



Department  
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Food & Rural Affairs

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Baroness Hayman  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

16 April 2024

Dear Sue,

I am writing in relation to the debate on the Fair Dealing Obligation (Milk) Regulations 2024, on Monday 25 March.

During the debate, you raised a question about the new adjudicator, who will be responsible for the enforcement of the Regulations; the Agricultural Supply Chain Adjudicator (ASCA). In my closing speech, I stated:

*"We are currently recruiting our new agricultural supply chain adjudicator. The final decision will be taken by Ministers following the due Civil Service process".*

Regrettably, this is an inadvertent mischaracterisation of how the recruitment process for the new adjudicator will operate. The ASCA is not a public appointment and, as such, government ministers do not make the final decision regarding the candidate.

Rather, the normal process for Senior Civil Service recruitment is being used, in line with the statutory Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles. Given the importance of this role and that the Minister for Food, Farming, and Fisheries has an interest in this appointment, he has been given the opportunity to meet with each of the shortlisted candidates to discuss his priorities, the candidates' approach to the role and to feed back to the selection panel views on any issues he wants the panel to test in the final interviews. In line with the Recruitment Principles, a representative of the Civil Service Commission will attend these meetings. The final decision on the appointment will be made by the selection panel on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

I will deposit this letter in the Parliamentary library. I am also copying to the Noble Lords, Lord Curry of Kirkharle and Lord Grantchester and the Rt Rev. the Lord Bishop of Hereford, who also asked questions regarding the new adjudicator.

Yours sincerely,

**LORD DOUGLAS-MILLER**