

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

Room G/07, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ

General Enquiries: 020 7271 0848

Internet: <http://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk>

E-mail: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

<REDACTED>

via request <REDACTED>

Our ref 638

4 December 2017

Dear <REDACTED>

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 29 November.

Section 37(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act provides an exemption for information relating to the conferring of any honour or dignity by the crown.

The function of the exemption is to help preserve the integrity and robustness of the honours system in order to ensure that awards continue to be conferred solely on merit. The need to maintain public confidence in the system is of particular importance given that recipients often enjoy privileged positions, for example, a working peer can take up a seat in the House of Lords for life.

However, it is also a qualified exemption so there is a requirement to carry out a public interest test. Having undertaken that test, I have decided that the public interest in this case lies in providing the information, and I am pleased to confirm that the Commission does hold some recorded information relating to your request which I am now providing to you.

Turning now to the specifics of the request you made, in your email you asked:

Can you please provide us with a summary of the protected characteristics of applicants in terms of:

Members:

Rt Hon Lord Clark of Windemere, Rt. Hon. Lord Howard of Lympne QC, Rt. Hon. Lord Kakkar (Chairman),
Lord Low of Dalston, Professor Gillian Peele, Sir Malcolm Ross, Baroness Scott of Needham Market

** Number of applications per specified protected characteristic (e.g. number of Black applicants)*

It may be helpful to explain by way of background that the Commission has, from June 2012, asked all applicants for non-party-political peerages to complete a diversity monitoring form which requests the applicants to declare their:

- Gender
- Ethnic Origin
- Disability Status
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation.

These are the only protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 that the Commission collects – while the applicant is invited to complete the diversity monitoring form, there is also a ‘*prefer not to say*’ box. Most applicants complete the form but some choose to answer *prefer not to say* to some or all of the questions and a number of applicants do not fill in the form at all.

The information you requested is set out in the table at Annex A – but please note that for the reasons set out in the preceding paragraph, the numbers when added up differ for each protected characteristic.

You went on to ask for the:

** Number of applications per specified protected characteristic not recommended for appointment (e.g. number of Black people told their application was unsuccessful)*

The House of Lord Appointments Commission does not hold any recorded information in respect of this request. As the Commission has been asked by the Prime Minister to recommend only two people a year for a crossbench peerage, the percentage of applications that are not successful is around 98.5%.

I can however advise you that the Commission has recommended 67 persons for crossbench peerages from its inception.

Of these 67 peers:

- 25 have been Female and 42 Male;
- 13 have come from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background and 54 have been White.

You then sent us a supplementary email which asked:

Please also consider the following as part of our request:

** Average number of weeks spent considering each application per specified protected*

characteristic (e.g. How many weeks for younger people, Black people, etc. and how many for older people, White people, etc.)

The House of Lord Appointments Commission does not hold any recorded information in respect of this request. This is because applications are received on a rolling basis and considered in batches two or three times throughout the year. Each application is considered against the selection criteria which is available on our website at <http://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk/selection-criteria.aspx>

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may write to the Secretary to the Commission, Peter Lawrence, at the address below to ask for an internal review:

Peter Lawrence OBE,
Secretary to the House of Lords Appointments Commission
Room G/08
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

If you are not then content with his reply, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely

<REDACTED>

ANNEX A

**HOLAC APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BETWEEN JUNE 2012 & NOVEMBER 2017
SHOWING DECLARED PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

Gender			
Female	131		
Male	344		
Ethnicity			
Bangladeshi	8	African	15
Chinese	2	Caribbean	8
Indian	49	Other Black	2
Pakistani	23	Mixed Ethnic	4
Other Asian	8	White	352
Disabled			
Disability declared	49		
Sexual Orientation			
Bisexual	6	Heterosexual	394
Gay Man	16	Lesbian	2
Religion			
Buddhist	3	Muslim	39
Christian	250	Sikh	12
Hindu	25	Other	13
Jewish	14	None/Atheist	70

NB The totals add up differently for each section as candidates may have selected 'prefer not to say' in some, but not all of the sections of the diversity monitoring form or may have not answered some, but not all of the questions.