



## Defence Committee

Chair, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP

Committee Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

020 7219 6872 [defcom@parliament.uk](mailto:defcom@parliament.uk) [www.parliament.uk/defcom](http://www.parliament.uk/defcom)

Johnny Mercer MP  
Minister for Defence People and Veterans  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

28 July 2020

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about the recruitment of the new Service Complaints Ombudsman. The Committee welcomes the creation of the post of a Chief Executive of the SCO and the greater efficiency this should bring, but we are very concerned by the proposal to make the Ombudsman post a part-time one. We believe that this sends entirely the wrong message about the importance of the role at a time when diversity and inclusion, and retention, are at the top of the agenda. We would therefore urge you to keep the Ombudsman full time: if savings must be made then the Chief Executive should be part-time.

I would also point out that the Committee makes its reports to the House and does not submit them to the Defence Secretary. The fourth sentence of the last paragraph of the Job Description, headed *Pre-appointment Hearing by House of Commons Defence Select Committee*, should therefore end at 'suitability of the candidate'.

**Rt Hon. Tobias Ellwood MP**  
**Chair of the Defence Committee**