



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

4 July 2020

Dear Robert,

You will be aware that the term of the current Children's Commissioner for England comes to an end on 28 February 2021. I am writing to inform you of our plans for recruiting the next Commissioner. Sharing this with you is the first step in the recruitment process and we will continue to keep you updated as the campaign progresses.

Our high-level timetable is to run an eight week recruitment campaign from the end of July, carry out interviews in October and identify the preferred candidate by early November. We hope to announce the successful candidate in early December. This timetable is of course subject to change owing to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and we will inform you if anything does change.

As you know from your regular hearings, the Children's Commissioner plays an extremely important role in improving the lives of children in England and I would like to share with you our vision for the person we are looking for. Enclosed with this letter is our draft essential criteria.

In essence, the Children's Commissioner must be someone who understands the issues facing children and young people, and who is able to focus on delivering solutions to these issues.

The Children's Commissioner primary function is promoting and protecting the rights of children in England, with a particular focus on ensuring that the views of the most vulnerable children are heard. This includes considering the potential effect of government policy and legislative proposals on the rights of children. The legislative basis for the office of Children's Commissioner is in Part 1 and Schedule 1 of the Children Act 2004.

I would like to invite the Committee to undertake a pre-appointment hearing once I have chosen a preferred candidate. I will ask my officials to contact

your clerk to explore suitable dates as soon as possible after our appointment process has ended.

I am grateful for your consideration of this proposal and look forward to the Committee's involvement in this very important role. I am sure you will share my high expectations of the positive benefits that the Children's Commissioner will continue to bring to the lives of children in England.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Williamson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education

Draft criteria for recruitment of Children's Commissioner for England

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate the following **essential** criteria:

- ❖ An understanding of the issues and problems facing children and young people in England, and the ability to bring about solutions that have a demonstrable impact on children's lives.
- ❖ The ability to demonstrate a pragmatic approach to addressing and resolving complex issues, with a particular focus on delivering outcomes.
- ❖ The ability to lead a high profile and complex organisation, create effective partnership working and provide valuable challenge.
- ❖ The confidence and ability to successfully communicate, influence and work collaboratively with a wide range of groups – including children, decision makers, government and parliament.
- ❖ An understanding of all relevant statutory duties and how children's rights are protected and promoted through domestic legislation.

We also expect candidates to be able to demonstrate the following **desirable** criteria:

- ❖ Understanding and knowledge of the key rights of children such as, a child's right to quality of education and the rights of children who are living away from home or receiving social care.
- ❖ Ability and working understanding of financial management and the importance of securing value for money.
- ❖ The ability to think strategically about the issues affecting children and young people.
- ❖ The ability to engage effectively with and gain the confidence of children and young people in order to represent their views and interests.