



163

competitions chaired by Commissioners.



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Where declared, disabled candidates made up **5%** of total applicants in competitions chaired by Commissioners.



Annual Report and Accounts

Regulating recruitment to the Civil Service, providing assurance that appointments are on merit on the basis of fair and open competition

Helping to promote the Civil Service Code and its values of honesty, integrity, objectivity and impartiality

2020/21

25

Accredited Life Chances schemes.



Where declared, ethnic minority candidates made up

23%



of total applicants in competitions chaired by Commissioners.

60,487

people were recruited to the Civil Service through fair and open competition.



Civil Service Commission

Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21

Accounts presented to Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales pursuant to paragraph 16 of Schedule 1 to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010

Report presented to Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales pursuant to paragraph 17 of Schedule 1 to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010

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Performance Report

First Civil Service Commissioner's foreword

I am proud to present the 154th annual report in the history of the Civil Service Commission; the last in my tenure as First Commissioner.

Since the current Commission came together in 2016/17, the UK has faced unprecedented challenges – whether from Brexit and COVID-19, socio-economic tensions, security concerns or the increasing pace of science and technology – and it has been ever more dependent on its Civil Service to respond.

I believe the Civil Service has risen to that set of challenges and the Commission has played an important part in that response, acting as a flexible and pragmatic regulator, supporting the priorities of the government of the day, and working with Parliament to deliver the spirit of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act.

How have we done that? First, by relentlessly doing the day job well, setting Recruitment Principles, leading and auditing recruitments, promoting the Civil Service Code, seriously investigating appeals and complaints, being flexible when we can and standing up to abuses when we must.

Secondly, as its 'regulator', we will continue to challenge the Civil Service strategically, to retain relevance and to be representative of the society it serves. The Commission identified four such priorities back in 2016 which have stood us well:

- **Major issues of the day** – The Commission was quick to recognise government's need to recruit and redeploy senior and specialist people in bulk on a short-term basis to deliver Brexit, and so we created a protocol to enable them to do it. When COVID-19 struck, requiring a response on a much bigger scale, the Commission enabled the rapid mobilisation of people to roles across the Civil Service without losing the integrity of appointments.
- **Diversity** - The top of the Civil Service has seen a welcome improving trend in gender diversity, with a record 19 (out of 40) Permanent Secretaries being women in early 2021; it was 10 in 2016. There is more to do to appoint black and ethnic minority and disabled candidates at the top levels. We have helped to shine a bright light on this; progress is being made, particularly at the early and mid-senior Civil Service level, and I hope my successor will see this talent rise to the top.
- **21st century skills** – There has been significant progress in recruiting and growing the digital, cyber security, commercial, agile, investor, social entrepreneur and other 21st century skills so in demand everywhere. The moves to relocate parts of the Civil Service away from London will undoubtedly help this drive further, opening access to pools of specialist talent in the regions without the historic competition with high London salaries.

- **Life chances** – This is the Commission’s achievement in this period of which I am personally most proud. Drawing upon a suggestion of the Civil Service in the North West and learning from the experience of apprenticeships a decade earlier, we developed accreditation schemes to enable people from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to become civil servants, providing them with life chances, improving the diversity and lived experience of the Civil Service, and supporting government priorities such as reducing reoffending or supporting veterans. From a standing start, and overcoming all the obstacles that inevitably cropped up, the Civil Service now has a sustainable model for recruiting individuals who previously were not accessible to them – ex-offenders, military veterans, care leavers, people with Down’s syndrome, and many others.

These priorities echo those outlined in the new Declaration on Government Reform and the Commission looks forward to supporting this work to help ensure we have a representative and effective Civil Service.

This year, in my role as First Commissioner, working with the last two Cabinet Secretaries and Prime Ministers, I helped to develop a ‘de facto’ process for the appointment of the Cabinet Secretary to supplement the high-level guidance in the Cabinet Manual.

I would hope this continues to be needed infrequently, but will, I hope, serve future Prime Ministers well when the need arises.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues – the combination of 11 diverse and talented Commissioners, and our dedicated secretariat who make up the Commission who, in my judgement, are a great example of a high-performing team in action, which has continued despite the new demands of remote working, recruitment delays and surges in workload since the pandemic struck.

It has been an honour to lead the Commission through this period. As the UK begins its recovery from this unique period in history, I believe its role providing public assurance on the integrity of Civil Service appointments, as well as offering challenge and support to the Civil Service, is as important today as it has ever been.



Ian Watmore

First Civil Service Commissioner



Chief Executive's introduction

Like others writing similar introductions, I am surprised to be highlighting the COVID-19 pandemic for a second time in an annual report. However, I am pleased to report that the difficulties we have all faced have not seen a detrimental effect on the delivery of the Commission's functions, albeit that we have delivered them in new and different ways. There have been challenges at times, balancing the independence of the Commission as a regulator upholding legislation and supporting the necessary and urgent appointments to enable the Civil Service to respond to the pandemic but, working with our regulated bodies, we have been able to maintain assurance of the appropriateness of appointments.

The initial lull in the level of activity on recruitment campaigns that Commissioners personally chair was short-lived. The government and Civil Service worked quickly to establish a response to the emerging effects of the pandemic and consequently a number of senior appointments followed. These appointments fell into the following two categories that required the Commission's involvement as the regulator, although both were equally important.

First, the recruitment to senior posts at Director and Director General levels that required a Commissioner to chair the process. Despite initial pauses in on-going recruitment campaigns or the launching of new campaigns, activity built quickly and by the end of March 2021 the annual total of requests for Commissioner-chaired competitions peaked at the highest level during my tenure as Chief Executive. More details can be found at page 31 of this report. This time last year, recruitment processes were moving to virtual meetings and interviews in line with the government's 'work from home where possible' guidance. Throughout the reporting period, as broader experience developed, early wrinkles have been ironed out and processes are proving effective and efficient, even at the most senior level of Permanent Secretary.

The second category is that of Exceptions to the Recruitment Principles to allow individuals to be appointed as temporary civil servants, without the need for appointment on merit following fair and open competition. It quickly became apparent that, in particular, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) including Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE) would need to staff up quickly with a range of skills and experience that didn't necessarily exist in the Civil Service in sufficient quantities.

The Commission's secretariat has worked closely with DHSC, Test and Trace and PHE throughout the year to facilitate and enable necessary and urgent appointments to be made. However, in doing so we have robustly protected our independence and the integrity of the Recruitment Principles through challenging requests for approval where required and identifying any breaches of those principles. The number of pandemic-related Exception requests that we have supported has been significant, which under the circumstances should be no surprise, but relative to the wider impacts of the pandemic on citizens and the economy, the scale of the ask for Exception approvals from across the entire Civil Service has been less significant.

The number of appointments made to the Civil Service during 2020/21 has doubled from almost 45,000 last year to almost 91,000 this year. Appointments on merit following fair and open competition account for around 20,000 (45%) of the increase with Exceptions making up around 25,000 (55%). The organisations reporting the largest increases were: Department for Work and Pensions with around an additional 10,000 on merit and 4,500 Exceptions; HMRC with around 3,700 additional on merit; Office for National Statistics around 20,000 additional Exceptions, related to the 2021 census; PHE around 1,100 additional Exceptions.

We have, unfortunately, not been able to carry out annual audit activity in person at the premises of those we regulate, however, that has not prevented us from auditing 100% of regulated bodies this year. Our previous experience in undertaking audits electronically has allowed us to ensure compliance with the Recruitment Principles, including identifying any breaches that may have occurred. Our annual moderation process has continued unaffected, the results of which can be seen at pages 38-42. As those details show, the Commission regards compliance to have continued throughout the pandemic period with good progress made overall when comparing the current annual ratings with those in 2019/20.

During the year we continued to provide regulated bodies with both open and bespoke training events covering the Recruitment Principles and/or the Civil Service Code, from which we have received much positive feedback. We have also run events, which were open to those from outside of the Civil Service, covering the topics above as well as aspects of diversity in respect of Civil Service recruitment. In publishing a series of diversity blogs on our website we have sought to share the experiences of individuals working in the Civil Service.

One important element of our awareness-raising activity was the publication on our website of an online presentation to explain how and when ministers can be involved in the recruitment process for civil servants. The planning process for recruitment competitions chaired by Commissioners will also be enhanced to specifically consider whether ministers wish to be involved on a competition-by-competition basis.

As a statutory regulator involved in both recruitment and ethics in the Civil Service, the First Commissioner gave evidence about our independent role and work to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's ongoing landscape review of standards. He also appeared before the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee for an annual parliamentary accountability session.

This year, the number of concerns brought to the Commission about the application of the Recruitment Principles reduced compared to the previous year. However, the number of Civil Service Code concerns raised with the Commission increased, but many of these were raised by individuals who were not civil servants and so fall outside of the commission's remit.

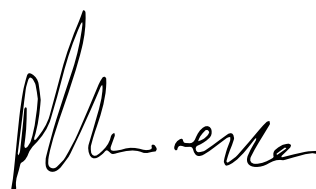
Our work on improving life chances for individuals through removing barriers to employment in the Civil Service has continued to grow. There are now 25 accredited schemes, up from 14 at 31 March 2020. We have also recruited a veteran through Going Forward into Employment (GFIE) into the Commission team to work on and provide lived experience within the GFIE team itself; I am grateful to the Office for Veterans Affairs who have funded this role.

I am extremely proud of the secretariat team, who have risen to the challenges of the last year in order to deliver our business and support all of those we work with, as well as each other. Their flexibility and reactivity to the demands arising from the pandemic has been unquestionable, despite the obvious uncertainties and personal concerns that the last year has provided. As I write, five members of the team who joined in the last year have not yet physically worked in the office or met others in the team face-to-face. However, that has not prevented them from being integrated and demonstrates well the ability of the team to operate virtually. The secretariat's results from the 2020 People Survey remained satisfyingly strong which is, in part, testament to the small leadership team and the collective individual resilience. My thanks go to all of those in the team, past and present, for their hard work and dedication throughout the last year.

The year ahead into 2021/22 will see changes to the Board of Commissioners with the appointment and induction of new Commissioners during the summer, and a new First Civil Service Commissioner to succeed Ian Watmore, whose five-year fixed term concludes at the end of September 2021. A review of strategic priorities and governance is likely to follow in the autumn. Having taken partial retirement in February 2021 the proposal is to recruit a new senior civil servant (SCS) pay band 1 as Chief Executive of the Commission during 2021/22, whilst I will retain oversight as Director of the Independent Offices and GFIE.

When looking ahead last year I highlighted that we would be seeking to learn lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, preparing for similar future situations and considering the challenges or opportunities that had arisen. That work has begun, but I had not anticipated that the pandemic would continue for so long and as such it is not yet possible to report findings at this time.

As noted last year four of the Commissioners concluded their 5-year term on 30 September 2020; Jan Cameron, Isabel Doverty, Sarah Laessig and Kevin Woods. However, due to other Government priorities the appointment of new Commissioners had not been completed and the four ex-Commissioners agreed to support the work of the Commission under an alternative arrangement. Although no longer Commissioners they have continued to chair recruitment competitions on behalf of the Commission, and without their continued dedication the Commission would have struggled to meet the high demand from departments. On behalf of the whole Commission I offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to Jan, Isabel, Sarah and Kevin for their extraordinary efforts over the last year.




Peter J Lawrence OBE
Chief Executive
Civil Service Commission
15 July 2021

Key facts

Civil Service-wide

90,668  people appointed to roles in the Civil Service, **up 102%** from 44,858 in 2019/20

60,487  recruited through fair and open competition, **up 53%** from 39,654 in 2019/20


30,181  appointed by Exception, **up from** 5,203 in 2019/20

 **100%** of departments and agencies audited despite COVID-19 restrictions (100% of audits conducted remotely)

122  breaches of the Recruitment Principles (**119** in 2019/20)

199 Recruitment Principles **complaints received**, of which **82** were referred back to departments for investigation and initial decision 

121 Civil Service Code **appeals received**, of which **47** were referred back to departments for investigation and initial decision 

25 accredited life chances schemes, **up 79%** from 14 in 2019/20 

Commissioner-chaired competitions

163



competitions chaired by Commissioners (161 in 2019/20) with 10,954 applicants (53% more than last year)



Where declared, women made up **24%** of applicants. They were more successful in later stages, making up **41%** of shortlists and **33%** of appointable candidates

Where declared, ethnic minority candidates made up **23%** of total applicants. They made **12%** of shortlists and **6%** of appointable candidates 



Where declared, **5%** of applicants reported having a disability; they made up **5%** of shortlists and **3%** of appointable candidates

64%



of appointed candidates were existing civil servants



55%

of recommended candidates were rated outstanding or very good

106

competitions produced more than one appointable candidate (65%)



Recruitment below SCS pay band (PB) 2

90,427



people appointed to positions below SCS PB2

60,344



recruited through fair and open competition (30,083 by Exception)

Where declared, **56%** of people recruited were **female** and



44% were **male**

Where declared, **23%** of people recruited were from ethnic minority backgrounds, **up from 19% in 2019/20**



Where declared, ethnic minority candidates were most successful at grade

EO (28% of EO recruits) and

HEO

(24% HEO recruits)



8%

of people recruited **declared a disability**, up from **6% in 2019/20**




Highlights of 2020/21

April 2020

Revised advice published with Civil Service Employee Policy – move to virtual recruitment 

GfIE military partners and spouses scheme launches 

May 2020


First round of compliance monitoring 


June 2020

CSC starts work on bulk campaigns for Directors and Deputy Directors in response to pandemic 

HMRC and BEIS Permanent Secretary competitions launched

July 2020

2019/20 annual report and accounts published online 

Demystifying the Civil Service Code event online 

August 2020

Civil Service Code awareness session delivered to Department for Transport 

September 2020


First blog in our series on diverse senior leaders published on website 

October 2020

Disability and SCS event held online 


Commissioner Natalie Campbell MBE writes about how CSC can support the Civil Service diversity and inclusion strategy 

November 2020

All staff wellbeing event 

Recruitment competition for eventual UK Health Security Agency Chief Executive concludes

December 2020

CSC People Survey results show strong performance across the board 


GfIE appoints a Veteran to the team through GfIE to bring lived experience

January 2021

Working with the Recruitment Principles online event 

GfIE lived experience strand launches

February 2021

Target of 500 prison leavers to be delivered by GfIE agreed at the Prime Minister-led Crime and Justice Task Force 

March 2021

Short film on ministerial involvement in competitions shot and posted on website 

GfIE recruitment hits 90 candidates

What we do

Promotion and visibility

COVID-19 restrictions meant that all our planned events happened online this year. In July we held an event on demystifying the Civil Service Code, with two of our Commissioners, Jan Cameron and June Milligan, sharing their insights.

We held another one of our popular 'Demystifying the Recruitment Principles' sessions in January, led by Rosie Glazebrook and Jane Burgess. The event was well attended, with an average of 120 people logged into the event. We will be holding more of these events next year.

We have been really encouraged by the numbers joining all of our online events and the demand for training. Holding them online, while a necessity, has made events more accessible for civil servants and members of the public across the country and we intend to continue with virtual events, as well as in-person ones when restrictions permit.

Publishing recordings of these events online is also allowing a wider audience to understand more about the work of the Commission.

Life chances

This year has seen the biggest growth in the Commission's life chances portfolio so far, having now accredited 25 Exception 2 schemes an increase of 11 new schemes in the year. To provide greater consistency and better reporting of progress, all life chances activity has begun to be brought under the auspices of Going Forward into Employment (GFIE), building a single brand and community focused on providing opportunities across the Civil Service. This growing community has offered more life chance opportunities and filled more roles than ever before, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

An important development has seen ministerial sign-up to support an ambition, driven by the Commission, that 1% to 2% of all Civil Service recruitment be made through the use of an accredited Exception 2 scheme. GFIE also went further, firmly embedding its work in Ministry of Justice (MoJ) policy, supporting their ambition to reduce re-offending and get more prison leavers into work within six months of release. This further supports the Civil Service's long-held ambition to be the UK's most inclusive employer and helps us lead by example in increasing social mobility and supports the government's levelling up agenda. Life chance candidates from all of the schemes are making a difference in their localities and making the Civil Service more representative of the society it serves.

During the last year GFIE has developed its strand to provide support for veterans, and built a close working relationship with the Office for Veterans Affairs (OVA). On 1 December a veteran recruited through an accredited GFIE scheme started working as part of our team, utilising their lived experience to enhance our understanding of how to make the Civil Service a great place to work for veterans. This was made possible by the OVA who have agreed to fund the post for three years.

As the year concluded, ministers agreed that the Civil Service should recruit 500 prison leavers through GFIE by December 2023. To enable the delivery of those recruits, Civil Service HR committed to provide funding for some additional posts for GFIE.

Compliance regime

Compliance

Our approach to compliance has developed since 2017 and is now an embedded and mature process. A Commissioner Compliance Group, which comprises three Commissioners supported by the Secretariat, undertakes an assessment of performance for the reporting year and assesses likely risk for the year ahead. The Compliance Group is informed by a range of inputs, including:

- the findings of the annual audit undertaken by the Commission's secretariat, which looks at a sample of recruitment campaigns and Exceptions to determine whether the records demonstrate compliance with the Recruitment Principles

- data collected from each organisation through the Commission's quarterly data survey, which captures the number of appointments made, including by Exception, and aggregated diversity data
- data from the Civil Service People Survey about the Civil Service Code and data held by the Commission about recruitment complaints and Civil Service Code Appeals
- the context in which the organisation is operating and any positive actions they are taking related to recruitment, diversity or the Civil Service Code, gained through outreach and contact with the Secretariat.

When determining the compliance risk rating for each department and agency, the greatest weight is given to any Recruitment Principles breaches found. The seriousness of a breach can prevent a department or agency from receiving a 'good' rating. We then give equal weighting to levels of recruitment in the department or agency and the departmental context. Finally, we consider and give equal weighting to the:

- positive actions of the department or agency
- Civil Service Code awareness levels
- level of capability, engagement and understanding of the Recruitment Principles, of the HR team in the department or agency

This year, we carried out virtual compliance inspections on all 70 organisations within our remit. Having conducted several remote compliance audits at the end of the last compliance year, this method of audit was not unfamiliar to us and we were well equipped.

The inspection process involved auditing a dip-sample of agencies' external recruitment campaigns and Exception appointments, through examination of the pertaining documentation. During the course of the audit, the team typically identifies best practice, poor practice, as well as breaches of the Recruitment Principles. We discuss our findings with the organisation, providing recommendations to ensure ongoing and improved compliance. Looking forward to the new compliance year, we will continue with the electronic inspection of evidence, with a view to visiting departments for a face-to-face meeting, according to the department's compliance risk rating.

The Commission collects recruitment and diversity data from each department and agency through quarterly data returns. The data submitted relates to external recruitment on merit following a fair and open competition and recruitment using Exceptions to the Recruitment Principles. Each department also submits declared diversity data on gender, ethnicity and disability makeup from all appointments for each quarter. This data and information is collected for a number of purposes, including statistical analysis for our annual report, and more generally to inform our compliance activities throughout the year.

This data, alongside additional compliance intelligence collected throughout the year, is used to evidence final year risk ratings for departments.

This year has seen a large increase in external recruitment among some departments and agencies, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and EU Exit. This has posed significant challenges in resourcing for some departments and agencies, as they have had to recruit at pace and on a large scale. To ensure compliance with the legal requirement to recruit on merit following a fair and open competition, we have worked closely with these departments and provided advice, particularly on large, bulk recruitment campaigns.

The number of departments rated as 'good' has increased from last year, despite the significant challenges. The Commission has seen numerous examples of good practice and compliance with the Recruitment Principles. There are also concerted efforts to improve the diversity of the Civil Service, with some innovative uses of recruitment and life chances.

Table 1: Distribution of ratings and trajectories 2020/21 with comparison to 2019/20

Overall ratings and trajectories 2020/21 (2019/20)	Good – static	Good- at risk
	16 (11)	2 (1)
Fair- likely to improve	Fair – static	Fair – at risk
18 (11)	16 (28)	9 (16)
Poor – likely to improve	Poor – static	Poor – at risk
3 (3)	4 (2)	2 (0)

We assessed the following nine organisations as poor for 2020/21:



Animal & Plant Health Agency

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has three breaches for 2020/2021. The more concerning breach of the Recruitment Principles was the result of an upheld complaint, as a result of inappropriate conduct by the panel chair. The others were in relation to an unclear assessment process, which impacted on candidates unfairly, and a breach which was self-reported, after realising an incorrect criterion had been assessed during a recruitment campaign. In addition to the breaches, and despite an increase in recruitment levels over the past year, the diversity of recruitment has reduced.



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Charity Commission has three breaches for 2020/2021. In comparison to the level of recruitment activity, this was considered to be a high number of breaches. These involved serious record keeping breaches identified during the compliance audit - recruitment records were either not available, incomplete, or not well evidenced.



Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office has 14 breaches for 2020/21. The more serious breaches of the Recruitment Principles relate to: an appointment out of merit order (the highest scoring candidate was not offered the role); an upheld complaint as the correct advertised process was not followed during a recruitment campaign; incorrect application of the scoring matrix which resulted in candidates incorrectly passing the sift of a recruitment campaign, while candidates who applied under the Disability Confident Scheme with the same score did not pass sift.



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has five breaches of the Recruitment Principles for 2020/2021. Of these breaches, one was in relation to criteria which did not meet the open requirement, with another incurred by the inclusion of an assessment which had not been advertised. The remaining three breaches were all incurred by extensions of Exception 3 appointments beyond two years without obtaining the Commission's prior approval.



Department for International Trade

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has three breaches of the Recruitment Principles for 2020/2021. Two of these breaches were technical but one was an upheld complaint whereby incorrect criteria were used at sift, which may have had the effect of favouring internal candidates. Further investigations conducted by the Commission showed that DIT records of the sift were not sufficient and did not provide a clear audit trail.



Department of Health & Social Care

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has 24 breaches for 2020/2021. The more serious breaches refer to two recruitment campaigns which were audited, in which there was no civil servant chairing the recruitment competition (as per the legal requirement) resulting in the unlawful appointment of all appointed candidates. Record keeping errors were also identified at audit. DHSC has 21 Exception breaches, in which the appointment of candidates was not compliant with the Recruitment Principles.



Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has four breaches for 2020/2021. The most serious breach of the Recruitment Principles was identified through an upheld complaint in which the advertised process had not been accurately followed and an incorrect criterion had been assessed during a recruitment campaign. MOD failed to resolve this at departmental level. In addition, one of the breaches identified at audit referred to candidates who were not distinguished on the basis of the advertised criteria. This had the effect of favouring an internal candidate.



Ministry of Justice

MoJ has 11 breaches of the Recruitment Principles for 2020/2021. The most serious relate to: four complaints upheld and two breaches of merit order. The complaints referred to failure to accurately follow the advertised processes and non-open restrictions on job adverts. Both merit breaches related to technical IT errors, the first of which concerned a large number of candidates who were incorrectly rejected at the sift stage of a competition. The second merit order breach is the result of the appointment of five candidates who incorrectly passed the assessment stage of a recruitment campaign.



The National Crime Agency has two breaches of the Recruitment Principles for 2020/2021. The most concerning refers to a breach of merit order, where a candidate placed sixth in merit order was offered the role above the higher scoring candidates. In addition, a record keeping breach was identified during the compliance audit as the records did not accurately demonstrate how tying candidates were distinguished.

The Commission will support each of these organisations through training on the Recruitment Principles and increased engagement with the organisation and the Civil Service Commissioners. We will conduct an early interim compliance audit on all of the 'poor' organisations, followed by a full compliance audit later in the year, to measure compliance improvement. Table 3 (page 38) demonstrates the Compliance Group's annual assessment and risk rating for each organisation, following moderation by the Compliance Group.

Table 3 also contains the number of breaches identified for each organisation in 2020/21. These include breaches of the Recruitment Principles or situations where there was insufficient documentation to evidence recruitment on merit following a fair and open competition and other issues identified at audit visits, breaches following complaint investigations, and Exception breaches.

While we have identified some breaches and poor practice throughout the year, we recognise and take account of the challenges to external recruitment that many organisations have faced, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and EU-Exit. The Commission retains confidence in the ability of all organisations to regulate and carry out external recruitment, albeit with additional support being provided to some.

Recruitment

The Commission derives its regulatory powers from the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG) which requires the Civil Service to appoint staff on merit, after fair and open competition. It also provides the Commission with a duty to publish the Recruitment Principles, the Commission's interpretation of CRaG. The Recruitment Principles provide the guide that government departments must use in order to recruit into the Civil Service.

The Commission has long taken the view that an overly prescriptive approach to compliance with CRaG would be counter-productive for government departments. Our principles-based regulation provides departments with the flexibility to design resourcing solutions which suit them, while still meeting the core requirements of an appointment on merit, after fair and open competition.

The Commission is a regulator, independent of government and the Civil Service, and provides assurance that the requirements of CRaG are being met, largely through our compliance and complaints functions. As an organisation, the Commission also aims to be open, collaborative and enabling. Departments are encouraged to maintain regular and early contact with the recruitment policy team to seek advice and design recruitment campaigns that are compliant with the Recruitment Principles. We offer a direct phone number and responsive email service for both staff in departments and members of the public to seek immediate advice.

Success Profiles, which were introduced in January 2019, are largely embedded into recruitment to delegated grades, that is below SCS pay band 2 (Director) level. Success Profiles brought a move away from a competency-based recruitment process, to a blended assessment which takes account of experience, ability and technical or professional skills, alongside personal strengths and behaviours. Typically, interviews and assessments at grades below SCS will involve questions designed to test behaviours and strengths.

“Civil Service Commissioners have been involved in only a small proportion of recruitment that uses Success Profiles. In practice, whilst many elements of the competitions already incorporated additional assessments such as Staff Engagement Panels and Leadership Assessments with an occupational psychologist, a significant change has been that candidate information and the person specification itself contain more information than before.”

Jane Burgess, Civil Service Commissioner

Our intention is always to inform departments and enhance their understanding of the Recruitment Principles by offering training sessions. This year, we offered virtual training sessions with individual departments and demand was high. We were able to run 38 individual sessions, including with MoJ, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), DHSC and the Home Office. These were the result of individual requests, or as a result of compliance visits that identified particular needs within some departments. Our aim for the coming year is to offer more bespoke sessions, focusing on particular areas of the Recruitment Principles, and offer drop-in sessions so that departments have the opportunity to ask questions, and learn from others within the recruitment network, as well as from the Commission. The Commission views this outreach activity as an essential tool for a modern regulator.

“The Civil Service Commission relationship with DWP is mutually proactive and supportive, working together on the challenges and additional demands on resourcing throughout the last year. In particular there has been an open door to discuss new scenarios and pragmatic ways to proceed in line with the Recruitment Principles. Particularly helpful for both resourcing teams and our key stakeholders, were the upskilling sessions that the Civil Service Commission delivered on the role of the Commission’s exceptions and the audit process. This was a great opportunity for us to develop knowledge and to ask direct questions with high quality and immediate feedback.”

Nicola Stones, Head of Specialist and Functional Resourcing, DWP People, Capability and Place Group

In addition to training and upskilling, the Commission seeks to ensure that there is a sufficient level of understanding on other issues. We publish a list of frequently asked questions on our website, which are updated regularly. These are as a direct result of the issues picked up through our general enquiry mailbox or through compliance visits.

Ministerial involvement

We also address larger questions such as ministerial involvement. To ensure departments are engaging with ministers in the appropriate way, the Commission published a short video, presented by Jane Burgess. While the Recruitment Principles set out clearly how ministers can be involved in all Civil Service recruitment, in practice this usually only happens in the most senior recruitment and occasionally in roles that involve very close working with ministers, such as within Private Office, communications staff and speech writers.

Ministers are able to review and comment on candidate packs before publication, agree to the membership of a selection panel, and may choose to meet with all shortlisted candidates prior to the interview to discuss their priorities and the candidates’ approach to the role, and then provide feedback on any areas that the panel should pursue. When such meetings take place with a minister a representative of the Commission must attend each meeting, to discuss that feedback. This is so that, while ministers cannot themselves sit on a selection panel, the opportunity to be involved is there, while safeguarding the political impartiality of the Civil Service.

The Commission anticipates an increase in ministerial interest as outlined in the new Declaration on Government Reform. We welcome the chance to discuss candidates or the competition and proactively encourage departments to ensure that ministers are properly consulted at every stage. A short video explaining the rules around ministerial involvement is available on the Commission's website.¹

“Ministers are accountable for their departments so have an interest in those being appointed to support them. The Commission’s Recruitment Principles set out how ministers can be properly involved in recruitment, and at which stages”.

**Jane Burgess, Civil Service
Commissioner**

Response to the pandemic

“As a result of COVID-19, HMRC needed to quickly adapt recruitment processes and make sure these continued to meet rapidly evolving guidelines. Working in partnership with the Commission we were able to overcome these challenges and fill critical roles at pace. The Commission supported us in exploring flexible and innovative approaches; we particularly valued their responsiveness and willingness to work with us to find pragmatic solutions.”

**Katie Chapman and Sarah
King, Resourcing Expertise and
Governance Team, HMRC**

The Commission, like all government departments and public bodies, faced an incredible challenge in responding to the pandemic. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, enquiries to the Commission increased significantly as departments revised their approach to face-to-face recruitment accordingly. An example of this was the prison service, which was required to change its normal assessment process, to take account of social distancing. This removed their ability to invite candidates to assessment centres, to undertake tests and role play scenarios. As the MoJ designed new processes, they came to the Commission to ensure those were compliant with the Recruitment Principles.

¹ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/involving-ministers/>

The Commission worked closely with Civil Service Employee Policy to develop detailed guidance, which was published within a week of the Government's initial advice for social distancing.

“We have an excellent ongoing relationship with the Commission and often liaise with them in relation to recruitment policy to ensure full compliance with the Commission’s Recruitment Principles. This proved vital when supporting the changing needs of the Civil Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sharing stakeholder insight enabled swift identification of the emerging recruitment challenges faced by departments. Working in partnership, we were able to develop guidance and innovative solutions for maintaining recruitment activity in response to COVID-19 restrictions. We look forward to continuing this strong relationship over the next year and beyond.”

Civil Service HR Expert Services

Exceptions

The Commission has long recognised that, at times, the principles of fair and open recruitment may not be possible and therefore a set of Exceptions are built into the Recruitment Principles. These provide departments with legitimate methods of appointing without a full competition, when need dictates. There are currently 10 Exceptions set out in the Recruitment Principles and these have evolved over time to meet the needs of an ever-changing Civil Service. This year, Exceptions became highly relevant as departments strove to meet their acute resourcing demands.

The increase this year was mainly due to Exception 1, short term or urgent need appointments and Exception 3, secondments. At times, Exceptions are used to draft in expertise through secondment arrangements with organisations outside of the Civil Service. This facilitates an exchange of skills, often between the public and private sector. Last year, the Commission considered 256 Exception business cases. This year, the number of cases increased to 721, 94% of which were answered within our five working day target. Of these 231 were for SCS PB1, PB2 and PB3 grades, which are subject to the approval of the First Commissioner or the Chief Executive. A list of the most senior appointments by Exception is published and updated regularly on the Commission’s website.²

² <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/recruitment/exceptions/>

The increase in Exceptions was of course reflective of the need to resource at pace in light of the pandemic. Departments all but lost the capacity to conduct face-to-face recruitment, and some needed to deliver functions such as mass testing, the vaccines roll out or medical specialisms that have not traditionally been part of the Civil Service. Departments also requested to extend temporary appointments they had already made, beyond the permitted two-year period. One department extended a number of appointments made through the summer diversity internship scheme to staff their planning division and provide some stability to the team, avoiding the need to recruit virtually. Another extended the temporary appointment of commercial specialists to cope with an influx of work purchasing oxygen and PPE.

“The Civil Service Commission’s flexibility on allowing departments to extend appointments made by exception in the last year has been incredibly timely as we have responded to the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. In MHCLG this has been around supporting local government and communities to respond and recover from COVID-19. The Commission’s support has enabled us to keep key individuals in post through a critical period and maintained business continuity. The Commission are always keen to help us meet the needs of the business and this is one way they have supported the Civil Service and wider government to deal with the exceptional circumstances of the last year.”

Alex Rimmer, Head of Talent and HR Business Partner, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Bulk approvals

We have in the past provided bulk approvals which allow departments to make a group of appointments using an Exception to the Recruitment Principles. An example of this would be the agreement with the Home Office to appoint 34 caseworkers to undertake work in the EU Settlement Scheme.

Usually, bulk agreements are used sporadically, however this year we made use of them to a greater extent, in particular for those departments tasked with increased frontline delivery, at considerable pace. The Commission worked with departments to provide various permissions. The first department to approach us was PHE, with a request to bring medically qualified staff into testing centres at a range of grades, with an additional need to bring them in and out of service to manage peaks of work. At first the permission was for 40 appointments but this increased as the pandemic progressed. The final agreement was for up to 1,500 staff, using a number of Exceptions - temporary appointments, secondments and the reinstatement of former civil servants, up to Deputy Director level. A separate approval was given for the appointment of up to 100 temporary appointments of Directors (SCS PB2).

The Scottish Government was provided with an agreement to move 50 temporary appointments to COVID-19 related roles, to assist with the pandemic, and DHSC requested an approval for up to 15 volunteers with salaries above the PB2 minimum of £93,000. Although offering their services and expertise without a salary, this permission allowed them to assist the department from time to time, as a temporary civil servant, without requiring a new permission each time.

“In light of Public Health England’s role within the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has supported us by providing two bulk exceptions. This has allowed us to rapidly scale up and recruit to critical roles across the organisation at pace. The flexibility and pragmatism of the Commission has proven invaluable, allowing us to respond to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 incident. We have valued their advice and support through a period of unprecedented demands.”

Andrew Wilson - Recruitment Manager, Medical and Dental and SCS Recruitment, Public Health England

Chairing senior competitions

Commissioners chaired 163 competitions, 120 at Director level, 34 at Director General level and nine at Permanent Secretary level. This resulted in 146 confirmed appointments to date and 15 competitions without an appointment. These senior roles ranged from specialised military roles such as submarine infrastructure, and Director of Combat Air with the Ministry of Defence and Defence, Equipment and Support; to operational roles such as Chief Operating Officers, Directors for the prison service and policy focussed roles such as Directors for diversity and inclusion or a Director General for environmental policy.

The Commission has the unique position of working across all departments, and agencies, and has privileged sight of the variety of roles that the service undertakes.

The First Commissioner chairs the selection panel for Permanent Secretary roles, usually with the Cabinet Secretary who, as Head of the Civil Service, Permanent Secretaries work to, therefore his input into selection is vital. However, as the Cabinet Secretary's time had been diverted to the pandemic response, this was delegated for most competitions to the Permanent Secretary at HM Treasury.

This year the First Commissioner has chaired competitions for the appointment of Permanent Secretaries to the:

- Department for Education
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
- Government Legal Department
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Defence, and
- the Second Permanent Secretary for HMRC

Of these appointments, five more women were appointed to the very senior level of the civil service. The First Commissioner also oversaw the appointment of the Cabinet Secretary, with the outgoing postholder.

This year, Joe Montgomery chaired the competition for the Chief Executive of the newly established UK Health Security Agency, and Isabel Doverty oversaw the competition for the Government Chief Digital Officer. Both of these are appointments at Permanent Secretary level, and all of these appointments are subject to the approval of the Prime Minister.

Chairing senior competitions is another essential lever that the Commission has as a regulator. Commissioners are involved from the planning phase of a competition, through to the interview stage. They guide the panel through the consideration of a range of assessments undertaken by candidates. Typically, additional assessments include a leadership assessment and a staff engagement exercise, and reports are made available to the panel prior to interview. For appointments at Director General level, Commissioners work closely with the Director General Workforce Team based in the Cabinet Office.

SCS bulk campaign

The above competition data does not take into account a bulk competition coordinated by the Cabinet Office to recruit to a number of Director roles across four departments. The campaign involved five Commissioners, and as recruitment for this role had not been combined in this way before, it was a resource intensive exercise for the Commissioners involved.

The process itself was overseen by Isabel Doverty, who worked closely with the pay band 2 team in the Government Recruitment Service and the Commission's secretariat to decide on the most compliant way in which to manage an unusual competition. It moved at pace at the outset without anticipating the large number of applications eventually received. Jane Burgess, June Milligan, Natalie Campbell and Jan Cameron chaired across six competitions, working with BEIS, DHSC, MHCLG, and the Department for Transport.

"I was really impressed with the pace at which departments worked to respond to the huge additional demands created by the pandemic, and with the increased collaboration between teams. The Commission supported a bulk recruitment campaign for Director level roles, implemented at speed, which generated a massive response of well over 3,000 applications. A team of Commissioners was set up to work with panels from four different departments resulting in the successful appointment of 17 new Directors"

**Jan Cameron, Civil Service
Commissioner**

The roles advertised were for policy generalists or project managers. The campaign attracted 3,228 applicants: 31% were women, 19% declared as being from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 4.5% declared a disability. Of the resulting appointments, 56% were women, but none were from ethnic minorities or disabled. It is interesting to note that the Commissioners agreed to a 'name blind' approach to this campaign, with some reservations.

NDPB accreditation

The Commission manages an accreditation process for those non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) that are sponsored by government departments. The accreditation enables NDPBs access to the Civil Service Jobs website, extending their ability to advertise. In turn, the staff of NDPBs are able to apply for roles that have only been advertised across the Civil Service. This allows a greater interchange of valuable skills in the public sector. This year, we have worked closely with the team in the Cabinet Office that manages Civil Service Jobs to ensure we offer a prompt accreditation service. An accreditation lasts for three years and provides a level of assurance that NDPBs recruit in a way that is compliant with the Recruitment Principles. A list of accredited bodies can be found on the Commission's website.

Recruitment complaints

This year we received 199 complaints about recruitment campaigns (215 in 2019/20). The majority of complaints received by the Commission are out of scope for our consideration or require a departmental investigation before we can look at the case. Of the remaining cases requiring further consideration, this year 42 cases were considered by the Commission and no breach was found in any of those cases. Although these cases did not require a full investigation, they often form a large part of our casework as we check that the relevant organisations have complied with the Recruitment Principles. Breaches were found in a further 15 cases detailed below. Case 6 was considered by a Commissioner panel. The remainder did not require full consideration as breaches were identified without this being necessary.

Details of the complaints received are published on our website³ and, for those complaints that require adjudication by a Commissioner panel, we publish a decision notice.

³ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/publications/recruitment-complaints/>

Complaints where breaches of the Recruitment Principles were found:

<p>Case 1 – Forestry Commission</p>	<p>The Commission concluded that a breach of the Recruitment Principles occurred during the campaign in question as the panellists failed to appropriately record and manage a potential conflict of interest, as a candidate was known to the panel.</p>
<p>Case 2 – Animal and Plant Health Agency</p>	<p>The Commission received a complaint about the conduct of the panel chair during an interview. The chair had not conducted themselves in an appropriate manner and compromised the fairness of the recruitment exercise as a result.</p>
<p>Case 3 – Cabinet Office</p>	<p>The Commission concluded that a breach of the Recruitment Principles occurred during the campaign in question as the assessment process was significantly altered during the campaign, meaning the advertised process was not followed and candidates were not provided with adequate access to information prior to the assessment.</p>
<p>Case 4 – Ministry of Justice</p>	<p>The Commission concluded that a breach of the Recruitment Principles occurred during the campaign in question as the assessment process was significantly altered during the campaign, meaning the advertised process was not followed.</p>
<p>Case 5 – Ministry of Justice</p>	<p>We received a complaint about an exclusionary statement contained in a job advert, which stated that candidates were not permitted to apply for the role within 12 months of a previous, unsuccessful application.</p>

<p>Case 6 – Department for International Trade</p>	<p>The Commission received a complaint about a recruitment competition where the incorrect criteria had been assessed. When we conducted further investigation, there was evidence that recruitment documents had been altered, adding to the severity of the overall breach.</p>
<p>Case 7 – The National Archives</p>	<p>The Commission concluded that a breach of the Recruitment Principles occurred during the campaign in question as the assessment process was significantly altered during the campaign, meaning the advertised process was not followed.</p>
<p>Case 8 – The Department for Work and Pensions</p>	<p>We received a complaint about an exclusionary statement contained in a job advert, which stated that candidates were not permitted to apply for the role within three months of a previous, unsuccessful application.</p>
<p>Case 9 – 15 The Department for Work and Pensions N.B although six complaints were received this amounted to one breach of the Recruitment Principles for the department.</p>	<p>An administrative error meant that some candidates’ applications were incorrectly rejected during a recruitment campaign. The DWP wrote to all candidates affected and ensured they were given the opportunity to re-apply. The Commission received six complaints related to this breach.</p>

Civil Service Code

Promoting the values

The Civil Service People Survey 2020 included three questions relating to the Civil Service Code. Each of these questions reported higher results than last year. While awareness of the code remains relatively high across the Civil Service, the results (albeit improved on last year) for how to raise a concern and confidence that a concern would be investigated properly are worrying. We will be watching this closely to see if this is a trend over the longer term.

In the shorter term, we will review the People Survey results and, where an organisation’s response shows signs of weakness in any of the areas, we will offer support and training. We will also continue to hold regular review sessions with Civil Service Employee Policy, who lead on code policy.

Table 2: Awareness of the Civil Service Code

Question text (from the People Survey)	2018	2019	2020
Are you aware of the Civil Service Code? (% answering yes)	92%	89%	91%
Are you aware of how to raise a concern under the Civil Service Code? (% answering yes)	67%	66%	69%
Are you confident that if you raise a concern under the Civil Service Code (in the organisation) it would be investigated properly? (% answering yes)	71%	67%	72%

Code appeals and investigations, 2020/21

In 2020/21 we received 121 code complaints (97 in 2019/20). The majority of cases were either out of scope or required a departmental investigation to be undertaken before we could consider whether there were grounds to investigate. All complaints received are published on our website⁴, with decision notices being produced for cases investigated by a Commissioner panel.

In 2020/21 a Commissioner panel investigation was only necessary for the following case:

Department for International Development

This complaint was considered by a panel of Commissioners. Two civil servants were found to have breached the Civil Service Code while working on a project relating to the construction of schools and facilities. Both individuals were provided with expert advice pertaining to the serious risk that the building supplier posed, as it did not comply with current building regulations. The individuals failed to escalate significant safety issues with the building supplier and did not account for or act on the advice.

Strategy

Diversity

This year we have continued our work on encouraging candidates with a disability to apply for roles in the SCS.

In October we held our first event for applicants with a disability interested in a career in the SCS, again with two of our Commissioners and the Commission's Disability Adviser John Knight, sharing tips on the recruitment process for SCS roles. A follow-up event on reasonable adjustments is being held in April 2021.

As part of our strategic priority to encourage diverse applicants to apply for roles in the SCS we published a series of blogs about diverse senior leaders. So far we have produced seven personal blog posts from senior leaders and received positive feedback on how powerful it is to hear first-hand about the challenges they have overcome and their thoughts on how the Civil Service can attract more diversity in leadership roles.

Preparation is well underway for the launch of the Commissioners' Mark of Excellence, an award to showcase outstanding innovation and commitment in the recruitment of diverse candidates across all grades into the Civil Service.

⁴ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/publications/code-complaints/>

Management information

The following tables and graphs provide management information on the compliance rating for each department and agency we regulate and the numbers and make up of applicants for Civil Service appointment during 2020/21.

Civil Service-wide

Table 3: Ratings, trajectories, and breaches for 2020/21

Department	Rating	Trajectory	Breaches
Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Animal and Plant Health Agency	Poor	Static	3
Cabinet Office	Poor	At risk	14
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	Good	Static	0
Charity Commission	Poor	Likely to improve	3
Companies House	Good	Static	0
Competition and Markets Authority	Good	Static	0
Crown Commercial Service	Fair	Static	2
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service	Good	Static	0
Crown Prosecution Service	Fair	At risk	2
Defence Equipment and Support	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Good	Static	2

Department	Rating	Trajectory	Breaches
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Good	Static	0
Department for Education	Good	Static	1
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Poor	Likely to improve	5
Department for International Trade	Poor	Static	3
Department for Transport	Fair	Likely to improve	1
Department for Work and Pensions	Fair	Likely to improve	4
Department of Health and Social Care	Poor	At risk	24
Estyn	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Services	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Food Standards Agency	Fair	Likely to improve	1
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	Fair	Static	1
Forestry Commission	Fair	At risk	2
Government Actuary's Department	Fair	At risk	1
Government Commercial Function	Fair	Static	1
Government Economic Service	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Government Legal Department	Good	Static	0
Government Social Research Service	Fair	Likely to improve	0

Department	Rating	Trajectory	Breaches
Health and Safety Executive	Fair	Static	2
HM Land Registry	Fair	Likely to improve	1
HM Revenue and Customs	Fair	Likely to improve	3
HM Treasury	Good	Static	1
Home Office	Fair	Likely to improve	3
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education	Fair	Likely to improve	1
Intellectual Property Office	Fair	Static	0
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	Good	Static	0
Met Office	Fair	At risk	2
Ministry of Defence	Poor	Static	4
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Good	Static	0
Ministry of Justice	Poor	Static	11
National Crime Agency	Poor	Likely to improve	2
National Savings and Investments	Fair	Static	1
Northern Ireland Office	Fair	At risk	2
Office for National Statistics	Good	Static	0
Office of Rail and Road	Fair	Likely to improve	0

Department	Rating	Trajectory	Breaches
Ofgem	Fair	Static	1
Ofqual	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Ofsted	Fair	Static	0
Ofwat	Fair	At risk	2
Planning Inspectorate	Fair	At risk	1
Public Health England	Fair	Static	4
Registers of Scotland	Good	At risk	0
Rural Payments Agency	Good	Static	0
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	Good	Static	2
Scottish Prison Service	Fair	Likely to improve	0
Serious Fraud Office	Fair	Static	1
The Insolvency Service	Good	Static	0
The National Archives	Fair	At risk	2
The Queen Elizabeth II Centre	Fair	Static	0
The Scottish Government	Fair	Static	2
UK Debt Management Office	Fair	Likely to improve	1
UK Export Finance	Fair	Static	0

Department	Rating	Trajectory	Breaches
UK Hydrographic Office	Fair	Likely to improve	0
UK Space Agency	Fair	Static	0
Valuation Office Agency	Fair	Static	1
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	Fair	Static	0
Welsh Government	Good	Static	0
Welsh Revenue Authority	Good	At risk	1
Wilton Park Executive Agency	Fair	At risk	1

Commissioner-chaired competitions

Table 4: Number of commissioner chaired competitions and appointments made

	Posts advertised	Appointments made
SCS 2 (Director)	120	107
SCS 3 (Director General)	34	31
SCS 4 (Permanent Secretary)	9	8
Total	163	146

Figure 1: Ethnicity breakdown of key stages of senior competitions

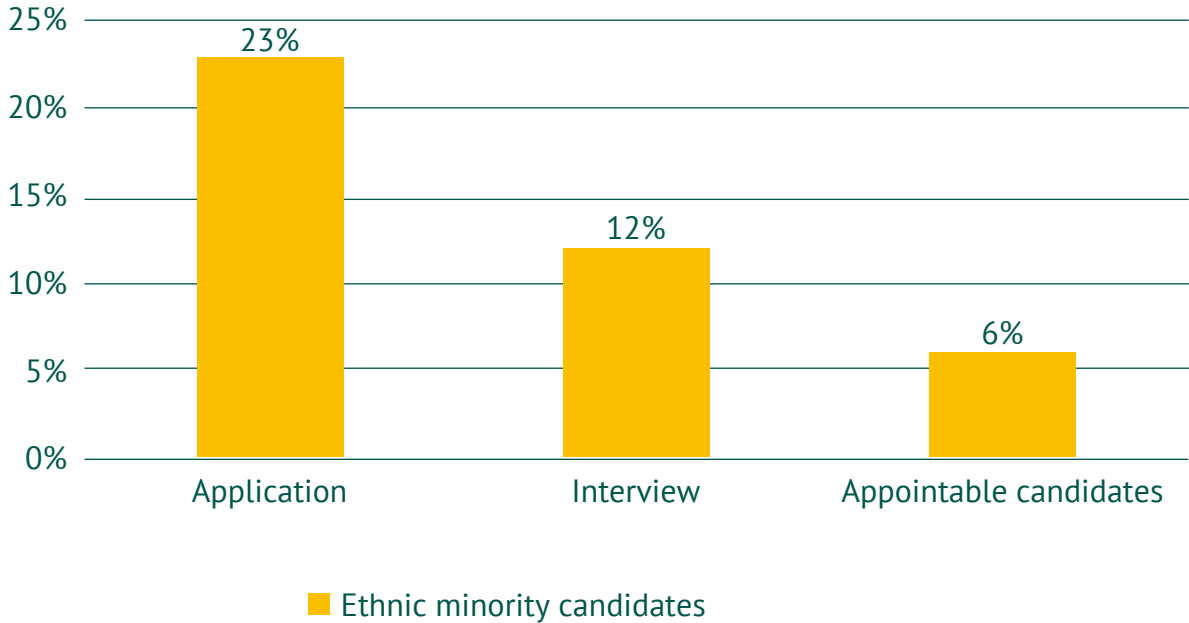


Figure 2: Gender breakdown of key stages of senior competitions

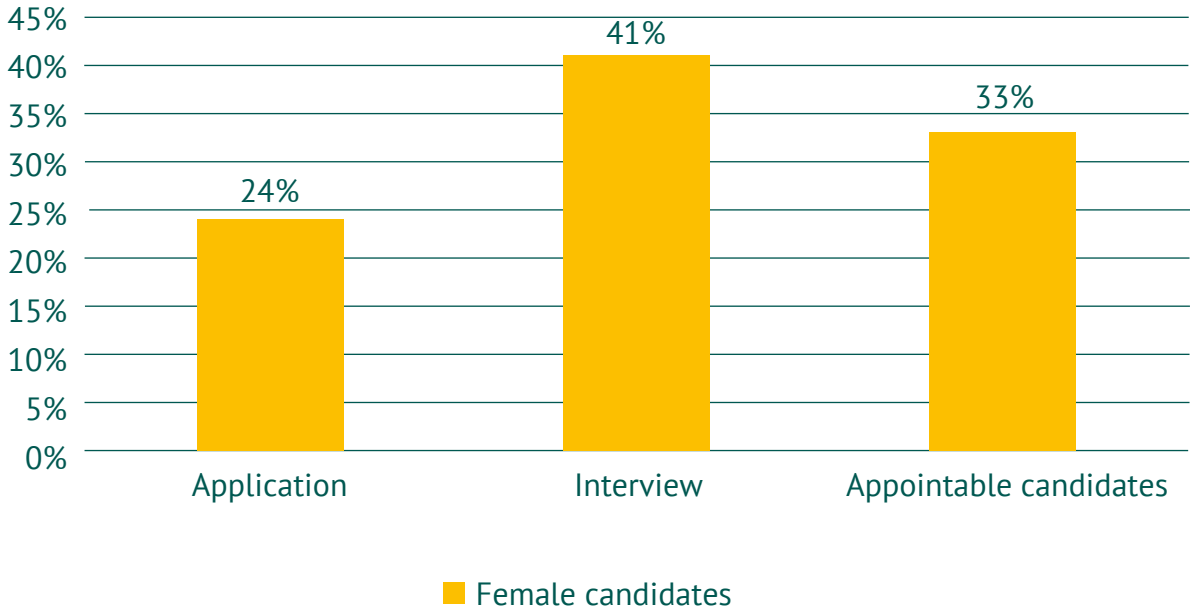
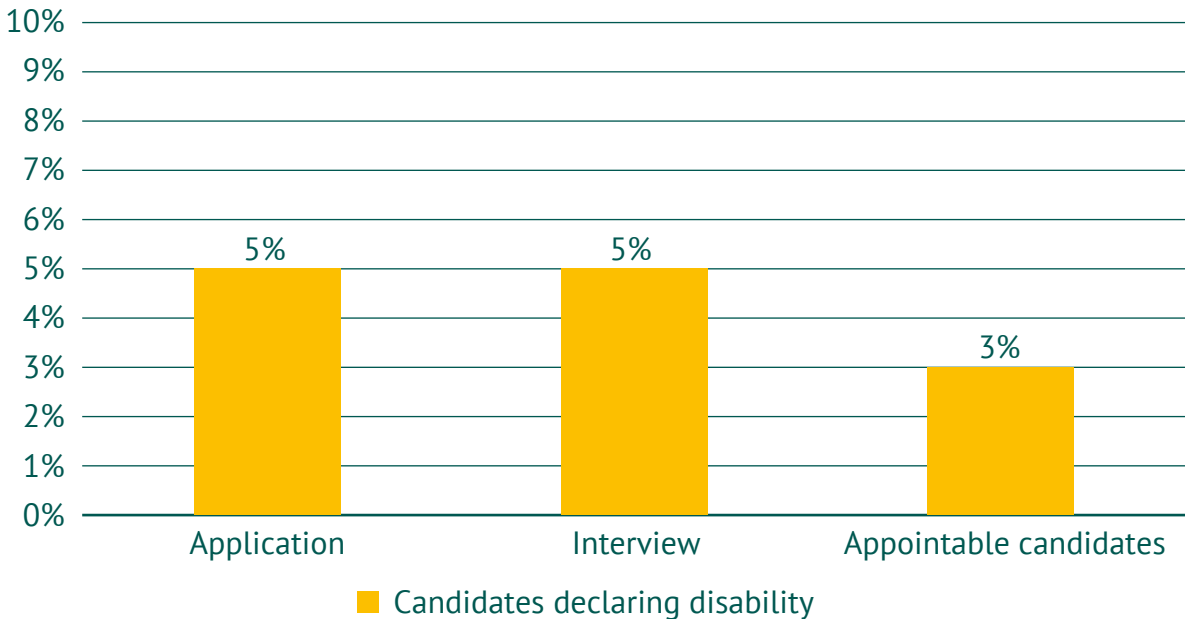


Figure 3: Disability breakdown of key stages of senior competitions



Recruitment below SCS pay band 2

Figure 4: Recruitment below SCS pay band 2

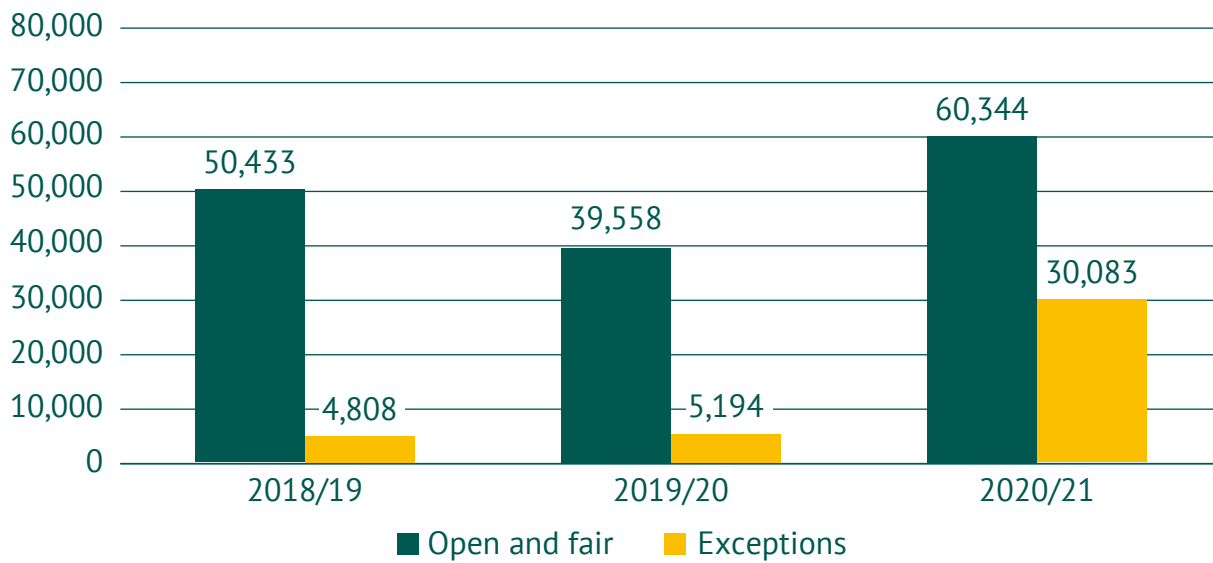


Figure 5: Ethnic diversity of successful candidates by grade

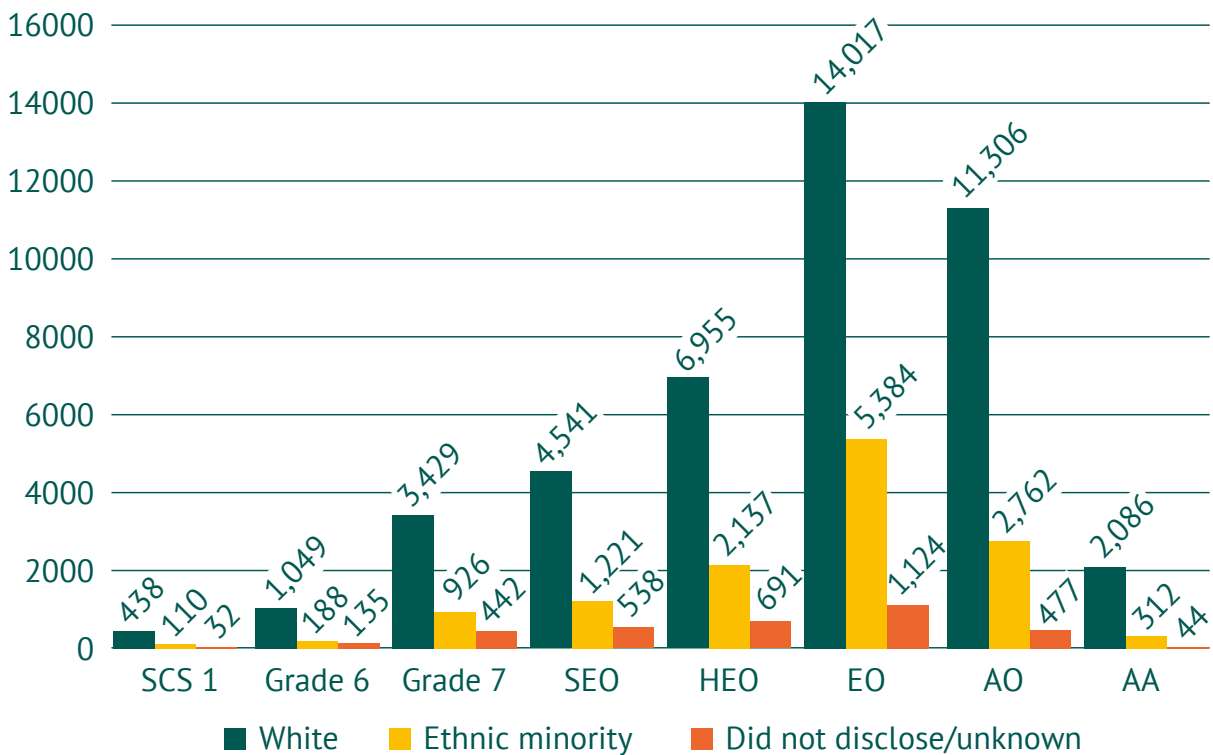


Figure 6: Gender diversity of successful candidates by grade

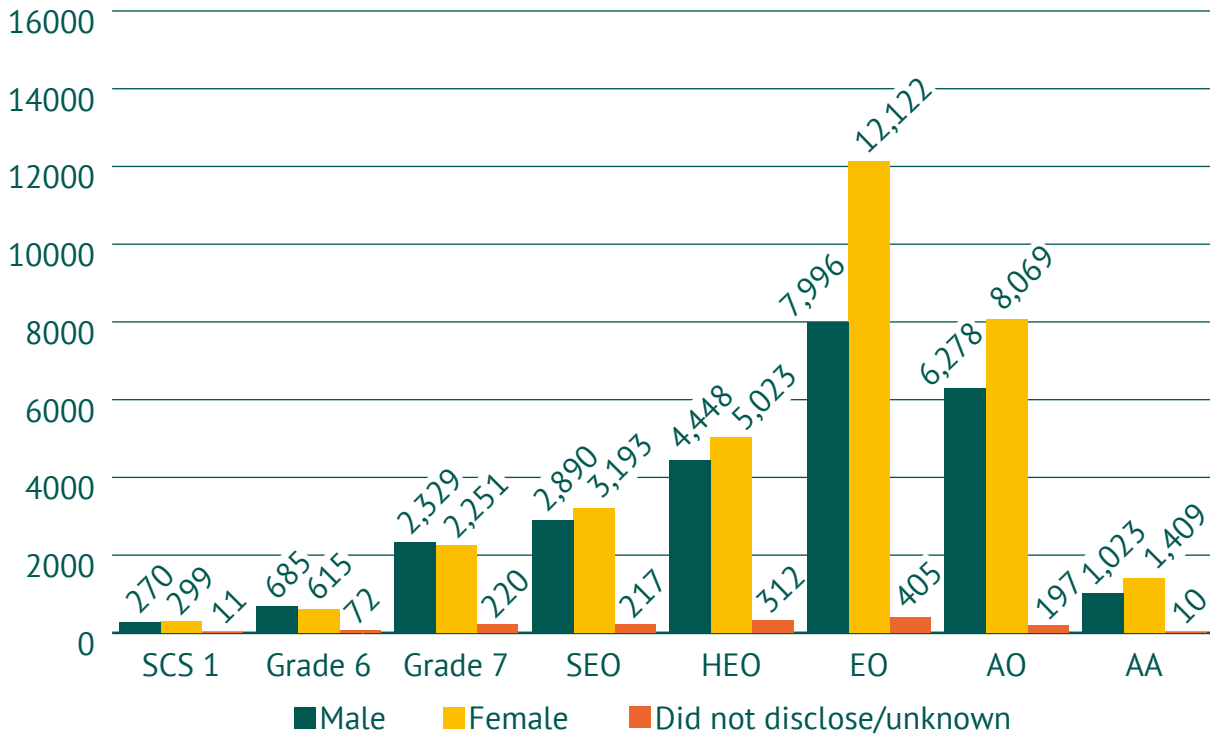
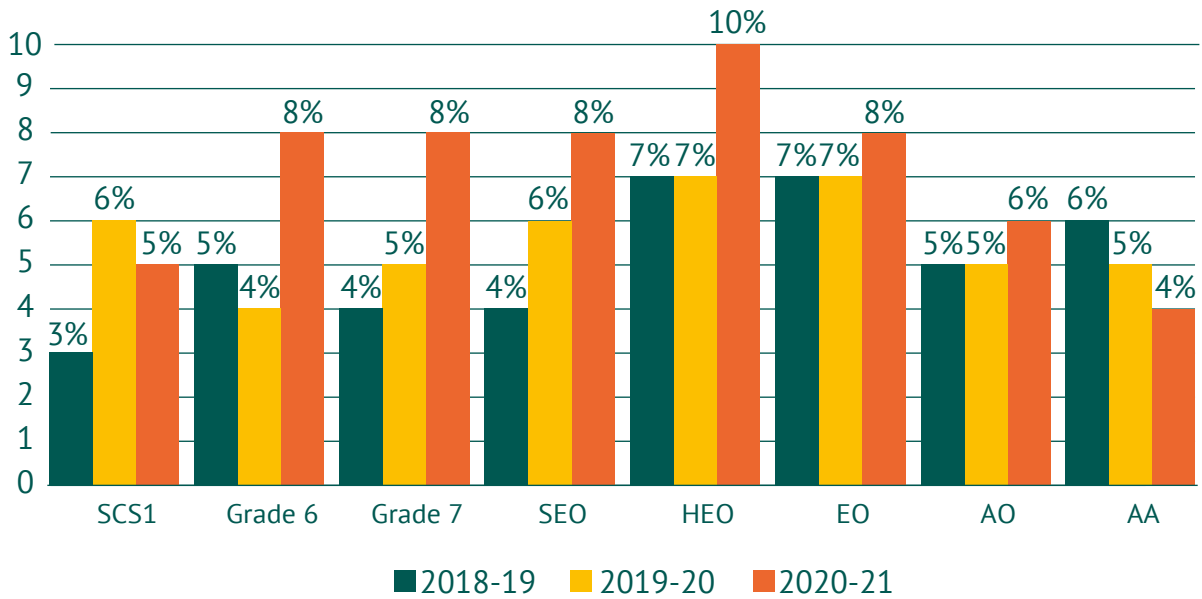


Figure 7: Disability breakdown of successful candidates by grade



Who we are

The Commission

The Commissioners collectively form the Civil Service Commission and its board. They are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen for a single five-year term of office. They bring a range of expertise of the private, public and voluntary sectors as well as an independent perspective.

The Commission meets regularly, along with the Chief Executive and members of the secretariat, to consider business and strategic matters and take informed decisions in pursuit of its regulatory functions. The Chief Executive provides a business update to the board of Commissioners twice each year, in September and March.

In September 2020, four of our Commissioners came to the end of their five-year terms. However due to the volume of work and delay in recruiting new Commissioners they have continued to work with the Commission, in accordance with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, to chair competitions and perform other roles and responsibilities as assigned to them by the First Commissioner and/or the Chief Executive.

This year, due to the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 we have held all our board meetings online. Items discussed at board included the scope of complaints, reserve lists, equal merit, ministerial meetings and the Commission's governance, as well as updates from the working groups and the Audit and Risk Committee.

In November the board meeting took the form of a longer strategy discussion on Civil Service reform and what this may mean for the Commission.

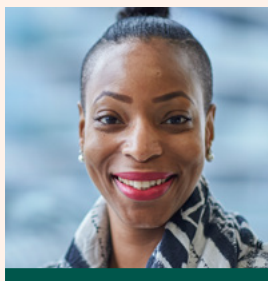
The Commissioners



Jane Burgess

The majority of Jane's career has been in the private sector and she was formerly Partners' Counsellor and a main board director at John Lewis Partnership. She is currently a lay member of the House of Commons Committee on Standards and an ordinary member of the Competition Appeal Tribunal.

Jane was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2017.



Natalie Campbell

Natalie Campbell is CEO of Belu Water and an award-winning businesswoman.

In 2011 she co-founded A Very Good Company (AVGC), a global social innovation agency that worked with brands to drive social change. Natalie is also a board member of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC).

Natalie was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 June 2017.



Margaret Edwards

Margaret has held senior roles in the public sector, including Chief Executive roles in the NHS and as Director General in the Department of Health. She then had a successful career with Mckesson International. Currently Margaret is chair of the Civil Service Pension Board and previous non-executive roles have included chair of the National Oversight Group for the High Secure Hospitals, member and interim chair of the Senior Salaries Pay Review Body and a non-executive director role with the Government Internal Audit Agency.

She has a track record of designing and delivering public sector reform and delivering national targets. She is particularly interested in aligning individual and corporate objectives and the design of total reward packages.

Margaret was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2017.



Rosie Glazebrook

Rosie chairs the Copyright Licensing Agency and its associated company Publishers' Licensing Services. She is also a Council Member, General Optical Council, chairs an NHS Research Ethics Committee and is a Member, BSI's Standards Policy and Strategy Committee. Her previous Board/Non-Executive Director positions include the Food Standards Agency and in NHS regulatory and commissioning bodies.

Rosie has held commercial positions in the private sector in media, publishing and health data organisations.

Rosie was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 June 2017.



June Milligan

June has extensive experience as a senior civil servant. Her last role was Director General, Local Government and Communities and a board member in the Welsh Government. She has also held roles as a diplomat and as Head of Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. She is currently a member of the Court of the University of Glasgow and was, until May 2019, an Equality and Human Rights Commissioner.

June's areas of interest and expertise are people-centred: in leadership, diversity, governance and ethics.

June was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 June 2017.



Joe Montgomery

Joe has held senior executive and non-executive roles in the private sector, focusing on property and regeneration, as well as an executive career in both central and local government including as Director General at the Department of Communities and Local Government and Director General, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Joe is also chair of the Youth Futures Foundation, and chairman for RE Ltd.

Joe was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 June 2017.



Ian Watmore

Ian's career is diverse, spanning private, public, sports, university, church and third sectors.

He spent 24 years in the private sector culminating as Accenture UK CEO. He then worked for seven years in the Civil Service, holding three different Permanent Secretary posts under three Prime Ministers.

Ian has held several board positions in sports administration. He is on the Council of Chester Cathedral, and he has previously served on boards at the Information Commissioner's Office, Cambridge University and was chair of the Migraine Trust for 10 years. Ian is also chair of the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Ian was appointed as First Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2016.

Former Civil Service Commissioners (whose five-year terms ended 30 September 2020)



Jan Cameron

Jan has spent her career in HR in the private sector, primarily in large retail organisations including Sainsbury's and Homebase. Until recently she was the Group Services Director for the executive search firm Norman Broadbent plc. She currently serves as a member of the Employment Tribunal for HM Courts and Tribunals Service and undertakes HR consultancy work.

She has extensive experience of senior executive recruitment with a particular interest in governance and employment law.

Jan was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2015 and her term ended on 30 September 2020.

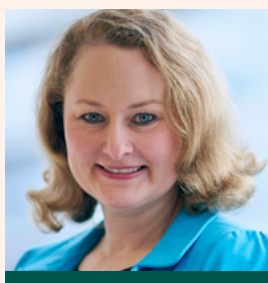


Isabel Doverty

Isabel Doverty was formerly Global Head of Human Resources, Wholesale Banking, at Standard Chartered Bank. She is also an independent member of the State Honours Committee, a member of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments and a Governor of the University of Bedfordshire.

Throughout her private sector career, she held senior HR roles in the energy and financial services sectors, specialising in employee relations, organisational change, and executive-level recruitment.

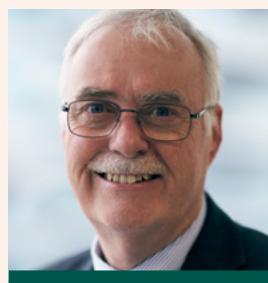
Isabel was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2015 and her term ended on 30 September 2020.



Sarah Laessig

Sarah is a Non-Executive Director of Local Pensions Partnership Investments (LPPI), and of United Trust Bank (UTB). She is also a Director of CG Pension Trustees Ltd. and member of the Board of Advisors of data.world. Sarah has been two-term Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner and a Visiting Executive at the London Business School. She previously enjoyed an executive banking career at Citigroup.

Sarah was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2015, and her term ended on 30 September 2020.



Kevin Woods

Kevin was Director General of Health and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health in New Zealand between January 2011 and December 2013, prior to which he was the Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and Director General for Health in the Scottish Government. Previously, he held senior management roles in the health service and the Scottish Government and was also the William R Lindsay Professor of Health Policy and Economic Evaluation at the University of Glasgow.

He is also a Trustee of Leuchie House, a charity in East Lothian, which provides respite care for people with neurological conditions.

Kevin was appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner on 1 October 2015 and his term ended on 30 September 2020.

The secretariat

The secretariat supports the individual Commissioners as well as the collective Commission. The Chief Executive and five team leaders made up the senior leadership team and on 31 March 2021 there were 21 members of staff employed in the Commission secretariat (19.8 FTE). The secretariat is staffed entirely by civil servants on secondment from the Cabinet Office and new recruits are employed by the Cabinet Office prior to being seconded to the Commission.

We are always proud when we see members of the team develop their skills in ways that benefit not just our work but them as individuals and with a view to their future Civil Service careers. We take particular pride when that development leads them to new things either on promotion or as a stepping stone role on their path to success.

In 2020/21 a total of four members of staff left the Commission, with two of them taking up new roles in other government departments, one leaving for a role in the private sector and one retiring.

Our People Survey 2020 results were significantly up on nine out of the 10 key themes compared to the previous year and the Civil Service benchmark scores.

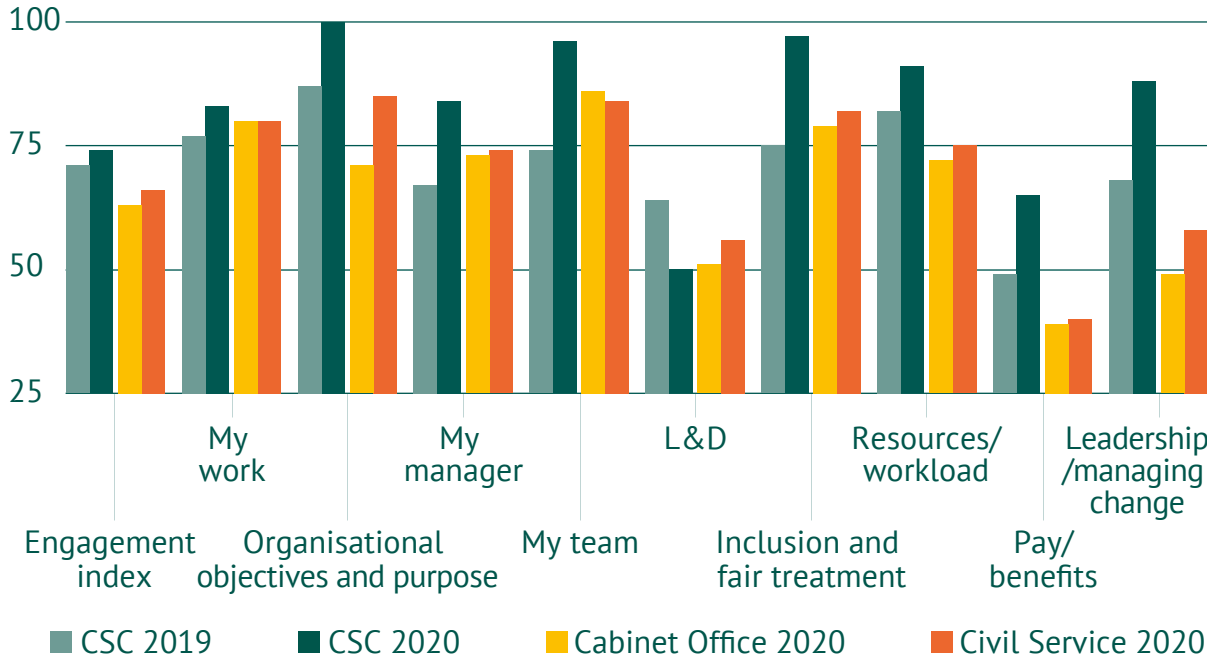
We were particularly proud of our score on inclusivity and fair treatment, which (despite remote working) was 97% this year, compared to 75% last year and the Civil Service benchmark score of 82%.

We have worked hard this year to ensure that staff feel included and are able to work safely and comfortably from home by holding bi-weekly all staff meetings, an all-staff wellbeing workshop, regular online social events and ensuring staff had the equipment they needed to work effectively from home.

This year's staff survey included additional questions relating to COVID-19 and remote working and the effect the pandemic had on staff's physical and mental health as well as work. Our scores were broadly in line with those of the Civil Service, although our scores on how the pandemic had affected the mental health of staff were slightly up.

At the Commission we take physical and mental wellbeing seriously. We have asked our internal auditors to conduct an audit of wellbeing next year and continue to offer and signpost support to all our staff.

Figure 8: People Survey results



Corporate management

Transparency and outreach

Open event



The Commission is required by its Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet Office to hold an annual open meeting.

In July we held a successful 'Demystifying the Civil Service Code' event open to all (see also page 18) as well as a number of other events aimed at internal audiences or candidates.

The First Commissioner gave evidence to the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee in March.

Information requests



The Commission publishes a large amount of information about its work. In addition to reflecting our commitment to openness and transparency, this is one way in which we meet our statutory responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Freedom of Information Act requires public authorities to adopt publication schemes setting out the types of information they will make available routinely. We have adopted the model publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner and the information on our website reflects this.

In 2020/21 we received 37 requests under the Freedom of Information Act (36 in 2019/20), and 36 of these were responded to within the statutory deadline: 97% (2019/20: 100%) We also received five requests under the Data Protection Act 1998 (three in 2019/20) all of which were responded to within the statutory deadline (2019/20: 100%). Where information is released by the Commission in response to a Freedom of Information request, this information is usually published on our website.⁵

⁵ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/?s=freedom+of+information>

Statutory Disclosures

Risk

The main risks to the Commission's operations during 2020/21 related to budget and workload. For more details, see page 65.

At the beginning of the year there was a downturn in the numbers of new competitions due to the pandemic, however this has now picked up considerably and has overtaken last year's numbers. The risk is that numbers of competitions will continue to spike in 2021/22 at a time when we only have six Commissioners and the recruitment process for new Commissioners continues to be delayed.

Accounts preparation and going concern basis

The accounts attached to this report have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction issued by the Minister for the Cabinet Office under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

The Commission's accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the Civil Service Commission is a going concern on the grounds that where the Commission has outstanding current liabilities at the end of the year these will be funded in the next year by annual Grant-in-Aid. Budget and expenditure plans for 2021/22 have been agreed by the Cabinet Office. In common with government departments, the future financing of the Commission's liabilities is accordingly to be met by future grants of supply to the Cabinet Office and the application of future income, both to be approved by Parliament. There is no reason to believe that future approvals will not be forthcoming.

Future developments

The delayed competition to recruit Commissioners will take place next year, along with a competition to recruit a new First Civil Service Commissioner (Ian Watmore's five-year term ends at the end of September 2021). A second round of Commissioner recruitment will also need to take place sufficiently in advance of May 2022; the point at which four of the current Commissioners will conclude their five-year non-renewable terms.

Sustainability, environmental, social and community initiatives

The Commission has adopted the Cabinet Office's policy on volunteering, which aims to encourage staff to participate in volunteering activity in the community and to enable staff to build their skills through practical experience. Staff are eligible for up to five days' paid leave per year for volunteering activity as part of their personal development.

We are committed to improving the work/life balance of our staff and we value diversity. We try to accommodate different working patterns and encourage our staff to join the diversity networks of the Cabinet Office or their parent department.

We have Codes of Practice for both Commissioners and staff that require them to observe the highest standards of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, and to offer the highest standards of service to the public.

The Commission contributes to the Cabinet Office's commitment to making a continuing contribution to the goals, priorities and principles of the UK government's Sustainable Development Strategy, Securing the Future. Details of the initiatives to reduce energy consumption in the Cabinet Office can be found on the government's website.



Peter J Lawrence OBE
Chief Executive
Civil Service Commission
15 July 2021

Accountability report

Corporate governance report

Director's report

Commissioners

Commissioners serve for a five-year non-renewable term of appointment (please see pages 48-53 for full list of Commissioners).

Register of Commissioners' interests

Commissioners record any interests such as company directorships and other significant interests in the Register of Interests, published on our website.⁶

Data protection and incidents involving personal data

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force 25 May 2018, supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018, which requires the Commission, as an organisation that processes personal data, to process that information in accordance with the data protection principles and to register with the Information Commissioner's Office.

For a small organisation, the Commission manages a large amount of personal data. Most of this relates to Civil Service recruitment and complaint handling and is held so that the Commission can discharge its role of providing assurance that civil servants are selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Commission also holds data for the purpose of investigating complaints under the Civil Service Code and, for administrative purposes, holds data relating to its staff, contractors and Commissioners. The Commission also provided secretariat services throughout 2020/21 to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments and so manages further large amounts of personal data for them.

There were eight personal data incidents in 2020/21 (eight in 2019/20) that involved unauthorised disclosure of data to unintended recipients. The incidents were not deemed to fall within the criteria for reporting to the ICO. Article 15 of the GDPR creates a right, commonly referred to as subject access, which is most often used by individuals who want to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them (see page 56).

⁶ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/about-the-commission/how-we-work/>

Statement of the Commissioners' and Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, the Civil Service Commissioners are required, to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Civil Service Commission and its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year. In preparing the accounts, the Commissioners and the Accounting Officer are required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) and, in particular, to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Minister for the Civil Service (with the consent of HM Treasury), including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and

- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Principal Accounting Officer of the Cabinet Office has appointed the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of the Civil Service Commission. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Civil Service Commission's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money published by the HM Treasury.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Civil Service Commission's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware. I also confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable.

Governance statement

The Civil Service Commission is independent of government and the Civil Service. It is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB), sponsored by the Cabinet Office, which was created in its current form on 11 November 2010 by the commencement of Part 1 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining effective systems of corporate governance controls – both structural and procedural – to support the achievement of the Commission’s policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money.

Governance framework

The Commission is made up of the Commissioners and holds monthly meetings chaired by the First Civil Service Commissioner. These meetings are supported by the secretariat, headed by the Commission’s Chief Executive. Together, the Commissioners and the secretariat constitute the Civil Service Commission.

The Commissioners review information on the Commission’s core work at each meeting and the board periodically reviews its own performance to ensure that it and its standing committees are acting effectively.

The Commission’s budget is set by the Cabinet Office and expenditure against it is reviewed quarterly by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). Expenditure is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Chief Executive and on a day-to-day basis by the Commission’s finance team.

During 2020/21 the Commission had one standing committee to advise the Commissioners on specific areas or to exercise functions on behalf of the Commissioners:

- the Audit and Risk Committee, established to support the board in its responsibilities for issues of risk control and governance

Compliance, communication and the life chances working groups continued to meet. The diversity group did not meet in 2020/21, but instead a standing item on diversity was added to each board agenda.

In March the decision was made to temporarily suspend meetings of the life chances group until new Commissioners have been recruited.

Membership of the standing committees during 2020/21 is listed at page 64.

Except as set out below, the Commission complies with the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice 2017 Compliance Checklist, which is regarded as best practice. The exceptions are:

- All Commissioners are non-executives. There are no additional non-executive members of the board.
- The Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, is responsible for writing the Governance Statement, rather than the board. The statement is reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and cleared by a meeting of the Commissioners before publication.
- Our Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet Office is not automatically re-negotiated when key personnel leave (including when there is a change of government). We have meetings with the sponsor team in the Cabinet Office and an agreement that the Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed every three years. The review due in 2013/14 was delayed, at the Cabinet Office's request, pending the Triennial Review of the Commission. The Commission is committed to working closely with the Cabinet Office to have a revised Memorandum in place for 2021-22.

In the majority of areas, the Commission follows Cabinet Office guidelines and procedures for internal control. Where the Commission's policy differs from the Cabinet Office's, this is set out in Standing Orders which are published on our website.⁷ Day-to-day working practices of the Commission are decided by the Commissioners and these are known as Standing Orders. The key Standing Orders are the Code of Practice for Commissioners and staff, financial and operational delegations, responsibilities from the Commission to the Chief Executive and Audit and Risk Committee terms of reference.

The Commission is registered on the Information Commissioner's register of data controllers.⁸ We have reviewed our procedures for information security against those used by the Cabinet Office and our policy on data retention in light of the new GDPR which came into force in May 2018.

⁷ <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/about-the-commission/how-we-work/>

⁸ <https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Entry/Z2480635>

Commissioner meeting and committee performance

The board of Commissioners and standing committees complied with the published best practice requirements as set out in Managing Public Money.

The Commissioners met monthly during 2020/21 (except in May, August and January). The meeting in November 2020 took the form of a strategic discussion.

The Audit and Risk Committee met during 2020/21, in June, September, December and March. The committee reviewed the risk register, the reports of reviews conducted by the Commission's internal auditors, reports from the National Audit Office, staffing arrangements and expenditure against budget. The working groups met as and when required, and there was no set schedule.

Table 5: Board and Audit and Risk Committee attendance

Figures denote meetings attended (of meetings available to attend) between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. The board met nine times in the year with non-attendance agreed in advance on an exceptional basis.

Commissioners' attendance business year ending 31/03/2020	Commission board	Audit and Risk Committee
Jan Cameron (term ended 30 September 2020)	4/4	N/A
Kevin Woods (term ended 30 September 2020)	3/4	N/A
Sarah Laessig (term ended 30 September 2020)	4/4	2/2
Isabel Doverty (term ended 30 September 2020)	4/4	1/2
Ian Watmore	9/9	N/A
Natalie Campbell	8/9	N/A
Joe Montgomery	9/9	2/2
Rosie Glazebrook	8/9	N/A
Jane Burgess	9/9	N/A
June Milligan	9/9	N/A
Margaret Edwards	9/9	4/4

Audit and Risk Committee

Sarah Laessig
(chair until 30 September 2020)

Isabel Doverty (until 30 September 2020)

Margaret Edwards
(chair from 1 October 2020)

Joe Montgomery (from 1 December 2020)

Jane Burgess (from 1 March 2021)

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is also attended by the Chief Executive, relevant members of the secretariat and members of both the internal audit team from the Government Internal Audit Agency and the National Audit Office.

Data quality

The Commissioners have a number of data sources available to them to enable them to carry out their work.

In providing assurance that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit, following a fair and open competition, the Commission obtains most of its data through compliance monitoring audits of departmental recruitment (see page 19). Compliance audits for 2020/21 were carried out for all 70 departments and agencies regulated by the Commission. The Commissioners are satisfied that the quality of the analysis is high. The quality of the base data provided by departments is more variable but sufficient to enable a proportionate assessment of the likely risk of non-compliance with the requirement.

For the most senior appointments, the Commission obtains its data to provide assurance about compliance with the requirement by directly chairing competitions. Data is collated on the Commission's casework database drawn from the Commissioner's panel report and the diversity monitoring return. This information is then analysed by the secretariat and presented at the Commissioner meeting and ARC. The database also records data about appointments by Exception (see page 28) and complaints (see pages 33) dealt with by the Commission.

The data used by the Commissioners to oversee the Commission's expenditure comes from a combination of the Secretariat's finance spreadsheet and data supplied by the Cabinet Office's finance team, which provides transactional finance services to the Commission. To date, the level of control has remained acceptable.

Civil Service Commission Code of Practice for staff

The Commission publishes its own Code of Practice for staff which mirrors the Civil Service Code. The Code of Practice sets out standards of behaviour expected of Commission employees and sets out the process for employees to raise complaints under the code.

Management of risk

The Commission's corporate governance controls are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve compliance with policies, aims and objectives. They can therefore only provide reasonable, not absolute, assurance of effectiveness. The Commission maintains a risk register which is regularly reviewed by both the Audit and Risk Committee and at Commission meetings.

Risks are managed on an ongoing basis, in a process that is designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the fulfilment of the Commission's statutory role and to the achievement of its policies, aims and objectives; to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised and to identify what actions are in place, or need to be taken, to mitigate their impact effectively, efficiently and economically.

Cabinet Office guidelines and procedures have been observed during 2020/21 and this Annual Report and Accounts accords with HM Treasury guidance.

The ARC meets quarterly and reports to the Commissioners at the following Commissioner meeting. ARC supports the Commission by reviewing whether proportionate assurances for meeting the Commission's and Accounting Officer's responsibilities are available and by testing the reliability and integrity of those assurances. This includes responsibility for the effective operation and impact of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet Office, the Commissioners' Code of Practice, the Staff Code of Practice, and the Commission's business planning process.

The Commission has risk registers in place that have been assessed and considered at senior management level and at Commissioner level. The strategic risk register is regularly scrutinised, discussed, updated and ratified at both ARC and Commission meetings. It is considered at each ARC meeting with an in-depth discussion on particular risks and formally reviewed at the Commission meetings twice a year, or more frequently as required. It is maintained by the secretariat and is available to all staff and Commissioners.

The operational risk register is reviewed at the fortnightly meetings of the senior management team.

The Commission's main strategic risk in 2020/21 related to exiting the EU and a post COVID-19 related surge in SCS competitions and requests for exceptions. The risk has increased this year due to the ongoing delay in being able to recruit new Commissioners. While we have mitigated the risk as far as possible by retaining the ex-Commissioners to continue to chair competitions and the risk did not materialise, there remains the risk that the number of competitions continues to rise and the ex-Commissioners are no longer able or no longer wish to chair competitions.

Moving below the strategic level, the Commission's main operational risk during 2020/21 was that external demands result in failure to live within the Commission's financial and headcount control totals. We sought to mitigate this risk by reporting to ARC and the board. This risk did not materialise.

Audit

The Commission's internal audit service is provided by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) (formerly HM Treasury Internal Audit). The internal audit team advise the Chief Executive, who is also the Accounting Officer, and the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Head of Internal Audit annually provides an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commission's governance, risk and control arrangements. The internal audit reviews contribute to that opinion. The Internal audit review opinion for 2020/21 is 'moderate' with some improvements required to enhance the adequacy of the framework of governance, risk management and control.

Results of internal audit work, including action taken by management to address issues, including in audit reports (where appropriate), have been regularly reported to management and the Commission's Audit and Risk Committee.

The external audit of the Commission's accounts is undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General, as required by the 2010 Act.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the Commission's governance procedures and controls. During my review, I have consulted the Commissioners and the Audit and Risk Committee and have systems in place to ensure improvements are implemented as required.

I have engaged an internal audit team (the Government Internal Audit Agency) and have consulted them and the National Audit Office regularly on matters of internal control. Both sets of auditors attend all Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

I consider that the processes, checks and controls provided by the Commission meetings, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Secretariat team have been effective.

No significant governance control issues have been identified in this year.

Remuneration and staff report

The information below is labelled subject to audit and is covered by the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit opinion.

Remuneration policy

All staff at the Commission are currently employed on secondment from the Cabinet Office and their salaries are set by the Cabinet Office.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioners and senior management of the Commission.

Commissioners [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

The First Civil Service Commissioner, Ian Watmore, is a part time office holder; Commissioners are all part time, fee-paid office holders.

The terms of Jan Cameron, Isabel Doverty, Sarah Laessig and Kevin Woods as Commissioners ended on 30 September 2020. Due to the delay in recruiting new Commissioners and the volume of work, they have continued to be employed in accordance with Schedule 1 part 2 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and continue to chair competitions and perform other roles and responsibilities as assigned to them by the First Commissioner and/or the Chief Executive.

Their remuneration is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Fees paid to Commissioners (and ex-Commissioners)

Commissioners	Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
	Pay band (£000)	Pay band (£000)
Ian Watmore First Commissioner	55-60	55-60
Jane Burgess	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Competition fees 30-35	Competition fees 25-30

	Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
Commissioners	Pay band (£000)	Pay band (£000)
Jan Cameron Commissioner until 30 September 2020	Board fees 5-10	Board fees 5-10
	Board fees 0-5*	
	Competition fees 5-10	Competition fees 35-40
	Competition fees 15-20*	
Natalie Campbell	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 5-10
	Competition fees 30-35	Competition fees 20-25
Isabel Doverty Commissioner until 30 September 2020	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Board fees 0-5*	
	Competition fees 5-10	Competition fees 25-30
	Competition fees 25-30*	
Margaret Edwards	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Competition fees 10-15	Competition fees 15-20
Rosie Glazebrook	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 5-10
	Competition fees 40-45	Competition fees 30-35
Sarah Laessig Commissioner until 30 September 2020	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Board fees 0-5*	
	Competition fees 5-10	Competition fees 25-30
	Competition fees 15-20*	

Commissioners	Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
	Pay band (£000)	Pay band (£000)
June Milligan	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Competition fees 25-30	Competition fees 35-40
Joe Montgomery	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Competition fees 10-15	Competition fees 5-10
Kevin Woods Commissioner until 30 September 2020	Board fees 0-5	Board fees 0-5
	Board fees 0-5*	
	Competition fees 10-15	Competition fees 20-25
	Competition fees 10-15*	

Notes to Table 6

Board fees include attendance at Commissioner meetings, working groups, time spent considering complaints and all other non-competition work.

All fees given are actual figures and fees are calculated based on work completed.

*These fees were paid during the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021, to ex-Commissioners continuing to undertake responsibilities on behalf of the Civil Service Commission.

Senior management [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

The Commission has determined that the Chief Executive meets the definition of senior management. The current Chief Executive is a senior civil servant on secondment to the Commission.

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set by the Prime Minister following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries.

Table 7: Senior staff remuneration (salary, benefits in kind and pensions)

	Salary (£000)		Bonus payments (£000)		Benefits in kind (to the nearest £100)		Pension benefits (to the nearest £1000)		Total (£000)	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Peter Lawrence	100-105	100-105	0-5	0-5	0	0	95	19	200-205	120-125

Note to Table 7

The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase excludes increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights. The Chief Executive's full time equivalent annual salary was £110k-£115k.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary, overtime, reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances, recruitment and retention allowances, and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. The figure reported reflects the full-time equivalent salary of the Chief Executive. There were no benefits in kind.

Bonuses

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year prior to which they become payable to the individual. The bonuses reported in 2020/21 relate to performance in 2019/20 and the comparative bonuses reported for 2019/20 relate to the performance in 2018/19.

Pay multiples [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the Full Year Equivalent (FYE) remuneration (to the nearest £5,000 band) of the highest-paid employee in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

As shown in Table 7, the banded full year equivalent of the highest-paid employee in the Commission in 2020/21 was £110-115k (2019/20: £105-110k). This was 3.85 times the median remuneration of the workforce (2019/20: 3.23 times), which was £29,190 (2019/20: £33,310).

In 2020/21 0 employees (2019/20: 0) received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid Director. The remuneration of Commission staff ranged from £25,138 to £59,265 (FTE) (2019/20: £24,610 to £58,137 FTE).

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Table 8: Hutton fair pay disclosure ratio

	Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
Band of Highest Paid Employee's FYE remuneration (to nearest £5,000 band)	110-115	105-110
Median total remuneration	£29,190	£33,310
Ratio	3.85	3.23

Note to Table 8

The remuneration ratio is higher in 2020/21 than it was in 2019/20 due to promotion to SCS2 of the Chief Executive increasing his salary band, and the recruitment of several new staff members at entry-level grades.

Table 9: Gender pay gap [not subject to audit]

	%	
Mean gender pay gap - ordinary pay	23.28%	
Median gender pay gap - ordinary pay	-38.25%	
Mean gender pay gap - bonus pay (in the 12 months ending 31 March)	5.66%	
Median gender pay gap - bonus pay (in the 12 months ending 31 March)	-163.47%	
Proportion of male and female employees paid a bonus (in the 12 months ending 31 March)	Male	21.43%
	Female	78.57%
Proportion of male and female employees in each quartile:		
Quartile	Female %	Male %
First (upper)	16.67%	83.33%
Second	66.67%	33.33%
Third	66.67%	33.33%
Fourth (lower)	40%	60%

Note to Table 9

The current Chief Executive of the Commission is male. He is the only senior civil servant in the Commission and consequently he is the most highly paid, which has a direct disproportionate causal effect on the mean gender pay gap. Removing the Chief Executive from the calculations reveals a clear reverse gender pay gap, producing negative figures for the mean and median figures for both pay and bonuses for the remaining staff.

Pensions [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

Commissioner appointments, including that of the First Civil Service Commissioner, are not pensionable. The Commission does not operate its own pension scheme. All staff are on secondment from the Civil Service and are therefore members of Civil Service pension schemes (for further details, see the Staff Report on page 77).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website: www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk The Chief Executive's pension, as shown in Table 9, has accrued in his role as a civil servant. The Chief Executive partially retired from 1st February 2021, taking all accrued pension benefits at that time.

Table 10: Chief Executive's pension

	Accrued pension at pension age and related lump sum (£000)			Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) (£000)		
	At start of reporting period	At end of reporting period	Real increase in value during reporting period	At start of reporting period	At end of reporting period	Real increase during reporting period
Peter Lawrence	45-50 (plus lump sum 145-150)	50-55 (plus lump sum 160-165)	2.5-5 (plus lump sum 12.5-15)	1181	1266	97

Note to Table 10

A new pension scheme, alpha, was introduced on 1 April 2015. The majority of Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme members will have transitioned to alpha. However, those who were members of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012, and 10 years or less away from Normal Pension Age, would continue to build up benefits in their existing pension scheme. Benefits for Peter Lawrence were all accrued under the 'classic' pension scheme.

Compensation for loss of office [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

0 members of staff left under voluntary exit terms during 2020/21 (2019/20: 0).

0 staff left under compulsory early retirement terms during 2020/21 (2019/20: 0).

Numbers and costs [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

Staff and Commissioner costs and numbers are set out in Tables 11 and 12. These figures include the Commissioners and senior managers whose remuneration is detailed in the Remuneration report (page 67) and the office holders in the other independent institutions (Advisory Committee on Business Appointments and Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments), which are supported by the joint secretariat.

The Chief Executive, Peter Lawrence, is the only senior civil servant at the Commission.

Table 11: Staff and Commissioner costs

	2020/21					2019/20
	Total (£000)	Staff (£000)	Commissioners ⁹ (£000)	Ex-Commissioners ¹⁰ (£000)	Office Holders ¹¹ (£000)	Total (£000)
Wages and salaries	1,301	822	364	85	30	1,219
Social security costs	125	89	27	9	0	114
Other pension costs	225	225	0	0	0	211
Total	1,651	1,136	391	94	30	1,544

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme. For 2020/21 employer's pension contributions of £225k (2019/20: £211k) were payable to the PCSPS at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% (2019/20: 20% to 24.5%) of pensionable pay based on salary bands.

⁹ Commissioners includes the First Civil Service Commissioner, the Public Appointments Commissioner, and current Civil Service Commissioners

¹⁰ Ex-Commissioners refers to Civil Service Commissioners whose five-year term ended on 30 September 2020, but who have continued to undertake work on behalf of the Civil Service Commission (while recruitment of new Commissioners has been delayed)

¹¹ Office holders refers to the Chair and members of ACOBA

Table 12: Average staff (full-time equivalent) and Commissioner numbers

	2020/21					2019/20
	Total	Staff (FTE)	Commissioners	Ex-Commissioners	Office Holders	Total
Directly employed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inward secondments	19.2	19.2	0	0	0	17.8
Office holders	21	0	10	2	9	21
Total	40.2	19.2	10	2	9	38.8

Note to Table 12

The numbers of staff, Commissioners, ex-Commissioners and office holders reflect the monthly average throughout 2020/21. The numbers in post on 31 March 2021 were 19.8 full time equivalent staff, 8 Commissioners, 4 ex-Commissioners and 9 office holders. One FTE is funded by the Office for Veterans Affairs and is included in staff numbers but not in staff costs. One member of staff took maternity leave (from May 2020) and therefore was not in post, although 0.8 FTE continues to be included in headcount.

The secretariat supports the individual Commissioners as well as the collective Commission. On 31 March 2021, there were 21 members of staff employed in the Commission secretariat (19.8 FTE). The secretariat is staffed entirely by civil servants on loan or secondment from the Cabinet Office and new recruits are employed by the Cabinet Office prior to being seconded to the Commission.

Staff composition

The table below provides a breakdown, by gender, of all the staff who have worked for the Commission during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Table 13: Analysis of staff by gender

	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Senior civil servants	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
All staff	10	38%	16	62%	26	100%

Attendance information

The level of sickness absence within the secretariat in 2020/21 was 6.1 average working days lost per staff year (3.8 days in 2019/20), which is below the last reported Civil Service average of 7.4 days per staff year.¹² The average number of days per person was 5 (2.4 days in 2019/20).

Staff policies applied during the financial year

The Civil Service Commission is committed to equality and diversity. In all our activities we aim to treat colleagues and customers fairly and with respect.

The Civil Service Commission applies its own Recruitment Principles, appointing candidates based on merit through fair and open competition. The Commission takes part in the Disability Confident Scheme (which replaces the Guaranteed Interview Scheme), which encourages candidates with a disability to apply for the jobs it advertises. If a candidate declares a disability and meets the minimum standards required for a job, he or she is invited to interview.

Expenditure on consultancy

The Commission employed no consultants during 2020/21 (2019/20: none).

Off-payroll engagements

The Commission employed no staff off-payroll during 2020/21 (2019/20: none).

Contractual relationships

The Commission has a contract with Pay Check Ltd. to calculate Commissioners' payments, a contract with DF Press Ltd., to provide press officer support and a contract with Government Legal Department to provide legal advice.

In addition, the Commission's Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet Office enables us to use many of the Cabinet Office's suppliers. We are charged on a per capita basis for these services.

¹² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957248/2020_Sickness_Absence_in_the_Civil_Service_ReportvFINAL28_01_21.pdf

Pensions

The Commission does not operate its own pension scheme. All staff are on secondment from the Civil Service. All pension arrangements for staff are dealt with by the department in the Civil Service from which they are seconded to the Commission (the Cabinet Office). All pension arrangements relate to defined contribution pension schemes and contributions are charged in the income and expenditure account as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the arrangements.

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or **alpha**, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined **alpha**. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: 3 providing benefits on a final salary basis (**classic, premium** or **classic plus**) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (**nuvos**) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under **classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos** and **alpha** are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within 10 years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and 5 months from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 switch into **alpha** sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. Because the Government plans to remove discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced for some members, it is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period (and this may affect the Cash Equivalent Transfer Values shown in this report – see below). All members who switch to **alpha** have their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave **alpha**. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or **alpha** – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and **alpha** the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a defined contribution (money purchase) pension with an employer contribution (**partnership** pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus**, **nuvos** and **alpha**. Benefits in **classic** accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years initial pension is payable on retirement. For **premium**, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike **classic**, there is no automatic lump sum. **Classic plus** is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per **classic** and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in **premium**. In **nuvos** a member builds up a pension based on his pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in **alpha** build up in a similar way to **nuvos**, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The **partnership** pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal and General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium** and **classic plus**, 65 for members of **nuvos**, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of **alpha**. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or **alpha** – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and **alpha** the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages.)

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website

www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Parliamentary accountability and audit report

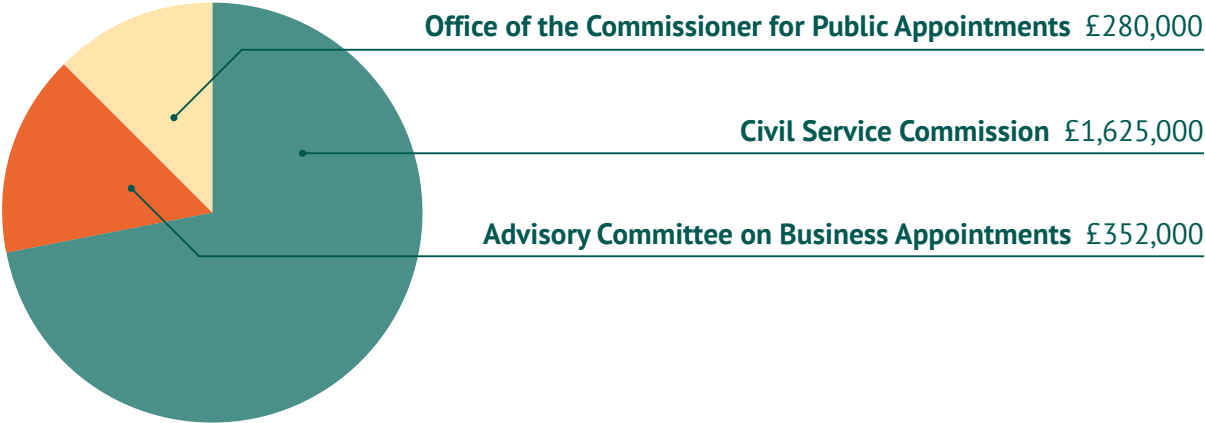
Finance summary

The Commission’s Accounts for 2020/21 are presented at Part 2.

The Commission provides secretariat support for two other independent offices.¹³ As of September 2019, the Commission has also supported the Going Forward into Employment programme, as part of its strategic priority to improve the life chances of those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The budgets and expenditure of those organisations are incorporated within the Commission’s overall budget and expenditure for the purposes of our accounts and this summary. The breakdown of expenditure (to the nearest £000) between the three institutions supported by the Civil Service Commission Secretariat is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Expenditure by institution, 2020/21



¹³ The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) and Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA)

Including the Commission's work for the other Independent Offices, the Commission had a budget of £2.33m (£2.15m in 2019/20). The Commission's net expenditure was £2.26m (£2.16m in 2019/20), an underspend of approximately £70k against the budget (£11k overspend in 2019/20).

The primary reason for this underspend was the move to virtual meetings (including for recruitment campaigns) and remote compliance auditing, due to COVID-19 restrictions, which meant that there were very few travel and subsistence expense claims made throughout the year. Budget allocated to the recruitment of new Commissioners was also not required, in part due to delays in the process, but primarily due to a change in the planned process which offered a saving.

Our main items of expenditure during 2020/21 were:

- Secretariat staff costs: £1.14m compared with £1.07m in 2019/20.
- Competition fees: £297k compared with £241k in 2019/20. This is the most volatile element of the Commission's expenditure and is driven primarily by the volume of senior competitions. The Commission's budget is based on an estimate of the number of recruitment competitions that may be held, however the Commission does not have control over when, or how often, departments choose to recruit. While the number of competitions was low at the start of the year due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, numbers went up during the year to reach 2018/19 levels.

Of the total spend £143k related to accrued costs (£133k in 2019/20).

Compliance with HM Treasury and other guidance

The Commission has complied with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out in HM Treasury and Office of Public Sector Information guidance.

Losses and special payments [SUBJECT TO AUDIT]

There have been no losses or special payments this year.



Peter J Lawrence OBE

Chief Executive

Civil Service Commission

15 July 2021

The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Civil Service Commission for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Accounting Standards as interpreted by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Civil Service Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the Civil Service Commission's net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I have also elected to apply the ethical standards relevant to listed entities. I am independent of the Civil Service Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Civil Service Commission's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Civil Service Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Commissioners and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Civil Service Commission is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in International Accounting Standards as interpreted by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises information included in the annual report, but does not include the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, the financial statements and my auditor's certificate thereon. The Commissioners and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Civil Service Commission and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability reports. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Commissioners and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Commissioners' and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Commissioners and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the Commissioners and the Accounting Officer determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- assessing the Civil Service Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Commissioners and the Accounting Officer anticipate that the services provided by the Civil Service Commission will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Inquiring of management, the Civil Service Commission's head of internal audit, and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Civil Service Commission's policies and procedures relating to:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Civil Service Commission's controls relating to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and Managing Public Money.
- discussing among the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

- obtaining an understanding of the Civil Service Commission’s framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Civil Service Commission operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Civil Service Commission. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, Managing Public Money, Employment Law and tax legislation; and
- other risk assessment procedures performed relating to fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulations and regularity, including: review of Commissioner meeting minutes; attending the Audit Committee; enquiries of management, internal audit and those charged with governance; review of significant and unusual transactions; and review of segregation of duties and mitigating controls.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management and the Audit Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Commissioners;

- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business; and
- other audit procedures responsive to the risk of fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulation or irregularity as appropriate, including testing of significant and unusual transactions and an assessment of the regularity of transactions tested.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council’s website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

Comptroller and Auditor General

16 July 2021

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