

HOLAC MEMBERS HANDBOOK



May 2020

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Introduction

The House of Lords Appointments Commission was established in 2000 to make nominations for membership of the House of Lords to the independent cross benches. It is also responsible for the vetting for propriety of all nominations to the House, including candidates for party political membership.

HOLAC does not have formal terms of reference. The Commission was founded in what was intended as a transitional mechanism for appointing “people’s peers” as part of a (largely unrealised) raft of measures to facilitate reform culminating in a majority-elected House.

Until January 2018, the House of Lords Appointments Commission was placed within the Civil Service Commission Secretariat. HOLAC staff were drawn from CSC staff. The CSC is a Non-Departmental Public Body.

A decision was then taken to move oversight to the Honours and Appointments Secretariat. HOLAC has sat under the HAS umbrella since then. It remains independent, but draws its staff from HAS staff members.

The Commission has seven members, including the Chair. Three members were appointed to represent the main political parties. The other three members and the Chair are non-political and independent of Government. They are recruited via a public appointment process and appointed by the Prime Minister.

The members of the Commission are:

Lord (Paul) Bew (Chair)

Rt Hon and Rt Rev Lord Richard Chartres KCVO

Vacant – following resignation of Charles Moore in November 2019

The Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O’Boyle CBE DL

Lord (David) Clark of Windermere (Labour)

Baroness (Angela) Browning (Conservative)

Commission Secretariat

HOLAC is supported by a Secretariat that is drawn from staff provided by the Honours and Appointments Secretariat (HAS). HAS is part of the Cabinet Office.

Although independent of the Cabinet Office, HOLAC's budget is provided by that department.

Advice provided to the Commission by its Secretariat is independent of the department and of the Government.

Staff as at Spring 2020:

Alison Bennett - Secretary to the Commission

██████████ Team Leader and Principal Policy Advisor

██████████ Team Member and Policy Advisor

Maggie O'Boyle - Press Officer (not part of the HAS Secretariat)

Contact:

Phone: 020 7276 6794

Email: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

Press enquiries: 07880 740 627 (Maggie)

Role and Remit of the Commission

HOLAC Nominations to the House of Lords

The role of HOLAC is to recommend non-party-political peers to the Prime Minister, who in turn will recommend to Her Majesty The Queen.

HOLAC appointments are made via an open process with published criteria as set out in this handbook.

The criteria for nominations

The Commission seeks to recommend nominees:


- with the ability to make an effective and significant contribution to the work of the House of Lords, not only in their areas of particular interest and special expertise, but the wide range of other issues coming before the House;
- with a record of significant achievement within their chosen way of life that demonstrates a range of experience, skills and competencies;
- who are willing to commit the time necessary to make an effective contribution to the work of the House of Lords. The Commission recognises that many active members continue with their professional and other working interests and this can help maintain expertise and experience;
- with some understanding of the constitutional framework, including the place of the House of Lords, and the skills and qualities needed to be an effective member of the House – for example, nominees should be able to speak with independence and authority;
- who are able to demonstrate outstanding personal qualities, in particular, integrity and independence;
- with a strong and personal commitment to the principles and highest standards of public life;
- who are and intend to remain independent of any political party. Nominees and the Commission will need to feel confident of their ability to be independent of party-political considerations whatever their past party-political involvement. For this reason, all nominees are asked to respond to the questions on political involvement and activities which are similar to those used for most public appointments;
- who are resident in the UK for tax purposes and accept the requirement to remain so.

Overview

- Candidates complete a set nomination form and are asked to give evidence that they meet the criteria. **SEE ANNEX A.**

- There is no deadline or closing date. Nominations are assessed on a rolling basis.
- The Commission receives between 100-150 applications per year.
- Recommendations are made on merit, with the Commission interviewing applicants that emerge from the sifting process.
- PM decides timing and numbers. The current PM has stated that he will allow HOLAC to nominate two individuals before the end of 2020.

Process

- Nomination forms are logged and acknowledged.
- Summaries of each nomination are formulated for the Commission members. This is a condensed version of the nomination that picks out key achievements and other relevant information.
- Two Secretariat staff will sift nominations ahead of a Commission meeting
- 
- Although not a compulsory part of the process, it may sometimes be deemed useful to have a sub-committee sift of nominations ahead of the full Commission meeting.
- Two independent members of the Commission meet to go through the nomination files in full, including the Secretariat's recommendations, before the Commission meeting.

Commission Meeting

- At its meeting the Commission will decide whether to reject or retain candidates. Those that are retained will be considered again at a later stage, and a final decision will be made about which of them to interview.
- Commission members are provided with the summary of each application, and the indicative scores following the Secretariat (and sub-Committee, if conducted) sift.
- When considering applications, the Commission should have regard to the criteria listed on the HOLAC website. It should also have regard to the current makeup of the House of Lords, giving more weight to applicants whose skill set is under-represented.
- The Secretariat will provide the full nomination forms where requested.

Interviews

- The panel should consist of the Chairman and two members of the Commission, preferably one political and one independent. A member of the Secretariat will be present to record the minutes. If conducting a number of interviews, the Secretariat ensures that the panels vary (other than the Chairman, who is always present) and all Commission members are represented over the suite of interviews.
- Referees for all interviewees should be contacted in advance and references collected prior to any interviews taking place.

- [REDACTED]

- The Secretariat produces a write-up of the interview, including the panel's assessment.

Appointment


- Once the Commission has agreed a list of nominees it wishes to recommend for appointment, the Secretariat conducts its standard vetting checks.
- Assuming the Prime Minister is content with the number of appointees, and there are no issues with the vetting, the Chairman telephones the successful nominees to let them know the Commission's decision.
- The Secretariat emails the nominee to confirm the details of the Chairman's conversation.
- The Secretariat (or press officer) also drafts a long and a short citation for each nominee, and emails it to the nominee for comments/clearance. The short citation takes the form of a line or two summarising the nominee's profile; the long citation is a paragraph setting out their biography.
- The citations are then submitted to No.10 so the Prime Minister can pass them on to The Queen for approval (which is a formality).

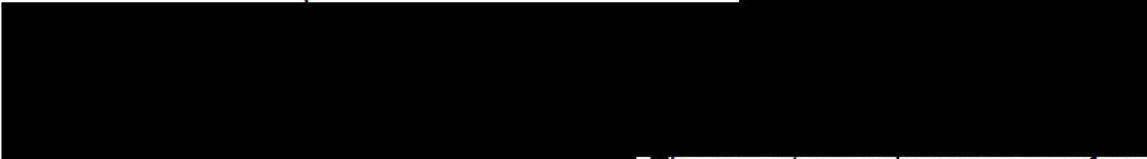
- Once a date for announcement is agreed, the following must happen:
 - The Chairman writes to the nominee congratulating them formally and setting out the next steps for them, such as agreeing their title.
 - The press notice is drafted by the press officer; a copy is made ready for upload to HOLAC's website and is set to publish at 10am on the day of announcement.
 - A day or two before announcement, the Chairman writes to key stakeholders in the House of Lords giving them prior notification of the appointments- including the Leader of the House, the Shadow Leader, the Lord Speaker and the Convenor of the Crossbenches.
 - The Clerk of the Parliaments and Convenor of the Crossbenches should both also be contacted by the secretariat and, assuming the nominees have given their consent, their contact details should be passed on. The Clerk and Convenor will then contact the nominees directly before they formally join the House.
- On the day of the announcement, press queries should be directed to the press officer.

Vetting of political nominees to the House of Lords

- HOLAC vets most other nominees to House of Lords for propriety but not suitability
- This includes party-political and Ministerial nominations as well as non-party-political 'exceptions', of which - by convention - the Prime Minister is entitled to ten per Parliament.
- Lords Spiritual and hereditary appointments are not vetted by the Commission.
- The HOLAC role is advisory only. The Commission is not able to veto nominees.

Vetting Process

- The Secretariat produces a vetting report for each nominee, which takes a standard format. Copies are saved in the drive. 

 The report records responses from departments and agencies and includes a summary of any issues arising in the

public searches which might have a bearing on the Commission's criteria. It includes the outcomes of the various formal probity checks. **SEE ANNEX B.**

- Commission members are invited to view the vetting reports ahead of a meeting of the full Commission, where they will take decisions.
- For party political nominations, if the Commission is unable to support any names the Secretariat will firstly contact the party in question and offer them the chance to withdraw these and substitute alternative names. If they do so, vetting should be carried out on the new names. If the Commission is unable to support any of the substitutes the party is not offered a chance to substitute again.
- Once the Commission has reached a decision on the names, the advice letter to the PM must be signed by the Chairman. Given the policy of allowing substitutions, this letter usually just lists those that the Commission can support. However, the letter may draw the PM's attention to any issues the Commission thinks are likely to attract negative or adverse comments but which fall short of a failure to meet a probity check.

Data Handling

HOLAC takes the confidentiality of nomination system and the privacy of nominees very seriously. Commission members are central to maintaining that confidentiality by complying with information management arrangements.

The following information summarises the role and responsibilities of committee members' in upholding the confidentiality of the system:

We recognise the need for transparency in the system to ensure that the process of awarding of peerages is clear and sustains public confidence in the system.

However, we believe this must be balanced against the principle of confidentiality of the content of individual cases. We believe such confidentiality is integral to the good functioning of the system. It allows Commission members and others involved in the nomination and assessment of nominees to express views freely and fully, allowing for discussion and deliberation, confident that those views will not be made public.

As a member of the Commission, you will be privy to a considerable amount of information concerning past, present and future honours nominees. All of this information is sensitive and some of it will be very personal. It is therefore very important that members have in mind the correct handling and storage requirements of this sensitive material so as to retain confidentiality and privacy for the nominee and to ensure that we follow data protection guidelines.

In particular committee members are asked to comply with the following principles:

Any HOLAC paperwork relating to nominations or vetting reports must be signed for on receipt and then securely stored in a locked cabinet when not in use.

Emailed documents from the HOLAC Secretariat will be password protected. Care should be taken to ensure that nobody is able to access your computer and documents should be deleted from your system once work on them has concluded.

HOLAC work should not be discussed with third parties not directly involved in the process, including the media.

Freedom of Information

HOLAC will occasionally receive requests under the Freedom of Information Act. These are dealt with by the Secretariat, usually without reference to Commission members. Please forward any FOI requests that you receive to the Commission inbox enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

Payments and Expenses

The HOLAC Chair is paid a total of £8000pa, payable on a bi-annual basis. Members are paid £3000pa. These payments are made in March and September of each year.

All members are entitled to receive reasonable expenses for attending meetings or to carry out other HOLAC work as necessary.

We would request that you provide your bank account details in order that we may process your remuneration.

ANNEX A

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION NOMINATION FORM

The House of Lords Appointments Commission will treat information provided in this form in confidence.

Please complete this form if you wish to be considered for appointment as a non-party-political life peer. Before doing so, please consider carefully the notes provided, in particular, the Commission's criteria for assessing nominees.

Please print or type details clearly and complete all sections.

You can send the form to us by:

- post to: The Secretary, House of Lords Appointments Commission, Room G/40, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
- e-mail: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

Please note that if you do use email, we will accept a scanned signed declaration on page 6 in PDF format.

Surname:

Forenames:

Title: eg Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone:

Mobile:

E-mail:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Please note that only British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens over the age of 21 are eligible. You must be resident in the UK for tax purposes and accept the requirement to remain so.

Please mark the appropriate box:

British Irish Commonwealth Nationality:

Are you resident in the UK for tax purposes?

Yes

No

The House of Lords Appointments Commission will make its recommendations on the basis of merit.

Please summarise how you would make an effective contribution to the work of the House of Lords and why you consider that you are suitable for recommendation as a non-party-political peer. Please support this with a CV showing your major achievements and highlighting relevant skills and experience. If necessary, you may continue on a separate sheet of paper.

The Commission requires evidence of all of the following, and you should ensure that you have covered each of these in your application:

- **Ability to make an effective and significant contribution to the work of the House of Lords in your area of expertise and the wide range of other issues that come before the House**
- **A proven record of significant achievement in your chosen field**
- **Willing and able to commit the time necessary to make an effective contribution in the House**
- **An understanding of the constitutional framework**
- **That you are independent of any political party and intend to remain independent**

The Commission requires evidence of all of the following, and you should ensure that you have covered each of these in your application:

- **Ability to make an effective and significant contribution to the work of the House of Lords in your area of expertise and the wide range of other issues that come before the House**
- **A proven record of significant achievement in your chosen field**
- **Willing and able to commit the time necessary to make an effective contribution in the House**
- **An understanding of the constitutional framework**
- **That you are independent of any political party and intend to remain independent**

Political Donations

You must declare to the Appointments Commission any donation (either in money or in kind), loan or credit arrangement between you and a political party regardless of when they were made.

Please delete paragraph (a) or (b) as appropriate.

(a) "I have not made any donations, either directly or indirectly, to a political party nor have I entered into any loans or credit arrangements with a political party. I will inform the Appointments Commission of any donations, loans or credit arrangements made while my nomination remains under consideration."

(b) "I have made the following donations/ entered into the following loans/credit agreements with a political party"

Year:

Amount:

Nature of transaction:

Party:

I will inform the Appointments Commission of any further donations, loans or credit arrangements made while my nomination remains under consideration."

Party-Political Activity

Party-political activity or membership is not a bar to nomination. However, you will need to satisfy yourself and the Commission that you are comfortable operating outside a party-political framework, whatever your past involvement, and that you intend to remain outside a party-political framework.

1) If you have undertaken any of the following activities during the past five years, please mark all those that apply and provide details of your involvement:

- § Obtained office as a local councillor, MP, MEP etc.
- § Stood as a candidate for one of the above offices
- § Spoken on behalf of a candidate or party
- § Acted as a political agent
- § Held office such as chairman, treasurer or secretary of a local branch or party
- § Canvassed on behalf of a party or helped at elections
- § Undertaken any other political activity that you consider to be relevant

Party for which activity was undertaken and details of involvement:

§ None of the above activities apply

2) Please indicate if you are a member of a political party

No

Yes

If yes, please state which party:

Awareness of the Commission

Nominations for non-party-political peerages

It would help the Appointments Commission if you could indicate how you became aware of its work and the nominations process. For example, Press, TV/radio, Internet or through an organisation, friend or other individual.

Please give details:

References

Should you be invited for interview, the Commission will ask you for a minimum of three and a maximum of six referees, who will be approached by the Secretariat in order to provide a reference. At least one of those referees must be connected to your working life (If appropriate).

Scrutiny of nominations

The Commission will vet all recommendations for peerages to ensure the highest standards of propriety. Please ensure that you complete the following declaration and consent section.

Declaration and Consent (See Note 1 below)

- 1. I confirm that the information given on this form is complete and correct.**
- 2. As far as I am aware I am not, and have not been, involved in any roles, positions or activities or have any interests that would conflict with a position in the House of Lords or cast doubt on my ability to make an effective contribution as non-party-political member of the House. (See Note 2 below)**
- 3. I give my consent to the release of information included in my nomination form to enable further inquiries to be made by the Appointments Commission in relation to my nomination. This includes: inquiries made of Government departments and**

agencies; the taking up of references; approaches to other individuals or organisations supporting my nomination; and any other relevant inquiries.

Signed:

Date:

Name (block capitals):

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Previous address:

* **Note 1: If you are submitting your nomination form electronically we will accept a scanned signed and dated version of the declaration in PDF format.**

* **Note 2: If you wish to draw the Commission's attention to any areas of conflict or doubt, please provide a separate, signed and dated hard copy of the full declaration (or scanned in PDF format if submitting electronically) setting these out at the beginning of paragraph 2 of your declaration with the words "Except for ..." before describing the particular area, and then continuing "I have not been involved in any roles ..."**

Vetting Report Template

Ms. XXX

Reference

Recommended For: Life Peerage

Name:

Address:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality: British

Residence: Yes
(for tax purposes)

Proposed by: The Rt. Hon.

Grounds for recommendation: Party-political peerage

Citation: Attached

1. Checks with Agencies and Government Departments

Metropolitan Police Nil return

██████████

██████████

Honours & Appt Sec Nil return

HMRC Nil return

Nil returns also received from [...]

2. Electoral Commission website

No record of any donations or loans. *[Default wording for no donations; alternatively, record the value of any donations or loans as necessary and the year in which they were given].*

3. ██████████ and Media ██████████ searches

XXX has a high/ moderate/ low profile [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] his/her role as YYY.

[Example paragraph openings:]

In 2003, XXX was [REDACTED] for YYY

In April 2005, a report by ZZ Select Committee found XXX to have...

[Be as specific and extensive or as brief as warranted by the seriousness or complexity of the issues. Part 3 of Reports tends not to be longer than a side of A4 unless complex issues need explanation. Sequences of events should be reported chronologically with a clear statement of the outcome [if possible] e.g. the individual's resignation from a post or exoneration from a particular charge.]

[Finish with a paragraph about the individual's spouse]

Similar searches were conducted on her husband ZZZ, who has no [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Paul) Bew

Lord Bew joined Queen's University Belfast in 1979 and was made Professor of Irish Politics in 1991. He acted as historical adviser to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry between 1998 and 2001 and was appointed as a non-party-political peer by the independent House of Lords Appointments Commission in February 2007 following his contributions to the Good Friday Agreement. He has served on a number of committees including the Joint Committee on the Defamation Bill, which addressed key issues of academic freedom, and the Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege which produced its report in July 2013. Lord Bew chaired the 2011 independent review of Key Stage 2 (SATs) provision in England. He is a Visiting Professor at King's College London. Among Lord Bew's many publications is the Ireland volume of the Oxford History of Modern Europe.



Political Members

Baroness (Angela) Browning (Conservative)

Baroness (Angela) Browning was a teacher, auxiliary nurse, and management consultant before entering Parliament. She was MP for Tiverton (1992-1997) and for Tiverton and Honiton (1997-2010). She was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Michael Forsyth as Minister of State at the Department of Employment (1993-1994) and Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1994-1997). She was made a life peer in 2010 and was Government Spokesperson for the Home Office in the House of Lords, and Minister of State for Crime Prevention and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction at the Home Office in 2011. She is a former member of the Public Accounts Committee. She has also been an Electoral Commissioner (2010-2012). She is currently a member of the EU Select Committee and the EU Home Affairs Sub Committee; Vice President of both the National Autistic Society and the Alzheimer's Society; Vice President of the Institute of Sales and Marketing and a consultant for Cumberlege, Eden and Partners Ltd. She is also Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.



The Rt. Hon. Lord (David) Clark of Windermere (Labour)

Lord Clark is a former Minister who served as a Member of Parliament for over 25 years. He served as Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duch of Lancaster, and held a number of roles in the Shadow Cabinet. He was appointed a Labour Life Peer in 2001. He is a visiting Professor at the University of Huddersfield, and a Director of Carlisle United Football Club. He is an Honorary Fellow of Cumbria University, and Chairman of both the Lake District National Park Partnership and the Lake District National Park World Heritage Bid.



Independent Members

Rt Rev and Rt Hon Lord Richard Chartres KCVO

The Rt Rev and Rt Hon Lord Richard Chartres is a Crossbench Peer. He is the former Bishop of London and held a number of wider roles during that time, including as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners.



The Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE DL

Mrs Jay-O'Boyle is the current Lord Lieutenant of the Country Borough of Belfast, a member of the Advisory Board to Hillsborough Castle, and the Vice Chair of Northern Ireland Opera. She has been involved in public and voluntary service for many years.

