



Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

Dame Meg Hillier MP  
Chair, Public Accounts Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC2024/03984

26 March 2024

Dear Chair,

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ORAL EVIDENCE SESSION ON NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS - 18 MARCH: CABINET OFFICE FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee last Monday to discuss the appointments process for non-executive directors across Government.

During the session, we committed to undertake a number of follow-up actions and this letter confirms the details of those commitments.

**Attendance at Departmental Boards**

Michael Jary said that he would pass on the figures for ministerial attendance at Departmental Boards that were contained within his Government Lead Non-Executive Annual Report 2022-23 (these can be found on page 8). **Annex A** to this letter sets out an extract from the relevant section of Michael's report which contains a graph (Figure 2) showing percentage attendance figures at Departmental Boards broken down by Secretary of State, junior minister, officials and non-executives over the last five years.

The data in Figure 2 is currently aggregated across departments, however ahead of his annual report for 2023-24 which is due to be released later this calendar year, Michael Jary will look at the feasibility of reporting on attendance broken down by department.

Also at Annex A you will find a chart (Figure 1 from the same annual report) which shows the number of boards held during the year, by department, which Michael Jary referred to in his response.

**Monitoring Advisory Assessment Panel Member Diversity and Anonymised Application Forms**

Simon Madden undertook to review two areas of current policy and practice to explore whether new approaches to those areas might be desirable. These were:

- the feasibility and usefulness of compiling data (currently not held centrally) on the diversity makeup of members of Advisory Assessment Panels, with a view to examining any diversity trends in the composition of those panels; and
- looking at alternative options for applicants to supply information on their relevant skills and experience when applying for roles that did not rely on traditional CV and personal statement formats, in particular the use of anonymised application forms.

The Cabinet Office will actively look at both these areas, alongside its consideration of the NAO report and the findings of your Committee, and will report back on its conclusions on these proposals.

### **Diversity Data for the Boardroom Apprenticeship Programme**

Simon Madden also undertook to pass on to the Committee diversity data for the UK Boardroom Apprenticeship Programme (provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, who sponsor and jointly deliver the programme). These figures are set out in **Annex B** to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



**Alex Chisholm**

Civil Service Chief Operating Officer  
and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary



**Simon Madden**

Director, Propriety and Ethics at  
Cabinet Office



**Michael Jary**

Government Lead Non-Executive at Cabinet Office

## Annex A

### Extract: Government Lead Non-Executive Annual Report 2022-23 - Attendance at Departmental Boards

“Overall attendance at board meetings, this year at 83%, remains high but shows a reduction of 6 percentage points compared to 2021-22. Figure 2 illustrates all of the constituent groups of board membership, and indicates that the reduction of attendance was apparent in each category. All levels of attendance were comparable to the 2018-19 baseline.

Figure 2 : Attendance at Departmental Board meetings



As intended, the large majority of departmental board meetings are chaired by the Secretary of State. In the case where the Secretary of State is absent, departmental board meetings are chaired by the Lead Non-executive Board Member.”

## **Annex B**

### **UK Boardroom Apprentice Programme - Diversity Data**

Applicant pool diversity stats for Years 1 and 2:

#### **Year 1 (Jan – Dec 2023):**

- 60% female
- 45% under the age of 40
- 36% ethnic minority
- 16% declared a disability
- 11% LGBT
- 60% outside London.

Host boards: 80% board meetings held outside of London.

#### **Year 2 (Jan – Dec 2024):**

- 52% female
- 58% under the age of 40
- 37% ethnic minority
- 14% declared a disability
- 12% LGBT
- 66% outside London

Host boards: 77% board meetings held outside of London.