



The House of Commons
Commission

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards: Nomination of Candidate

Report presented to the House of
Commons by Mr Speaker

*Ordered by the House of Commons to be
printed 19 July 2017*

Commissioners

The Speaker (John Bercow) (Chair), The Leader of the House of Commons (Andrea Leadsom), Sir Paul Beresford, Tom Brake, Stewart Hosie, Valerie Vaz, Dame Rosie Winterton, Ian Ailles (Director General), David Natzler (Clerk of the House), Dame Janet Gaymer (External member) and Jane McCall (External member).

Secretary to the Commission: Marianne Cwynarski.

Assistant Secretary: Helen Wood.

Introduction

1. On 19 July 1995, the House debated the First Report of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life,¹ and passed the following Resolution:

“That the appointment of a Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards be set in hand under arrangements to be made by Madam Speaker on the advice of the House of Commons Commission and in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life.”

2. The principal duties and functions of the Commissioner are:

- Maintaining and monitoring the operation of the Register of Members’ Financial Interests and the other Registers.
- Providing advice on a confidential basis to individual Members and to the Select Committee on Standards, including advice about the registration of interests, the interpretation of the Code of Conduct and questions of propriety.
- Preparing guidance and providing induction courses for new Members on matters of conduct, propriety and ethics.
- Monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, proposing possible modifications of it to the Committee.
- Receiving and investigating matters relating to the conduct of Members and reporting findings to the Committee where appropriate.
- Submitting to the House annually a report on the exercise by her of her functions.

3. On 26 June 2003 the House resolved,

That this House agrees with the proposals of the House of Commons Commission in paragraphs 8 to 10 of its response to the Eighth Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life,² that—

- a) any future appointment to the office of Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards shall be for a period of five years, and shall not be renewable; [...]

4. Kathryn Hudson, the current Commissioner, was nominated by the Commission and approved by the House on 12 September 2012, as the fifth holder of the post. Her tenure started on 1 January 2013 and comes to an end on 31 December 2017.

5. The House of Commons Commission would like to record its appreciation of Kathryn Hudson’s service to the House during her time as Commissioner. During that time she has handled a wide range of complaints against Members and has also contributed to the development of the standards system as a whole; for example, through instituting greater opportunities for training Members and their staff and her work on the Respect policy and review of the Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules. Kathryn Hudson took up her

1 HC (1994–95) 637.

2 HC (2002–03) 422.

post at the same time as the first lay members arrived on the Committee on Standards and she has played a full part in ensuring the success of these new arrangements in addressing standards issues within the House. Throughout her time in office she has demonstrated great integrity, resilience, patience and persistence, and she will be remembered for her real dedication to public service.

The competition

6. The selection process followed that of 2012. Following a national advertisement and a search by recruitment consultants, a total of 81 candidates was reduced through sifts and interviews to a short list for interview. Six candidates were interviewed by a panel consisting of Sir Kevin Barron, Sir Paul Beresford, Dr Jane Martin (external member) and Philippa Helme (Principal Clerk of the Table Office and chair of the panel).

7. The Selection panel recommended two candidates for final interview by the Commission. These interviews were conducted by the Speaker, Valerie Vaz MP and David Natzler (Clerk of the House) who reported to the full Commission.

The nominated candidate

8. Following the exacting process set out above, the House of Commons Commission recommends to the House Kathryn Stone, currently Chief Legal Ombudsman of England and Wales. The Commission is confident that she has the necessary experience and skills for the role, and that she will bring to it the authority, independence, discretion, and strength of character required. The Parliamentary Commissioner plays a central role in building the confidence of those both within and outside the House in the standards system and the Commission is certain that Kathryn Stone has the right combination of background and personal qualities to meet this challenge.

9. Kathryn Stone's *curriculum vitae* is set out in the Annex.

10. If the House approves the nomination, the appointment will be for a single term of five years. Subject to any necessary notice period, the Commission would expect Kathryn Stone to take up the appointment on 1 January 2018.

Resources

11. Upon appointment, the Parliamentary Commissioner will be supported directly by the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests, the Complaints Officer and by the equivalent of three and a half other full time staff. Legal and other assistance has been engaged in the past and will be provided when required. The Commission attaches great importance to ensuring that the Commissioner has the necessary resources.

12. If her nomination is approved by the House Kathryn Stone will take up the appointment initially on the basis of a three-day week at a salary commensurate with the seniority of the post; it is of course likely that the workload will vary from time to time, and the Commission will impose no restriction on the days per week which the Parliamentary Commissioner considers necessary.

Annex

Kathryn Stone OBE

January 2016 to present – Chief Legal Ombudsman of England and Wales responsible for managing Ombudsman Scheme for regulated legal services and providers and claims management companies.

July 2014 – January 2016 – Commissioner with Independent Police Complaints Commission

September 2012 – July 2014 – Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, Northern Ireland

2001 – 2012 – CEO at Voice UK

1999 – 2001 – Social care regulator, including Principal Inspector Milton Keynes Council, Head of Inspection at Hammersmith and Fulham Council and Head of Inspection for Barking and Dagenham Council.

1981 – 1999 – various roles in social care include child protection and mental health social worker, training officer and residential social work.