



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
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Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE
The Commissioner for Public Appointments
1 Horse Guards Road
London
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MC2021/16184

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By email: publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 22 July, regarding progress in a number of high profile competitions. I recognise the importance of your role in regulating these public appointments, including ensuring that the Governance Code's provisions on candidate care are adhered to.

These competitions are, of course, the responsibility of the relevant Secretary of State. I strongly agree however that across government, we must do all we can to ensure that appointment processes are run efficiently and good candidates are not deterred from applying for appointments, or remaining engaged in processes, by avoidable delays. Critical to that is good engagement with candidates throughout, as the Code requires.

I share your disappointment when, on occasion, campaigns are unsuccessful and need to be re-run. As you set out, under the Code ministers may choose not to appoint any of the candidates found appointable and re-run a competition. No such decision is taken lightly, but as Ministers are accountable for appointments this is a necessary and legitimate course to take in some circumstances. Naturally in these cases there should be a period of review in order to understand why an appointment was not made and what changes may need to be made, for example to the criteria, assessment panel and/or advertising and outreach before relaunching.

If of assistance, I briefly set out my understanding of the specific campaigns you mention. In the Ofcom and Competition and Markets Authority chair campaigns, the relevant Secretaries of State decided not to make an appointment from the candidates they were presented with as being found to be appointable. In each case, the decision by the respective Secretaries of State not to appoint any of the candidates found appointable was taken within, or close to, the three month period following the closure of the campaign, thereby bringing the campaigns to a close. I know that in both cases, following review, Secretaries of State are close to launching fresh campaigns and of course will be consulting you where required in advance.

In the case of the Information Commissioner campaign, DCMS has confirmed that an announcement will be made imminently, and in good time to ensure a proper handover with the incumbent, who steps down in October 2021. The Charity Commission Chair campaign is also now progressing with interviews scheduled for September.

More broadly, over recent months I have asked my officials to insist on better succession and campaign planning by all departments. They have been working closely with departmental appointment teams to ensure proper management information is in place, including a forward look of planned campaigns. This enables Secretaries of State and the centre to be sure that proper preparation is being done in advance of competitions being launched, thereby increasing the chances of a smooth and successful competition. These efforts will be bolstered further by the new public appointments digital service that the Cabinet Office is continuing to develop, which will allow access to more accurate and accessible real time information on how campaigns are progressing.

I look forward to continuing to work with you, and your successor, on this important agenda. I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office**