

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Clare Adamson MSP
Convener
Social Security Committee

SocialSecurityCommittee@parliament.scot

11 June 2018

Jeane Freeman

I am writing to you today regarding the Scottish Commission on Social Security ('the Commission'), the independent scrutiny body that will scrutinise the Scottish social security system and hold the Government to account. During the successful passage of the Social Security (Scotland) Bill, I committed to seeking the views of the Social Security Committee on the skillset and experience that should be looked for when appointing individuals to the Commission.

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 provides that appointments to the Commission are to be made by Scottish Ministers, and secondary legislation will shortly be laid to allow the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland (CESPLS) to regulate the appointments process. Being regulated by CESPLS ensures that the appointment process is fair, open, merit-based and affords equality of opportunity to a strong and diverse field of suitable applicants. Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities, wrote to you about the required secondary legislation on 4 June 2018.

I hope to appoint the Chair and initial Members later this year or early 2019. A Selection Panel will shortly be convened to carry out the advertising of posts, sifting of applications and interviewing of candidates for the Chair and initial Members, advising Ministers of suitable individuals to appoint.

This Panel will work on drafting adverts and assessment criteria for the posts. The Commission will require specific skills and experience from its Chair and Members (a working knowledge of social security, for example, or experience of scrutinising government legislation). It would be helpful if the Committee could provide its views on what these essential skills might be. The person specifications will also take account of the Public Appointments Board Member Core

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Skills Framework, available on Scotland's Public Appointments website¹. This framework includes many of the core skills and personal qualities which are often sought as part of public appointment rounds to ensure smooth running and good governance of the diverse range of bodies and organisations in Scotland.

I am therefore asking the Committee to submit its thoughts to me in advance of the Scottish Parliament's summer recess. Although the final decision is for Ministers, obtaining the views of the Committee at this stage of the appointment process will ensure they can be considered as the person specifications are created.

I appreciate the tight timescale but I know the Committee will appreciate that this is unavoidable if we are to establish this important element of our new social security system.

I look forward to receiving the Committee's comments by the end of June.

Kind regards



JEANE FREEMAN

¹ See: <http://www.appointed-for-scotland.org/media/37883/board-member-core-skills-framework-november-2016.docx>

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot