



House of Commons

Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport Committee

**Pre-appointment
hearing for Information
Commissioner**

Fifth Report of Session 2021–22



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*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the Report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 9 September 2021*

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Julian Knight MP](#) (*Conservative, Solihull*) (Chair)

[Kevin Brennan MP](#) (*Labour, Cardiff West*)

[Steve Brine MP](#) (*Conservative, Winchester*)

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[Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP](#) (*Conservative, East Hampshire*)

[John Nicolson MP](#) (*Scottish National Party*)

[Giles Watling MP](#) (*Conservative, Clacton*)

[Mrs Heather Wheeler MP](#) (*Conservative, South Derbyshire*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

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Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/dcmscom and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Keely Bishop (Committee Operations Assistant), Andy Boyd (Committee Operations Manager), Laura Caccia (Fast Stream Clerk), Dr Conor Durham (Committee Specialist), Lois Jeary (Committee Specialist), Dr Stephen McGinness (Clerk), Charlotte Swift (Second Clerk), Anne Peacock (Senior Media and Communications Officer) and Billy Roberts (Media & Communications Officer).

Contacts

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You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsDCMS](https://twitter.com/CommonsDCMS).

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Background to today's session

Introduction

1. On 26 August 2021, the Government announced that its preferred candidate for Information Commissioner was John Edwards.¹ The appointment of the Information Commissioner is provided for within Section 114 and Schedule 12 of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Government stated in February 2011 that, unlike most pre-appointment hearings, for the appointment of the Information Commissioner in 2014, the Government would accept the Committee's conclusion on the candidate.² This was on the grounds that:

The Information Commissioner plays a vital role in promoting transparency and protecting the rights of individuals in relation to their personal data. The Government are fully committed to an independent Commissioner and the critical role he plays as a champion and protector of information rights.

The Commissioner is already entirely independent in the decisions he takes to enforce the legislation he regulates. However, the provisions to be included in the (Protection of Freedoms) Bill will further enhance his day-to-day corporate and administrative independence. The Commissioner will no longer need to seek the consent of the Justice Secretary on issues relating to staff appointments, charging for certain services, or before issuing certain statutory codes of practice under the Data Protection Act. Changes will also be made to the terms of the Commissioner's appointment and tenure to increase transparency and protect against any potential undue influence.

Taken together, these steps—to be underpinned by a revised framework document outlining the day-to-day relationship between Government and the Information Commissioner—will result in a real and tangible enhancement to his independence.³

There has been no similar Ministerial undertaking for this appointment, though the need for transparency and protection against undue influence is possibly greater than ever.

The Information Commission

2. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent data protection authority, set up to uphold information rights in the public interest by promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals. The Information Commissioner himself has several key responsibilities:

- Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Information Commissioner;
- Providing leadership and strategic direction to the Information Commissioner's Office;

1 DCMS, "[Government announces preferred candidate for Information Commissioner](#)", 26 August 2021

2 In 2011, the appointment of the Information Commissioner sat within the Department for Justice rather than the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

3 HC Deb, 16 February 2011, col 87WS: [Information Commissioner](#)

- Supporting innovation and growth when discharging their duties;
 - Building and maintaining excellent relationships with key stakeholders including the business community, Ministers, Parliament, public interest groups and international counterparts;
 - Contributing to debates both nationally and internationally; and
 - Acting as Accounting Officer for the ICO.
3. The Commissioner has several statutory obligations. Part 5 of the Data Protection Act 2018 sets out several responsibilities, including:
- Acting as the relevant supervisory or designated authority for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Law Enforcement Directive and the Data Protection Convention;
 - Discharge particular international co-operation and mutual assistance functions, including taking appropriate steps to:
 - “develop international co-operation mechanisms to facilitate the effective enforcement of legislation for the protection of personal data”;
 - “provide international mutual assistance in the enforcement of legislation for the protection of personal data, subject to appropriate safeguards for the protection of personal data and other fundamental rights and freedoms”;
 - “engage relevant stakeholders in discussion and activities aimed at furthering international co-operation in the enforcement of legislation for the protection of personal data”;
 - “promote the exchange and documentation of legislation and practice for the protection of personal data, including legislation and practice relating to jurisdictional conflicts with third countries”;
 - Develop codes of practice for data-sharing, direct marketing, age-appropriate design, data protection and journalism and other codes as directed by the Secretary of State; and
 - Report regularly to Parliament.

The role

4. The Government advertised the post based on the following criteria:
- A successful track record of credible and strategic leadership and management, including the delivery of transformational organisational change.
 - Experience of working at the highest level of public or commercial life in the UK or internationally.
 - Experience of using data to drive innovation and growth, in industry, research or scientific field.

- Experience in data protection and rights.
- Commercial and business acumen, including an understanding of how the data protection regulatory environment impacts on business and how to help them.
- Ability to make sound, independent judgements under pressure and where necessary defend these against internal and external challenge.
- Excellent communication and relationship management skills, and the ability to represent the Information Commissioner's Office to a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- A proven ability to think through complex issues strategically, independently and imaginatively, with a focus on innovation and growth.
- A strong understanding of the legal and regulatory framework in which the Information Commissioner's Office operates.
- Strong financial and performance management skills, including the ability to deliver value for money and achieve operational excellence.
- Ability to have influence and impact for the UK internationally.

5. The appointment of the Commissioner is for five years with a salary of £200,000 per annum for 5 days per week.

Recruitment process

6. The Information Commissioner competition was launched on 28 February 2021 and was advertised on the Cabinet Office Centre for Public Appointments website and on DCMS Social Media and the Secretary of State announced the launch in the media. GatenbySanderson were contracted to be headhunters for the role. The closing date was 5 March 2021.

7. The selection panel was chaired by Susannah Storey (DCMS Director General for Digital and Media Policy) and contained three other members: Sir Philip Augar,⁴ Daniel Korski,⁵ and Nicola Wood.⁶

8. Forty candidates applied for the post, of whom eight were invited to interview and, of those, four were found to be appointable. Of the forty applications, where diversity forms were completed, there were eleven female applicants, six black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants and six of the applicants declared a disability. Of the eight invited to interview, four were women, one was black, Asian and minority ethnic and there were no interviewees with a declared disability.

4 Senior Independent Panel Member: a British author and an equities broker in the City of London, England for twenty years from the 1970s, first with NatWest and J. Henry Schroder

5 Independent sector representative

6 Non-Executive Director at the ICO

The candidate: John Edwards

Biographical information

9. Mr Edwards has been the New Zealand Privacy Commissioner since February 2014 and, within that role, was Chair of the Executive Committee of International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners for three years, a member of the OECD Informal Group of Experts on Children in the Digital Environment, and built formal and informal relationships with international organisations (for example, the European Commission, the OECD and the World Bank) and international counterparts from across the world, including the UK, the US and Canada.

10. Prior to his role as the Privacy Commissioner, Mr Edwards was a barrister and solicitor working with a range of clients. He was a policy advisor on Freedom of Information, consultant on Accident insurance reform, and provided training to civil servants on official information and privacy acts.

Our evidence

11. In oral evidence we asked John Edwards about the following specific matters:

- The collaboration of the ICO with other data protection authorities
- The tension between facilitating business and protecting individuals
- The independence of the Information Commissioner
- Data Protection and the GDPR
- Freedom of Information

12. We asked Mr Edwards about the functioning of the process, which he considered rigorous and fair, but this Committee had to wait a long time before being able to hold this pre-appointment hearing. The preferred candidates were known to the Government well in advance of the summer recess of Parliament and we consider it a failure of Government that this pre-appointment was not held in July. We have broad concerns about our experience of how the pre-appointment process is working and we will question Ministers more closely on these matters in the future.

Conclusion

13. The process of arranging this pre-appointment hearing has been a drawn-out affair. There were two committee hearings arranged before Summer Recess that had to be cancelled which, to our understanding, was due to delays in central government confirming the decision made within the Department. We are concerned that there is a growing trend of the administration interfering in appointment processes that may limit the number of good candidates willing to submit themselves to future competitions.

14. On the basis of the evidence presented, we approve John Edward's appointment as Information Commissioner and it is to his credit that he told us that if we did not consider him a fit appointment, he would not accept the role. We wish him well in his new post and

look forward to working with him in the future.

15. We are disappointed that the Government did not extend its offer of abiding by the decision of the Committee on the appointment of candidate for Information Commissioner. We recommend that the Government give this same undertaking for all future appointments to the position of Information Commissioner.

Appendix: CV and accompanying papers

CURRICULUM VITAE

Professional history

February 2014–Present New Zealand Privacy Commissioner

Chief Executive of Office of the Privacy Commissioner, Corporation Sole, Independent Crown Entity. Discharging all statutory functions of Privacy Commissioner.

- Chair of Executive Committee of International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (now Global Privacy Assembly) (Oct 2014 – Oct – 2017) (now Global Privacy Assembly)
- Member of OECD Informal Group of Experts on Children in the Digital Environment
- Building and maintaining relationships with International Organisations including European Commission, Article 29 Working Group and European Data Protection Board, Council of Europe, United Nations, International Telecommunications Union, OECD, APEC, The World Bank, International Intelligence Oversight Forum.
- Developing strong bi-lateral relationships with key international counterparts including UK's ICO, the US FTC, Department of Justice, Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board and others, Australia's OAIC, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy, Canada OPC.
- Restructure and transform Office to modernise approach.

1999–December 2013 Barrister and solicitor on own account

Selected clients and engagements

- Various banks, insurance companies, utilities, telecommunications, IT developers and vendors.
- Consultant to Law Commission on Privacy Review (2007 - 8)
- Policy Adviser Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Freedom of Information (May–June 2007 and as required)
- Consultant to Department of Labour on Accident Insurance reform (2000, 2011)
- District Inspector for Mental Health Intellectual Disability and Compulsory Care (1999–2014)
- Adviser to Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Solicitor General Kingdom of Tonga on public law, governance and constitutional reform matters (2008)
- Providing training for public servants on Official Information and Privacy Acts, and on legal/policy interface

October 1997–June 1999 Senior Solicitor Ministry of Health

October 1997–December 1997 Relieving Solicitor, State Services Commission (secondment)

October 1993–October 1997 Barrister and solicitor on own account

Appointments / key clients include

- Special Adviser to Parliamentary Select Committee for Inquiry (1994) -
- Member “Whistleblowing Review Team” appointed by Minister of State Services (1995)
- Adviser to / advocate for Telecom New Zealand, Creative New Zealand, NZ Post Ltd, Department of Corrections, Department of Labour, Health Funding Authority, numerous health enterprises.

March–October 1993 Manager, Office of the Privacy Commissioner

Assisting with the establishment the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

March 1990–March 1993 Investigating Officer, Office of the Ombudsman

Investigating decisions under the Official Information Act.

January 1989–March 1990 Staff Solicitor Nicholson Kirkby Sheat & Co

General legal practice, family, company & criminal law.

October 1986–April 1987 Mountaineer, Search and Rescue Team, Mount Cook National Park

Education

Oxford Advanced Management and Leadership Programme, Said Business School, Oxford University (2019)

Master of Public Policy with Merit Victoria University of Wellington (2008)

Bachelor of Laws Victoria University of Wellington (1989)

Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Professionals (1989)

New Plymouth Boys High School 1979–1983

Selected Publications

- “A View From 2030” – Visions of Privacy, International Association of Privacy Professionals 2020
- “Children and Privacy Online: It’s Time to Change the Dynamic – More Responsibility on the Platforms, More Autonomy for the Kids” Freedom, Security, Privacy - The Future of Childhood in the Digital World. 5 Rights Foundation 2020
- “Improving public services by sharing the right information,” *Public Money & Management, Taylor & Francis Journals, vol. 39(5), pages 355–358, July. Stephen Curtis & John Edwards, 2019.*
- *Privacy Impact Assessment in New Zealand – A Practitioner’s Perspective Chapter in Privacy Impact Assessment Springer London 2011*
- “Secondary Legal Consequences of Compulsory Status under Mental Health Act” [2008] NZLJ 428

- “*Public Registers and Privacy*” [2007] NZLJ 146
- “*The Official Information Act and Commercial Interests*” [2006] NZLJ 391
- “*The Anonymity of Public Servants*” [2006] NZLJ 272
- “*The Article 19 Freedom of Expression Manual – international and comparative law standards and procedures*” Article 19 International Centre Against Censorship – London 1993

Contributor - reporting on New Zealand’s compliance with Article 19 of the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights (freedom of expression).

- “Human Rights Law and Practice” Brookers (1995 –1998)

Specialist Editor and regular contributor of articles

Selected Conferences and Seminars

Dozens of appearances at conferences as keynote, speaker, panellist, moderator, chair, domestically and internationally. List available if required.

QUESTIONNAIRE: JOHN EDWARDS

Motivation

1. What motivated you to apply for this role, and what specific experiences would you bring to it?

I bring three decades of experience working in both data protection and freedom of information law and public policy, seven years as a chief executive, providing organisational, and system wide leadership, and change management, and a rich network of international contacts from my three years as Chair of the Global Privacy Assembly (a position currently occupied by Elizabeth Denham).

I have been Privacy Commissioner in New Zealand since 2014 and have successfully managed a transformation of both our operating model and our culture. We have implemented new legislation, the Privacy Act 2020, and created a new structure to better reflect our regulatory role in the system for 2021. Having achieved these changes and establishing a team who can confidently navigate an increasingly sophisticated privacy ecosystem, I was not actively looking but felt open to consider a new challenge. When I saw that Elizabeth Denham had been asked to stay in the role until a replacement could be recruited, I began to look into it more seriously, excited by the possibilities for the role over the next few years as the United Kingdom leaves the EU and forges its own regulatory path.

I am proud of what I have achieved in New Zealand in changing the way privacy and data protection is seen in the public discourse. The ICO position offers an opportunity to extend this approach to the UK.

One issue that needs urgent attention is harmonising systems for international data

transfers. The ICO will be in a position to lead innovative solutions to achieving what Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first described in 2019 as “Data free flow with trust”, and which the UK has progressed during its G7 presidency year into a tangible programme of action for governments and regulators, which will in turn unlock economic benefits internationally.

2. If appointed, are there specific areas within your new responsibilities where you will need to acquire new skills or knowledge?

The most significant area for me to acquire knowledge is on the political and public administration environment in the United Kingdom. I need to acquire a deeper understanding of the different roles of different regulators such as Ofcom and the CMA, and how we can leverage our respective jurisdictions to achieve the vision of the National Data Strategy, for example.

I rely on technical expertise and advice in areas of advanced and emergent technologies such as blockchain, encryption and artificial intelligence, and I expect that capacity to exist within the ICO, and through networks such as its links with the Alan Turing Institute.

3. How were you recruited? Were you encouraged to apply, and if so, by whom?

I am aware that several colleagues in different jurisdictions identified me as a possible candidate when approached by the Government’s recruitment adviser, but I had no direct approach either from the Government, or any recruiter. I applied on my own initiative.

Personal Background

4. Do you currently or potentially have any business, financial or other non-pecuniary interests or commitments, that might give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest if you are appointed? How do you intend to resolve any potential conflicts of interests if you are appointed?

No. I have a portfolio of investments that is managed on my behalf by a broker, but I do not believe any single holding would meet the threshold for materiality.

My approach to managing potential conflicts is to declare them and be open about them at first instance, and then to discuss with colleagues whether any specific steps need to be taken to manage them, and if they are not a manageable conflict to recuse myself from involvement with the matter.

5. If appointed, what professional or voluntary work commitments will you continue to undertake, or do you intend to take on, alongside your new role? How will you reconcile these with your new role?

As taking on this role will require rapidly increasing my contextual and environmental knowledge of the UK’s regulatory and parliamentary environment, I will not be taking on any other professional or voluntary work commitments in the immediate term.

6. Have you ever held any post or undertaken any activity that might cast doubt on your political impartiality? If so, how will you demonstrate your political impartiality in the role if appointed?

No.

7. Do you intend to serve your full term of office?

Yes.

The ICO

8. If appointed, what will be your main priorities on taking up the role?

I intend to work with stakeholders to demonstrate that the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR are not impediments to innovation, growth and the use of data to add value; that on the contrary, they are enabling statutes.

It will be a priority for me and my team to identify ways in which we can reduce compliance costs, particularly for small to medium enterprises, by providing them with tools to understand and apply the law without the need to incur large professional fees. To this end I will be promoting a “service” culture.

Another aspect of cost that we can work on is reducing the uncertainty that is always attendant on a principle-based regulatory framework. We can do this by declaring our position on areas which might otherwise be ambiguous, with that ambiguity driving a risk-averse, or high cost approach.

It will be important, while doing these, to give the people of the United Kingdom certainty that there is a stable and fair regulator ensuring they can have confidence that their personal data will be processed appropriately, and kept safe; that they can trust the digital economy enough to actively participate in it. This is a fundamental precondition to gaining the benefits of a digital economy.

Part of providing that trust and confidence will be taking effective regulatory action, based on criteria of public interest and risk, when organisations egregiously breach their obligations in ways that puts individuals at risk.

9. What criteria should the Committee use to judge the ICO’s performance over your term of office?

I will be working with the team at the ICO to identify measurable criteria for the outcomes we are able to achieve. It is always more difficult to measure outcomes than outputs, but it may be possible to undertake some benchmarking work early on to understand the industry perception of matters such as “ease of compliance with data protection rules” on the side of the regulated sector, and continue with the existing ICO surveys gauging consumer awareness or “confidence in the system’s ability to safely and fairly process personal data” on the consumer side. We could then retake those surveys at regular intervals and report to the Committee on any movement.

One area I would like to work on is reducing the processing times for complaints and investigations. In an online economy, consumers expect near instant gratification. While that is incompatible with the observation of due process and the need to comply with natural justice obligations, I am sure that improvements can be made, and the experience of both complainants and respondents enhanced. The slow processing of complaints is one of the main criticisms of the administration of the GDPR, and I would like to see the ICO

differentiate from European data protection agencies in this area of our work.

I would welcome a discussion with the Committee about which aspects of our performance it would like to measure, and how we might identify meaningful indicators of performance to report on.

10. How will you protect and enhance your personal independence and the regulatory independence of the ICO from the Government/ministers?

I have always found that open communication with Government stakeholders and Ministers is essential to understanding and respecting each other's different roles. I will certainly consult with key stakeholders when considering any significant changes to our priorities or operating model, and will operate on the basis of "no surprises". However, I will ensure that Ministers understand and respect the importance of a regulator discharging quasi-judicial regulatory functions free from actual or apparent political influence or interference.

11. How do you assess the public profile and reputation of the ICO?

It is difficult for me to assess the public profile and reputation of the ICO domestically from my current vantage point, however the ICO has emerged in recent years as a key regulator internationally. Much of that is a consequence of Elizabeth Denham's leadership. The ICO enjoys a very high reputation in the privacy regulatory community, and with international organisations such as the Council of Europe, the OECD, and others. Its scholarship and work programme contribute greatly to the international discourse and assists other regulators and governments with emerging issues such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition technologies.

12. What risks do you think ICO will face over your term of office? How do you intend to manage them?

There will be risks to the system as data protection regimes continue to evolve in the UK and overseas, and I will work with UK organisations and international partners to manage the associated risks, including those consequent to any change in the UK's adequacy status.

The organisation itself faces risks of staff retention in a field where there are skills shortages. I intend to work with the leadership team to ensure we have a culture and conditions that nurture and retain talent.

There is a risk that the organisation, when working across such a broad range of human and economic activity, could lose focus. It will be my role as leader to maintain a vision and focus, and to ensure we are at all times working in the best interests of the people of the United Kingdom.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Box 1. Providing information to select committees

Information about the preferred candidate

- Name of the preferred candidate

John Edwards

- Their current CV (redacted for publication)

attached

- Declaration of relevant interests made by the candidate:

Mr Edwards declared no conflicts of interest on his returned 'Declaration of conflict of interest form'.

- Declaration of relevant political activity made by the candidate required under paragraph 9.2 of the Governance Code on Public Appointments:

As per the paragraph 9.2 of the Governance Code, political activity should not affect any judgement of merit nor be a bar to appointment. John has not made any political donations.

- Proposed terms of appointment and remuneration (if any)

This is a five year appointment. The remuneration is £200,000 per annum for 5 days per week.

Further information on the ICO, the role, the process and the candidate can be found below. Also attached at Annex B is the CO's proforma.

Background: the ICO and the role of the Information Commissioner

About the ICO

In 2019/20 the ICO received 39,000 data protection enquiries; handled over 102,000 enquiries about nuisance calls and texts; and responded to 6,421 freedom of information requests. The ICO employs approximately 770 staff with its Head Office in Wilmslow and offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and London. The ICO receives Grant-in-Aid of £4.62M (2019/20) for its work on Freedom of Information, Network and Information Systems Regulations, Electronic Identification and Trust Services, Investigatory Powers Act; and fee income of (approximately) £46.6M (2019/20) for data protection work. The ICO's 2019–2022 Strategic Plan can be found [here](#), and its annual reports can be found [here](#).

The Information Commissioner's Office is a Non Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Although the Information Commissioner operates independently in the exercise of his/her statutory functions, some issues require the approval of the Secretary of State such as funding and the level of fees charged to data controllers. The [Framework Agreement](#) (due for review in 2022) sets out the respective responsibilities of the sponsor department and the Information Commissioner

to support the work of both organisations, and to ensure the Commissioner's independence, propriety and value for money.

As a corporation sole⁷ the Information Commissioner is responsible for:

- acting as the Accounting Officer for the ICO; answering directly to the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons;
- producing an annual statement of accounts in line with Managing Public Money and the Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual, which is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- setting the pay and conditions of staff in compliance with Managing Public Money and Civil Service pay guidance.

Further detail on the specific legislation and the ICO's powers and functions can be found [here](#).

Role specification

As per the Data Protection Act 2018, the Information Commissioner is to be appointed by Her Majesty by Letters Patent on the basis of fair and open competition. Candidates should be aware that the preferred candidate will be required to appear before a Parliamentary Select Committee prior to appointment.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for:

- Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Information Commissioner;
- Providing leadership and strategic direction to the Information Commissioner's Office;
- Supporting innovation and growth when discharging their duties;
- Building and maintaining excellent relationships with key stakeholders including the business community, Ministers, Parliament, public interest groups, and international counterparts;
- Contributing to debates both nationally and internationally, on data protection and right issues; and
- Acting as Accounting Officer for the Information Commissioner's Office

Key selection criteria

This is a demanding and high-profile role. We are looking for an exceptional candidate with a demonstrable desire to deliver a new approach to data in the UK that strikes the right balance between high data protection standards and responsible use of data to benefit our economy and society. This candidate must be willing and able to steer the ICO

⁷ A corporation sole is a legal entity consisting of a single ('sole') incorporated office, occupied by a single (sole) man or woman. This allows a corporation to pass vertically in time from one office holder to the next successor-in-office, giving the position legal continuity with each subsequent office holder having identical powers to his/her predecessor'

through a dynamic period of change, refining processes and decision-making.

Prospective candidates need to be able to demonstrate that they meet a majority of the following criteria to a high degree:

Experience and personal qualities

- A successful track record of credible and strategic leadership and management, including the delivery of transformational organisational change.
- Experience of working at the highest level of public or commercial life in the UK or internationally.
- Experience of using data to drive innovation and growth, in industry, research or scientific field.
- Experience in data protection and rights.
- Commercial and business acumen, including an understanding of how the data protection regulatory environment impacts on business and how to help them.
- Ability to make sound, independent judgements under pressure and where necessary defend these against internal and external challenge.
- Excellent communication and relationship management skills, and the ability to represent the Information Commissioner's Office to a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- A proven ability to think through complex issues strategically, independently and imaginatively, with a focus on innovation and growth.
- A strong understanding of the legal and regulatory framework in which the Information Commissioner's Office operates.
- Strong financial and performance management skills, including the ability to deliver value for money and achieve operational excellence.
- Ability to have influence and impact for the UK internationally.

About the candidate

John Edwards was first appointed to the position of Privacy Commissioner of New Zealand in February 2014 and was re-appointed for a further 5 year term in February 2019. Prior to this he practiced law for over 20 years.

John has degrees in law (LLB) and public policy (MPP) from Victoria University of Wellington, NZ and has advised and represented a wide range of clients from the public and private sector. He provides independent comment on significant personal information policies and issues.

John chaired the New Zealand Law Society Privacy and Human Rights Committee and was Contributing Editor of Brookers Human Rights Law and Practice and has published widely on human rights and privacy matters.

In addition to a practice specialty in the field of information and privacy law, he held warrants as a district inspector for mental health, and as district inspector for intellectual disability services and has provided legal services to the Kingdom of Tonga.

In October 2014 John was elected Chair of the Executive Committee of the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners and completed his 3 year term in October 2017.

Annex B: Proforma for departments to provide campaign information to select committees

| | |
|--|---|
| Campaign Launch Date | 28th February 2021 |
| Campaign Closing Date | 5th March 2021 |
| Reason for any changes in timetable to that originally published | There were no changes to the timetable that was originally published |
| Advertising strategy | The Public Appointments team advertised the role on the Cabinet Office Centre for Public Appointments website and on DCMS Social Media. The Secretary of State also announced the launch in the media. GatenbySanderson were contracted to be headhunters for the role. |
| Advisory Assessment Panel | <p>Panel Chair: Susannah Storey, DCMS Director General for Digital and Media Policy</p> <p>Senior Independent Panel Member: Sir Philip Augar is a British author, and was an equities broker in the City of London, England for twenty years from the 1970s, first with NatWest and J. Henry Schroder,</p> <p>Other Members (including name, position and organisation):</p> <p>Daniel Korski - independent sector representative.</p> <p>Nicola Wood - Non-Executive Director at the ICO.</p> |
| Number of applicants | The campaign closed with a total of 40 individual applicants. |
| Number of candidates invited to interview | Eight candidates were invited to interview. |
| Number of candidates found appointable | Four candidates were found appointable. |

Formal minutes

Thursday 9 September 2021

Members present:

Julian Knight, in the Chair

Kevin Brennan

Steve Brine

Clive Efford

Rt Hon Damian Green

Draft Report (*Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 15 read and agreed to.

The Candidate's CV and supporting documents were appended to the Report as Appendix 1.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 14 September 2021 at 9.30 am.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Thursday 9 September 2021

John Edwards, Government's preferred candidate for Information Commissioner [Q1-44](#)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

| Number | Title | Reference |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 1st | The future of UK music festivals | HC 49 |
| 2nd | Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner | HC 260 |
| 3rd | Concussion in sport | HC 46 |
| 4th | Sport in our communities | HC 45 |
| 1st Special | The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21 | HC 273 |

Session 2019–21

| Number | Title | Reference |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| 1st | The Covid-19 crisis and charities | HC 281 |
| 2nd | Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic | HC 234 |
| 3rd | Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report | HC 291 |
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