

Press release: Review launched to encourage more disabled people to take up high profile public appointments

The review will be led by Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE and is expected to report in, later in 2018.

The review will explore why the proportion of applicants for public appointments who declare a disability, is low compared to the UK population as a whole. It will also explore how the process could be improved, to encourage more applications from disabled people.

It is part of the Government's Diversity Action Plan which also includes an ambition that by 2022, half of all public appointees should be female and 14% should be from ethnic minorities, bringing representation on public boards in line with the wider population of England and Wales.

Public appointments are high profile and influential positions on boards of public bodies which run, regulate and advise our public service. These can include Chairs and other senior non-executive positions and range from Court Visitors to Commissioners and Ombudsmen.

Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden said:

It is essential that public appointees are truly representative of the society they serve. Diverse public boards are more effective, benefiting from fresh perspectives, new ideas, vigorous challenge and broad experiences. It is both morally right to ensure greater participation from disabled people but I also believe it will lead to better decision-making.

I'm thrilled to announce that Lord Holmes will be leading the review. He combines expertise in accessibility, diversity and inclusion, as well as a wealth of personal experience on public boards.

The Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE said:

I'm delighted that the government is looking seriously at this issue. Public appointments play a fundamental role in shaping society as well as within the organisations themselves. I look forward to working with the government to better understand and improve the recruitment process so that we can address the reality that whilst talent is everywhere, opportunity is not.

Today's announcement was made at the Public Chairs' Forum Diversity, Inclusion and Equality for Boards event, where the Minister spoke to Chairs of Public Bodies about his ambition for diversity in public appointments. It follows a commitment made in the Government's Diversity Action Plan, launched in December 2017, to commission a review into the barriers facing those with visible and non-visible disabilities when considering public appointments.

Press release: Public Service Mutuals receive £1m funding boost

The fund follows the launch of the successful Mutuals Support Programme in January. This fund provided 12 organisations with support to set up or grow as Public Service Mutuals.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

We want to support the development, growth and sustainability of mutuals. Our funding boost has already enabled dozens of organisations to flourish.

This next round will strengthen our commitment and allow many institutions, staff, and their customers, to benefit from more independence, faster decision-making and less bureaucracy in the future.

To apply for funding email the Mutuals Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on: mutuals@culture.gov.uk.

Funding will be open until 17.00hrs on Friday 29 June.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Public service mutuals are organisations that have left the public sector but continue delivering public services.

To apply for support from this programme you must currently, or intend to, fulfil our definition of a Public Service Mutual, which is an organisation that: i) has left the public sector (also known as 'spinning out') ii) continues to deliver public services and aims to have a positive social impact iii) has a significant degree of staff influence or control in the way it is run.

If you're an existing mutual, you must be in your first five years of operation, or delivering your original or extended contract which has not been retendered, or both.

You must be able to demonstrate how support from this programme will help your organisation grow or diversify its operations.

All applicants will be required to demonstrate their commitment to their project and the mutual model by providing matched funding, in cash, towards the support needed.

[News story: New research into funding for adult social care published](#)

[The Review of Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formulae](#) was commissioned and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care in 2012. It was produced by the University of Kent, the London School of Economics, and LG Futures.

The research was commissioned to:

- look at changes in the mix of services local authorities provide to their residents with care needs
- reflect improvements in data collection and statistical methods

The research proposes a new formula to be used within the local government finance settlement.

It will be considered as part of the government's [review of local authorities' relative needs and resources, which is led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#).

The research includes separate formulae for dividing budgets for 4 specific aspects of the Care Act. These are:

- deferred payment agreements
- early assessments for the cap on care costs
- extension to the means test
- cap on care costs

These formulae were commissioned in 2012 and may need to be revised to reflect the outcome of the forthcoming green paper on adult social care.

News story: Wales and South West England's joint innovation strengths highlighted in a new index produced by Data City

A new [UK Tech Innovation Index available today](#) (6 June) shows that South Wales and the South West of England have significant strengths across a range of sectors including AI and Data, Clean Growth, Advanced Manufacturing and Ageing Society.

The index, produced by Data City also illustrates for the first time a significant overlap of activity clusters between the regions, with Bristol, Cardiff and Newport showing especially strong links to each other.

The index shows the most active innovation communities in the UK by categories, captured in an [online map](#). It goes beyond standard pre-determined geographies, enabling it to reveal previously unseen vital business and academic links across cities and county boundaries, and demonstrating that innovation communities are often made up of groups of cities or conurbations.

Wales and the South West of England tend to produce significantly overlapping clusters across the whole index. The cluster around Bristol, Cardiff and Newport ranks 5th overall representing 5% of all activity in the UK, with a strong contribution from business activity.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This report demonstrates the value of the connectivity which is already underway between South Wales and the South West.

In Bristol, Newport and Cardiff we have thriving digital and advanced manufacturing sectors, and our universities and higher education institutions have strong connections with industry and business on both sides of the Severn.

By abolishing tolls on the Severn Crossings by the end of this year, not only will regular commuters generate annual savings of around £1,400 but we will witness the expansion of this already flourishing growth corridor spanning South Wales to Bristol and beyond.

The Severn Crossings will no longer be a barrier to cross-border economic growth, but will represent a positive symbol for economic vibrancy flowing both ways between South Wales and the South West of England.

The top 10 overall clusters across all sectors are shown below, including the percentage of activity in the UK as a whole:

Top 10 clusters and activity percentage

1. London, Luton (21.5%)
2. Birmingham, Coventry (7.3%)
3. Manchester, Stoke, Burnley (6.4%)
4. Reading, Aldershot, Slough (5.0%)
5. Bristol, Cardiff, Newport (5.0%)
6. Oxford, Northampton, Milton Keynes (4.7%)
7. Leicester, Nottingham (4.7%)
8. Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Barnsley, Huddersfield, Wakefield (4.7%)
9. Romford, Dartford (4.0%)
10. Edinburgh, Dundee (3.9%)

This new index has also been developed using not just business activity, but the influence, specialisms and location of universities and other academic institutions, and the concentration of events and networking opportunities in an area.

The index is published by Data City (thedatacity.com), with support from the Open Data Institute (ODI). The project is part of the ODI's innovation programme, a three-year, £6m programme to support and build upon the UK's strengths in data and data analytics, funded by Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency.

Tom Forth, Head of Data at ODI Leeds, who led the project, explains how it is different from other pieces of innovation research. He says:

With this index, we are providing an evidence base for better-informed decisions within the UK Government and beyond, and are sharing many of our methods and documenting the datasets we use so that others can benefit from them.

Our new approach covers more of the UK, and by using many times more data points we have found and measured more clusters of innovation, and more of them away from cities. With millions of rows of data, and thousands more rows being added every week, we no longer classify businesses and events by hand, we use machine-learning techniques instead. We are also explaining what would be possible if more data were available to us in the future, in the hope that it will be.

We believe this information will help private investors looking to invest in companies, existing businesses looking to expand, national government departments looking to assign investment and local and regional governments looking to assign funding locally or make a case for inward investment to their regions.

Jeni Tennison, CEO at the Open Data Institute, said:

This new index gives a bird's eye view of innovation networks across the UK in 2018, providing not only an interactive online tool but regularly updated open datasets that others can use and explore.

The index can be used to inform policy makers, investors and businesses about innovation across the UK, showing where there are active tech communities in different sectors, and where there are gaps. It also demonstrates how new sources of data can be brought together to cast a different light on innovation in the UK. By making the methodology and data open, we hope others can build on this work.

To read the index in full, [visit the Data City website](#).

Press release: New power to target hostile state activity

The government has today introduced [new legislation to Parliament](#) to give police new powers to investigate hostile state activity at the border.

The measure, [announced by the Prime Minister](#) following the attack in Salisbury, forms part of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill.

Using the [new power](#), the police or dedicated immigration or customs officers will be able to stop, question, search and detain an individual at a port, airport or border area to determine whether he or she is, or has been, engaged in hostile activity.

Home Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

We judge that it was highly likely that the Russian state carried out the appalling attack in Salisbury which demonstrates why the police need robust powers to investigate, identify and challenge those acting against our interests.

This is a necessary and proportionate response to the threat and will, of course, be subject to strict safeguards and robust oversight to assure its proper use.

The power will be subject to robust oversight by the Investigatory Powers

Commissioner Sir Adrian Fulford and the bill includes provisions for safeguards to protect legally privileged and journalistic material.

The UK faces a sustained threat from hostile state actors seeking to undermine national security in a variety of ways, including espionage and, as the attack in Salisbury made clear, violence against individuals.

As announced in the [government's strengthened counter-terrorism strategy](#), the legislation will also introduce a variety of new laws to respond to the unprecedented terrorist threat, allowing earlier intervention to disrupt terrorism. These include:

- amending certain terrorism offences to update them for the digital age, to reflect contemporary patterns of radicalisation and to close gaps in their scope
- strengthening the sentencing framework for terrorism-related offences and the power for managing terrorist offenders following their release from custody, including by increasing the maximum penalty for certain offences, to ensure that the punishment properly reflects the crime and to better prevent re-offending
- strengthening the powers of the police to prevent terrorism and investigate terrorist offences

The bill will also amend the Reinsurance (Acts of Terrorism) Act 1993 so that the government-backed terrorism reinsurer, Pool Re, can extend its business interruption cover to include losses that are not contingent on physical damage to commercial property.