

## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

### NEW RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES TEST DEPARTMENTS ON DIVERSITY

The Civil Service Commission, the independent body which upholds the legal requirement for appointment to the Civil Service to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition, has published revised **Recruitment Principles** which place greater emphasis on Departments' efforts to attract strong and diverse fields of candidates.

The Commission's **Recruitment Principles** are the key document to which departments and agencies must refer for the Commissioners' interpretation of the legal requirement to select for appointment to the Civil Service on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. They also outline the circumstances in which appointments may be made as **exceptions** to the merit requirement.

Following a consultation, the Commission has published revised Recruitment Principles, which now include:

- A requirement for chairs of recruitment panels to approve plans to attract a strong and diverse field of applicants before a competition gets underway;
- An invitation for chairs to comment on the strength and diversity of the field of candidates in the formal record of the recruitment exercise;
- A requirement for search consultants working with Departments to be made fully aware of the requirements of the Recruitments Principles, including the importance of achieving a strong and diverse field and
- A signal that Commissioners are likely to report on Departments' efforts to secure applications for currently under-represented groups - and any possible lessons learned - when chairing senior competitions.

Other key changes include:

- An exception (to the legal requirement to recruit on merit after fair and open competition) for a number of programmes to provide fixed term appointments within the Civil Service to improve 'life chances' for individuals and
- Updates to the longstanding exception for up to two years for urgent, highly specialist skills that are not readily available within the Civil Service.

Ian Watmore, First Civil Service Commissioner, said:

“The Commission wants to play its part in helping to build a brilliant Civil Service, which is representative of the society it serves and with the skills it needs to meet the huge challenges the country faces.

“These revisions reflect and support the Commission’s **four strategic priorities** of increasing diversity, recruiting 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, delivering Brexit and improving life chances. In particular, they will help ensure Departments focus, right from the outset, on how they intend to attract strong and diverse fields of candidates for jobs at all levels of the Civil Service.

“It is for departments and agencies to develop and apply recruitment processes that best meet their business needs, but they must operate in accordance with the Recruitment Principles and test their own practices against them.

“I’d like to thank all those who contributed to our consultation and we look forward to hearing how our revised Principles are working in practice.”

The revised Principles take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April. They will be circulating to all HR Directors and available on the Commission’s website:  
<http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/>

## Notes to Editors

1. **Media enquiries about the work of the Commission should go to Maggie O’Boyle on 07880 740 627.**
2. **More information about the work of the Commission is available on its website [www.civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk](http://www.civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk)**
3. **You can also follow the Commission on twitter [@CivServComm](https://twitter.com/CivServComm)**
4. The Civil Service Commission was established as a statutory body in November 2010 under the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Commission is independent of Ministers and the Civil Service. It is responsible for upholding the requirement that recruitment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.
5. The Commission comprises senior figures from the private, public and third sectors. Civil Service Commissioners are appointed by the Crown for five-year non-renewable terms of office.