

ANNUAL PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS PLAN FOR 2006-7

1. Overview and policy

Diversity

1. We are concerned to ensure that all groups in society are represented on our boards because it is fair; we want to draw on the richest possible pool of talent; and boards function best if their members bring a variety of different perspectives, and are in touch with wider society.
2. We try therefore to attract people with different backgrounds and experience, ie women, members of the ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, younger people, people from outside London, and people with experience of different types of organisations and industries.
3. We have ambitious centrally agreed targets to increase the diversity of board appointments among three groups - 50% women, 10% people from minority ethnic backgrounds and 6% disabled people. In 2005-06, of the 124 Ministerial appointments made by DCMS, 33% were women, 10% were from an ethnic minority background, and 4% had a declared disability.

The importance of appointments to DCMS

4. DCMS is responsible for over 60 public bodies. These provide services, act as regulators, distribute large sums of Lottery money, and form the network through which DCMS delivers its strategic priorities.
5. They are mostly classified as Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), are funded by, but independent of, the Department and are run by boards. It is very important to the effectiveness of DCMS and its bodies that Ministers are able to appoint the most able and suitable members to their boards.

How we make them

6. Because of their importance to DCMS, the appointments processes are run by a central team who specialise in this area. This team works in partnership with policy colleagues in the Department and professional executive search firms.
7. Our procedures have been designed taking account of the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). We are committed to ensuring that Ministers make appointments in a fair, open and transparent way. We also use Independent Assessors throughout our processes. These are senior people from outside the Department who have experience of recruitment and have been trained in OCPA principles and rules, who are involved at all stages as guardians of the integrity of the process.

2. Development activity and future plans

8. Our development activity focuses on better governance and increased diversity. We are currently consulting our NDPB Chairs on proposals to further improve the operation of our NDPB Boards by:

- clarifying the relative roles of and the rules of engagement between the Department and its NDPBs of different types;
- developing a clearer shared view of the role of NDPB boards and the areas in which they should focus;
- talking to our Chairs about how we can make our NDPB boards more diverse, by looking carefully at the composition of all our boards from first principles and considering whether they have the right skills and experience to form balanced teams and to reach out to the whole of society and deliver full public value;
- putting in place a programme to adjust Board composition where this is appropriate, by widening Departmental networks, refining the criteria for appointment, and finding and nurturing new talent;
- spreading good practice on the induction and appraisal of individual board members and the development of the board as a whole.