



Cabinet Office



Independent Member
Honours Independent Committee

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

Closing date for this post is: Friday 16 July 2021

Applications should be sent to:
honoursrecruitment@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Prime Minister's strategic priorities for the honours system

The work of the independent honours committees is guided by the Prime Minister's priorities.

Mr Johnson reaffirmed that honours should be awarded 'merit first' – to those who give service above and beyond – and not to those who are just doing their job. Honours are not to reward longevity in a role, seniority or age.

In supporting the Government's levelling up agenda, the Prime Minister would like to see representation from the length and breadth of the UK, reflecting the extraordinary contributions made across every part of this country, with a real focus in recognising parts of the country often overlooked.

In awarding honours, the Prime Minister would like to see individuals who have provided outstanding service with clear and specific examples of how their results have delivered real change to people's lives or had a positive impact on the country.

Individuals must represent values which reflect the UK and recognise the exceptional role the UK plays in the world.

He would like to see the system especially recognise those:

- innovators and entrepreneurs who create thriving businesses and deliver growth across the country and export to new markets
- individuals who are unleashing our potential in emerging sectors, striving to find new technologies, deliver a cleaner environment as well as improve global biodiversity
- who deliver excellence in culture and education
- charities and groups which deliver meaningful change locally in tackling crime, improving the local environment and delivering integration as well as individuals who support the aim of increasing the chances of female education across the globe
- individuals who have put their own lives at risk to protect and defend the lives of others
- public servants and those in public life who have delivered an exceptional service to provide help and support to the people of the United Kingdom
- individuals who worked to support the Union of all four constituent nations of the United Kingdom

The Prime Minister is grateful for the support of everyone involved in adhering to this guidance.

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister
5 May 2020

Background to the Honours System

The modern honours system is intended to recognise merit, achievement and excellence in all areas of UK life. The Prime Minister of the day sets strategic priorities for the honours system. Successive recent Prime Ministers have asked that the system honours people who give service above and beyond – and not those who are just doing their job.

Honours lists are published twice a year at New Year (usually 30 or 31 December) and on the Sovereign's Official Birthday (currently the middle of June). Three separate lists comprise the half-yearly list:

- the Prime Minister's List – managed by the Cabinet Office, for those contributing to the UK, of around 1,300 people (although some people living outside the UK may also be considered);
- the Diplomatic Service and Overseas List – managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), for members of the Diplomatic Service and for those UK citizens working in the UK's interests abroad, of around 150 people; and
- the Defence Services List – managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), for members of the Armed Forces, of around 200 people.

There are ten independent committees which assess nominations for the Prime Minister's List. The majority of awards recommended by the honours committees are in the Order of the British Empire.

Typically, the Prime Minister's List is made up of around 30 people appointed as Dames or Knights, with around 120 people awarded a CB/CBE. These are considered the highest honours and in all they represent no more than 15% of the list. The overwhelming majority of people recognised will receive OBEs, MBEs and BEMs, and generally represent those who have made valuable contributions at a relatively local level.

Role of the Independent Committees

Honours committees meet twice a year in advance of each honours list being published. Your commitment as a committee member is to attend the meetings, one in January-March for a Birthday honours round and one in September-October for a New Year honours round. There is extensive pre-reading for the committee.

As an honours committee member, you are asked to:

- attend each honours committee meeting whenever possible;
- read and develop views the honours committee papers in advance of the meeting;
- play a role in supporting Government departments to build pipelines of possible future nominees in your area of expertise;
- act as an ambassador for the honours system in outreach activities, particularly by promoting the honours system through your professional networks.

Committee members act independently, recommending honours candidates to the Prime Minister and Her Majesty The Queen. Nominations are assessed case-by-case on their

specific merits. This is a high profile area of work, which attracts considerable public and media interest.

Committees are supported by the Honours and Appointments Secretariat, which currently consists of 25 team members who are based in the Cabinet Office.

Much of the Committees work is undertaken at the twice-yearly honours committees, held in London with an option to video conference into the meeting.

Current Committee membership can be found at www.gov.uk/honours.

About the Education Committee

The Education Committee's remit is to consider nominees put forward for their work in the following sectors: Scholars; academics; researchers; teachers in all educational organisations from schools to universities (state & independent); children's services staff ; educational charities and philanthropists.

About the Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office supports the Prime Minister and ensures the effective running of government. The Department is the corporate headquarters for government, in partnership with HM Treasury, and takes the lead in certain critical policy areas.

The Cabinet Office has responsibility for:

- supporting collective government, helping to ensure the effective development, coordination and implementation of policy;
- supporting the National Security Council and the Joint Intelligence Organisation, coordinating the government's response to crises and managing the UK's cyber security;
- promoting efficiency and reform across government through innovation, better procurement and project management, and by transforming the delivery of services;
- promoting the release of government data, and making the way government works more transparent;
- creating an exceptional Civil Service, improving its capability and effectiveness; and
- political and constitutional reform.

The Department's priorities are to:

- support the Prime Minister and Cabinet to deliver the government's programme;
- drive efficiencies and reforms that will make government work better;
- create a more united democracy; and
- strengthen and secure the United Kingdom at home and abroad.

Person specification and eligibility criteria

All candidates must demonstrate, in their CV and supporting letter, how they meet the following criteria, through their knowledge, skills and experience.

Person specification and eligibility criteria

Due to the nature and high profile of the honours system, the work and outcomes often attract considerable public and media interest. The candidate should therefore be someone of outstanding integrity and be open to promoting the honours system within their sector or region.

We would particularly welcome applications from those with experience of the Higher and Further Education sectors, or those based outside of London and the South East.

The successful candidates should be experts in the Education field and whose expertise has been gained by paid, voluntary or academic work in these areas. They must be able to command the confidence of other experts in the sector and will be persons of distinction in their own fields who are well qualified to judge the relative merits of different candidates for honours.

They will be able to act with independence of judgement and be individuals of the highest standards of probity and discretion. They will need to be sympathetic with the aims of the honours system and have an awareness of the importance of diversity in the honours process. We would particularly welcome applications from those with a proven track record of championing and improving diversity in their field.

Essential criteria

The successful candidate will need to demonstrate the following skills:

- Ability to be part of a diverse team of influential people;
- Excellent judgment, and knowledge of those in the sector they are representing;
- Ability to consider all the information presented, identify key issues and make objective and balanced decisions;
- Excellent communication skills (written and oral); and
- Personal integrity and strength of character.

For this post, a person cannot be appointed as a Committee Member if he or she is employed in the civil service of the state, has unspent criminal convictions, is subject to bankruptcy, or disqualification as a company director. There must be no employment restrictions, or limit on your permitted stay in the UK.

Conditions of appointment

Remuneration, allowances and abatement

- Members can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on Committee business
- The post is not pensionable.

Appointment and tenure of office

- Committee members are appointed by the Prime Minister for a three year term.

- It will be important that the successful applicant's other commitments do not cast any doubt on their ability to act impartially in discharging the role; any potential conflict of interest must be declared.
- All Committee Members are required to adhere to The Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 1)

Commitment

- Chairs of honours committees are expected to commit to an average of six meetings a year. This would usually be two independent committee meetings, two Main Committee meetings and two pipelining meetings.
- The chair has additional responsibilities including setting the agenda for their specialist Committee on developing the candidate pipeline.
- The person in this role would be expected to undertake promotional and outreach activity on behalf of the honours system.

In addition, all members of the Committee must:

- ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of independent honours committees and the honours system. New Committee members will be inducted by the Secretariat;
- ensure they act in accordance with the Code of Practice for members (see Appendix 1) and the Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 2);
- comply with any rules set by the Cabinet Office regarding the reimbursement of expenses, the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, conflict of interest and declaration of interests; and
- not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the role of public service to promote their private interests or those of closely connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations.

Indicative timetable and how to apply

Timetable for recruitment

Closing date: Monday 19 July 2021

Shortlisting: TBC

Interviews held: TBC

Provision appointment start date: September 2021

Due to limited availability of selection panel members, shortlisted candidates should ensure that they are available to attend on the advertised interview date as it is unlikely that an alternative date can be accommodated.

Interviews will be held remotely.

In order for us to progress your application please submit the following completed documentation:

1. A **Curriculum Vitae** (maximum 2 A4 pages) with your education, professional qualifications and full employment history
2. An accompanying **Supporting Letter** (maximum 2 A4 pages) – setting out your suitability for the role and how you meet the essential skills set out in the person specification - please ensure your full name is clearly noted at the top of your letter.
3. **Diversity monitoring form (attached separately)** - this form will not be disclosed to the panel involved in assessing your application.

Please send all the above required application documents to:
Honoursrecruitment@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Due to working from home arrangements, we are unable to accept applications in hard copy at this time.

How we will handle your application

The process is one of fair and open competition.

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will keep you informed at key stages:

- After the closing date we will acknowledge receipt of your application (by email if you have provided this).
- Your application will be assessed against the candidate profile and your experience relevant to the post. **Please ensure that your application includes a supporting letter (as set out above), providing evidence that demonstrates how you meet the criteria. Submitting a Curriculum Vitae alone will not be sufficient.**
- At the short-listing meeting the selection panel will decide which candidates will be invited for interview, taking account of the evidence provided by the candidates. **You will be advised of the outcome of your application (by email) as soon as possible. If successful, you will be invited to an interview in central London or if social distancing restrictions remain in place, interviews will be held remotely over video conferencing.**
- The chair of the committee which the candidate is being recruited to may wish to meet the candidates who are deemed appointable by the selection panel. You will be advised after the interview if this is the case and a mutually suitable time will be arranged as soon as possible.
- If your application is unsuccessful and you would like feedback, please write to the email address to which you sent your application. We regret that we are only able to

offer detailed feedback to candidates who have been unsuccessful at interview stage.

- If you have a complaint about the way your application has been handled at any stage of the process, please see the section on “How to complain” below.

Candidates should be aware that due diligence will be carried out in candidates shortlisted for interview. This will include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information.

Use of your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending us any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information;
- ensure you know why we need it;
- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't;
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information;
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary; and
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised.

We ask that you:

- give us accurate information;
- tell us as soon as possible of any changes; and
- tell us as soon as possible if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you.

If you apply for a post, the manner in which we share information with the interview panel is described above.

Our data protection policy is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

If you would like these details to be removed from our records as soon as this recruitment exercise is complete, please inform the Honours and Appointments Secretariat via the email address to which you sent your application

Diversity and Equality of opportunity

Diversity of opportunity is something the Cabinet Office cares passionately about.

Applications are encouraged from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender identity. We particularly welcome applications from women, those with a disability, those from a black or ethnic minority

background and those living outside of London and the South East. We want to explore the widest possible pool of talent for these important appointments.

Offering an Interview to Disabled People (GIS scheme)

As a Disability Confident employer, we will ensure that disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for this position will be offered an interview.

[The Equality Act 2010](#) defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If you wish to indicate that you are disabled or have a long-term health condition, please complete the **Disability Confident - Offering an Interview to Disabled People** declaration in the supporting documents and send it with your application.

Flexible working practices

The Cabinet Office supports flexible working practices and as a national organisation has video conferencing available for communications between regional and central offices. Committee members are expected to commit to quarterly meetings.

Location

Meetings are usually held in London. All meetings are currently being held remotely.

Standards in public life, political activity, disqualification from appointment and conflicts of interests

Standards in public life

Members of the Independent Honours Committees will need to confirm that they understand the standards of probity required of public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life” drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see Appendix 1 below).

Political Activity

Members of the Independent Honours Committees will need to show political impartiality during their time on the Committee and must declare any party political activity they undertake in the period of their appointment.

Due to the nature of Independent Honours Committees it is not appropriate for independent members of the Committee to occupy paid party political posts or hold sensitive, senior or prominent positions in any political organisation. Nomination for election to political office, for example, the House of Commons, the Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament, the European Parliament, is not considered compatible with membership of Independent Honours Committees.

These provisions do not apply to political members of the Political and Parliamentary Services Honours Committee.

Subject to the above, Committee members are free to engage in political activities, provided that they are conscious of their general responsibilities and standards for public life and exercise proper discretion.

You are required to fill out a Political Activity Declaration as part of your application (please see monitoring forms), which will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the selection panel prior to interview. However, it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision-making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should include it separately in the main body of your application.

If you are successfully appointed to the post, details of your response to the Political Activity Declaration will be included in any announcement of your appointment.

Disqualification from appointment

Anyone in the categories listed below will not be considered for appointment as Chair of Independent Honours Committees (also see 'Political Activity' above):

- Employed in the civil service of the state
- Unspent criminal convictions
- Bankruptcy
- Disqualification as a company director.

Conflict of Interests

The Honours and Appointments Secretariat maintains a register of committee members' interests to avoid any danger of the Committee Member being influenced - or appearing to be influenced - by their private interests in the exercise of their duties. Candidates invited to interview will be questioned about any real or perceived conflicts of interest. These do not constitute an automatic bar to appointment, but they must be manageable.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

All candidates for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.