The Commissioner for Public Appointments

Annual Report

2024|25

At a glance

The work of the Commissioner for Public Appointments 2024-25

449

new regulated public appointments made in 2024-25

128

requests from UK Government departments and the Welsh Government

3,915

public appointees in post in 2024-25

51

appointments without competition

98

regulated public appointments and reappointments made by the Welsh Government in 2024-25

11

complaints considered and assessed

4%

UK government public appointees who declared a disability

5

breaches identified and mitigated

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Commissioner's Foreword

In 2024-25, I completed my penultimate year in office, some 30 years after the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended the creation of an independent Commissioner for Public Appointments. It has thus been a year of reflection, of what has improved in appointments and what more still needs to be done.

Much has improved in public appointments in recent years. In 1996-97, women made up just 34% of appointees. Today women make up a majority of public appointees, and progress well through campaigns. The representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds has also significantly increased.
The Governance Code on Public Appointments, recently updated by the government, is intended to facilitate an open, fair and meritocratic system of ministerial appointments. Ministers must take independent advice prior to selecting candidates for roles. Non-compliance with this Code and the Principles of Public Appointments is unusual and standards of conduct are generally high.

Of course, there are still improvements to be made. In 2024-25, I was disappointed to see some recurring issues. Timeliness, if improved from 2023-24, is still too low at only 16.7% of campaigns being completed within three months. Slow campaigns have a real impact on candidates and public bodies alike, seriously undermining the efficacy of government. I am encouraged by the government's drive to improve the appointments process and hope the new Governance Code will make strides in making campaigns quicker. In particular, the increased accountability and transparency of the involvement of the Prime Minister's Office in appointments campaigns should help with speeding up the process for the most significant roles.

I am proud to carry out my duty under the Governance Code, to be an 'active advocate for diversity' and to fulfil my responsibility to report on data on 'improving diversity in public appointments'. As such, I find the low representation of people with disabilities across all public appointments another troubling area. In my 2023-24 Annual Report, I expressed concern about the low representation of people with disabilities being appointed to roles. I remain worried that departments, by and large, are still not doing enough to help people with disabilities access public appointments. Departments should be seriously considering what more they need to do to improve the recruitment of people with disabilities.

Diversity must also be understood in its broadest sense. The purpose of increasing diversity in public appointments is to ensure that public bodies draw upon the widest possible range of talent. This requires an appointments system that draws the strongest candidates from the broadest field. That is how the appointments process earns trust. Ultimately, the public deserves to be served by the best people, chosen on

merit, wherever they come from and whatever their background. The purpose of the public appointments system is to identify these individuals, who can meet serious responsibilities with sound judgement.

In my final months in office, I look forward to working with departments to identify and resolve the challenges preventing timely campaigns and the recruitment of people with disabilities. I wish to leave a public appointments system that is more efficient, while ensuring that appointments processes are open and fair to all.

William Shawcross CVO
Commissioner for Public Appointments

The Principles of Public Appointments

The Principles of Public Appointments apply to all those involved with public appointments processes.

Ministerial responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for appointments and thus the selection of those appointed rests with Ministers who are accountable to Parliament for their decisions and actions. Welsh Ministers are accountable to Senedd Cymru, Welsh Parliament.

Selflessness

Ministers when making appointments should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Ministers when making appointments 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.

Merit

All public appointments should be governed by the principle of appointment on merit. This means providing Ministers with a choice of high quality candidates, drawn from a strong, diverse field, whose skills, experiences and qualities have been judged to meet the needs of the public body or statutory office in question.

Openness

Processes for making public appointments should be open and transparent.

Diversity

Public appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live.

Assurance

There should be established assurance processes with appropriate checks and balances. The Commissioner for Public Appointments has an important role in providing independent assurance that public appointments are made in accordance with these Principles and this Governance Code.

Fairness

Selection processes should be fair, impartial and each candidate must be assessed against the same criteria for the role in question.

Public Service

All public appointments should be seen as an opportunity to ensure that exceptional people from across the United Kingdom are given the chance to serve the public and utilise their skills and expertise to drive progress.

Introduction

The role of the Commissioner

The Commissioner for Public Appointments was created in 1995, after a recommendation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). In the 30 years since, the Commissioner and the regulation of public appointments has taken a system that was seen as opaque, informal and exclusive to a much more fair and open system, in which merit and diversity are central.

The Commissioner's role in this has remained constant - upholding a code of practice that codifies a process of fair, open and merit-based competitions. The Commissioner does this by enforcing the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments, including the Principles of Public Appointments, and by using his powers within the Public Appointments (No.2) Order in Council 2023 to audit departments, investigate complaints and interrogate potential poor practice. By doing this, the Commissioner provides assurance that the government follows the correct procedures when making public appointments.

30 years of the Commissioner

In the thirtieth year since the Commissioner's creation, it is worth reminding ourselves why the CSPL recommended the independent oversight and regulation of ministerial public appointments. Formed in October 1994, after a number of scandals involving paid lobbying by MPs, the CSPL had a broad remit that encompassed standards across Parliament, the civil service and public bodies, including appointments. CSPL proposed a new system that preserved the principle of 'accountability to Parliament', ensuring that the ultimate responsibility for appointments remained with Ministers. The committee also sought to minimise the risk of harm that resulted from informal processes.[1] This was done through the creation of an 'independent body', the Commissioner, which would set the standards for appointments processes and would monitor these processes to sustain public confidence in the appointments system.[2]

Across multiple different iterations of the Governance Code (or Code of Practice, as it was until 2016), these core elements of the system proposed by Nolan have persisted for 30 years:

1. Ministers are the ultimate decision makers on appointments.
2. Such decisions are only made after having received advice from an advisory assessment panel, which contains an independent member.
3. The process for making a public appointment, from application to final appointment, must be open

[1]Committee on Standards in Public Life, *Standards in Public Life: First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life*, May 1995 < assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>, p.11-12. Hereafter, 'the Nolan Report'.

[2] The Nolan Report, pp.11-12.

and transparent, enabling proper parliamentary and public scrutiny.

Each of these elements ensures public confidence in the system. The government, elected by the public, decides who serves on public boards and bodies. But by taking advice on the merit of candidates, the temptation, identified by Lord Nolan, to appoint candidates based on personal or political proximity alone is tempered. Finally, by making this process more transparent and accessible the public can have confidence that public appointments are not restricted to a well-connected few but are genuinely open and meritocratic.

Since the Nolan Report, the public appointments system has come a long way. In the inaugural report of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Sir Len Peach, the first office holder, wrote of resistance within government to advertising roles publicly. Individuals complained that this bureaucracy would undermine boards and that a 'private approach…had more chance of success'.[3]

Such complaints would be unthinkable today. All competitions for roles are advertised publicly, on <apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk>, or <cais.tal.net>, for Welsh Government roles. Data is collected on the diversity and social background of public appointees. Ministers, civil servants and public bodies alike show a genuine commitment to ensuring that boards represent the public they serve and all know the value of a fair and open system in attracting excellent candidates.

Five years in public appointments

The Commissioner's term of office has coincided with a period of unusually frequent change at the top of government, with four Prime Ministers and seven Chancellors of the Exchequer since September 2021.[4] A welcome constant has been the compliance of departments with the Governance Code. Breaches of the Code are rare and, where they do occur, are usually technical without any systemic risk. The Commissioner is pleased that, during his period in office, departments have shown determination to comply with the Code and seek the Commissioner's counsel in exceptional cases.

The Commissioner's assurance and regulation distinguishes between roles based on their public significance. In the highest tier are those appointments on the list of significant appointments and those roles subject to select committee scrutiny prior to an appointment being made. It is these highest tier roles where, if there is the perception of poor practice or non-compliance with the Code, risk to the appointments system as a whole is greatest. This is due to the wider public

[3] Commissioner for Public Appointments, *1995-96 Annual Report*, October 1996, <publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk> p.9

[4] Ministerial consistency is acknowledged to be a feature of successful reforms and projects, while rapid turnover undermines good government by leading to constant policy changes and hampering long term reform. See: Tom Sasse, Tim Durrant, Emma Norris and Ketaki Zodegar, 'Government reshuffles: the case for keeping ministers in post longer', *IfG Insight*, January 2020 <instituteforgovernment.org.uk>.

interest in appointments to the most important public bodies and boards, attracting a heightened level of scrutiny.

The Commissioner also has a role in identifying challenges in the appointments system and, where appropriate, pressing for change. In the 2023-24 Annual Report, the Commissioner reflected his belief that the involvement of the Prime Minister's Office in appointments processes was too slow and too opaque to command either public confidence or ensure proper customer care. He recommended that this process be made much more transparent for candidates. The recent revision to the Governance Code goes a long way to resolving these issues and improving openness. The Prime Minister's interest list is now published, enhancing candidates' understanding of the appointments process and enabling proper accountability of the Prime Minister's office's involvement in campaigns. A note on advertisements for campaigns on the list has now been added. While the Commissioner waits to see how these reforms work in practice, it is his strong belief that greater transparency and accountability can only improve the public appointments system.

The Commissioner's goals for 2025-26

In his final months in office, the Commissioner wishes to focus on providing further assurance for the most significant appointments. With a generally compliant appointment system, a proportionate regulatory approach should focus on the areas of the system where the best outcomes need heightened independent scrutiny.[5] To this end, the Commissioner will be directing his attention towards two points in the appointments system - the Senior Independent Panel Member (SIPM) and the role of select committees.

In October 2025, the government updated the Governance Code on Public Appointments. These are the largest changes since those made in 2017, following the *Better Public Appointments Review*. The Commissioner was consulted on the changes before publication. He welcomes them and will monitor their implementation.

The recent update to the Code has led the Commissioner to consider two system improvements. He will be looking at ways to improve SIPMs' understanding of the Governance Code and his link with SIPMs across campaigns. He could also look for ways to provide greater assistance to select committees, stressing the importance of effective pre-appointment scrutiny and using his powers to provide more information on campaigns.

Together, the Commissioner hopes that these actions will help improve the public appointments system.

[5] This is in-line with the *Better Regulation* framework, where the principle of 'Proportionality' emphasises the need to only regulate actively where the best outcomes require strong rules. Department for Business and Trade, *Better Regulation Framework: Guidance*, September 2023 <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk> p.3.

Commissioner Commendations

Like last year, as part of the Commissioner's annual audit departmental teams were asked what innovative solutions, they had used to address general or particular challenges. The Commissioner's Commendations for 2024-25 are awarded to:

Department for Health and Social Care: for completing high-profile campaigns at pace. In 2024-25, the Department ran campaigns for the Care Quality Commission and NHS England Chairs. By engaging quickly with Parliament and stakeholders, the Department was able to make both appointments in under 50 days - substantially under the Code's 90-day ambition.

Ministry of Defence: for introducing a new public appointments and public bodies sponsorship portal. This provides guidance and templates to guide sponsor teams through appointments campaigns, driving efficiencies in making appointments and ensuring consistency across the Ministry of Defence.

Department for Education: for effective use of the Public Appointments Digital Service by encouraging incumbent appointees to update their diversity data. As a result, 96% of Department for Education appointees have up to date diversity data, enabling the department to conduct informed outreach and engagement prior to recruitment campaigns being launched.

Department of Business and Trade: for exceptional candidate care, driven by strong relationships with private offices and No.10. This includes the campaign for the Small Business Commissioner, which went from launch to ministerial decision in 6 weeks. The Department also provides a weekly update for candidates on campaign progress, alongside "comprehensive" headhunting and discussions with potential applicants.

Annual audit, 2024-25

The annual report is the core vehicle used by the Commissioner for Public Appointments to provide public assurance in the appointments system. It is informed by an audit of UK Government departments and the Welsh Government. The Order in Council requires that:

The Commissioner must, in the manner the Commissioner thinks fit, carry out an audit of the procedures and practices followed by appointing authorities in making public appointments.[6]

This detailed examination of appointment procedures and practices allows the Commissioner to provide assurance that appointments are made in a fair and open manner, on the basis of merit. It also provides a forum where departments and the Welsh Government can share their strengths, weaknesses, innovations and any challenges they face in making appointments.

The 2024-25 audit retained the format introduced in 2022-23, with departments and the Welsh Government asked a set of qualitative questions reflecting on their strengths, weaknesses, and any wider challenges in the public appointments system. The findings of these questions are set out below. This is followed by a section on compliance with the Governance Code, including the consultations and notifications received by the Commissioner this year. Lastly, the second part of the report contains commentary on, and analysis of, diversity in public appointments.

Timeliness

In 2024-25, timeliness was consistently raised as an issue by departments. Last year was a nadir, with just 13% of campaigns concluded within the three-month aim. There has been marginal improvement in 2024-25, with 16.7% of campaigns completed within the three-month aim.[7] Still, it is notable - and concerning - that of the 17 departments providing data for both 2024-25 and 2023-24, only four improved, with 13 getting slower in delivering campaigns.

In 2024-25, and into 2025-26, the Commissioner pushed for measures to remove barriers to timely campaigns identified by departments. This includes driving for transparency in the involvement of the Prime Minister's office in public appointments. This recommendation has been implemented in the new Governance Code published in October 2025.

[6] Public Appointments Order in Council 2025, 4(2); hereafter 'Order in Council'. The Code makes two further references to the audit – confirming its purpose to provide data for the annual report and confirming, too, that departments should publish the necessary 'real-time' data on individual appointments. Governance Code on Public Appointments, 4.2 and 8.3; hereafter 'Governance Code'.

[7] This includes Welsh Government appointments. For UK Government appointments alone, 12% are completed within three months. Three months is taken to mean 90 days from applications closing to an offer call being made.

Table 1: Average number of days between closure to applications and offer accepted; listed by department, 2024-25[8]

Rank	Department	Avg. number of days taken per campaign
1	Scotland Office	84
2	Welsh Government	115
3	Ministry of Defence	117
4	Department for Business and Trade	141
5	Department of Health and Social Care	177
6	HM Treasury	179
7	Cabinet Office	187
8	Home Office	187
9	Department for Education	198
10	Northern Ireland Office	201
11	Department for Work and Pensions	207
12	Department for Science, Innovation & Technology	212
13	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	216
14	Ministry of Justice	219
15	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	232
16	Department for Energy Security & Net Zero	232
17	Department for Transport	251
18	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	267
19	Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office	273

[8] Data from Cabinet Office, *Public Appointments Annual Data Report: 2024*-25, 2 December 2025, <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>. Data as of 10 September 2025. The Commissioner understands there have been some changes as a result of departments reviewing their data during the course of his audit. It should also be noted that average campaign speeds can vary due to small sample sizes.

Table 2: Average number of days between closure to applications and offer accepted; listed by department, 2024-25 and 2023-24.[9]

Ministerial Department	2024-25	2023-24
Cabinet Office	187	125
Department for Business and Trade	141	202
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero	232	180
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology	212	262
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	232	150
Department for Education	198	135
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	216	125
Department for Transport	251	203
Department for Work and Pensions	207	194
Department of Health and Social Care	177	178
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	273	163
HM Treasury	179	116
Home Office	187	155
Ministry of Defence	117	129
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	267	103
Ministry of Justice	219	127
Northern Ireland Office	201	84
Scotland Office	84	No campaigns
UK Export Finance	No campaigns	133

To understand what reforms would be appropriate, the Commissioner also asked departments about the reasons underlying strong and weak performance in timeliness. In response, departments identified two main challenges:

1) The 2024 General Election led to delays. This was due to the pre-election period that followed the announcement of the election in May 2024 and prevented decisions being made until after the election.[10] In addition, the election of a new government and appointment of new ministers slowed some campaigns as new ministers were brought up to speed on public appointments, including ongoing campaigns. Positively, some departments have seen faster campaign speeds thus far through 2025-26, a year unaffected by a general election or change in government.[11]
2) A lack of panel member availability, especially following the delays resulting from the general election, also slowed campaigns. The Commissioner will

[9] This table is taken from Cabinet Office, *Public Appointments Annual Data Report: 2024-25*, 2 December 2025, <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>.p.6

[10] See Cabinet Office, *General election guidance 2024: guidance for civil servants*, 23 May 2024, <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk> pp.23-24.

[11] This includes DHSC, Defra and DBT who all provided responses noting the improvements in campaigns speeds in 2025-26.

be considering how the recruitment of panellists can be improved.

Compliance with the Governance Code

This section presents the Commissioner's involvement overseeing compliance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The first section focuses on the consultations and notifications during 2024-25. The second section discusses complaints received and breaches uncovered.

Consultations and notifications

The Commissioner was consulted or notified by ministers 128 times in 2024-25. These included:

- 51 consultations on ministerial decisions, under section 3.3 of the Governance Code, to make appointments without fair and open competition;
- 42 notifications of decisions by ministers, under section 3.6 of the Governance Code, to extend the tenure of public appointees beyond either two terms or a total of ten years;
- 31 agreed consultations on the appointment of Senior Independent Panel Members for campaigns for significant appointments, under section 6.2 of the Governance Code;
- Three consultations, under section 2(4) of the Order in Council, about treating new public appointments as though they were regulated;
- One request to make an addition to the list of significant appointments, under section 6.1 of the Governance Code

The Commissioner was not consulted or notified about ministers delegating responsibility for making appointments to any other body or person, under section 3.1 of the Governance Code. No minister chose to appoint a candidate deemed unappointable by an advisory assessment panel; the Commissioner therefore received no consultations under section 3.2 of the Governance Code. **Appendix 2** contains a full list of ministerial consultations and notifications of the Commissioner in 2024-25.

The number of consultations and notifications was slightly lower than the 134 in 2023-24 (Figure 1), though remained higher than in 2022-23 (96 times), 2021-22 (91 times) and 2020-21 (120 times).

It should be emphasised that the number of appointments made via sections 3.3 and 3.6 of the 2024 Governance Code represent a small proportion of total appointments, including those made through fair and open competition. Public pressure and the government's desire to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethics help to ensure that when appointments or reappointments are made through exceptions this only happens in truly exceptional cases - and not to circumvent open competition.

Senior Independent Panel Members

SIPMs are individuals familiar with senior recruitment and with the Governance Code, including the principles of public appointments. The Code requires that such individuals sit on all panels for significant appointments.[12] In 2024-25, the Commissioner was consulted 31 times on Senior Independent Panel Members, with 33 names put forward for consideration.[13] This is a decline on the 44 consultations in 2023-24.

As in previous years, there were some instances where the Commissioner recommended against using an individual as the SIPM where the person put forward did not comply with the Code. This happened primarily where the proposed SIPM was not politically independent or not sufficiently independent of the department.

The decision by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to introduce a SIPM list is therefore a welcome innovation.[14] The Commissioner looks forward to working with departments and the Cabinet Office to improve the process for selecting SIPMs.

Complaints

As part of the annual audit, UK Government departments reported a total of 17 complaints in the year between April 2024 and March 2025; one of these complaints was upheld.[15] The Welsh Government received five complaints in the same period and reported that none were upheld (Figure 2).

In the same period, the Commissioner received eleven complaints.[16] Only one complaint was found to be within his remit as set out by the Order in Council and the Governance Code. This went forward for detailed consideration and a technical breach was found where a campaign was launched on apply-for-a-public-appointment.gov.uk without any details of the role, person specification, deadlines or contact details for the campaign manager. This was found to have been an administrative error. For all other complaints, the Commissioner lacked jurisdiction. This was typically because the complaint concerned the outcome of an appointments process rather than the process followed. In some cases, a complaint related to parts of an appointments process but the complainant did not identify a specific element of the Governance Code that was breached. Finally, others required discussion first with the relevant departmental teams prior to a complaint being brought to the Commissioner.

As with last year, there appears to be an issue with the understanding of the Commissioner's remit and the process followed when reviewing and, if

[12] Governance Code, 6.1.
[13] In two instances, the Commissioner was asked to provide a view on two proposed SIPMs.
[14] This new process does not apply for Welsh Government significant appointments, where the previous process for selecting SIPMs will remain in place.
[15] This is compared with 13 complaints received by UK Government departments in 2023-24. The Welsh Government received one complaint in the same period.
[16] This is compared with ten in 2023-24.

applicable, investigating a complaint. The Commissioner does not have the power to consider all complaints relating to public sector appointments.

Instead, complaints must relate to a regulated public appointments process, should be raised with a department prior to being brought forward to the Commissioner, and should only be taken forward to the Commissioner if a complainant is dissatisfied with the department's investigation and decision.[17] The process is published on the Commissioner's website.[18] The Commissioner welcomes any complaints that meet the criteria in the published procedure.

Breaches and inquiries

The Commissioner's role of public assurance also requires that departments are held accountable where the procedures followed in making an appointment are not in compliance with the Governance Code. The Commissioner dissuades breaches of the Code through publication in the annual report, with the expectation that this discourages repeated breaches and improves system-wide knowledge of the Code's interpretation and application. In 2024-25, the Commissioner identified four breaches of the Governance Code.

Two breaches concern a failure to notify or consult the Commissioner prior to a reappointment or appointment being made under sections 3.3 or 3.6 of the 2024 Governance Code. Such breaches are significant insofar as the Commissioner's oversight role, set out in Principle G, Assurance, is key to appointments made via exception. A failure to consult or notify prevents the Commissioner from fulfilling his role in ensuring that appointments made without a competition or reappointments beyond 10 years do not breach the Principles of Public Appointments nor undermine public trust in the system as a whole. The Commissioner encourages departments to reach out to his office proactively in exceptional cases to avoid breaches such as this.[19]

Section 3.6 of the 2024 Code set out that there is a 'strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms or serve in any one post for more than ten years' and that '[i]n exceptional cases, Ministers may decide an individual's skills and expertise is needed beyond such a tenure. Such exceptional reappointments/extensions should be notified to the Commissioner for Public Appointments ahead of announcement.' The Welsh Government conceded to a breach when it announced the third-term reappointment of three members of Sport Wales without notifying the Commissioner.

[17] This means that complaints can only be brought forward to the Commissioner where the appointment is listed in the Schedule of the Order in Council. Order in Council, 4(4) and Governance Code, 4.4 set out the requirements for a complaint.

[18] Commissioner for Public Appointments, 'Complaints', nd., <publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk>

[19] This encouragement is also recognised in Section 4.3 of the Governance Code.

Figure 1: Commissioner's casework statistics, 2024-25 versus 2023-24

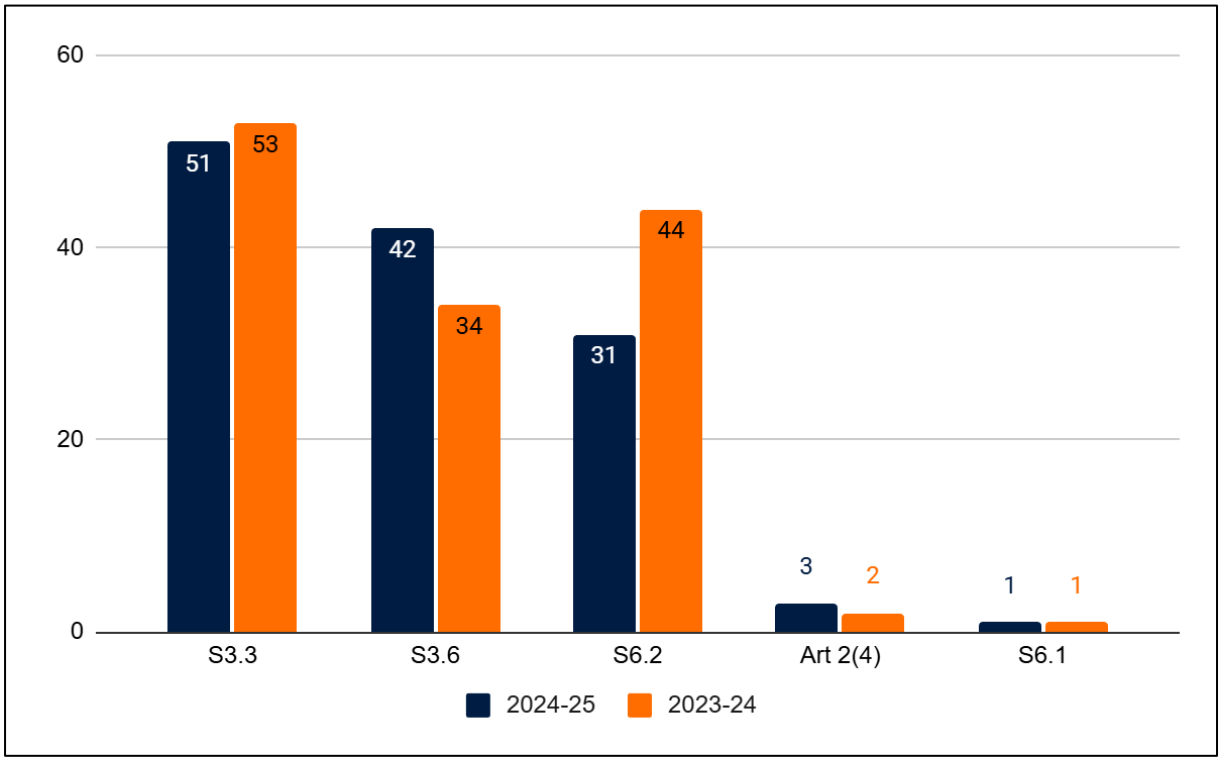
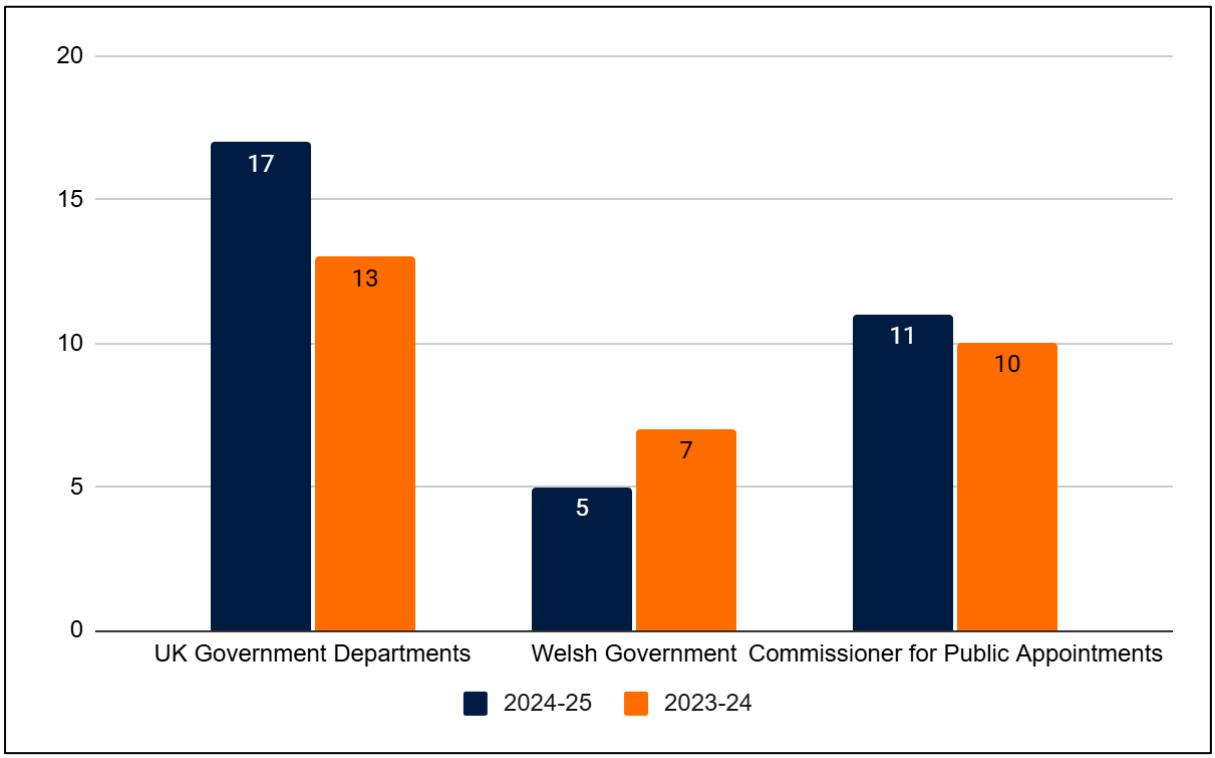


Figure 2: Complaints received by departments, the Welsh Government and the Commissioner, 2024-25 versus 2023-24



Section 3.3 of the 2024 Code allowed ministers, 'in exceptional cases' to appoint candidates without a competition. It is required that ministers

make this decision public alongside their reasons for doing so. They must consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments in good time before the appointment is publicly announced.

The sole breach of this section was by the Ministry of Justice. This related to the appointment of an Interim Chair to the Legal Services Board (LSB). After the substantive Chair unexpectedly resigned, the LSB's Board decided to elevate an individual from the Board as the interim Chair. The individual was publicly announced prior to consultation with the Commissioner and ministerial sign-off. Nearly two months after the announcement, the Commissioner was consulted after ministers had signed off on the interim appointment. Breaches like this are rare but risk undermining two core elements of the public appointments system: ministerial responsibility and the Commissioner's assurance. To avoid future situations such as this, in exceptional cases, such as an unexpected resignation, departments should ensure that public boards are well advised as to the requirements of the Governance Code.

Lastly, there was one breach under Section 6.2. This section sets out that:

Ministers must agree who the SIPM should be for each competition and should consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments ahead of the process commencing. Sufficient time should be built in for the Commissioner to discuss with either or both of the Minister or SIPM before the competition goes live.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport launched the campaign for British Museum trustees prior to having agreed the SIPM and so breached this section of the Code. As above, it is hoped that the implementation of the SIPM list should prevent similar breaches in future.

The state of public appointments

Introduction

Under the new Governance Code on Public Appointments, introduced in October 2025, the Commissioner has a new role in relation to assessing the state of public appointments. Under Section 4.2 of the revised Code, the Commissioner:

must publish an annual report reporting on the overall state of public appointments covered by the Order in Council. This should examine compliance with the Public Appointments Principles and this Code and progress on increasing diversity using data published by the Cabinet Office. The Commissioner may conduct an audit of departments or the Welsh Government to provide the data required to produce this analysis.

This year's annual report, therefore, assesses the public appointments data report published by the Cabinet Office in December 2025. This encompasses data for incumbent public appointees and new appointees across five categories: sex, ethnicity, disability, region and socio-economic background.

In addition, the Commissioner has also considered, as in previous years, other elements of the data collected by departments and the Cabinet Office, via the Public Appointments Digital Service (PADS), and the Welsh Government, who use a different system called Cais. This includes data across the following categories: political activity, age, sexual orientation, religious belief, and the number of additional appointments held by public appointees.

The stock data shows some positive developments in improving the representation of women and people from an ethnic minority background across all public appointments.[20] For the first time, women make up a majority of public appointees. Ethnic minority representation has also been improving over the past few years.

However, some persistent challenges remain. In last year's annual report, the Commissioner noted the poor representation of people with disabilities among those appointed in 2023-24. Regrettably, the stock data suggests that this underrepresentation is not just as a result of the flow of appointments in 2023-24 and people with disabilities, at just 4% of incumbent appointees, are significantly underrepresented relative to the population.

In response to his audit, departments most commonly responded that improving the diversity, including inclusive recruitment practices and expanding the potentially meritorious pool of candidates, was the core challenge in appointments. Departments identify three

[20] 'Stock data' refers to the total number of incumbent public appointees in post in 2024-25. 'Flow data' refers to those appointed in 2024-25.

issues affecting the ability to increase the diversity of public appointees. First, there can be a general challenge in attracting high quality candidates to apply for public appointments. Second, the pool of diverse candidates may itself be limited. This can be the case where the department, by the nature of its work, recruits from a pool of qualified individuals that is not representative of society as a whole. Third, some departments highlighted the need to ensure that the appointment process is fair and inclusive at every stage, explaining that this is an occasionally challenge for people with disabilities. Considering the recurring underrepresentation of people with disabilities across public appointments, departments should be considering whether their efforts to improve access and understanding of public appointments are sufficient to attract highly qualified applicants with disabilities.

Public Appointments Digital Service

Like last year, the Commissioner asked for reflections on the operation of the Public Appointments Digital Service (PADS) from departments. Two notable trends have been identified.

First, for departments with small numbers of public appointments, such as the Offices of the Nations, using the PADS can be challenging.[21] Challenges result from the need for training on the PADS, which can take too long for smaller teams or teams unfamiliar with public appointments.

Second, the system can be cumbersome for departments. Departmental teams noted that moving candidates through stages on the system (from sift to interview, for example) could be resource-intensive. Other technical hitches include issues with using the PADS to email candidates, leading to bounce-backs and duplicated emails, and incorrect automated notifications to update data for retired incumbents, which require investigation. With departments now mandated to pay for and use the PADS, it is essential that these issues are corrected.[22]

The data used in the Commissioner's annual report: UK Government

It is important to understand that the data used by the Commissioner is reliant upon the information inputted in the PADS by applicants, appointees and departments for his reporting on UK Government diversity data.[23] Not all incumbent public appointees have returned a diversity questionnaire on the online PADS. This varies across categories of diversity data. For example, as Independent Monitoring

[21] The Offices for the Nations include the Scotland Office, Wales Office and Northern Ireland Office. The Commissioner understands that the Scotland Office and Wales Office run appointments through ministerial private office, while the NIO has a dedicated governance team to run appointments, both regulated and unregulated.

[22] The 2025 revision to the Governance Code on Public Appointments introduces a new requirement for departments to use the PADS. This does not capture the Welsh Government.

[23] See also: Cabinet Office, *Public Appointments Annual Data Report: 2024-25*, December 2025, <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk> pp.56-59. This statistical note, with further details on data collection methodology and the limitations of the data, applies also to the Commissioner's reporting on UK Government data, which uses data from the PADS.

Boards and Lay Observers do not use the PADS for their diversity data, which is collected separately by the Cabinet Office from their respective secretariats, not all data has been captured from these bodies.[24]

The collection of data is also variable across departments. DfE, as referenced above, has 96% of appointees with up-to-date diversity data. Other departments have a much smaller proportion. As a result, the reader should take an appropriate level of caution as the data relayed below only reflects the snapshot of appointees who have uploaded their data. It is apparent to the Commissioner, from departments who collect data from appointees who have not created an account on the PADS, that there could be a substantial impact on some elements of the diversity data when a full population is included. This is a situation that should improve as using the PADS is now mandatory across departments and appointees are required to upload data prior to being reappointed to a role.[25]

Finally, readers should note that the data used by the Commissioner is only a snapshot. The PADS, and the data contained therein, is a live system. The data can and does change as new incumbents upload data and departments review and revise existing data, as occurred during the course of the Commissioner's audit. Under the Governance Code, the Commissioner has a responsibility to comment on the data published by the Cabinet Office in its diversity data release.[26] Thus, the data used here is the same as that published in the Cabinet Office's report.

Headline statistics

In 2024-25, there were 3,915 public appointees, holding 4,033 public appointments (Figure 3). There were 449 public appointments made (Figure 4). The department with the greatest number of appointments was the Ministry of Justice, which made up 54% of all roles, followed by DCMS and the Ministry of Defence (Figure 5). Most Ministry of Justice appointments are delegated by ministers to the relevant public body, encompassing roles on Independent Monitoring Boards and Lay Observers that make up 73% of all regulated appointments made by the Department (Figure 6).[27]

[24] These are principally the categories which are not included in the Cabinet Office's data report, alongside socio-economic data. The full list of categories includes: socio-economic background, religion, sexual orientation, political activity, additional appointments and age.
[25] Section 3.10, Governance Code.
[26] Section 4.2, Governance Code.
[27] The MoJ has 1596 appointments that are delegated to the public body under the Governance Code, with 598 appointments made by ministers. See: Cabinet Office, *Public Appointments Annual Data Report: 2024*-25, 2 December 2025, <assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>., pp.48-49.

Figure 3: Number of public appointees in post in 2024-25, by department

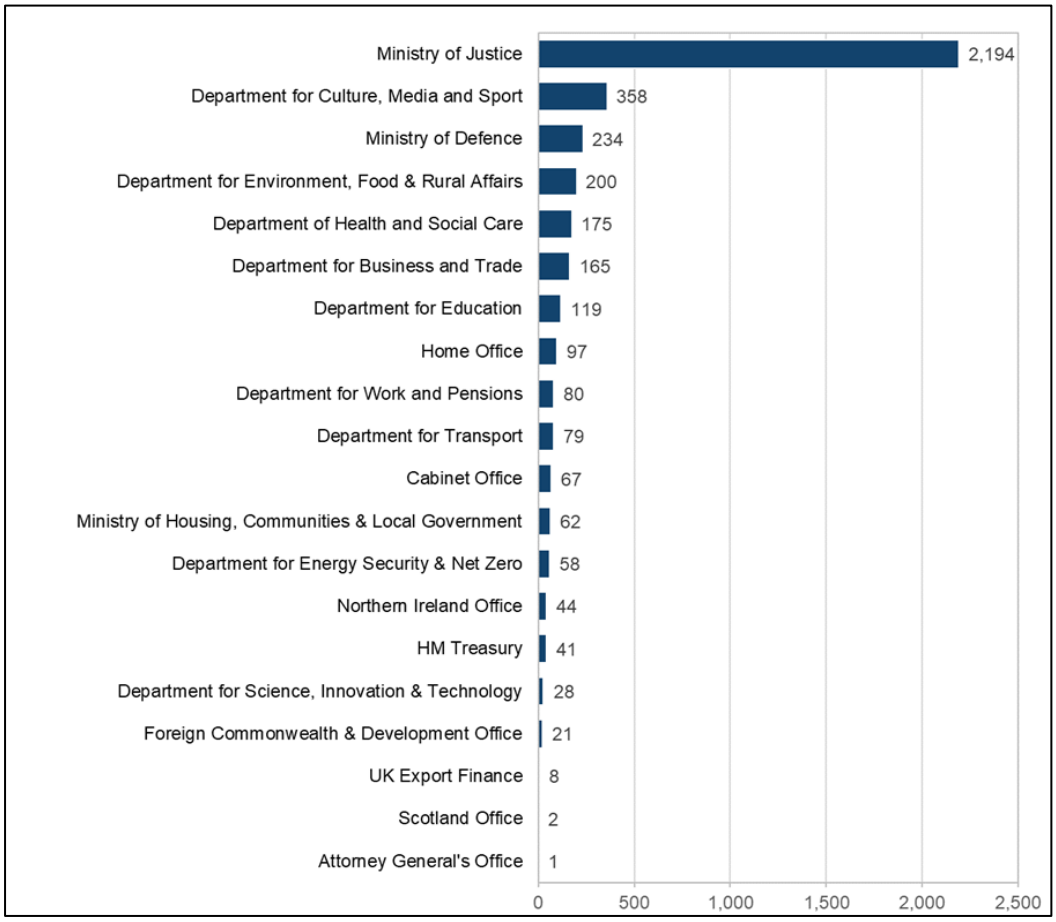


Figure 4: Total number of appointments made in 2024-24 by ministerial department.

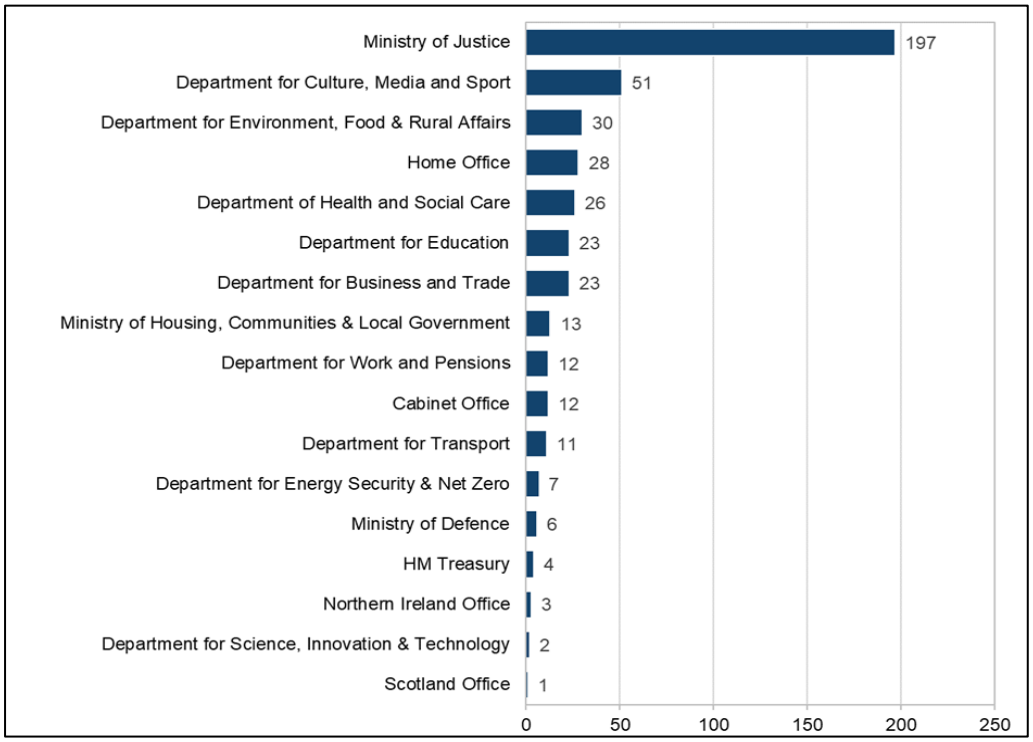


Figure 5: Proportion of public appointees in post in 2024-25, by department

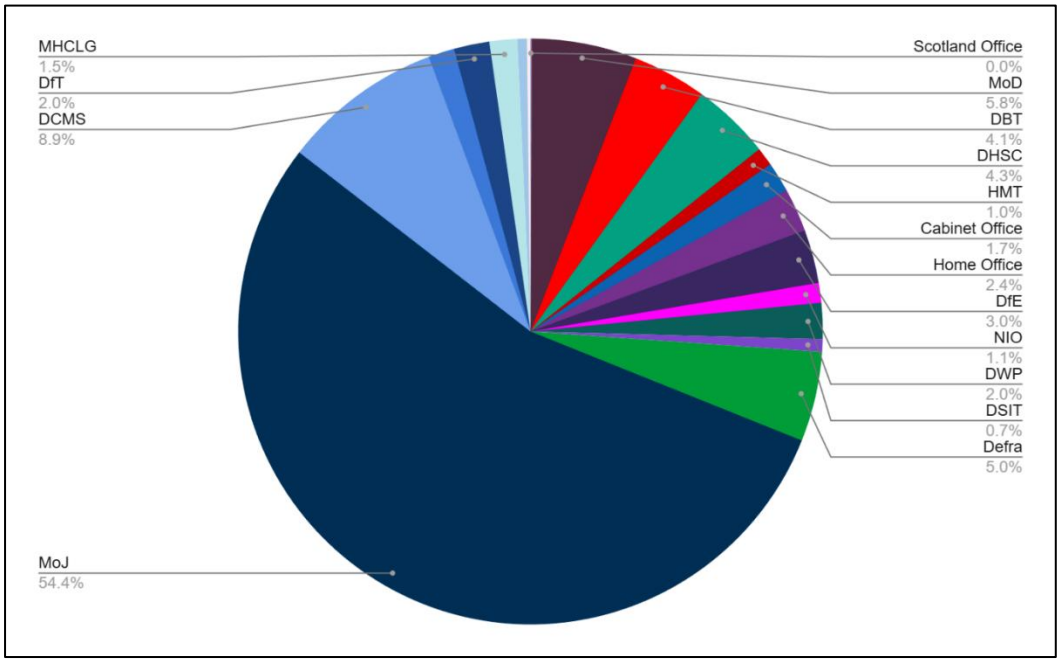
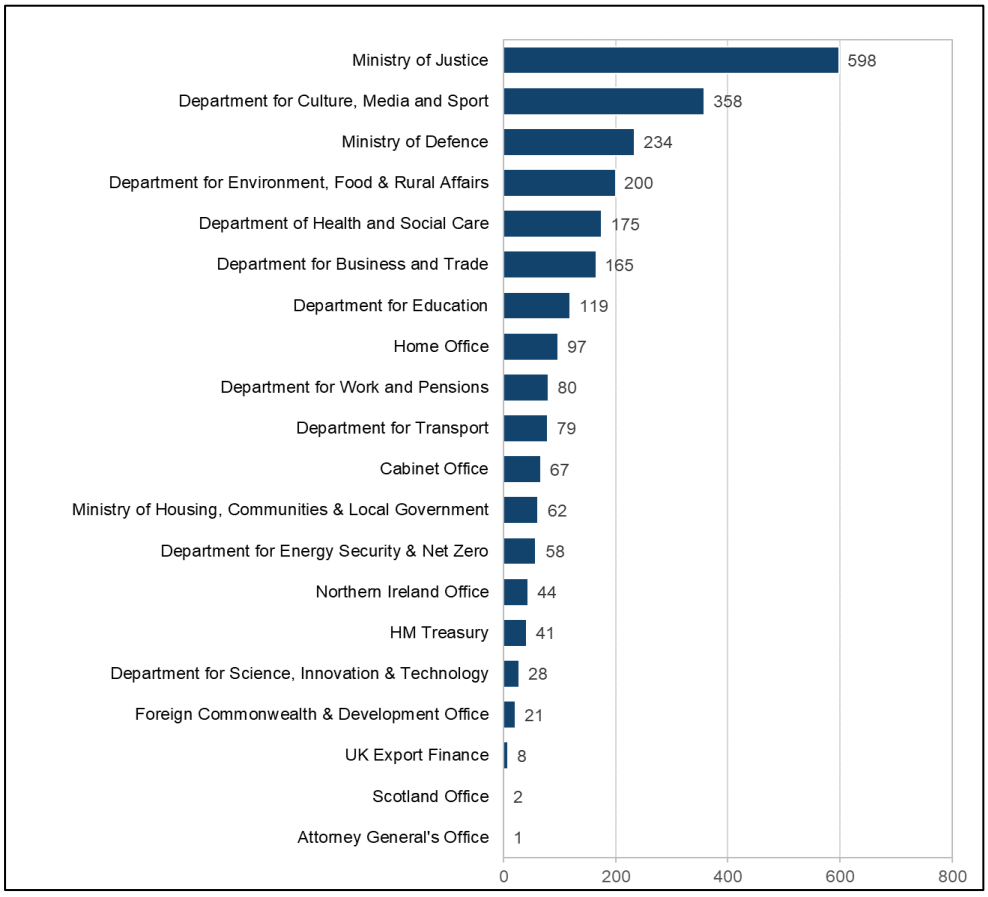


Figure 6: Total number of public appointments by ministerial department, excluding Ministry of Justice delegated roles



Disability

In his 2023-24 Annual Report, the Commissioner wrote that a priority of his would be understanding the challenges that departments face in attracting and appointing candidates with disabilities. He was also keen to see improvement in the representation of individuals with disabilities across all public appointments. He is thus concerned with both the present representation of individuals with disabilities across public appointments and the flow of candidates with disabilities into roles appointed in 2024-25.

The overall representation of people with disabilities across the 3,915 appointees in post in 2024-25 is low relative to the proportion of people with disabilities in the economically active population.[28] Just 4% of incumbents declare a disability (Figure 7).[29] The Department for Transport has reasonably strong representation of people declaring disabilities across its regulated public appointments, most departments hover around 4-5%. Some departments have no representation of people with disabilities across their stock of incumbent appointees (Figure 8).

The flow data, showing the people who have gone through the public appointments process in 2024-25, is especially poor. People with disabilities made up 6% of applicants, 7% of those shortlisted, 4% of those found appointable and just 2% of those appointed (Figure 9). This is a significant decline on 2023-24, where 4.7% of appointees declared a disability. This could be a result of the appointments on offer in 2024-25, with some public bodies required to have representation of people with disabilities on their boards. Still, as the stock data shows, the low representation of people with disabilities appears to be a systemic issue across the public appointments system.

This low representation is notable relative to the wider population. While people with disabilities make up 17.6% of the economically active population, as above, only 4% of incumbent public appointees declare a disability (Figure 10).[30] This significant underrepresentation implies challenges with identifying and recruiting candidates with disabilities. The Commissioner has also heard from departments that this may be a result of data gathering. In particular, the phrasing of the question asked to candidates is highlighted as possibly dissuading people from responding that they have a disability.[31]

[28] The response rate for this question was 50%.
[29] This is in response to a two-stage question of all candidates for public appointments. Candidates are asked: 1) Do you have a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? and 2) Does your health problem or disability limit your day-to-day activities?
[30] ONS, 'A08: Labour market status of disabled people', 12 August 2025, <ons.gov.uk>. The ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) includes data on economic activity for those aged between 16-64. For the purposes of this report, only positive responses to the LFS have been included and those who did not state their health status are not included. The LFS received 33,961,005 responses declaring economic activity, with 5,981,502 people with disabilities declaring they were economically active and 27,979,503 people without disabilities declaring that they were economically active.
[31] Some departments have higher numbers a) applying under the Disability Confident Scheme, than who respond as having a disability and b) responding affirmatively to the first part of the two-stage question than the second part.

Figure 7: Percentage of public appointees that have declared a disability

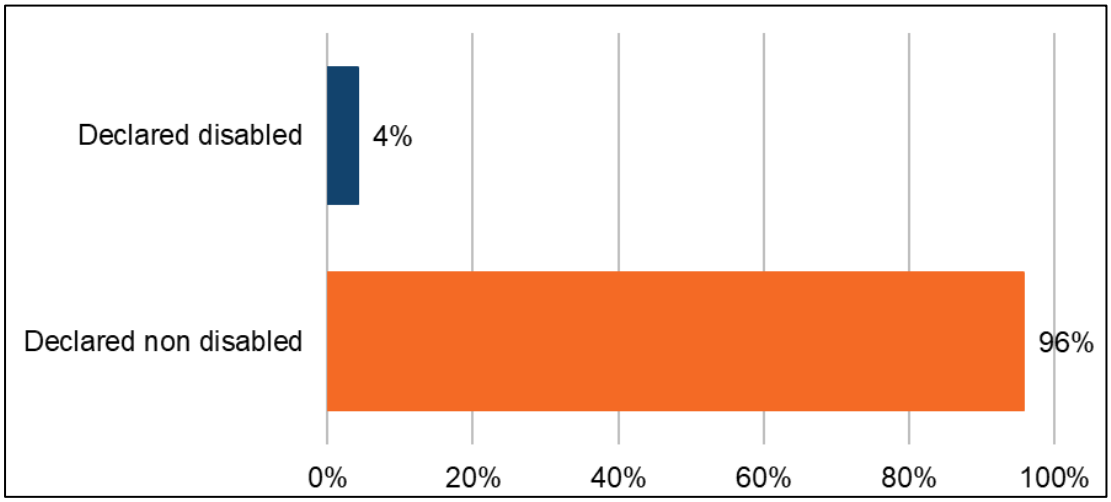


Figure 8: Percentage of incumbent public appointees declaring a disability, by department.

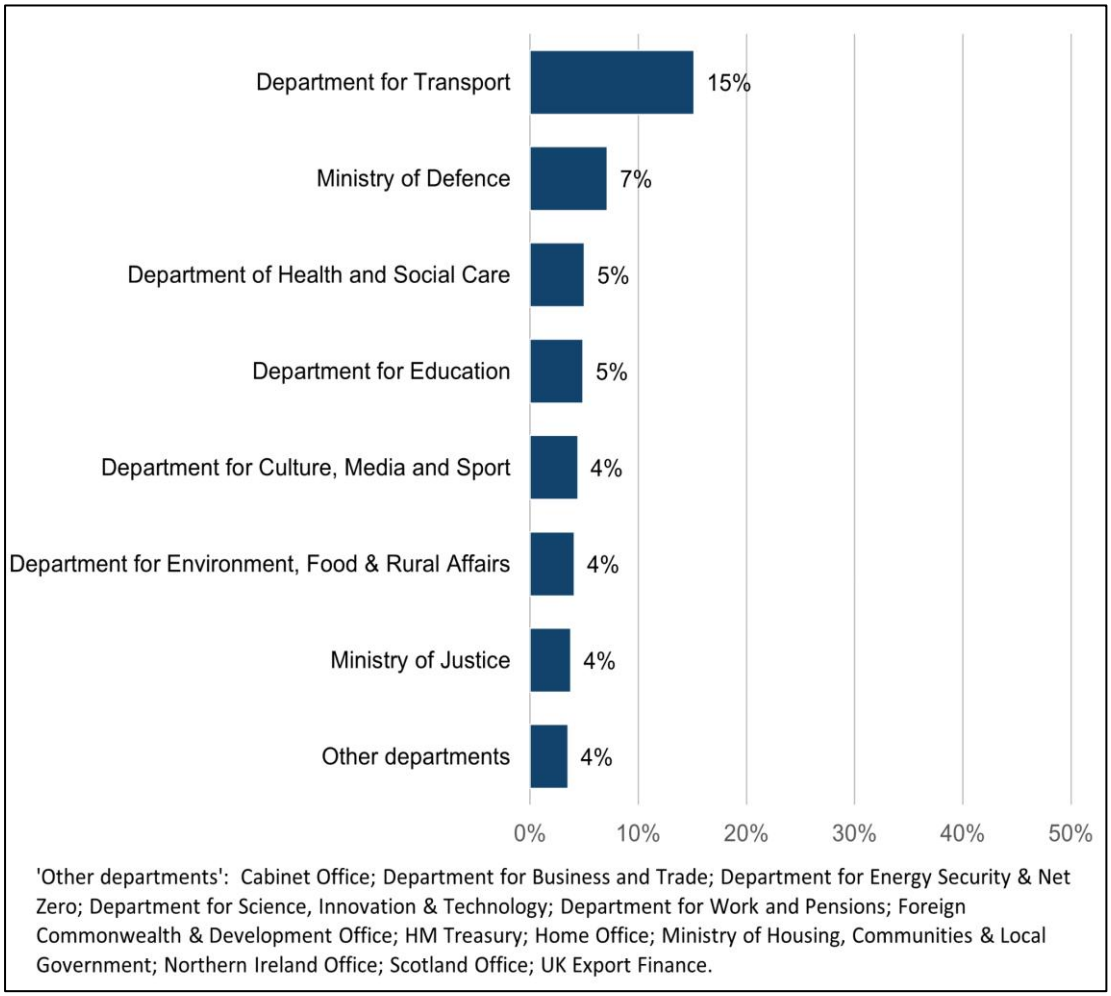


Figure 9: Percentage of applicants declaring and not declaring a disability at each stage of the application process, 2024-25

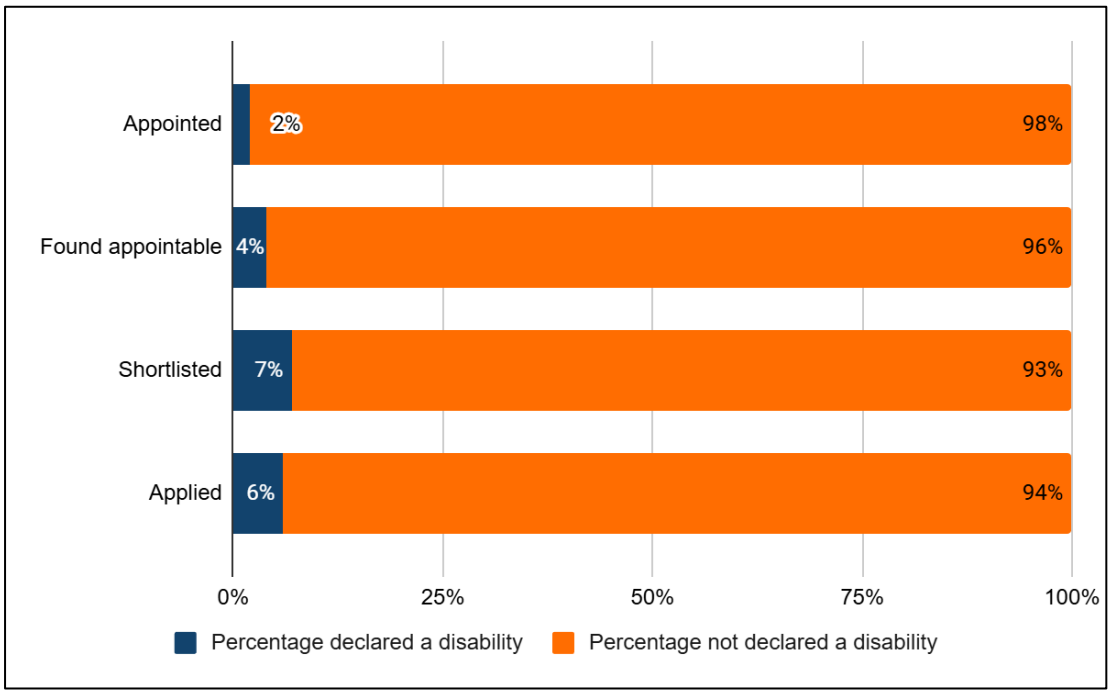
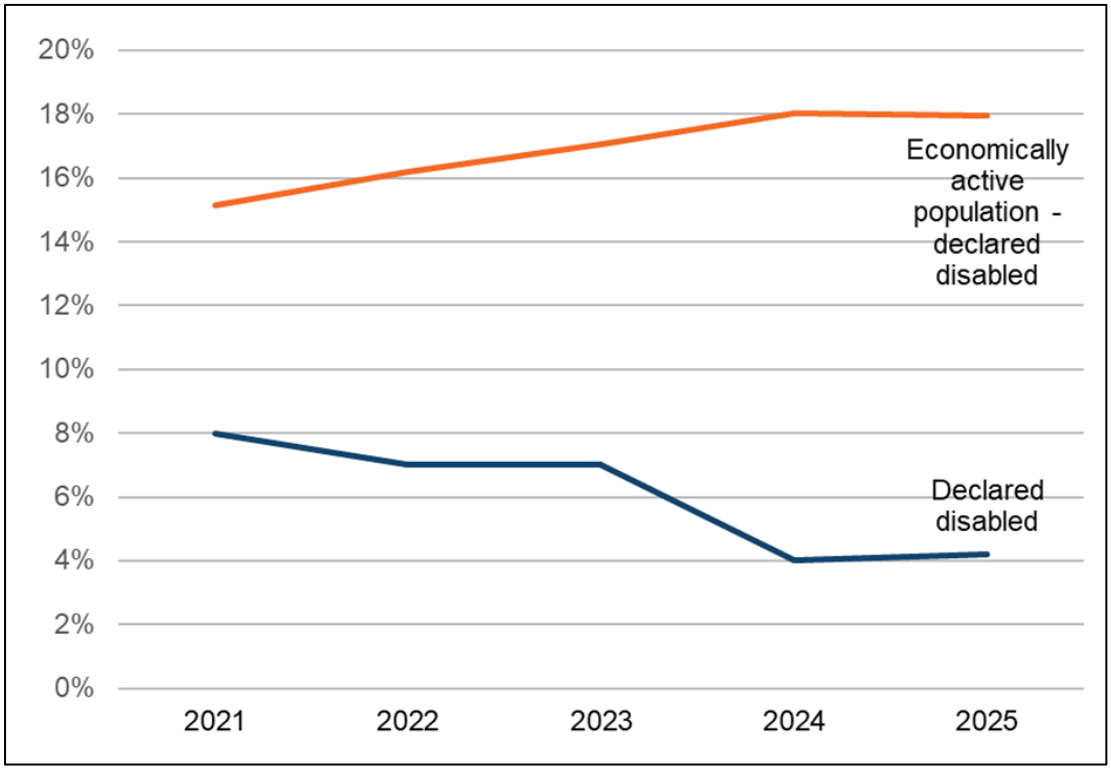


Figure 10: Percentage of public appointees declaring a disability appointed in year versus the economically active population declaring a disability, 2021-2025



This is reflected in research by leading disability inclusion groups; the Business Disability Forum, in a recent report on the topic, noted the difficulties across businesses in getting a true representation of those within their workforce with disabilities.[32] As such, the Commissioner will be working in consultation with departments throughout 2025-26 to help drive improvements in this area, including in improving the understanding of how data is gathered.

Ethnicity

In 2024-25, of those appointees in office who provided data, 13% said that they were from an ethnic minority background (Figure 11).[33] This compares with 9% in 2023-24 and 12% in 2022-23. The department with the greatest percentage of ethnic minority public appointees is the Cabinet Office, with 20%, followed by 19% under DCMS and 18% under MHCLG (Figure 12). Defra is recorded as the lowest single department, though it should be noted that some departments had lower representation but, as the total number was less than four, have been combined into a single category called 'other departments'.

As in 2023-24, the representation of individuals from an ethnic minority background varied depending on the appointment type. In 2024-25, ethnic minority appointees made up a greater proportion of member-level (13%) and individual office holder (18%) appointees, than for chair-level (8%) appointments (Figure 13)

Of those who went through the public appointments process in 2024-25, 27% of applicants were from an ethnic minority background, with 20% of those shortlisted, found appointable and appointed from an ethnic minority background (Figure 14). This is an increase on the 14.8% of appointees in 2023-24 who were from an ethnic minority background. This is a substantial increase which, when compared with the LFS estimates on the economically active ethnic minority population, suggests that those from an ethnic minority background appointed in 2024-25 are slightly overrepresented relative to the wider economically active population. In its latest release, the ONS found that 17.8% of the economically active population are from an ethnic minority background.[34]

Sex

Over the 30 years since the creation of the Commissioner, improving the representation of women across public appointments has been an important goal. In 1996-97, the first year of reporting on the diversity of public appointments, women made up 34% of public appointees.[35]

[32] See Business Disability Forum, *Towards meaningful disability workforce and pay gap reporting*, March 2025, <businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/> pp.32-34.
[33] The response rate for this question was 50.8%.
[34] ONS, 'A09: Labour market status by ethnic group', 12 August 2025 <ons.gov.uk>.
[35] Commissioner for Public Appointments, *Annual Report 1996-97, July 1997* <publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk> p.17.

Figure 11: Percentage of ethnic minority incumbent appointees

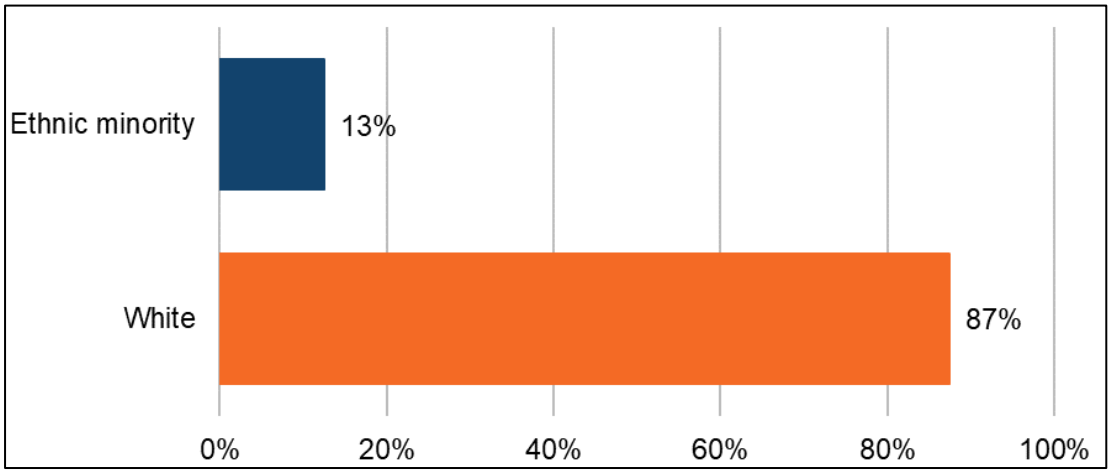
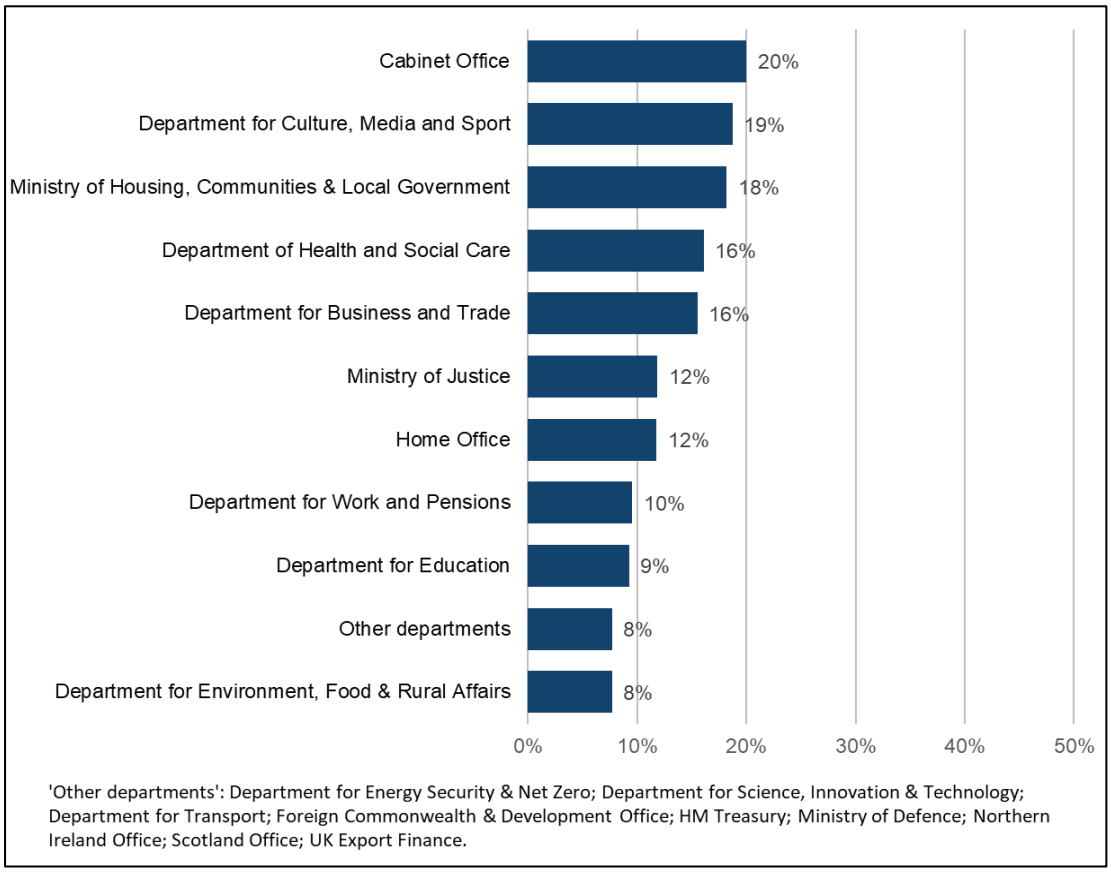


Figure 12: Percentage of ethnic minority incumbent appointees, by department[36]



[36] Although Defra is ranked lower than 'other departments' this is not reflective of its true ranking. Due to data protection requirements, where departments have four or fewer recorded under a category, this has been put under the label 'other departments'. Some departments in this category have a lower proportion of ethnic minority appointees than Defra.

Figure 13: Percentage of incumbent ethnic minority appointees and white appointees, by role type

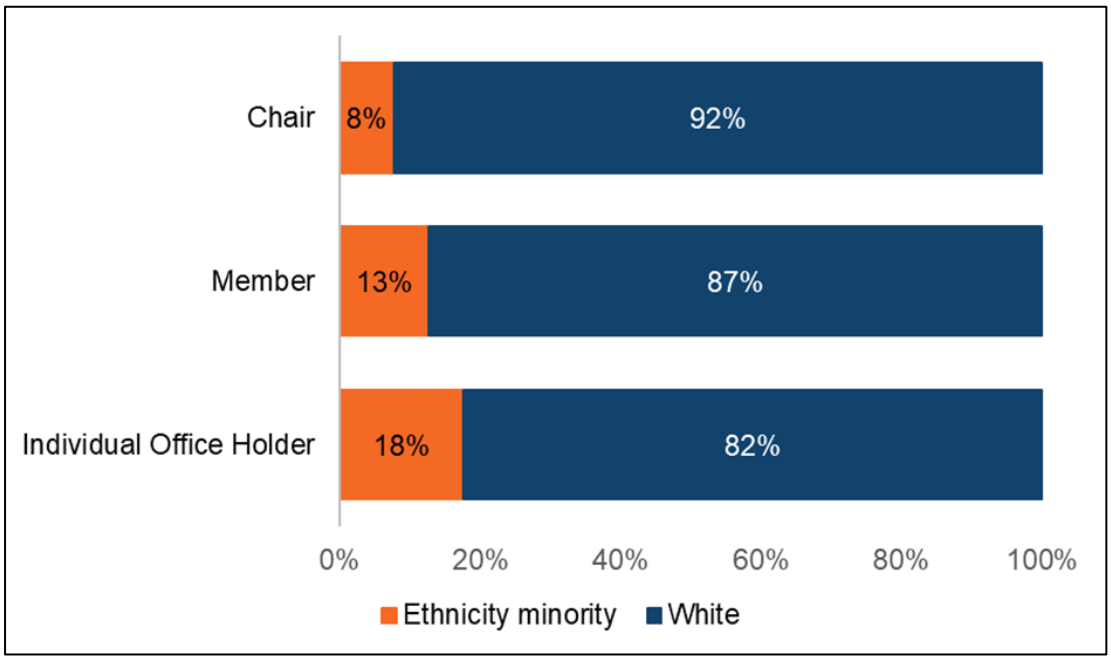
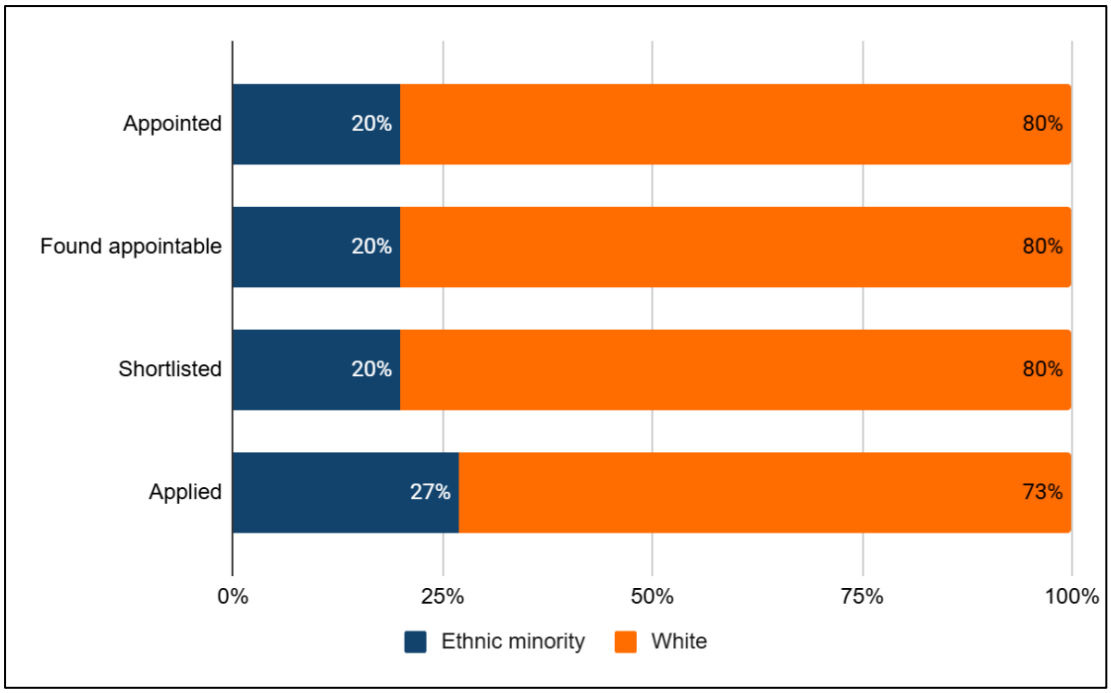


Figure 14: Representation of ethnic minority candidates at each stage, 2024-25



The improvement since then has been dramatic. Since 2021, the total proportion of regulated public appointments held by women has steadily been increasing - from 46% in 2020-21 to the peak of 52% in 2024-25 (see Figure 15).[37]

This improvement has carried across to all categories of appointments. Women may be slightly underrepresented relative to men across all chair appointments, making up 45% of chairs against 55% for men (Figure 16), but this is a marked improvement on 2020-21 when only 33% of chair roles were filled by female appointees.

While noting this strong progress, it is recognised that some departments have a significant underrepresentation of women across their stock of appointees in the data published by the Cabinet Office. DESNZ's performance, with just 21% female public appointees, is a prominent underperformer relative to other departments (Figure 17). DESNZ said that this figure may not be entirely representative of its 58 incumbent appointees as not all incumbents have created an account on the PADS or provided a positive response to this question.[38]

Alongside this, DESNZ states that the energy, nuclear and security sectors, from which it draws its appointees, have historically lower levels of female leadership in senior positions relative to other sectors. Due to the small numbers involved and the incomplete population of those providing diversity, the Commissioner cautions against drawing any strong conclusions from subsets of the data at a departmental level.

The flow data reveals high representation of women compared with men among those appointed to roles in 2024-25. Women make up 44% of applicants, 51% of those shortlisted, 57% of those found appointable and 58% of those appointed (Figure 18). This is similar to previous years where, despite applying at lower rates than men, women progress further through campaigns on average.

Region

In his 2023-24 Annual Report, the Commissioner stated that improving the representation of those based outside London and the South East would be a priority of his during 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 62% of all public appointees were based outside of London and the South East (Figure 19), with the Ministry of Defence (85%), Defra (68%) and Department for Transport (65%) representing the top three departments (Figure 20).[39] DCMS, Cabinet Office and MHCLG, at 41%, 47% and 48% respectively, had the lowest proportion of public appointees from outside of London and the South East. The Commissioner notes that performance on this metric is likely to be driven by where public bodies and roles are based.

[37] The response rate to this question was 58.2%.
[38] DESNZ officials suggest that 26 out of its 58 incumbents fall into either one of these categories.
[39] The response rate to the question on region was 53.7%.

Figure 15: Percentage of female public appointees, 2021-2025

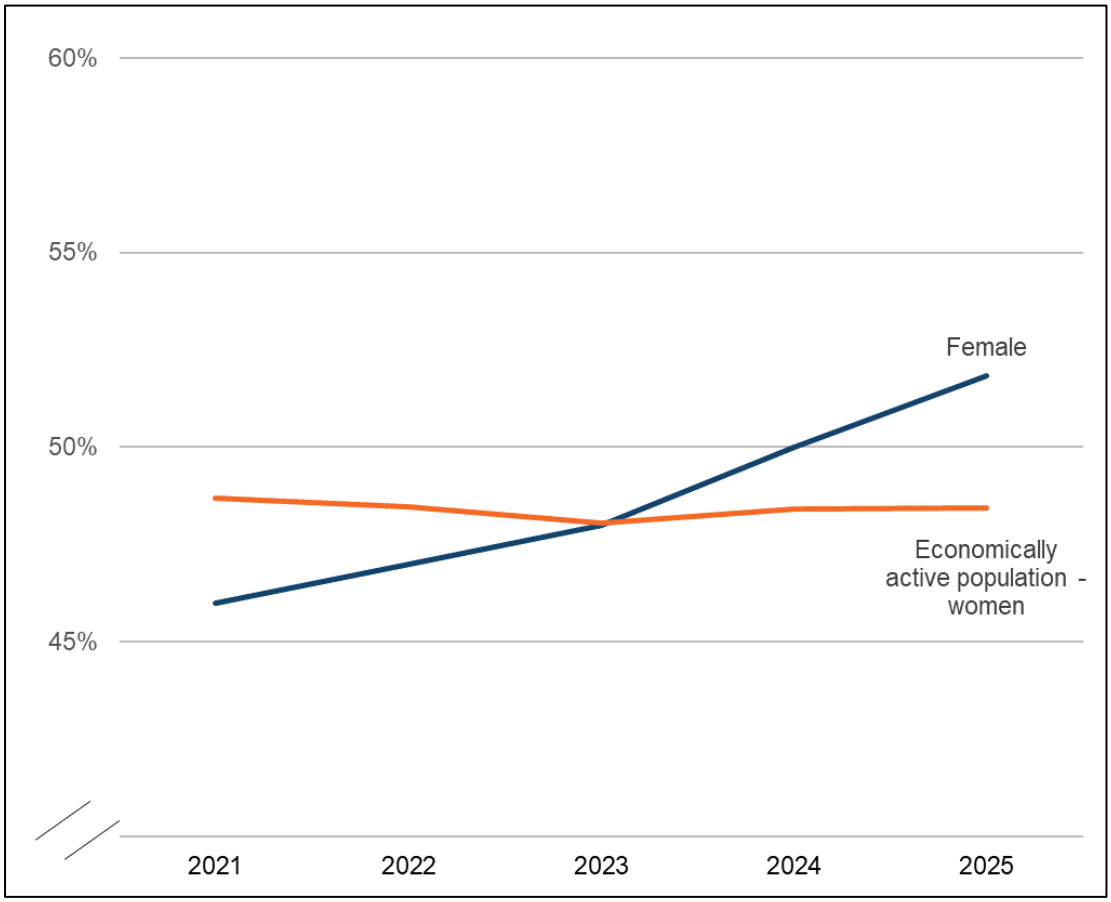


Figure 16: Sex split of incumbent appointees, by role type

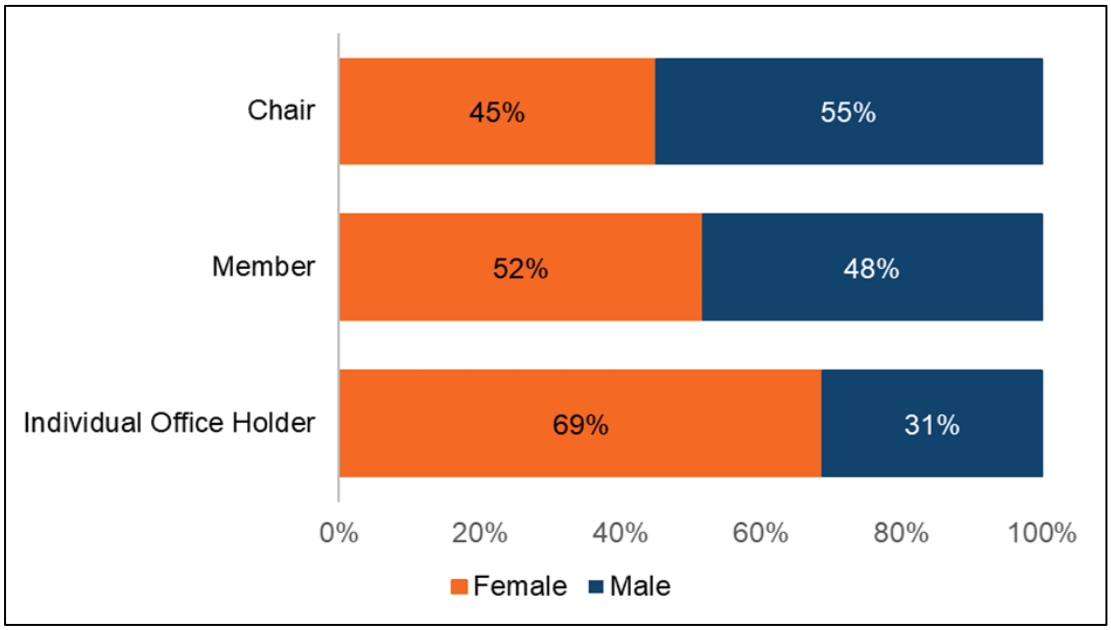


Figure 17: Percentage of incumbent female appointees, by ministerial department

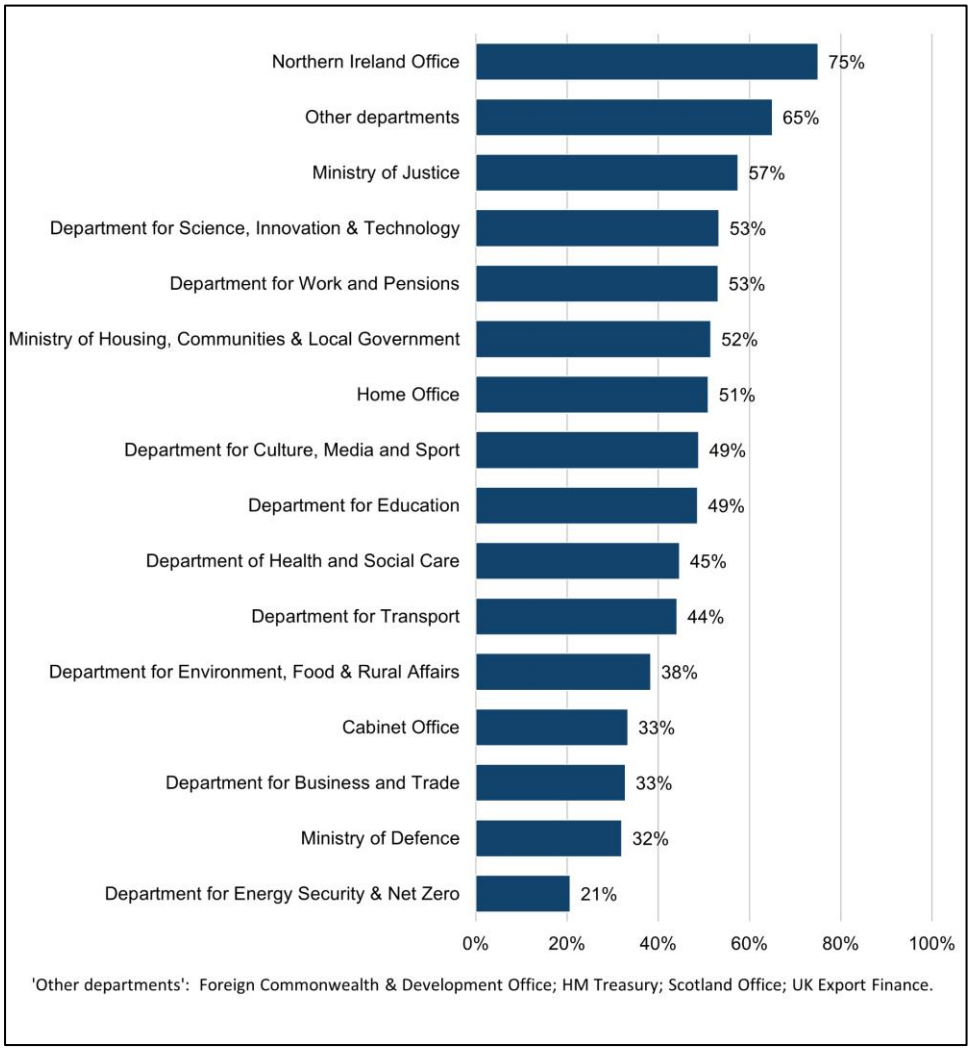
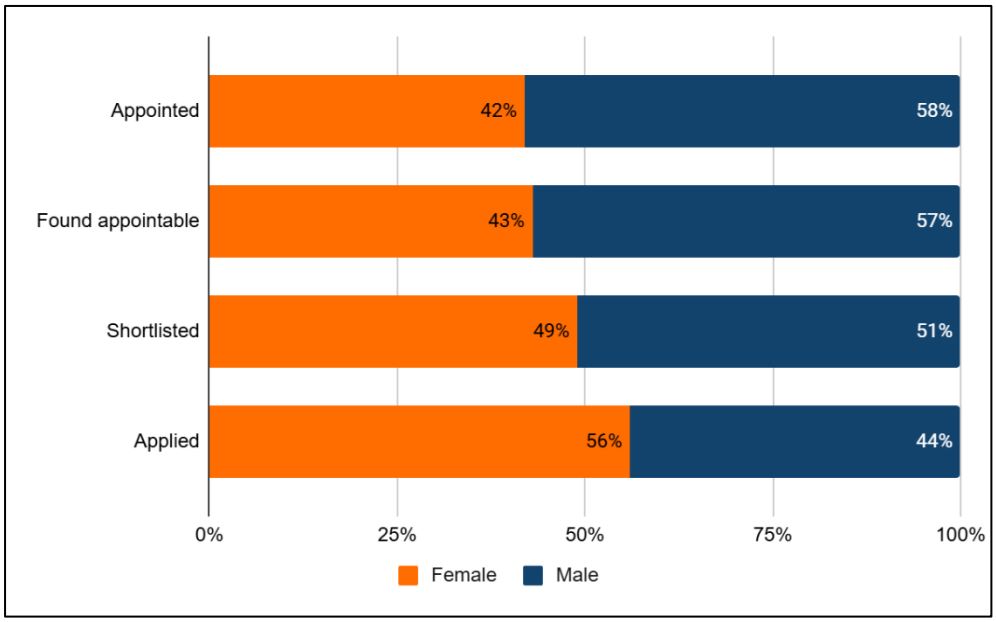


Figure 18: Sex split of applicants by application stage, 2024-25



DCMS has a large number of museums that are based in London under its sponsorship, and is thus more likely to have appointees from in and around London and the South East.[40] By contrast, Defra and MoD appointments are more regionally dispersed, leading to higher representation of people from outside London and the South East.[41] Nevertheless, outreach remains in important in encouraging regional diversity. The Commissioner encourages departments to continue ongoing work, such as webinars and regional events, as well as striving for improvements in regional engagement.

In 2024-25, 59% of those appointed had a principal residence based outside of London and the South East. Applicants from outside London and the South East progress well through campaigns, making up 56% of applicants, 55% of those shortlisted, 60% of those found appointable and 59% of those appointed (Figure 21).

Socio-economic background

In 2024-25, the Cabinet Office started collecting data on the socio-economic background of public appointees. That data is broken down into three categories: parental occupation, school type and whether or not the candidate was eligible for free school meals.[42] The response rate from incumbents to these questions is low and readers should not draw wide inferences from this data. The new requirements to use the PADS and for individuals reappointed to roles to add diversity data, should lead to higher response rates in future years.

Most appointees, 67%, described their parents as having a professional background, 6% an intermediate background and 27% as working class backgrounds (Figure 22). The Northern Ireland Office, at 56%, has the largest proportion of public appointees from a working class background, while DCMS, of departments with at least four appointees, has the smallest at 18% (Figure 23).

Data is collected on the type of school attended by public appointees.[43] The proportion of public appointees who have attended an independent or fee paying school is significantly higher than the proportion of the population who attended such schools. While 17% of public appointees in 2024-25 stated that they had attended an independent or fee paying school, only 6.4% of the school-age population are attending such a school. [44] Notably, 24% of chairs, against 16% members, attended an independent or fee paying school (Figure 24). DCMS (27%) had the highest proportion of appointees who attended an independent school.

[40] In response to the audit, DCMS officials have responded that out of the 39 boards to which the department makes regulated public appointments, 29 (74.4%) are based in London and the South East.

[41] Defra has regional parks authorities under its sponsorship, while the MoD has regionally

[42] 18.1% of appointees provided information on their parental background.

[43] The response rate to this question was 19.7%. 'Extreme economic advantage is the phrase used by the Cabinet Office

[44] GOV.UK, 'Academic year 2024/25: Schools, pupils and their characteristics', 7 July 2025, <gov.uk>

Figure 19: Incumbent appointees from outside London and the South East, by department

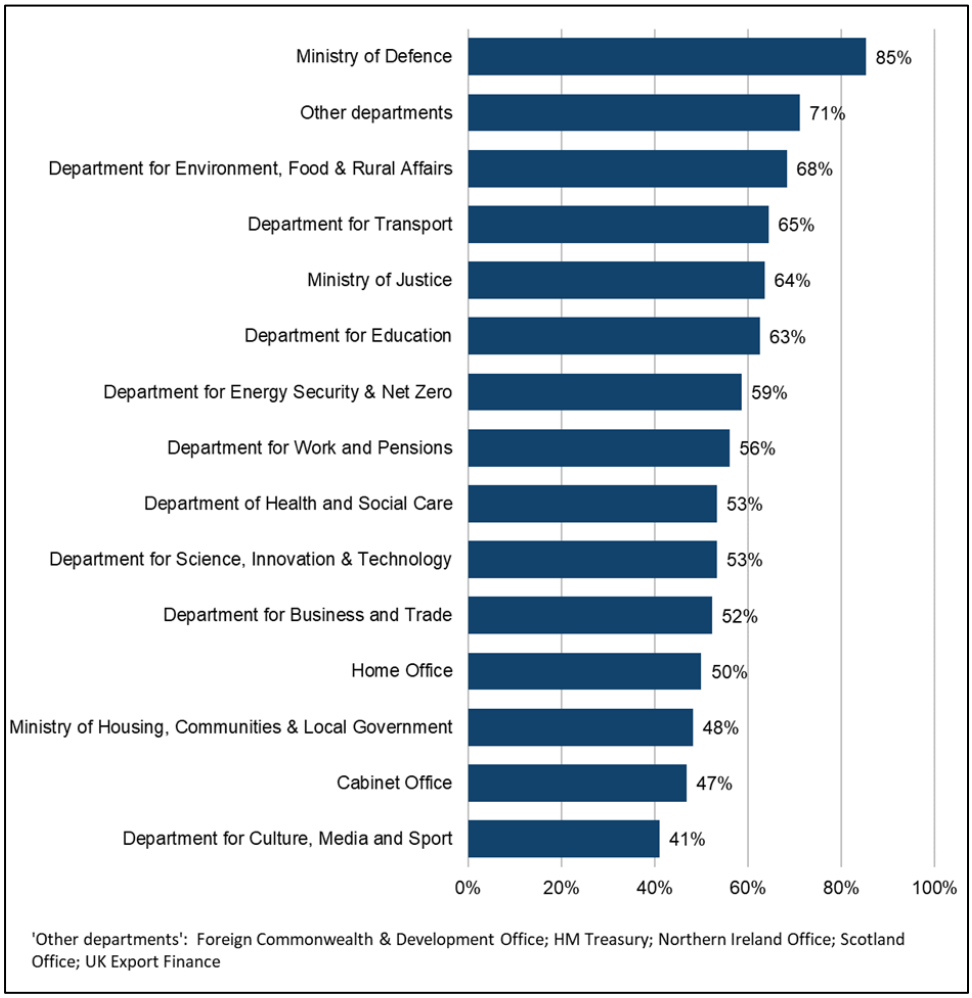


Figure 20: Percentage of incumbent appointees by region, 2023-2025

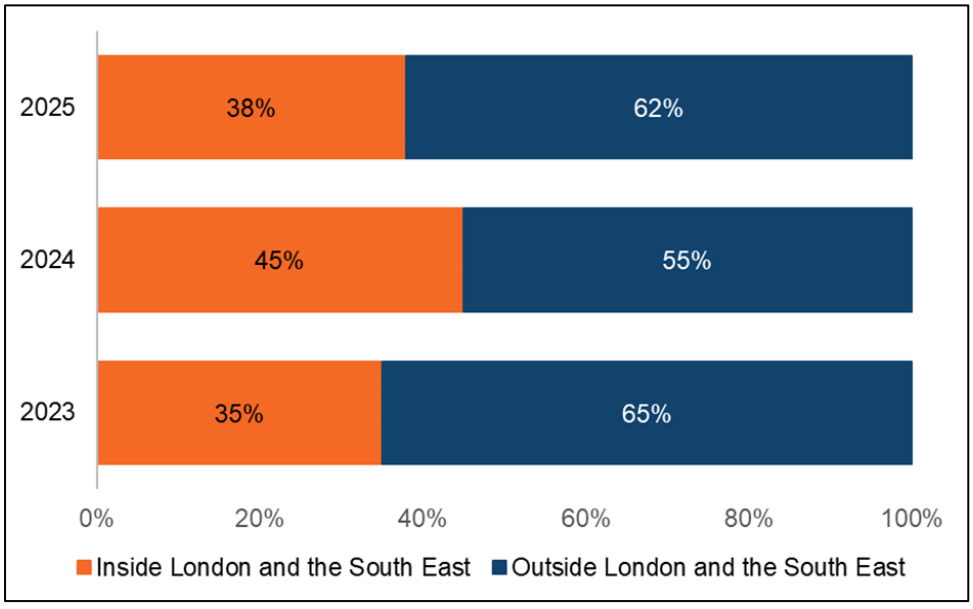


Figure 21: Percentage of applicants by region at each application stage, 2024-25

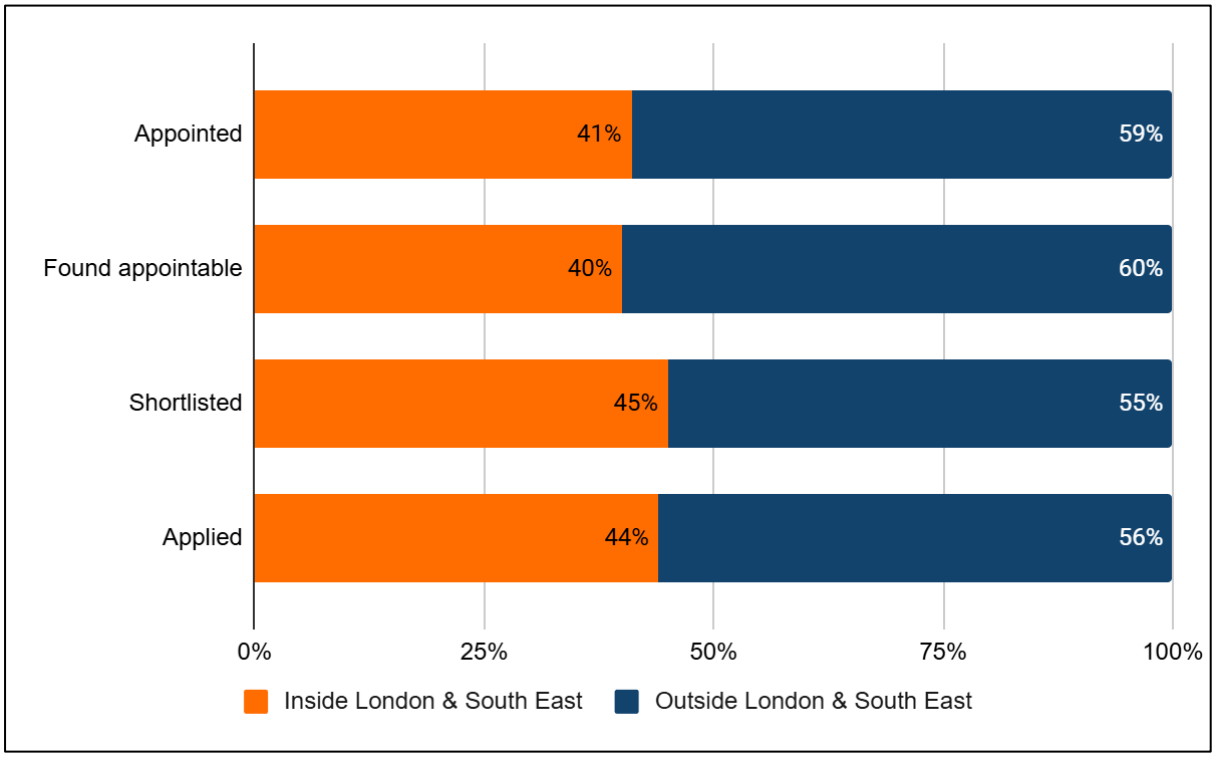
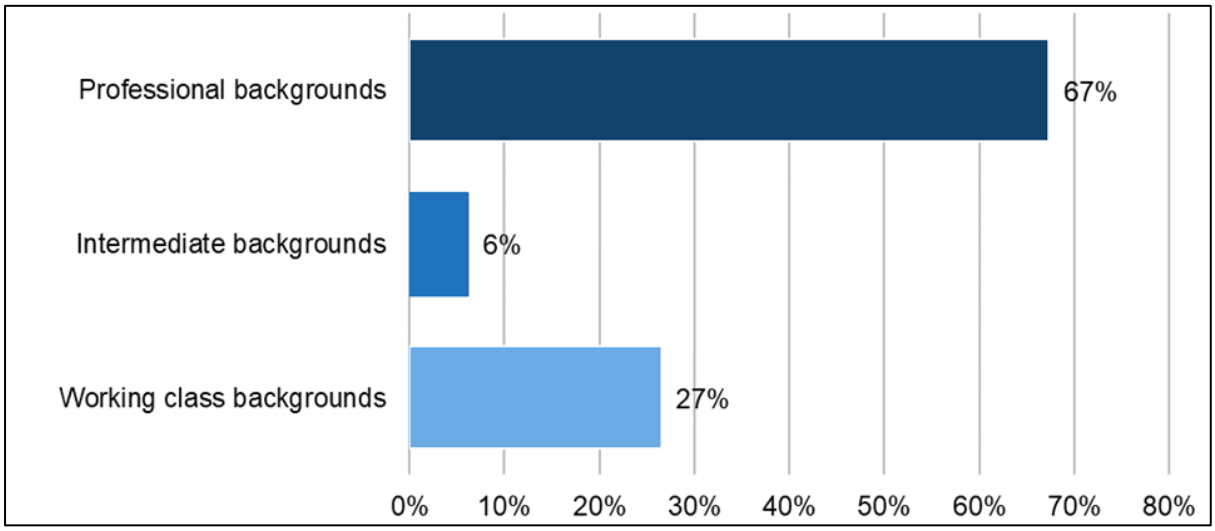


Figure 22: Percentage of incumbent public appointees, by parental occupation



Finally, data is collected on appointees who were eligible for free school meals.[45] In 2024-25, 25.7% of pupils were eligible for free school meals. In the same year, 13% of public appointees stated that they were eligible for free school meals when they were attending school, 52% stated that they were not eligible, 33% that the question was not applicable, and 2% stated that they did not know.

The flow data on socio-economic background focuses on parental occupation, as an easily understood marker of social class (Figure 25). In 2024-25, most appointments were made to those from professional backgrounds (70%), with individuals from working class backgrounds making up 24% of those appointed and those from intermediate backgrounds 6%. The data conveys that the representation of working class applicants falls noticeably between application and appointment stages - 30% of applicants are working class, but only 21% of those shortlisted and 21% of those found appointable are working class. While this data does not allow for a breakdown of the reasons behind this, it is worth departments monitoring if current guidance and support helps candidates understand the appointments process sufficiently to break down any pre-existing class barriers.

Age

In addition to the data already provided by the Cabinet Office publicly, the Commissioner has also been able to consider data already collected on a wider range of diversity criteria. In previous years, the distribution of public appointments by age followed a usual pattern of a bell curve, with most appointments being made to those in the mid-to-late career years. The stock data shows a similar pattern. Of the 1,320 appointees for which the Commissioner has data, 36% were aged between 55-64, and 28% between 45-54, with 21% between 65-74, 10% between 35-44, 3% between 75-84 and 1% between 25-34 (Figure 26).

Religion

In 2024-25, the most common response to the question on religious belief was Christian (50%), followed by no religion (40%) and much smaller numbers for Jewish (3%), Muslim (2%), Hindu (2%), Sikh (1%), Buddhist (1%) and other (1%) (Figure 27).[46] In the 2021 census, 46.2% declared themselves as being Christian, 37.2% as 'no religion', 6.5% as Muslim and 1.7% as Hindu.

Additional appointments

The number of additional appointments held by incumbent public appointees can allow for an assessment of how closed off public appointments are to those without prior experience of these roles. In 2024-25, a majority (52%) of incumbent appointees who had data recorded on the PADS held at least one additional appointment (Figure 29).[47]

[45] The response rate to this question was 14.1%.
[46] The response rate to this question was 30.8%.
[47] The response rate to this question was 31.1%.

Figure 23: Percentage of incumbent public appointees from a working class background, by department

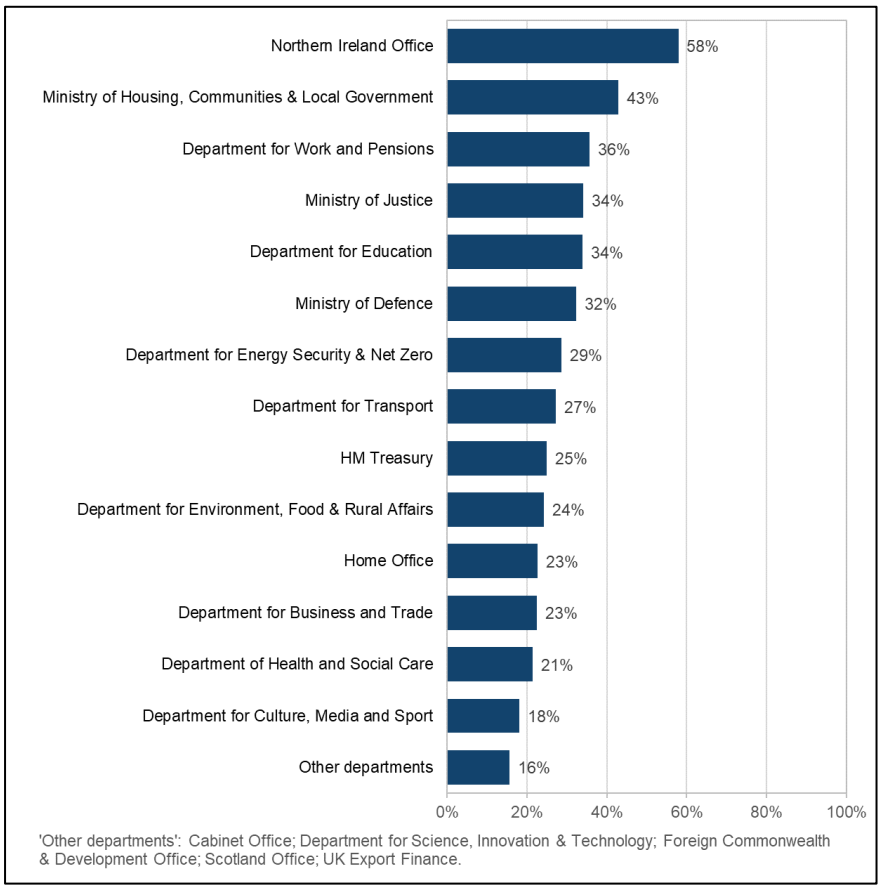


Figure 24: Percentage of incumbent appointees who attended an independent or fee paying school or who did not attend an independent or fee paying school, by role type

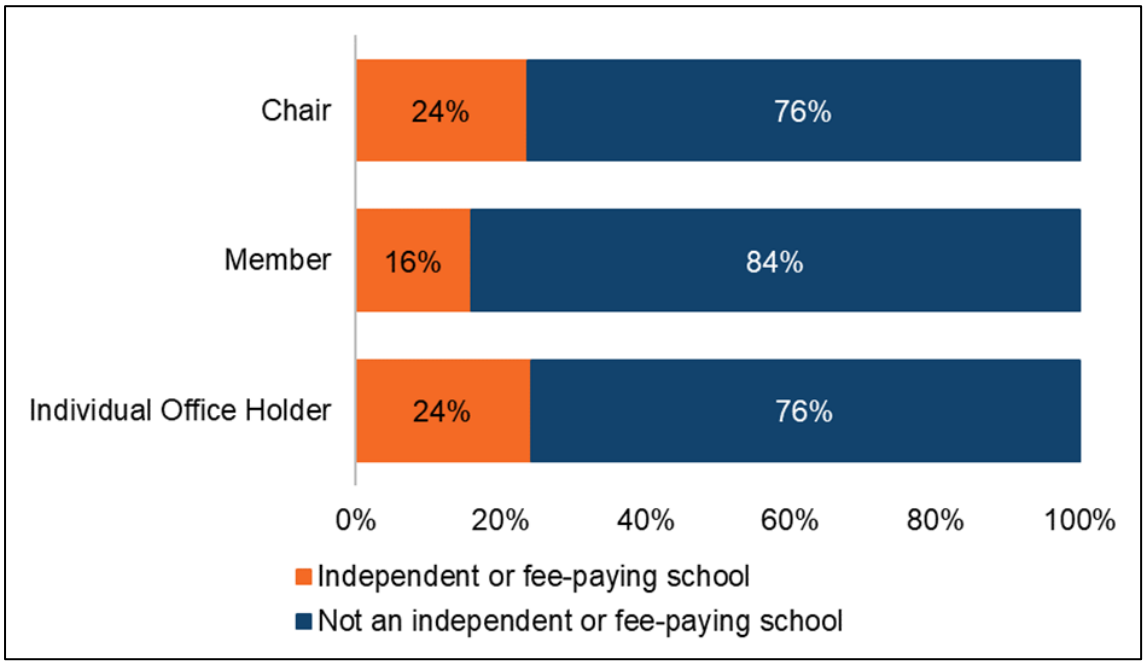


Figure 25: Percentage of applicants at each stage of the application process by socio-economic background, 2024-25

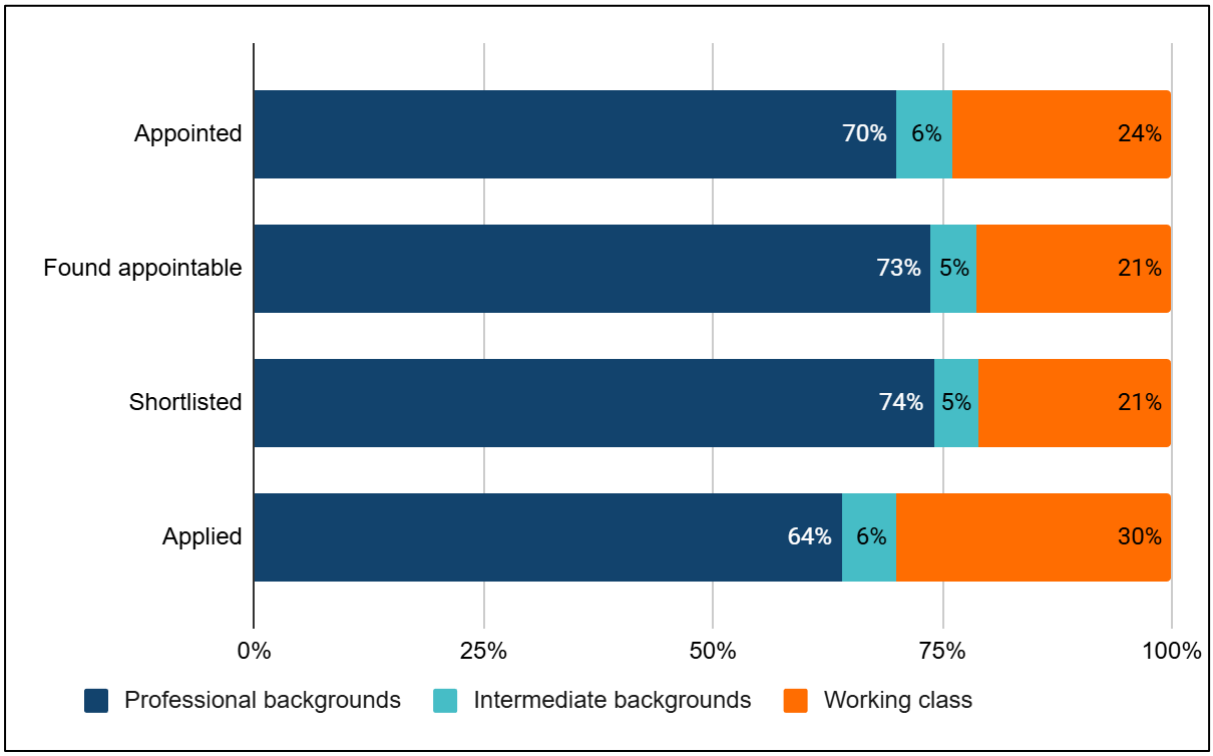
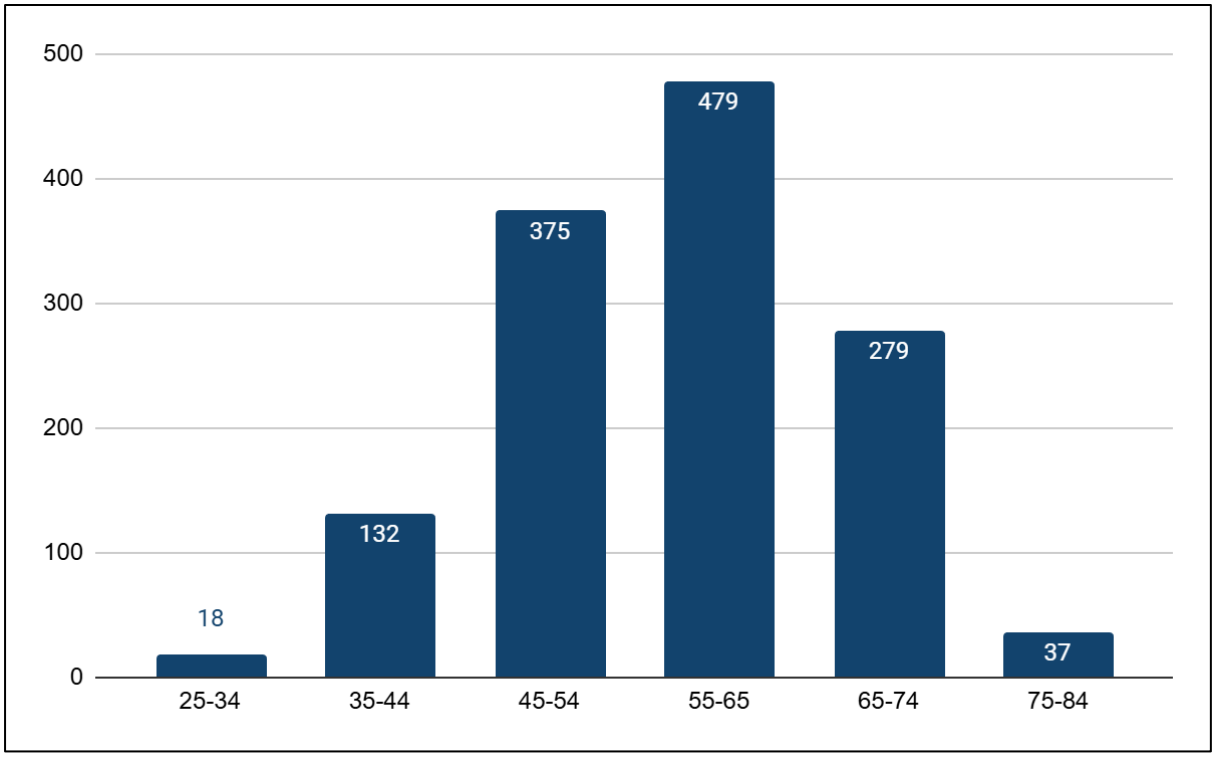


Figure 26: Number of appointees in post by age



This is broken down into 36% who held one additional appointment, 12% who held two, 3% who held three, and 1% who held four or more additional appointments. The mean average number of additional appointments held by incumbent public appointees is 1.7.

Political activity

The Governance Code sets out that political activity, while not being a bar to appointment, must be reported publicly.[48] As such, the PADS collects data on the political activity of incumbent appointees. Of those who inputted data regarding their political activity, 67 (7%) declared political activity and 904 (93%) stated that they had no political activity (Figure 30). As in previous years, concerns about widespread cronyism in appointments processes appear to be unfounded on the basis of the data available.

[48] See section 9.5, Governance Code. Political activity is where a successful candidate: '...has, in the last five years, been employed by a political party, held a significant office in a party, has stood as a candidate for a party in an election, has publicly spoken on behalf of a political party, or has made significant donations or loans to a party.' Significant donations and loans are those of a size which need to be reported to the Electoral Commission, in line with a central party's reporting threshold.

Figure 27: Percentage of appointees in post by religious belief

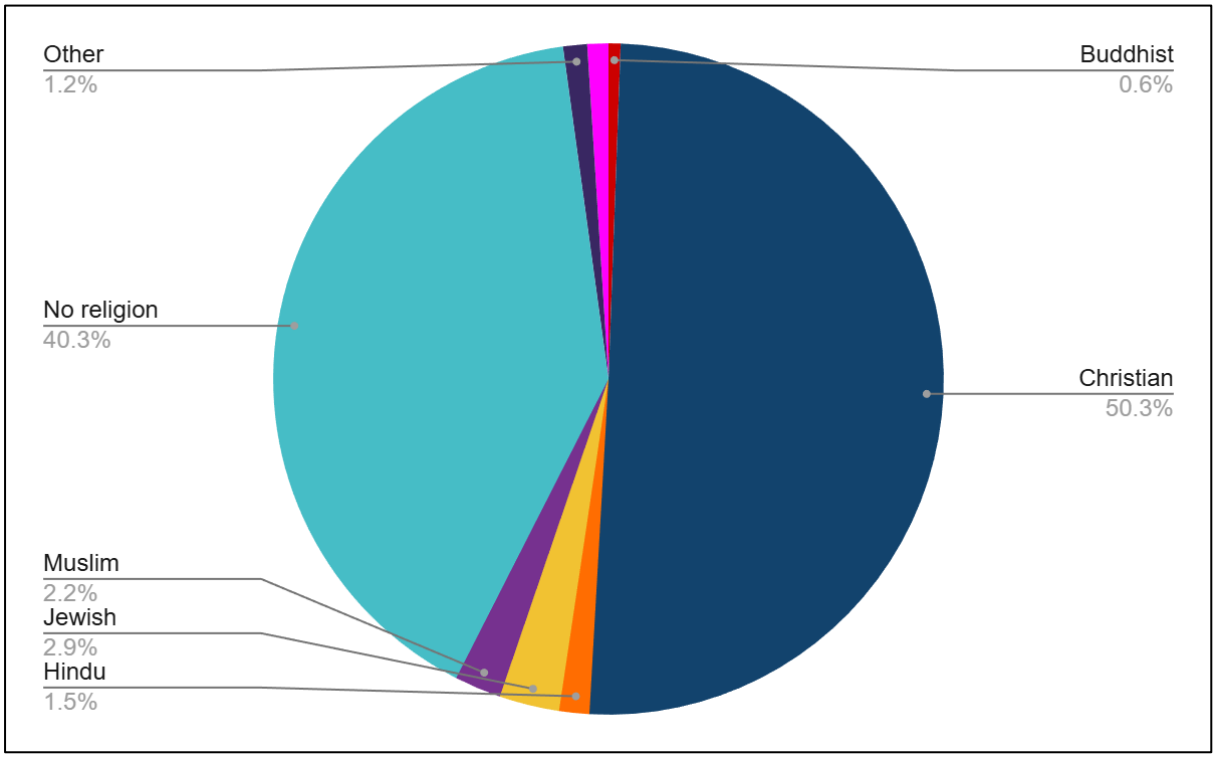


Figure 28: Percentage of incumbent appointees by sexual orientation

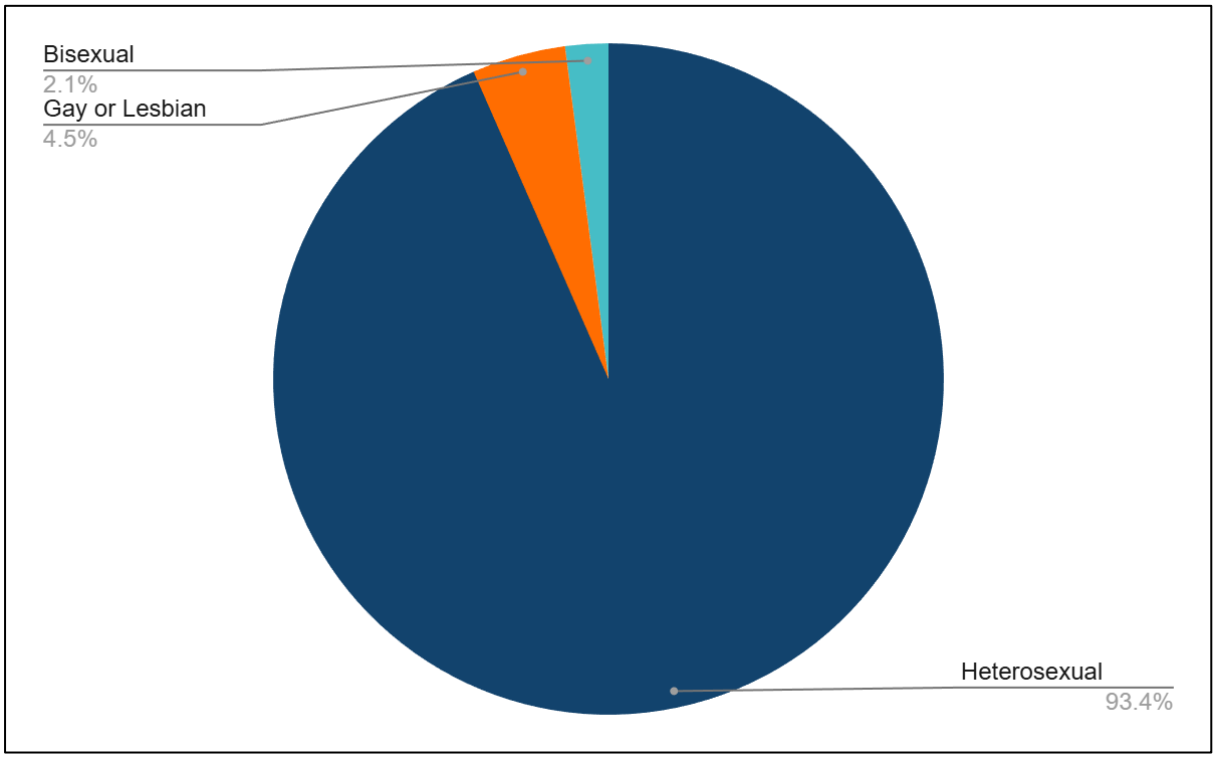


Figure 29: Number of additional appointments held by incumbent appointees

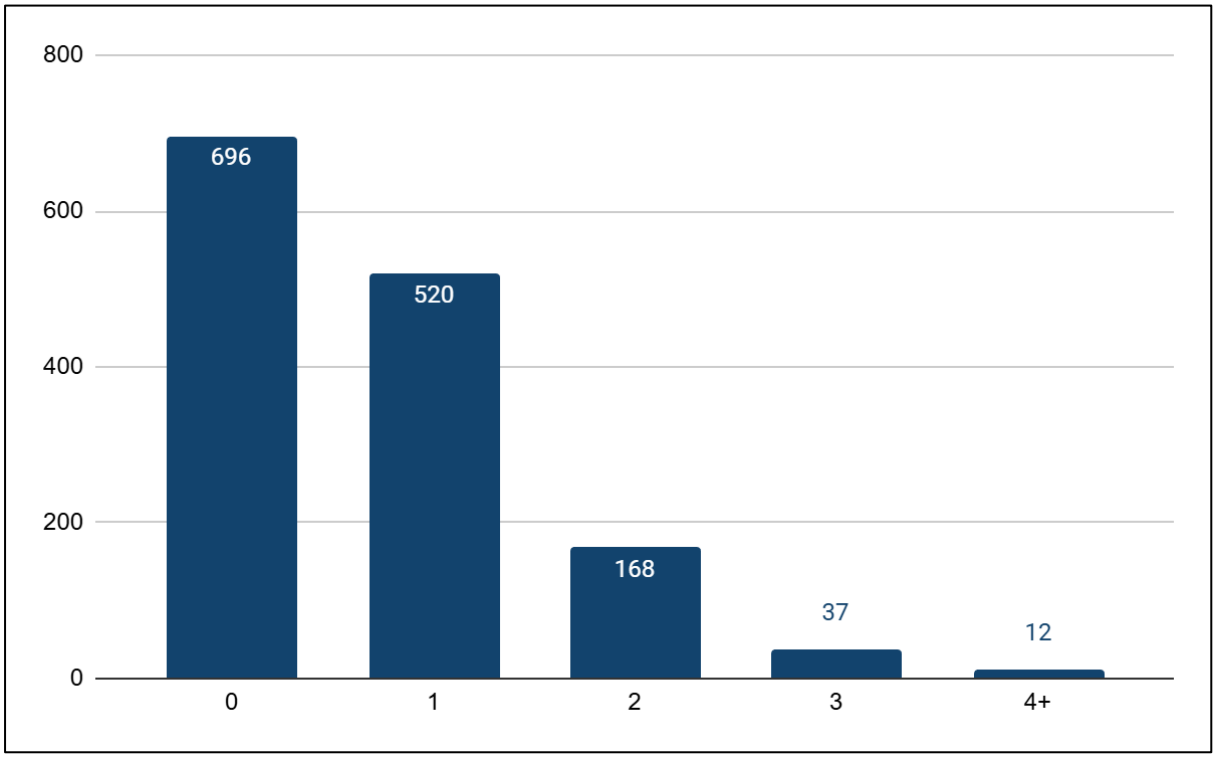
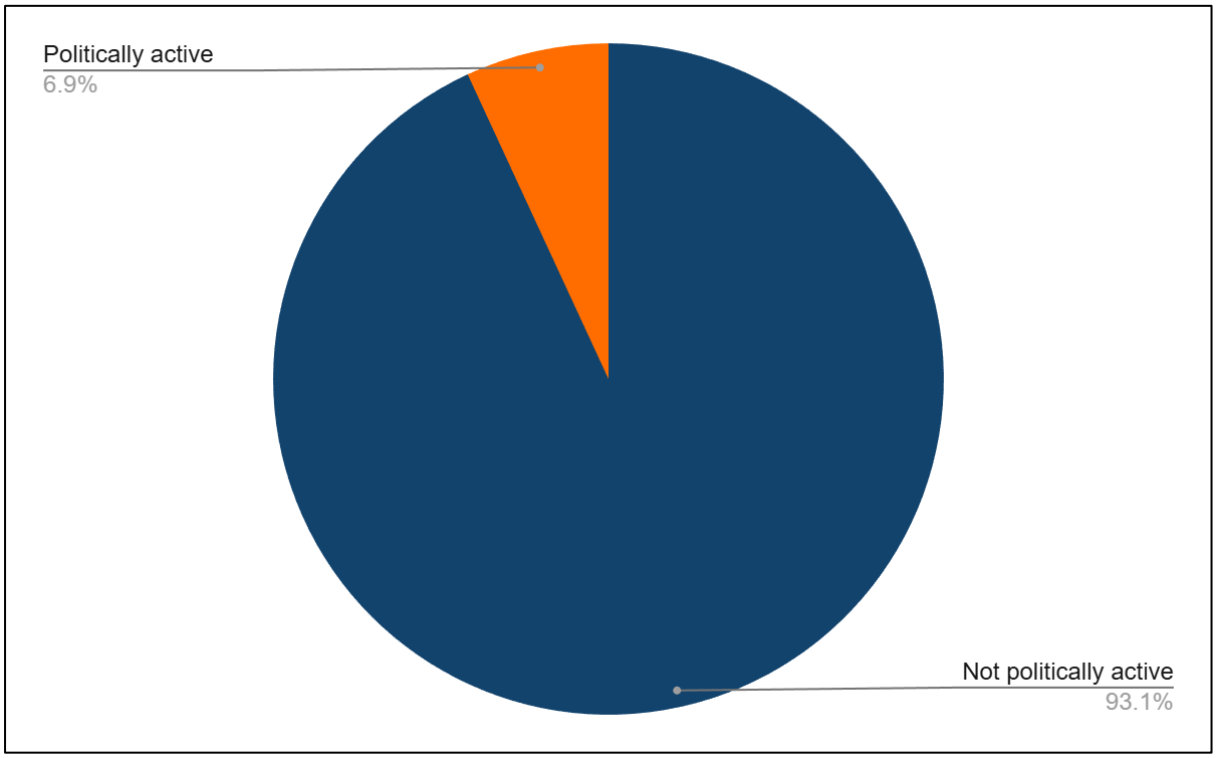


Figure 30: Percentage of incumbent appointees declaring political activity, 2024-25



Welsh Government public appointments

The Welsh Government, although falling under the Cabinet Office's Governance Code and the Public Appointments Order in Council, run their appointments separately to the UK Government and use a different system for the collection of candidate data, called Cais.

Since publication of the Commissioner's 2023-24 Annual Report, the Commissioner has been engaging with the First Minister of Wales and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, who is responsible for Welsh public appointments. In particular, the Commissioner has sought better to understand how the Governance Code can work more effectively for the Welsh Government. This has included obtaining a breakdown of departmental level responsibility for regulated appointments, as well as engaging with Ms Hutt on the issues of disabled, regional and Welsh language representation. For the first time, the Commissioner's annual report will be able to report on Welsh level regionality and the Welsh language competence of Welsh Government public appointees. This is a welcome change.

This year, the Commissioner notes the improved performance of the Welsh Government in completing appointments quickly. As Table 1 above shows, the Welsh Government performed second best in the timeliness of their campaigns for those departments and governments regulated by the Commissioner. Table 3 below shows the breakdown for timeliness across Welsh Government departments.

In 2024-25, the Welsh Government received 302 applications, with 142 shortlisted, 66 found appointable and 47 appointed (Figure 31). This is a slight decline on last year, when 53 appointments were made. It also made 45 reappointments, an increase on the 17 in 2023-24 (Figure 32).

Figure 31: Welsh Government appointees in 2024-25, by department

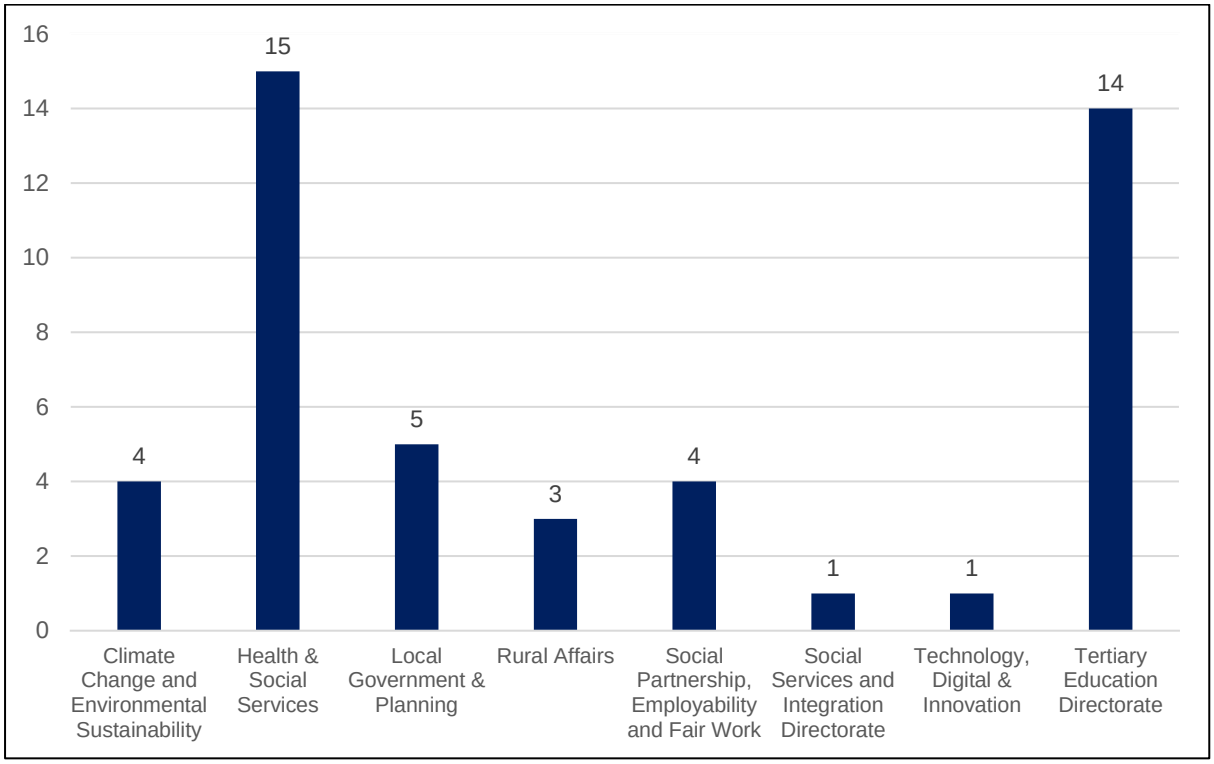


Figure 32: Welsh Government reappointees in 2024-25, by department

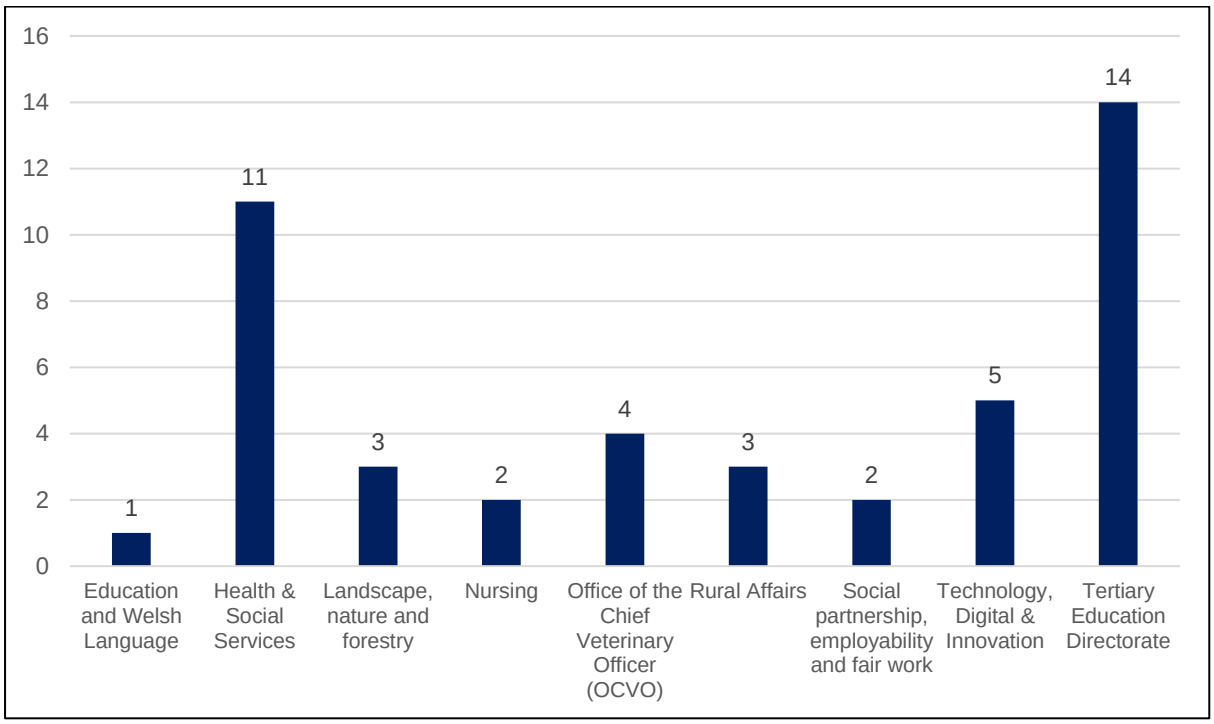


Table 3: Welsh Government timeliness in 2024-25, by department

Rank	Department	Avg days per campaign
1	Technology, Digital & Innovation	85
2	Social Services and Integration Directorate	88
3	Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability	88.5
4	Social Partnership, Employability and Fair Work	104
5	Health & Social Services	112.0
6	Tertiary Education Directorate	113.6
7	Local Government & Planning	117
8	Rural Affairs	142.2

Sex

In 2024-25, the Welsh Government appointed 28 women (60%) and 19 (40%) men across its 47 appointments made during the year (Figure 33).[49] In 2023-24, where appointments were split equally between men and women. One similarity with last year is that female applicants, despite applying in smaller numbers than men, progress well through competitions. Of those that declared their sex, there were 149 male and 143 female applicants, with 63 men and 74 women being shortlisted, 27 men and 39 women found appointable, and 19 men and 28 women appointed.

Disability

In 2023-24, people with disabilities were underrepresented among those appointed to Welsh public appointments. In 2024-25, there has been considerable improvement. Where in 2023-24, only 3.9% of those appointed declared a disability, in 2024-25 this has increased to 15% (Figure 34).[50] The proportion of people with disabilities at each application stage declines between application and found appointable stages, though increases slightly as all the candidates with disabilities found appointable were ultimately appointed. While noting that the appointments on offer can differ and have substantial impacts on representation, the Commissioner welcomes this improvement in the representation of people with disabilities across Welsh appointments.

Ethnicity

Last year, the Welsh Government had strong ethnic minority representation, with 20% of those appointed coming from an ethnic minority background. In 2024-25, there has been a minor decline, with 19% of those appointed coming from an ethnic minority background (Figure 35).[51] Progression of those from an ethnic minority background declines slightly at each stage between application and found appointable stages, and rises at appointed stage with 90% of those from an ethnic minority background who are found

[49] This gives a 100% response rate.
[50] The response rate was 97.9%.
[51] 38 responded that their ethnicity was 'White' while 9 people responded that their ethnicity was either 'mixed/multiple ethnic groups', 'Asian/Asian British' or 'Black/Black British'. The response rate to this question was 100%.

Figure 33: Percentage of Welsh Government appointees in 2024-25, by sex

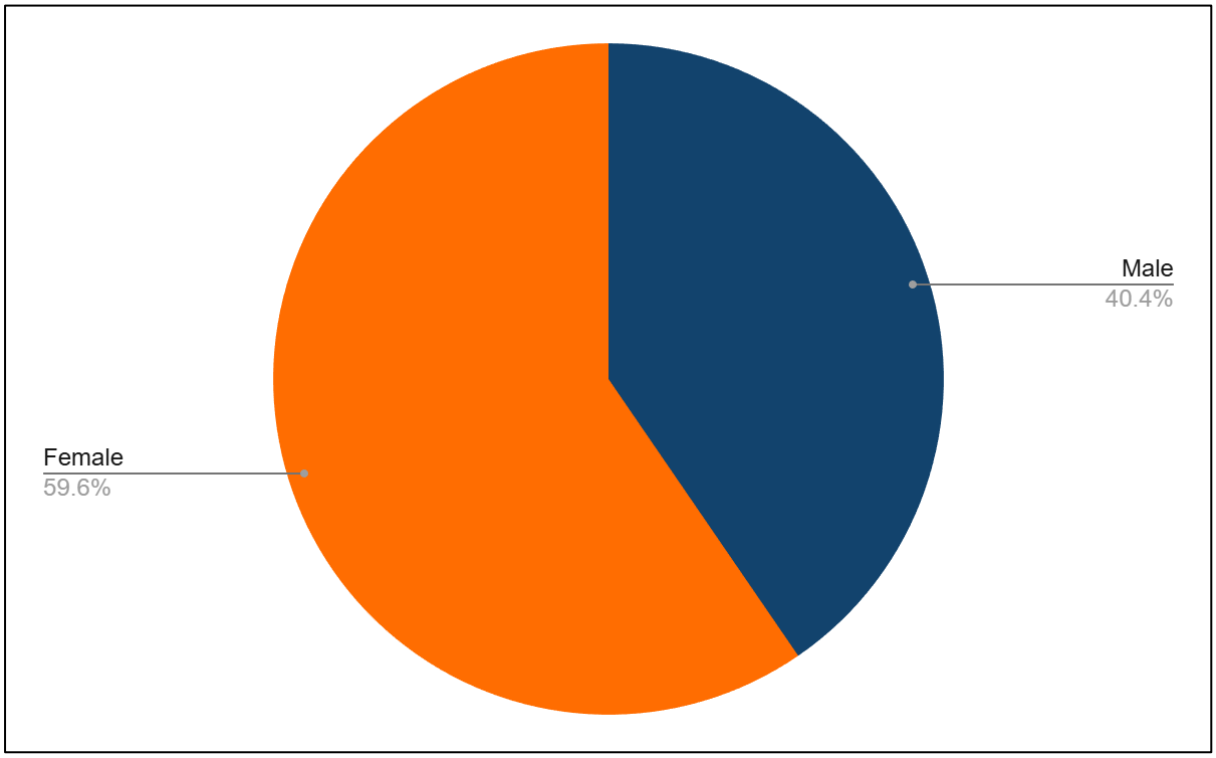
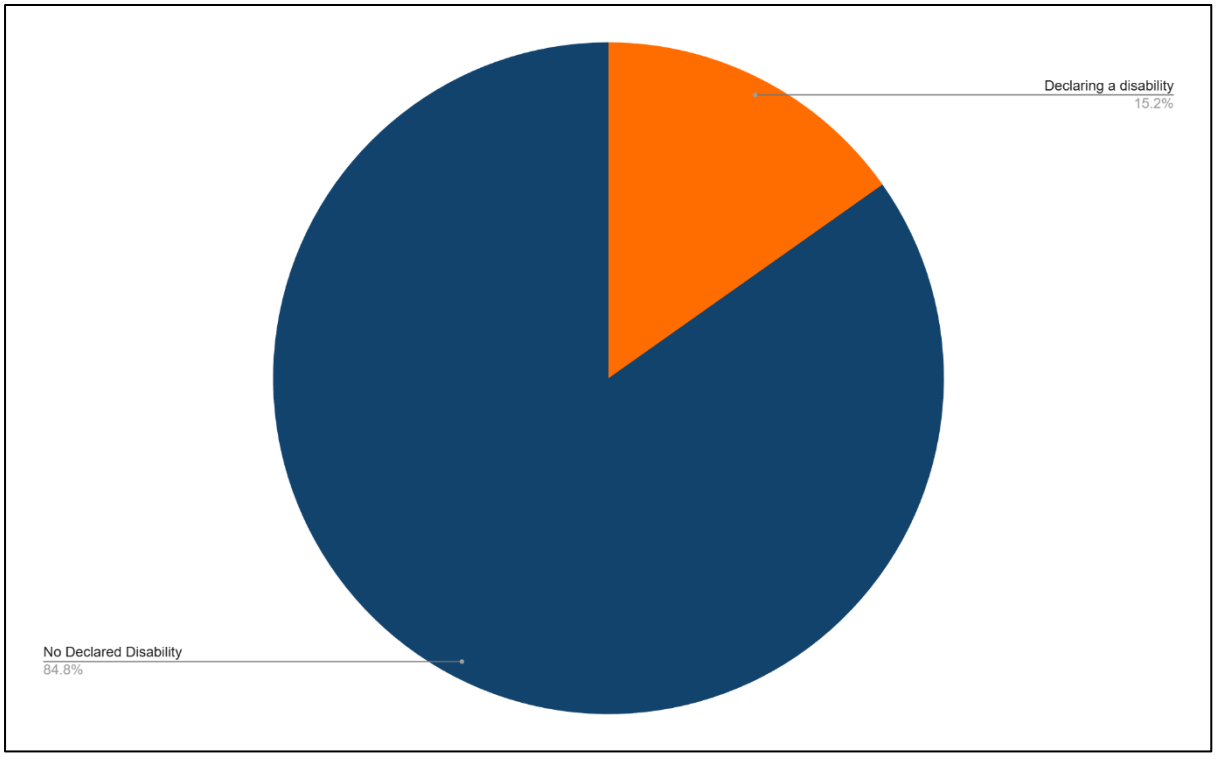


Figure 34: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments in 2024-25, by disability declaration



appointable are ultimately appointed. The Commissioner again welcomes the strong performance of the Welsh Government in encouraging and delivering ethnic diversity among its appointees.

Socio-economic background

New for 2024-25, the Commissioner has received data on the socio-economic background of Welsh Government public appointees. The Commissioner received 44 responses, out of 47 appointees, to this question.[52] As Figure 36 shows, most (52%) appointees are not from a lower-socioeconomic background, with 37% describing themselves as being from a lower socio-economic background, and 11% responding 'don't know'. While those from a lower socio-economic background make up a smaller proportion of applicants than those not from a lower socio-economic background, progression through the application process appears to be relatively strong. Those from a lower socio-economic background make up 33% of applicants, 37% of those shortlisted for interview, 42% of those interviewed and, lastly, 37% of those appointed.

Region

Also new in 2024-25, the Welsh Government has provided data on the areas of principal residence broken down by Welsh region.[53] This has allowed for a more granular assessment of the regional representation of Welsh public appointees.

Most appointees, 49%, declared that their principal residence was in South East Wales, which includes the capital, Cardiff. This is followed by Outside Wales (19%), South West Wales (17%), North Wales (11%) and Mid Wales (4%). This distribution is largely to be expected - Wales' largest city, Cardiff, is in South East Wales and its second largest city, Swansea, is in South West Wales. The data here does not suggest anything particularly concerning regarding the underrepresentation of those from less populated areas.

Welsh language

The Welsh Government has also started collecting data on the Welsh language skills of its public appointees and applicants for public appointments. This is split into two categories, Welsh language listening skills and Welsh language speaking skills, which applicants were asked to rate as having either 'no skills', 'basic/intermediate skills' or 'advanced skills'.[54] For speaking skills (Figure 38), 41% of appointees rated themselves as basic/intermediate, with 35% stating they had no skills and 24% stating they had advanced skills. For listening skills (Figure 39), a far greater proportion stated that they had basic skills at 55%, with 24% stating that they had advanced skills and 21% no skills. The proportion declaring themselves as having some level of competency was noticeably higher for listening skills at 79% than the 65% declaring they had some level of speaking proficiency.

[52] The response rate was therefore 93.62%.
[53] The response rate to this question was 100%.
[54] The response rate for 'speaking skills' was 97.9% and for 'listening skills' was 100%.

Figure 35: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by ethnic background

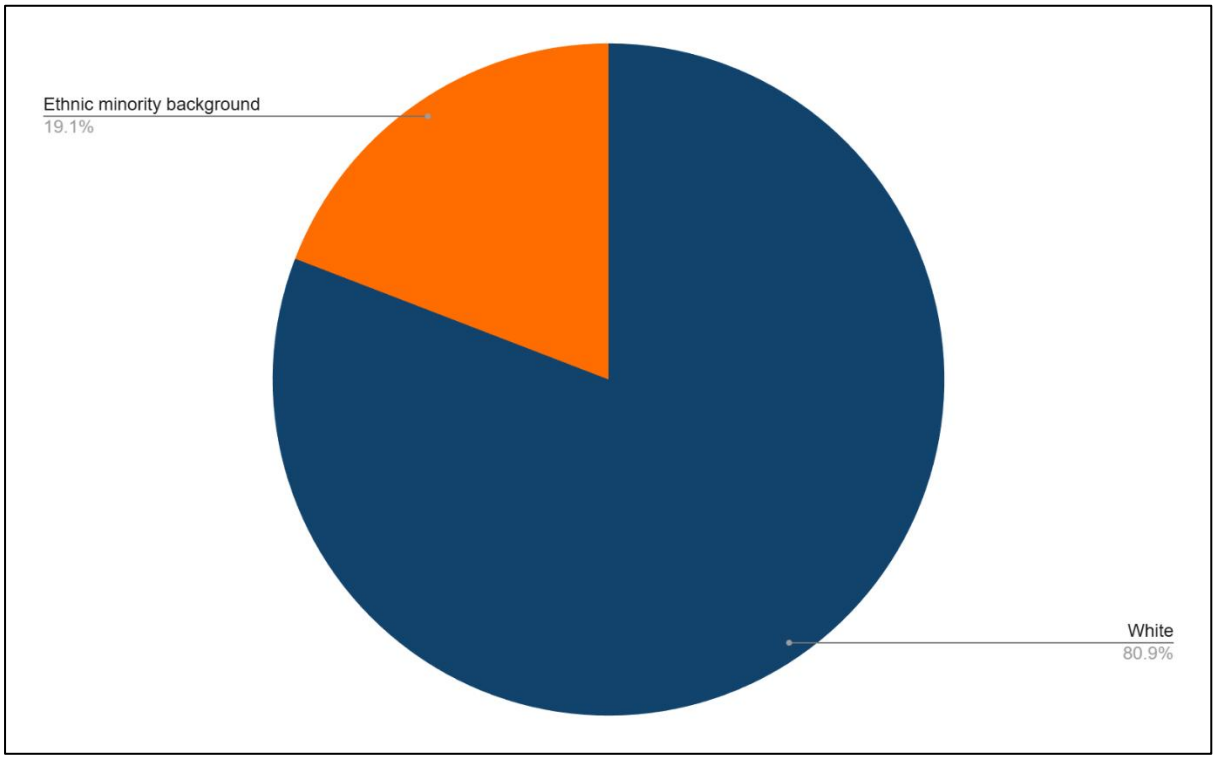
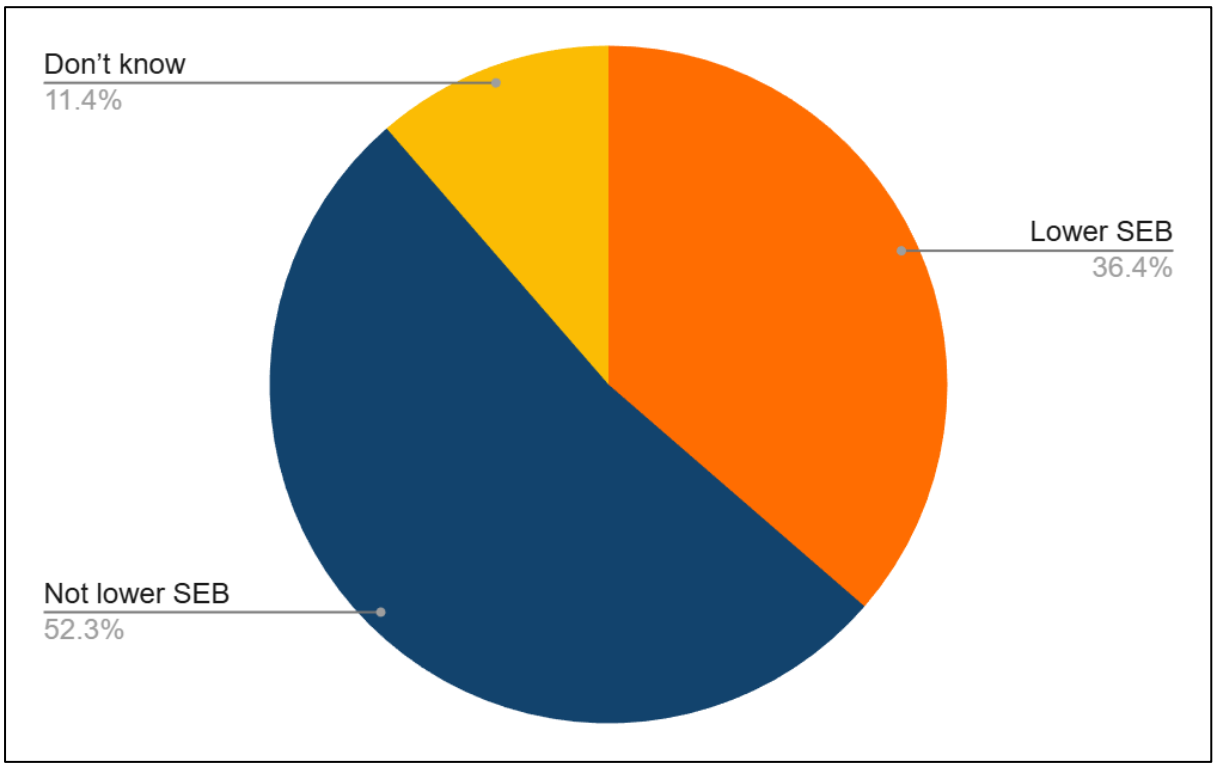


Figure 36: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by socio-economic background



Age

Of the 47 people appointed, two responded prefer not to say, giving a response rate of 95.7%. People were most commonly appointed in 2024-25 when aged either between 45-54 (17 people) or 55-64 (17 people), making up 34 out of the 45 people who responded positively to this question (Figure 40). Next were seven people appointed when aged between 35-44, three people aged between 25-34 and one person appointed when aged between 65-74.

Professional background

Diversity of thought is an important quality among public appointees, both for bringing new ideas and perspectives into boards and for being willing to challenge any groupthink that occurs. As such, questions are asked about applicants' professional background and experience.[55]

In 2024-25, a plurality Welsh public appointees declared that their prior experience was within the public sector - five as 'mostly civil service' and thirteen as 'mostly wider public sector' (Figure 41). A further eleven described themselves as having 'mixed' experience, seven as 'mostly third sector' and nine as 'mostly private sector'.

Political activity

As with the wider UK Government, Welsh public appointees are asked about their political activity within the past five years. In 2024-25, the response rate to this question was 100% and only one person (2%) declared significant political activity within the definition outlined in Section 9 of the Governance Code (Figure 42).

[55] The response rate to this question was 95.7%.

Figure 37: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by region

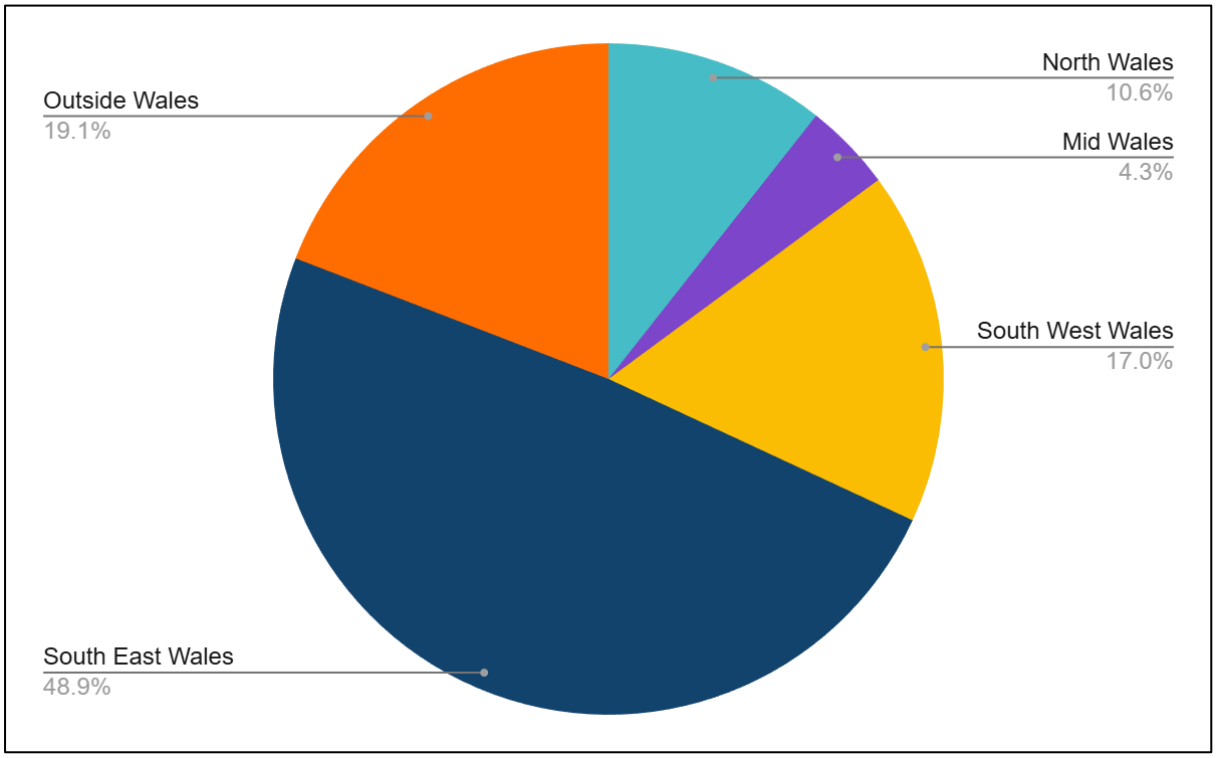


Figure 38: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by Welsh language speaking skills

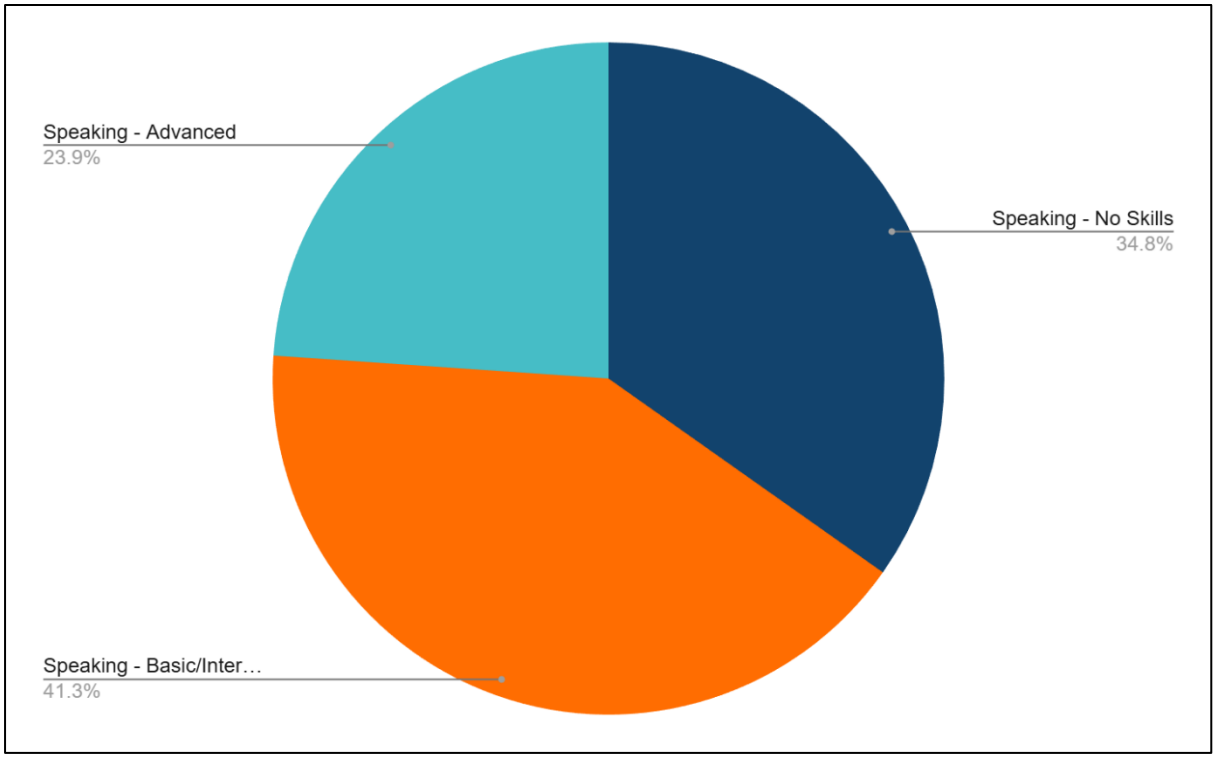


Figure 39: Percentage of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by Welsh language listening skills

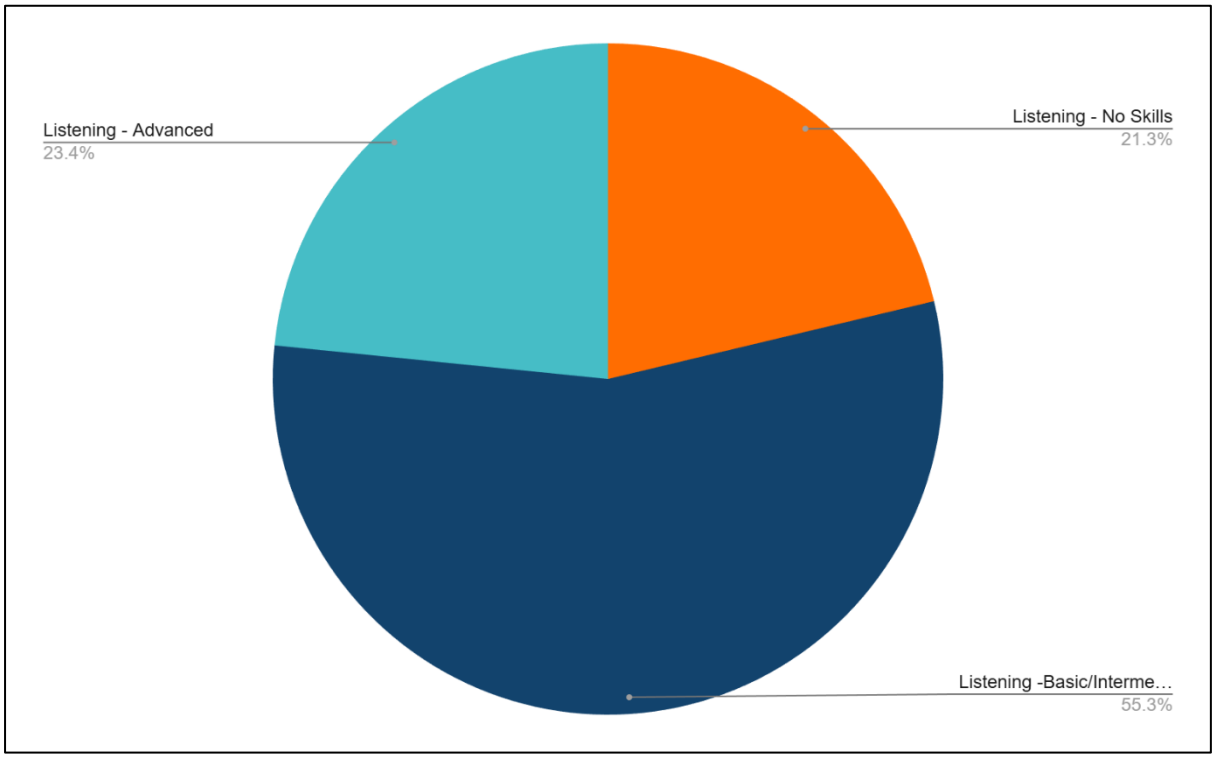


Figure 40: Number of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by age

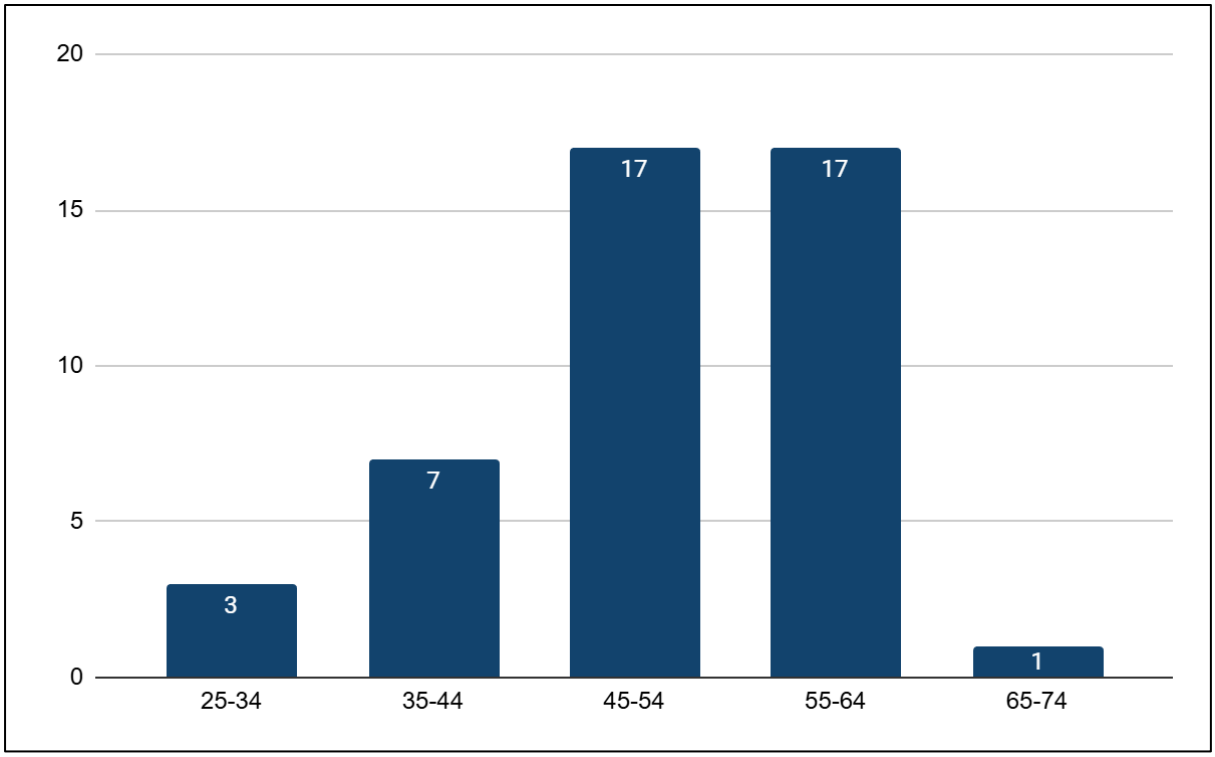


Figure 41: Number of Welsh Government appointments made in 2024-25, by professional background

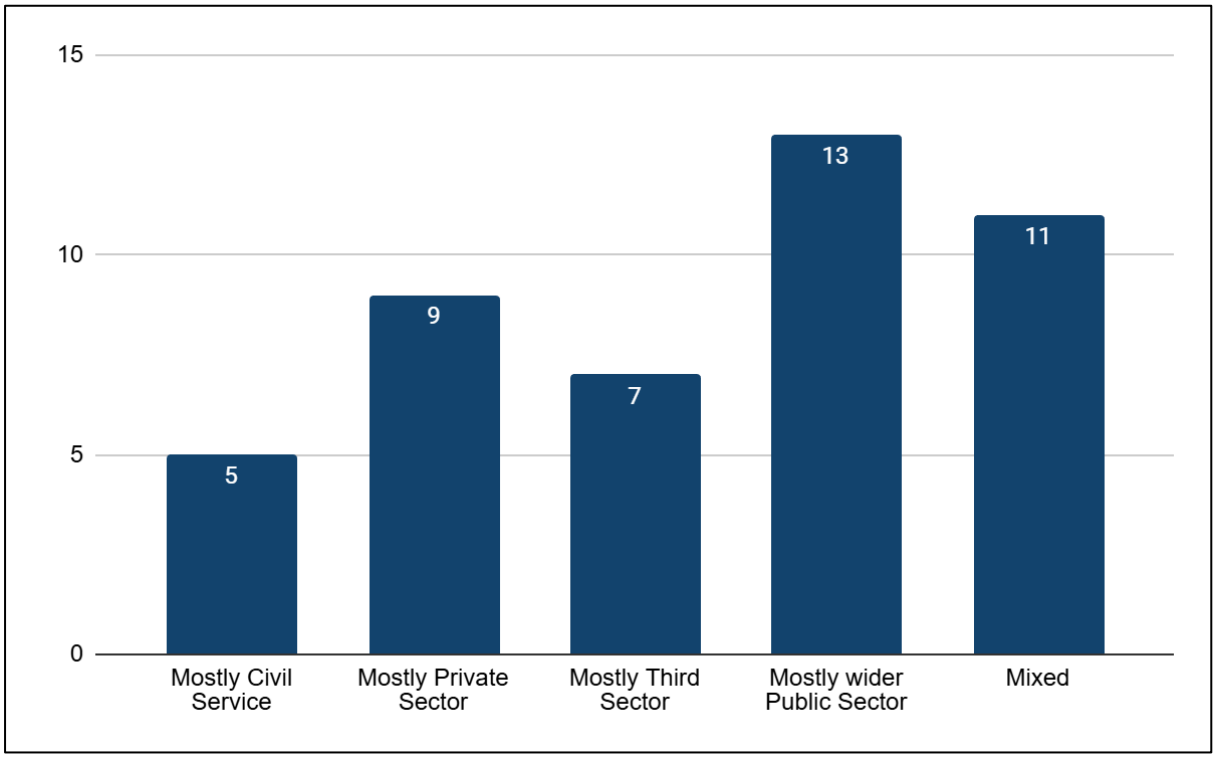
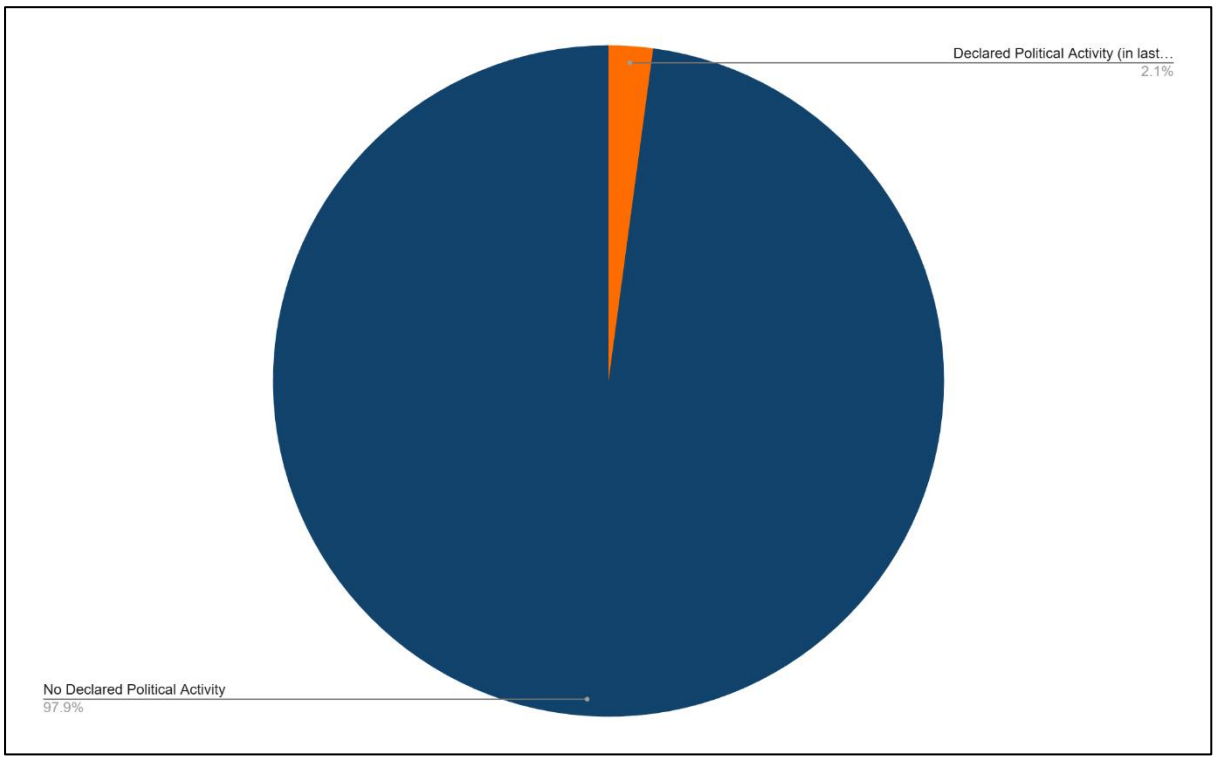


Figure 42: Percentage of Welsh Government appointees appointed in 2024-25 declaring political activity



Appendices

Appendix 1: Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments financial information

The Commissioner is supported by a small office of civil servants, on secondment from the Cabinet Office to the Civil Service Commission. The budget and expenditure of the office, as well as those of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, are incorporated within the Commission's overall budget and expenditure. The honorarium paid to the Commissioner and the salaries of his staff comprise the vast majority of the office's direct costs.

In 2024-25, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments' net expenditure was £320,000. This was made up of £62,000 in fees for the Commissioner for Public Appointments and £258,000 for other expenditure.

Appendix 2: Full list of consultations and notifications of the Commissioner in 2024-25

Article 2(4) cases: newly regulated bodies
Where a provisional appointment is to be made before a public body or public office exists in law or before a body or office has been specified as a public body or public office for the purposes of the Order in Council, the Minister for the Cabinet Office may notify the Commissioner that the appointment is to be treated as if it were a public appointment to a public body or public office for the purposes of this Order.

1. The Independent Public Advocate was added to the list of regulated bodies on 2 May 2024.
2. The Information Commission was added to the list of regulated bodies on 14 February 2025. Like the Information Commissioner's Office it replaces, the Information Commission was also made a significant appointment.
3. The Windrush Commissioner was added to the list of regulated bodies on 11 March 2025.

Section 3.1 cases: delegations
Ministers may, where they have the power to do so, choose to delegate responsibility for certain appointments to the appropriate body in question to run and make appointments. This should be agreed with the Cabinet Office and the Commissioner for Public Appointments, along with any exemptions from this Code as necessary.

None in 2024-25.

Section 3.2 cases: unappointable candidates
Ministers should consider the advice of Advisory Assessment Panels but are not bound by their views. Ministers may therefore reject a panel's advice on the merit of candidates and choose to re-run a competition with a new panel. Ministers may choose to appoint someone who is not deemed "appointable" by the Advisory Assessment Panel. In this case, they must consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments in good time before a public announcement to justify their decision publicly. In addition, from 8 February 2024, Ministers must write to

the relevant Select Committee alongside the announcement and appear before it if requested by the Select Committee Chair.[56]None in 2024-25.[57]

Section 3.3: direct appointments

In exceptional cases, Ministers may decide to appoint a candidate without a competition. They must make this decision public alongside their reasons for doing so. They must consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments in good time before the appointment is publicly announced.

Section 3.6: length of tenure

Subject to any statutory provisions, it is for ministers to decide on length of tenure. However, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms or serve in any one post for more than ten years. In exceptional cases, ministers may decide an individual's skills and expertise is needed beyond such a tenure. In such cases, the Commissioner should be notified.

Department	Body	Role	Length
DHSC	Commission on Human Medicines	Commissioner (ie member)	Two years
DESNZ	Coal Authority	Member	Three years
MOJ	Tribunal Procedure Committee	Member	Three years
Defra	Conservation Board for the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Member	Three years
Defra	National Park Authorities	Member	Two years
DfT	Office of Rail and Road	NED	Three months
DfE	Student Loans Company	Independent Assessor	Three years
DCMS	Royal Parks	Chair	Nine months
DWP	Social Security Advisory Committee	Member	18 months
DBT	British Hallmarking Council	Member	One, Two and Three years

[56] The Governance Code adds that this last provision does not apply to appointments made by Welsh Government ministers.

[57] Indeed, there has never been an instance of an appointment being made of an unappointable candidate since this section was introduced in 2017, following the Lord Grimstone-led *Better Public Appointments* review.

MHCLG	Regulator of Social Housing	Member	One year
WG	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales	Member	Nine months, Nine months
DBT	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Board	Representatives	Two years, Two years, Three-and-a-half years
WG	Natural Resources Wales	Member	5 months
DfT	Departmental board	Member	Two years
Defra	Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment	Deputy Chair	6 months
HO	Disclosure and Barring Service	Independent Monitor	3 months
WG	Qualifications Wales	Chair	3 months
DHSC	NHS Pay Review Body	Member	Two years
DCMS	Tate	Trustee (ie member)	Three years, Two years (less two weeks)
DCMS	Big Lottery Fund (The National Lottery Community Fund)	Interim Chair	3 months
DHSC	Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority	Member	6 months (both)
HO	Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation	Independent Reviewer	18 months
CO	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Interim deputy chair	9 months
HO	Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	Members	6 for 3 years; 5 for 1 year
DCMS	Arts Council England	Chair	18 months
WG	Velindre University NHS Trust	Chair	3 months
DESNZ	Office for Nuclear Regulation	Security NED	3 years
DfE	Student Loans	Independent	8 months

	Company	Assessors (IAs)	
Defra	Regional Flood and Coastal Committees	Chairs	2 years 5 months; 1 year
HO	Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority (GLAA)	NED	2 years
WG	National Academy for Educational Leadership	Members	1 year (each)
FCDO	Great Britain-China Centre	Chair	3 months
MHCLG	Boundary Commissioner for England	Commissioner (ie member)	7 years 2 months
Defra	Forestry Commission	Commissioner (ie member)	2 years
MoJ	Parole Board	Members	2 for 1 year, 10 for 5 years
DfT	Transport Focus	Members	3 years
MoJ	MoJ Board	Lead NED	1 year
DCMS	National Gallery	Member	2 years
DfT	Office of Rail and Road	NED	6 months
WG	Health Education and Improvement Wales	Chair	12 months

Section 6.1: Significant appointments

A list of 'significant appointments' should be agreed by Ministers and the Commissioner for Public Appointments and published. These competitions must have a Senior Independent Panel Member (SIPM) on their Advisory Assessment Panels. A SIPM is an individual who is familiar with senior recruitment, the Public Appointments Principles and this Governance Code. SIPMs should be independent of the department and of the body concerned and should not be currently politically active.

1. The chair of the Information Commission was made a significant appointment on 14 February 2025.

Section 6.2: Senior Independent Panel Members

Summary of departmental lists of Senior Independent Panels Members used on campaigns in 2024-25. The list relates to chairs or chief commissioners unless otherwise indicated.

Department	Body	Name
DSIT	Innovate UK	Charlotte Crosswell

DCMS	Independent Football Regulator	Hedley Finn
DCMS	National Museums Liverpool	Melanie Lewis
CO	Senior Salaries Review Body	Steve Holliday
DCMS	National Gallery	Michael John Cassidy
DCMS	Arts Council England	Lizzie Noel / Elizabeth Putnam
DCMS	National Gallery	Nick Clarry
MoJ	Ministry of Justice	Sir Peter Rubin
MHCLG	Homes England	Tony Poulter
DfE	Department for Education	Cindy Butts
DESNZ	Climate Change Committee	Emily Shuckburgh
CO	ACOBA	Simon Woolley
DCMS	National Gallery	Melissa Bethell
DfE	Office for Students	Andrea Coscelli
CO	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Keith Fraser
DHSC	NHS England	Libby Watkins
DHSC	Care Quality Commission	Janice Scanlan
DCMS	UK Sport	Jeremy Phillips KC
DCMS	Royal Parks	Jayam Dalal
DCMS	British Museum	Althea Efunshile
DfE	Ofsted	Lambert Allman
WG	Natural Resources Wales	Aaqil Ahmed
DCMS	British Museum	Cynthia Davis
WG	Qualifications Wales	Craig Stephenson
WG	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Velindre National Health Services Trust	Moawia Bin-Sufyan
DCMS	Gambling Commission	Dr John Craggs

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