

HOUSE OF LORDS
APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION
Room G/38, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ
General Enquiries: 07872 828699
Internet: <http://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk>
E-mail: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

Ref: HOLAC FOI2022/18

31 August 2022

By email: <REDACTED>

Dear <REDACTED>,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I am replying to your Freedom of Information request, which the House of Lords Appointments Commission (the Commission) received on 08 August 2022.

You asked:

Your web page <https://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk/vetting> states:

"Of central concern to the Commission, therefore, is the credibility of individuals who have made significant political donations, loans or credit arrangements. The Commission believes that the best way of addressing this issue is to reach a view on whether or not the individual could have been a credible nominee if he or she had made no financial contribution."

Q1. Since the last General Election how many (not 'who' or 'names') nominations has the Commission received where political donations, etc had to be taken into account?

Q2. How many of the number in answer to Q1. were found NOT to be credible as a result of addressing this issue?

We are writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, we have established that the information you requested is held by the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

All of the information that you have requested falls within section 37(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to the conferral of honours and dignities. A peerage is a dignity for the purposes of the Act. Section 37 is a qualified exemption which is subject to a public interest test. In favour of disclosing information, there is a strong public interest in knowing that the appointments process is accountable and transparent, and in maintaining public confidence in the system. In favour of

maintaining the exemption, there is a strong public interest in protecting the confidentiality of the consideration of individual nominees. We judge that the balance of public interest favours disclosure of overall figures. To protect the confidentiality of the Commission's discussions and the confidentiality of candidates' personal data - and in line with standard practice - the Commission is not disclosing figures of fewer than five people.

We have interpreted your questions as relating to nominations which were put forward through political means, or in other words, by a political party leader outside of the crossbench application process which the Commission also manages. This includes non-affiliated nominations and Prime Minister's crossbench exception nominations.

With regards to question 1, political donations are taken into account for all nominations that the Commission considers. Since the last General Election in December 2019, 74 nominations have been considered by the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

With regards to question 2, less than 5 nominations were found *'not to be credible as a result of addressing this issue'*.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may write to the Secretary to the Commission, Alison Bennett, to ask for an internal review by another person not involved with this request. Please note that we will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by HOLAC.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Secretariat to the House of Lords Appointments Commission