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Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Leader, Shadow First Secretary of State,
Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and
Shadow Secretary of State for the Future of Work

By email

The logo for the Committee on Standards in Public Life is a dark red rectangle with the text "Committee on Standards in Public Life" in white, sans-serif font, centered within the rectangle.

**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

3 August 2021

Dear Angela,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August about the appointment of Ewen Fergusson to the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

We welcome your interest in the Committee's work. Importantly, we are of course a non-partisan, independent Committee, but we do also have political representation on the Committee, from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.

Appointments to the Committee are made by the Prime Minister via a process run by the Cabinet Office under the Government's Governance Code for Public Appointments. This process has remained unchanged since the Government's Governance Code came into effect on 1 January 2017.

The Cabinet Office has responsibility for the appointment of the assessment panel. For independent member appointments, it has been usual over the years to involve the Chair of the Committee, and I was asked to chair this panel for the appointment of two new independent members.

Under the Governance Code, the [panel](#) is asked to assess all candidates against the published criteria, carry out interviews with shortlisted candidates after consulting the minister and produce a list of appointable candidates from which ministers make the choice. The Code does not ask the panel to rank candidates or provide merit order.

It is for the Minister to choose who to appoint from that list of appointable candidates.

The majority of the questions in your letter must therefore be addressed to the Cabinet Office as it is their process and public appointments are ultimately made by ministers.

Ewen Ferguson and Professor Gillian Peele were selected by ministers, and their appointments confirmed by the Prime Minister, to join the Committee on 1 August. The Committee's Register of Interests was updated to reflect this.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments, Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE, monitors and regulates appointments under the Code. I have attached a letter from him about this appointment process.

As you know, the Committee is looking at the regulation of public appointments as part of our Standards Matter 2 review. We published our initial findings last June and will be producing our final recommendations this autumn. Should the Labour Party have any proposals on reforming the system of checks and balances in the public appointments process, we would be delighted to hear your views and would welcome written evidence to that review. Or, if you would find another meeting helpful, do contact my office and we will arrange that.

As you have made your letter public, we will publish this exchange of correspondence on our website.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister; the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; the Commissioner for Public Appointments; and Director General, Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely



Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life