

**The Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner**

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To: Heads of Department (via email)

30 August 2024

Dear Heads of Department,

The principle that recruitment into the Civil Service takes place 'on merit on the basis of fair and open competition' is enshrined in Section 10 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 ('the Act'). This requirement is explained in the 2018 [Recruitment Principles](#).

Under Section 12 of the Act, the independent regulator the Civil Service Commission has the power to except a selection of appointments from this requirement. Initial approval of Exceptions to the statutory requirement for periods of up to two years is delegated to Departments for grades below SCS Pay Band 2 ('delegated grades'). The permitted Exceptions are set out at Annex A of the Recruitment Principles.

Many departments have already been audited by the Civil Service Commission for the 2023/24 year with others still to come. These audits include an assessment of the use of Exceptions but we are conscious that Exceptions granted recently may not fall into scope of this process for some time.

Given interest in a number of recent Civil Service appointments by Exception and the importance of public trust in these appointments, the Commission has decided to undertake a short review of appointments by Exception at delegated grades since 1 July 2024 and the departmental processes in place to make such appointments under the Recruitment Principles.

I attach a letter to your Human Resources Directors regarding next steps.

The Recruitment Principles provide a vital underpinning to the integrity of the Civil Service and we are grateful for your support and the work of your teams.

I will write to you again when we have completed this work with our findings and any recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gisela Stuart'.

Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner