



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

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William Wragg MP, Chair, Public and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee

Dear William,

OCA Annual Report 2019-20

It was a pleasure to appear before PACAC last month. As promised then, I enclose a copy of my annual report for 2019-20, my last as Commissioner for Public Appointments. I hope you find it of interest.

The 2019-20 year was affected by a series of political upheavals, the general election, and ministerial reshuffles, which have held up the public appointments process with fewer appointments and reappointments made compared to recent years. The report also refers to the early part of the 2020-21 year that has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with departments working hard to adapt appointments processes to a remote/virtual basis to ensure the system carries on as best as possible.

The report also contains the diversity data for appointments and reappointments for the 2019-20 year. For most diversity characteristics asked of applicants, appointees and reappointees, more people have felt confident to declare this year, a positive development as accurate data is central to any initiative to increase representation in public appointments. There have been positive gains in appointments made to women and those from ethnic minorities. Disappointingly, appointments to those with disabilities is still stalled, after little progress over several years, and there is still a significant gap in Chair roles.

The report details the appointments made under exception in the Code, complaints brought to OCA, and the findings from compliance visits to all departments, showing how processes and practices have improved and departments are trying new things to reach out to new talent. It also includes my views on challenges that my successor will face, as the Government faces increased scrutiny, including from me, in making sure the appointments system remains trusted, to be fair, open and based on merit. I discuss some of the concerns I raised in front of the committee, notably on attempts to influence the process in ways conflicting with the spirit of the Governance Code.



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I would like to thank you for your invitations to appear before PACAC, both last month and in March 2020. I have much enjoyed being given the opportunity to share my thoughts on how the public appointments process is working, and what needs to be done to safeguard its principles.

With best wishes,

Peter Riddell
Commissioner for Public Appointments