



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

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Dear Caroline,

I am writing to update the Committee on the steps the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has taken to strengthen its public appointments processes.

As you know, I commissioned an internal review last year to identify immediate improvements and ensure appropriate controls were in place. To provide further independent assurance, I subsequently commissioned an external review led by Dame Bernadette Kelly to assess DCMS's end-to-end public appointments processes and make recommendations about any ways in which the Department might improve them.

Dame Bernadette completed her review in March 2026. She found that DCMS has broadly robust processes, supported by an experienced central Public Appointments Team and a number of examples of good practice. The review also identified areas for improvement, including the need for clearer accountability, stronger forward and succession planning, improved timeliness of campaigns, and continued progress in attracting diverse and high-quality candidates.

We accepted the review's recommendations which focus on strengthening governance, improving capability and support for those involved in appointments, and embedding greater consistency across processes and systems.

We have already made significant progress and are now implementing a set of reforms across all appointments. These include a refreshed suite of processes and tools which were launched in May, with updated guidance, strengthened due diligence and conflicts of interest processes.

We are introducing more regular senior oversight of performance, risks, and delivery, and strengthening forward planning through a longer-term pipeline of vacancies. We are also improving the timeliness of campaigns and enhancing outreach and candidate engagement. Increasing the diversity of candidate pools and appointments remains a central priority, supported by regional outreach and clearer performance metrics.

We will continue to work closely with the Cabinet Office and the Commissioner for Public Appointments to ensure alignment with cross-government standards.

Public appointments are a critical responsibility for the Department, and we are committed to ensuring our processes are robust, transparent, and effective in securing high-quality and diverse candidates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a series of loops and a long vertical stroke at the end.

Susannah Storey CB
DCMS Permanent Secretary