

PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS ACT 2009



THE SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY (IPSA)

FIRST REPORT 2020

Appointment of IPSA Board Members

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The Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

The Speaker's Committee for the IPSA is appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 as amended by the Constitutional Reform & Governance Act 2010.

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1 Appointment of IPSA Board Members

1. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) was established by the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009. The Chair of the Board of IPSA and other Board Members are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, following an Address from the House of Commons. The Speaker of the House of Commons is required to select individuals to serve on the Board of IPSA “on merit [and] on the basis of fair and open competition”, and the Speaker’s Committee for IPSA must approve all candidates selected by the Speaker.
2. The Act specifies that, in addition to the Chair, there shall be four Board Members, and that:
 - a) At least one of the members of IPSA must be a person who has held (but no longer holds) high judicial office (within the meaning of Part 3 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (c.4)).
 - b) At least one of the members of IPSA must be a person who is qualified under Schedule 3 to the National Audit Act 1983 (c.44) to be an auditor for the National Audit Office.
 - c) One of the members of IPSA (“the Parliamentary member”) must be a person who has been (but is no longer) a member of the House of Commons.
3. On this occasion, the relevant vacancies on the Board of IPSA were for a former holder of high judicial office and a former Member of the House of Commons.
4. This report provides information about the procedures followed by the Speaker’s Committee during the selection of a candidate to join the IPSA Board.

The Process

5. Although this is not a Ministerial appointment, the Speaker has had regard to the Commissioner for Public Appointments’ Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies. In order to assist with identifying possible candidates for the posts, in September the Speaker appointed the following independent panel:

- Mark Addison (independent chair)
- Cindy Butts (lay member of the Speakers Committee for IPSA)
- Richard Lloyd (Interim Chair, IPSA)

The panel was asked, in respect of each position, to provide the Speaker with an unranked list of the candidates it considered appointable to the role.

6. It was agreed with the Speaker’s Committee that recruitment consultants would not be engaged for this particular recruitment process. Support for the process was provided by the House of Commons Human Resources team.
7. The panel reviewed the role description and person specification for each post and agreed them with Mr Speaker. The posts were then advertised between 1 and 21 October.

8. Both positions were advertised on the IPSA website and the Cabinet Office Public Appointments site. For the former holder of high judicial office post, the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Office and the Parole Board were asked to draw the attention of interested parties to the vacancy. For the former MP post, the House of Commons HR team sent details to MPs on their records who had stepped down in 2019. The whips' offices in the House of Commons and the Association of Former MPs were also asked to promote the vacancy.

9. The panel assessed the applications against the criteria for the role and agreed with Mr Speaker that two candidates would be shortlisted for the former holder of high judicial office post and five candidates would be shortlisted for the former Member of the House of Commons post. Interviews with the former judges were held on 11 and 17 October and those with the former MPs on 19 October. In the case of each post, the candidates were all questioned in the same areas relevant to the role. They were assessed as to how they met the essential criteria for the role in question.

10. The Speaker and the Committee are entirely satisfied that the selection process was rigorous and that the panel discharged its duties conscientiously and with all due regard to the requirements of thoroughness, fairness and propriety. We are grateful to Mark Addison and his fellow panel members.

Preferred candidates

11. Following the interviews, the panel presented Mr Speaker with a list of two candidates it considered appointable to the former holder of high judicial office position, and three candidates it considered appointable to the former Member of the House of Commons position. Mr Speaker and the Speaker's Committee carefully considered the panel's report. The Committee agreed with Mr Speaker that Sir Robert Owen should be recommended for re-appointment to the former holder of high judicial office position, and that Helen Jones should be recommended for appointment to the former Member of Parliament position.

The preferred candidate: former holder of high judicial office

12. Sir Robert Owen has served as an IPSA board member since 2016. He was a judge in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court, a nominated judge of the Administrative Court and the Presiding Judge of the Western Circuit. He also chaired the Litvinenko Inquiry in 2014-15.

The preferred candidate: former Member of the House of Commons

13. Helen Jones served as the MP for Warrington North from 1997 to 2019. She chaired the House of Commons Petitions Committee from 2015 to 2019 and had previously been an Opposition Spokesperson, senior Government Whip and Parliamentary Private Secretary. Prior to entering the House, she worked as a solicitor, teacher and as a justice and peace officer in the Liverpool Archdiocese.

Conclusion

14. The Committee invites the House to approve an Address to Her Majesty for the appointment of Helen Jones as a member of the Board of IPSA for a period of five years and the re-appointment of Sir Robert Owen for a period of three years.

Appendix A: Role specification: board members

The role of the Board member is to contribute to the work of the Board. The specific responsibilities of the Board are set out below.

IPSA's Board provides the strategic leadership of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, safeguarding its independence, acting as an advocate for its values and delivering its objectives: meeting its statutory duties; helping to ensure confidence in the House of Commons; and providing efficient and cost-effective administration of services which meet the needs of taxpayers, MPs and their staff.

The Board ensures that IPSA exercises its statutory obligations, including:

- the review and setting of MPs' salaries;
- the review and development of the MPs' pensions scheme;
- the operation and review of the MPs' Business Costs and Expenses Scheme.

The Board sets the strategic priorities for IPSA as an organisation ensuring it is efficient, cost-effective and fit for purpose and delivers its objectives. In doing so, the Board:

- Develops and articulates IPSA's vision, values, strategies and plans; shares, champions and demonstrably lives the values;
- Sets the policy framework for MPs' Costs and allowable expenses;
- Oversees the development of, and approves, a Corporate Plan, Annual Report and Estimate of IPSA's use of resources (the Estimate is then submitted to the Speaker's Committee for IPSA chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons); and
- Sets the risk appetite and approves the framework of internal controls in support of the achievement of IPSA's strategic objectives.

As part of the Board, members also have responsibility to:

- Review and approve the Scheme for MPs' business costs and expenses and assesses and ensures compliance with Scheme rules;
- Determine the salaries to be paid to Members of Parliament, including mechanisms for review and up-rating of salaries;
- Scrutinise the performance of the organisation in meeting its objectives and holds the Executive to account for their delivery;
- Determine and review the procedures used by the Compliance Officer;
- Propose and, from time to time, revise a code of conduct for members of IPSA's Board;

- Appoints the Chief Executive and Compliance Officer; and
- Determines the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive and staff.

Appendix B: Person specification - former holder of high judicial office

It is a requirement under the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 that the board member must have held (but no longer holds) high judicial office (within the meaning of Part 3 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (c. 4)).

- Proven experience of contributing to the leadership and strategic direction of a changing organisation, including scrutinising financial and budgetary information, and of working successfully with an executive to set the strategic direction of the organisation.
- An understanding of regulation and the role of the regulator, based on excellent analytical ability and a capacity to consider regulatory issues from a principles-based perspective.
- Demonstrable understanding of customer-focused service delivery, with experience delivering service improvements to meet the needs and expectations of a diverse and demanding customer base, and in particular understanding, or knowledge, of the work and challenges of the House of Commons, Members of Parliament and their staff.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and stakeholder management skills and a successful track record of communications with complex stakeholder communities.
- Track record of operating in an environment subject to significant scrutiny, and of demonstrating integrity, objectivity and commitment to transparency in decision making.
- Experience of delivering transformative business change and utilising business technology to improve service delivery.
- Current or recent relevant experience of operating as a non-executive board member, or with a board which included non-executive members.
- Demonstrable track record of valuing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- A commitment to the seven principles of public life.

Appendix C: Person specification - former Member of the House of Commons

It is a requirement under the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 that the board member must have been (but is no longer) a member of the House of Commons.

- Proven experience of contributing to the leadership and strategic direction of a changing organisation, including scrutinising financial and budgetary information, and of working successfully with an executive to set the strategic direction of the organisation.
- Recent experience of the IPSA regime as a Member of Parliament, demonstrable understanding of how Members and their staff interact with IPSA, and awareness of recent developments in the relationship between IPSA and MPs.
- An understanding of regulation and the role of the regulator, based on excellent analytical ability and a capacity to consider regulatory issues from a principles-based perspective.
- Demonstrable understanding of customer-focused service delivery, with experience delivering service improvements to meet the needs and expectations of a diverse and demanding customer base.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and stakeholder management skills and a successful track record of communications with complex stakeholder communities.
- Track record of operating in an environment subject to significant scrutiny, and of demonstrating integrity, objectivity and commitment to transparency in decision making.
- Experience of delivering transformative business change and utilising business technology to improve service delivery.
- Current or recent relevant experience of operating as a non-executive board member, or with a board which included non-executive members.
- Demonstrable track record of valuing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- A commitment to the seven principles of public life.