance Code paragraph 4.4)	Acknowledge complaints within 2 working days of receipt and complete all investigations within 3 months

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Improving the understanding of public appointments and public bodies, the Commissioner's role and the Governance Code	
The Commissioner will:	Timescale for OCPA to conclude:
Maintain and regularly update the OCPA website to hold information about the Commissioner's role and the Governance Code, results of investigations and complaints, and best practice and case studies	Ongoing
Maintain regular contact with the Public Administration & Constitutional Affairs Committee and the Committee on Standards in Public Life	Ongoing
Hold regular meetings with Permanent Secretaries and other key stakeholders to discuss Departmental performance in respect of public appointments	Ongoing, and more formally in March and April 2021*
Meet his counterparts from Scotland and Northern Ireland;	Annually (TBC March 2022)
Maintain a regular twitter feed on public appointments issues	Ongoing
Publish blogs on an ad hoc basis on matters of interest related to public appointments and invite others to guest blog	Ongoing
Maintain regular contact with public appointment teams in Departments and contribute to their understanding of the Governance Code and the Commissioner by sharing good practice and helping in training events	Ongoing
Undertake bespoke research into public appointments issues with a view to making improvements to the system and the experience for applicants.	Every year to two years

**May be postponed/moved online to later in 2021-2022 due to public health advice during the COVID-19 pandemic.*