

**THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
COMMISSION**

**Lay Members of the Committee on
Standards: Nomination of Candidate**

Report presented to the House of Commons by the Speaker

Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed 15 June 2022

Commissioners

The Speaker (Sir Lindsay Hoyle) (Chair), The Leader of the House of Commons (Mark Spencer), Nickie Aiken, Nick Brown, Thangam Debbonaire, Sir Charles Walker, Pete Wishart, Dr John Benger (Clerk of the House), Marianne Cwynarski (Director General (Operations)), Louise Wilson (External member) and Shrinivas Honap (External member).

Secretary to the Commission: Gosia McBride

Assistant Secretary: Ed Potton

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Introduction

1. In 2009 the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended:

“There should be at least two lay members who have never been Parliamentarians on the Standards and Privileges Committee. Their appointment should be made in the same way as that of the lay members of the Speaker’s Committee of the independent regulator.”¹

2. On 2 December 2010 the House agreed to the principle of lay members, and invited the Procedure Committee to bring forward proposals to implement it.² Those proposals, with some slight modifications, were given effect by the House on 12 March 2012 when Standing Orders No. 148A and 149A were made and Standing Order No. 149 was amended. On 13 December 2012 the House appointed three lay members to the Committee on Standards. Further amendments to Standing Orders in March 2015 increased the number of lay members on the Committee to seven, establishing an equal balance of lay and elected members on the Committee. The four additional lay members were appointed by the House on 19 May 2016.
3. The terms of office of the first tranche of lay members came to an end on 30 March 2017, and on 15 March 2017 three further lay members were appointed by the House to replace them.
4. Two of the four lay members recruited in 2016 came to the end of their four-year terms on 18 May 2020 (the other two had been appointed for six-year terms). On 10 November 2020 and 28 June 2021 the House appointed two lay members to fill these vacancies.
5. On 18 May 2022 two further lay members (Jane Burgess and Dr Arun Midha) came to the end of their terms of office, creating two more vacancies.
6. The House of Commons Commission agreed a recruitment process to fill these vacancies. In line with the requirement in Standing Order No. 149A, the process was designed to be open and fair.

¹ Twelfth Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, *MPs’ Expenses and Allowances*, Cm 7244

² Sixth Report from the Procedure Committee, Session 2010–12, *Lay membership of the Committee on Standards and Privileges*, HC 1606, and the Government Response, Third Special Report from the Procedure Committee, Session 2010–12, HC 1689

7. The post was advertised on the Parliamentary website, through the Outreach Service, through social media and through advertisement and search by recruitment consultants. There were 150 applicants. These were reduced through sifts and interviews to a short list of nine for final interview on 31 March and 1 April 2022 by a Selection Panel comprising Louise Wilson (External Member of the House of Commons Commission and independent chair of the selection panel), Chris Bryant MP (Chair of the Committee on Standards), Jane Burgess (lay member of the Committee on Standards) and Eve Samson (Clerk of the Journals).
8. The panel indicated that there were in its judgement three appointable candidates which it ranked in order. The Commission proposes the highest ranked candidate for a six year term.

The nominated candidate

9. Following the exacting process set out above, the House of Commons Commission proposes the following candidate to the House, to serve for a term of six years:
 - Victoria Smith
10. The candidate's CV is annexed to this report. The Commission believes that Victoria Smith will bring an effective mix of skills and knowledge to the Committee's work and contribute to maintaining public confidence in the independent element in the House's disciplinary processes.
11. The Commission asked that a new recruitment process be commenced to fill the remaining vacancy.

The outgoing lay members

12. The Commission would also like to take this opportunity to express the thanks of the House to the outgoing lay members, Jane Burgess and Dr Arun Midha, for the significant contribution they have made to the Committee on Standards and to the standards system in the House more widely.

ANNEX – BRIEF DETAILS OF NOMINATED CANDIDATE

VICTORIA SMITH

Career History

2016 to present	Portfolio of independent roles, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Member, Services Complaints Panel, Ministry of Defence• Chair of NHS Resolutions panel that adjudicates on disputes between the NHS and its external suppliers• Lay panel member, General Pharmaceutical Council• Lay panel member, General Optical Council Fitness to Practise Committee• Member, Department for Transport Independent Appeal Panel considering appeals against penalty fares on national rail services• Peripatetic Legal Adviser to Magistrates in the Magistrates' Court• Legally qualified chair of the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales• Formerly Assistant Boundary Commissioner for the South West (Boundary review 2022) (resigned April 2022)
2011-2016	Senior Solicitor, Co-operative Legal Services
2009-2011	Head of Estates Department, QualitySolicitors hpjv
2006-2009	Twomlows Solicitors & Advocates
1990-2006	HM Courts and Tribunal Service, concluding as Principal Legal Adviser