



Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Minister for Implementation
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

Our ref: PS/0677

Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

3 December 2018

Dear Lord Holmes,

Re: the publication of *The Lord Holmes Review: opening up public appointments to disabled people*.

I am delighted to have received a copy of your report *The Lord Holmes Review: opening up public appointments to disabled people*, published today on the International Day of People with Disabilities.

First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to take on this complex project in June of this year, and delivering a comprehensive review and set of recommendations in such short order. I firmly believe that it is essential that public appointees are truly representative of the society they serve. Diverse public boards are more effective, benefiting from fresh perspectives, new ideas, vigorous challenge and broad experiences. It is both morally right to ensure greater participation from disabled people but I also believe it will lead to better decision-making.

Your recommendations

When we first met to discuss this Review in June you were clear that you hoped to publish stretching, deliverable recommendations that were specific to disability, and which also had wider applicability to public appointments generally. I feel you have delivered on that commitment, and I will be considering these carefully.

There is a good balance of short, medium and long-term change outlined in the report. Your recommendations suggest improvements across each of the key points of the appointment process, from attracting applicants, to the application process to interview and assessments, and I welcome these.

Your observations on the data that the Government holds about public appointees, and proposals on how to improve data quality, transparency and encourage more disabled

applicants to share their disability status are particularly valuable and Cabinet Office will consider how to respond to these recommendations as a matter of priority. I will consider the recommendation to set an aspiration for a representative percentage of public appointees who declare a disability, as we have done for gender and BAME. It is clear that setting a specific, meaningful and evidence-based number would require developing a clear and robust dataset.

The government will assess how your recommendations could be implemented and develop a plan to achieve the outcomes that you suggest including considering the resource requirements and timescales so that it is appropriately supported. Public Appointments are made by many departments across government and I will work with ministerial colleagues to consider how we achieve the aims you set out.

I want to reassure you and the many stakeholders who gave of their time to support your work that this Review document will only be the start. The government's response and an update to the public appointments diversity action plan will be published in the spring.

I will deposit this letter and a copy of this report in the Library of both Houses today; and I will deposit the government's final response alongside it once that has been completed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Dowden', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Oliver Dowden CBE MP