

Government sets out new plans to open up public appointments

- Minister sets out next steps in drive to boost the diversity of boards of public bodies, such as the NHS and UK museums
- Government publishes updated Diversity Action Plan to ensure those who sit on boards of public bodies are representative of the society they serve
- Findings from a landmark, independent review by Lord Holmes into opening up public appointments for disabled people underpin this plan

The latest steps in an ambitious plan to ensure appointees to the boards of public bodies better reflect the public have been outlined today (27 June) by the Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden.

A refreshed Public Appointments Diversity Action Plan commits the government to improving all kinds of diversity on the boards of public bodies. It sets out a roadmap for realising an ambition that half of all public appointees will be female and 14 percent of public appointments will be from ethnic minorities by 2022.

The plan confirms actions to improve how appointments are made including:

- piloting a mentoring scheme to help those who narrowly miss out
- testing new approaches to the recruitment process, to ensure diverse skills and lived experience are taken into account
- induction training that gives those newly appointed the best start to their roles.

The Minister also confirmed that the government is accepting the principle of all the recommendations of Lord Holmes' independent review into opening up public appointments to disabled people, which was commissioned last year. This includes committing the government to improving the quality of data on appointees so that it can take a decision on what the government's ambition for the numbers of disabled people appointed to boards should be by the end of 2020.

The shake-up comes just days after the Prime Minister announced a new package of measures to tackle the injustices faced by disabled people in the workplace, at home and in the community.

The Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, said:

There is both a moral and practical case for ensuring the boards of our public institutions reflect the communities they serve.

That's why I'm announcing changes today that will remove obstacles not only for disabled people but for all underrepresented groups in

public appointments, opening up exciting roles across the UK to applicants with fresh opinions, ideas, backgrounds and experiences.

Lord Holmes said:

I am passionate about the benefits of Diversity and Inclusion. I am delighted the Government has accepted the principles of all of the recommendations I have made.

The review made recommendations in four areas: data and transparency, attracting talent, applications and interviews, and beyond. Whilst I am grateful for this unqualified support for the principles, the detail regarding specific recommendations, particularly around data and transparency, will have to be carefully monitored.

The Government and Cabinet Office have a fantastic opportunity to set a gold standard and demonstrate, not just the benefits of diversity, but how to recruit the best talent.