



Department
for Education

Children's
COMMISSIONER

Children's Commissioner Information pack



WELCOME

The role of the Children's Commissioner is to promote and protect the rights of children, with a particular focus on ensuring that the views of the most vulnerable children are heard. With the term of the current Children's Commissioner ending in February 2021, we are looking for a committed champion of children's rights to take on this high profile and exciting national role.

The Children's Commissioner is an independent ambassador for children's rights, ensuring their views and interests are heard. This is an autonomous and influential position across government and not-for-profit sectors.

We are looking for a high-calibre individual to perform this critical role, with an understanding of the issues facing children, services working for children and the policy environment, with a proven track record of successfully creating partnerships, communicating to wide and varied audiences and the skill to challenge and influence. Above all, candidates must have the ability to engage with, and represent the views of, children and young people.

Candidates will have an understanding of the wider political context with experience of stakeholder management and partnership working. They will have high personal impact and professional standing in their field, with the ability to persuade, influence and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Above all the successful candidate will have desire, passion, empathy and conviction in the cause of children's rights.

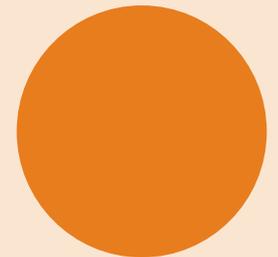
My Department is focused on equality of opportunity and I am committed to ensuring that public appointments better represent the views of the communities which they serve. I particularly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, those based outside London and the South-East and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

I hope that you find this opportunity as inspiring and exciting as I do and that you will want to explore it in greater depth. If you do, and wish to have an informal and confidential discussion about this appointment please contact Christina Bankes and Katy Weeks, Deputy Directors (Jobshare.BANKES-WEEKS@education.gov.uk).

The appointment will be made in December 2020, for a period of six years from 1 March 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education



The Office of the Children's Commissioner was created following a recommendation made by Lord Laming in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry.

The Commissioner operates as a corporation sole, sponsored by the Department for Education and is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. The Commissioner's primary function is promoting and protecting the rights of children in England.

The legislative basis for the Office of Children's Commissioner is in Part 1 and Schedule 1 of the Children Act 2004. This establishes the independence of the office and the six year tenure of the post holder www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents

The legislation relating to the Children's Commissioner is permissive, allowing significant flexibility for the Commissioner to determine how best to carry out his or her primary function of promoting and protecting children's rights. A non-exhaustive list of activities contained in the legislation serves to illustrate the breadth of the Commissioner's remit and includes:

- gathering and promoting awareness of the views and interests of children;
- advising central and local government and those who work with children, on children's rights, views and interests;
- monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in England;
- investigating any matter relating to the rights of children, including the adequacy of complaints and advocacy services for children;
- carrying out and following up on children's rights impact assessments on new policies and legislation that affect children;
- commissioning research relevant to the rights, views and interests of children; and
- providing advice and assistance to children who live away from home or are in receipt of social care services.

The Commissioner is not an Ombudsman and, in general, cannot conduct investigations into the case of an individual child.

The Commissioner is bound by the seven guiding principles of public life (Nolan Principles) and is required to account for the public funding allocated to the role. In 2019/20, the Commissioner was allocated a budget of £2.73m.

The Commissioner is also allowed to appoint staff to assist in the delivery of their functions. Currently, the Commissioner employs around 25 staff.

More information about the operation of the current Commissioner is available on the Children's Commissioner website www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us



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The Department for Education has a strong culture of inclusion and diversity and it wants to encourage applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and educational routes. In 2018 we launched a five year strategy to create a department where everyone is able to bring their whole self to work and where honesty, challenge and innovation are encouraged and valued. We are recognised by leading diversity organisations for promoting diversity in the workplace.

We want to ensure any appointee to the Department's arm's length bodies is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to the principles of levelling up and championing opportunity for all across the organisation, helping to ensure that the organisation is one which a genuinely diverse range of views can be expressed, without fear or favour.

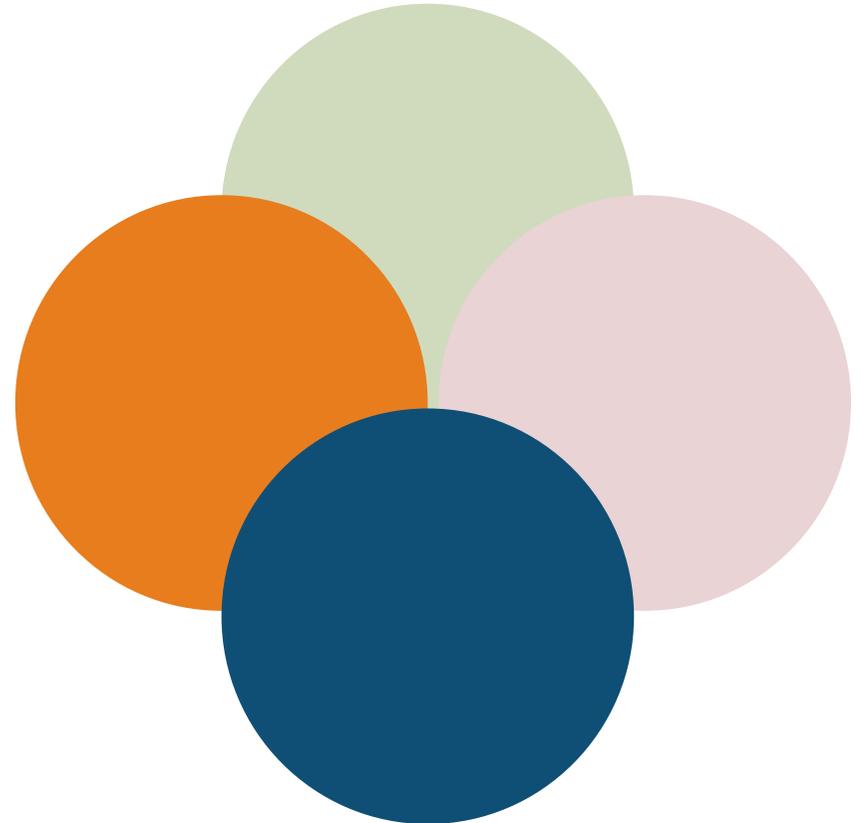
CHAMPIONING SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Department champions social mobility in all of its policies and is committed to opening up opportunities for people from all backgrounds, all socio-economic classes and all regions of the UK. We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments and expect all our leaders, including in arm's length bodies, to take action to attract and retain staff from all backgrounds, while also supporting them to progress within their careers

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme and have achieved Disability Confident Leader status, signifying our role as champions of the scheme. We use the Disability Confident symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability.

We ask that all applicants complete an anonymised Diversity Monitoring Form used for gathering data only in order to ensure departments are recruiting from the widest possible pool. The information you provide is held by the Public Appointments team and not shared with the selection panel.



WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We recommend that applicants familiarise themselves with the role of the Commissioner set out in Part 1 of the Children Act 2004 and with the work of the current Commissioner.

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate the following **essential** criteria:

- An understanding of the issues and problems facing children and young people in England, and the ability to bring about solutions that have a demonstrable impact on children's lives.
- The ability to demonstrate a pragmatic approach to addressing and resolving complex issues, with a particular focus on delivering outcomes.
- The ability to lead a high profile and complex organisation, create effective partnership working and provide valuable challenge.
- The confidence and ability to successfully communicate, influence and work collaboratively with a wide range of groups – including children, decision makers, government and parliament.
- An understanding of all relevant statutory duties and how children's rights are protected and promoted through domestic legislation.

We also expect candidates to be able to demonstrate the following **desirable** criteria:

- Understanding and knowledge of the key rights of children such as, a child's right to quality of education and the rights of children who are living away from home or receiving social care.
- Ability and working understanding of financial management and the importance of securing value for money.
- The ability to think strategically about the issues affecting children and young people.
- The ability to engage effectively with and gain the confidence of children and young people in order to represent their views and interests.



HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is:
18 September 2020

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process, requisite security clearance, and the Assessment Panel can be found on the Centre for Public Appointments website publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Please submit the following documents by email to:

**PublicAppointments.
APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk**

1. A personal statement,

which demonstrates how you meet the key requirements for the role, as set out in “who we’re looking for” section. No more than two sides of A4 in font 12.

2. A CV

3. Candidate Declaration Form

4. Diversity Monitoring Form

If submitting your application by email please include the heading “Children’s Commissioner for England” in the subject box and submit your application documents as separate attachments.

Please note the following:

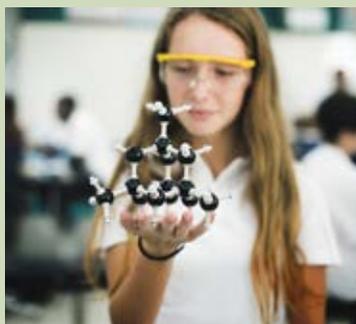
- We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications will be assessed on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation. We will assess it based solely on documentation provided.
- Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.
- Feedback will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview.
- When 30 or more applications are received, it is likely that your application will be “pre-assessed” by departmental officials before it is passed to the shortlisting Panel for consideration. You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all the members of the Panel.

We expect to notify candidates of application outcomes in **w/c 26 October 2020.**

Interviews will take place **in London** (subject to any ongoing travel restrictions) **in w/c 2 November 2020.** Candidates will also be invited to attend a panel with a group of children and young people as part of our assessment of ability to communicate with children.

The appointment will be made in **w/c 14 December 2020.**

This appointment comes under the scrutiny of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Peter Riddell, and his office. Please note that the successful candidate will be required to attend a pre-appointment hearing with the Education Select Committee, more information on next page.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The appointment will be for a period of six years.

Candidates will take up post from 1 March 2021.

Reappointment to this role is not permitted within the legislation.

Appointment is made by Secretary of State for Education on the basis of paragraph 3 of **Schedule 1** of the Children Act 2004.

This appointment is also made in compliance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code, which requires you to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Remuneration

The post affords remuneration of between £120,000 - £130,000.

Pension

The post is covered by the Civil Service Compensation Scheme and has access to the Civil Service Pension Scheme.

Location

Flexible. The Commissioner's office is based in Westminster, see address below, therefore frequent travel to London is expected.

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
Westminster
London SW1P 3BT

Disqualification from appointment

There are circumstances in which an individual will not be considered for appointment.

They include:

- people who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of three months or more in the last five years;
- people who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- in certain circumstances, those who have had an earlier term of appointment to another public body terminated;
- anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; and
- anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance is 25 days with remuneration, increasing by 1 day for each year of service up to a maximum of 30 days. In addition, you will receive 8 English Public Holidays and 1 day privilege leave for which you are also remunerated.

Sick Leave

Remuneration will be available for absences on sick leave. The paid entitlement to sick leave will be subject to length of service.

Pre-appointment Scrutiny by Education Select Committee

This role is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the Education Select Committee.

Pre-appointment scrutiny is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny to verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Pre-appointment scrutiny has two parts.

First, information concerning the appointment and the Minister's preferred candidate will be shared with the relevant select committee. As part of this process you will need to be content for your name and your CV to be shared with the select committee as the Government's preferred candidate. You may also be required to complete a pre-appointment hearing questionnaire which could include, among other things:

- declarations of any relevant potential conflicts of interest;
- what you see as the priorities and key risks for the organisation;
- questions about how you would lead the board and work with stakeholders;
- your commitment to standards in public life and how you would handle being in the public eye.

Normally any information provided to the select committee by the Government or a candidate will be published.

Second, it is likely that the select committee will decide to call the Government's preferred candidate to a public hearing to answer questions relating to their suitability to the role. You would not be expected to have an in-depth technical knowledge of how the body works or an exact plan of what you would do in the role. However, you will be expected to provide a credible representation of your understanding of the work of the body and what your role in its future would be.

The pre-appointment hearing for this role will be confirmed in due course, and is likely to be held in early December.

The Government is committed to making public appointments as accessible as possible so that no one is deterred from applying. The Department will provide support to you to help you prepare for the hearing and the clerks to the select committee will also be available to discuss with you how the hearing will run. You will also be supported by the Department in working with the select committee should you require any adjustment to enable you to participate fully in the hearing process.

More information

For more information about pre-appointment scrutiny, please see

Cabinet Office Guidance: Pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons Select Committees:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-appointment-scrutiny-by-house-of-commons-select-committees>

The Liaison Committee also publishes guidelines to select committees for pre-appointment hearings:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/liason-committee/role/pre-appointment-guidelines/>

You may also find it helpful to review the Code of Conduct for board members of public bodies here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/board-members-of-public-bodies-code-of-conduct. This sets out the expectations which the Government places on non-executive members of public bodies.

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



HOW TO COMPLAIN

Please contact the Department for Education's Public Appointments team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at

PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at **publicappointments@csc.gov.uk**

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website **publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk**