

Candidate pack

Accounts Commission Board members

June 2022

Dear applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming a board member for the Accounts Commission for Scotland.

The Accounts Commission is the public body responsible for reporting on the performance and spending within Scotland's 32 councils, 30 Integration Joint Boards and other local government joint boards.

The Accounts Commission plays a significant role in Scottish public life, providing independent assurance to citizens about their local councils' use of public money and about how these councils are performing. The Commission holds councils and joint boards to account and to ensure that they provide best value for their communities. The Commission operates independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and reports in public.

This is a particularly exciting time to join the Accounts Commission. As Scotland recovers from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, councils, in common with other public services, are building on learning from delivering effective person-centred services and enabling communities

to flourish. As a member of the Accounts Commission, you will have a key role in helping the Commission to re-shape the audit of Scotland's local government and help councils deliver and improve services for our citizens and the communities they live in.

Scottish ministers are keen to ensure our boards represent all of Scottish society and I would like to encourage applicants from all sectors including the voluntary sector, third sector, community organisations, industry and commerce to consider applying for this post.

We are particularly keen to receive applications from under-represented groups such as women, disabled people and ethnic minorities and people under the age of 50. Whatever your background, I hope that you will consider applying for this important role.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Macpherson

Minister for Social Security and Local Government

The Accounts Commission for Scotland

The Accounts Commission holds councils and other local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve by reporting to the public on their performance. Board members are appointed by Scottish ministers but they operate impartially and independently of the Scottish Government and local authorities.

The Accounts Commission plays a significant role in scrutinising approximately £27 billion of local authority spending. Their duty is to help ensure that public money is spent properly, efficiently and effectively.

The Accounts Commission is responsible for the audit of all local authorities in Scotland (which includes Integration Joint Boards). They also publish a Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) on every council as part of a five-year cycle, with progress reported annually. These reports identify how councils are performing and what action should be taken.

The Accounts Commission also provide improvement support, and have a key role in gathering intelligence and sharing good practice. This work helps to influence and shape transformational change throughout councils across Scotland.

You can find out more about the work of the Accounts Commission here: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/about-us/accounts-commission



We report to the public on the performance of local government in Scotland

Animation:
About the Accounts Commission



Report:
Strategy 2021-26



Report:
Annual report 2020/21

Person specification

What skills, experience and personal qualities do we need a member of the Accounts Commission to have?

As a member of the Accounts Commission, you will need to be able to demonstrate the personal qualities, skills and experience listed in this person specification. We have explained exactly what we will be looking for and how they will be tested.

In providing the evidence sought, you can draw on examples from your working and/or personal life, or through your participation with a private, public, voluntary, charity or community organisation.

Applicants must meet one of the priority criteria and all of the essential criteria.

Please **choose only one priority** criteria where you feel you can present the strongest evidence. We will give extra weight to the priority criteria. The Minister will appoint the combination of candidates who together most closely meet all criteria for selection.

Priority Criteria	Indicators	How will this be tested?
1. Experience of strategic communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of improving stakeholders' understanding of, and building confidence, in an organisation or project.• Experience of developing and delivering public messages or campaigns to diverse stakeholders.	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
2. Experience of consumer protection and/or advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of improving outcomes for, or successfully advocating on behalf of, consumers (professional or voluntary experience).• Knowledge of the role that consumers have in policy development and driving change.	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
3. Experience of local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of local government gained either as an elected member or as a senior officer (working at chief executive, director or head of service level).• Knowledge of the local government landscape in Scotland.• Experience of policy development and delivery at local government level.	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>

Cont.

Priority Criteria	Indicators	How will this be tested?
4. Experience of finance, accountancy, audit and/or risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in finance, accountancy and/or risk. This experience could have been gained through professional expertise or through experience of financial governance on a board. • Experience of dealing with financial complexity at a strategic level. • Experience of analysing and managing risk, with a developed understanding of the need for robust and compliant audit and risk systems being in place. 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
5. Experience of community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight either through lived experience of accessing services or delivering community services in a professional capacity. • Ability to use experience to improve outcomes for different groups of people who experience inequalities (this might include disabled people, women, care leavers, people facing poverty, and ethnic minorities). 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
6. Experience of national government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with or within national government (this can include UK Government or devolved national government). • Experience of policy development and delivery. • Knowledge of how the Scottish Government interacts with local government. 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>

Cont.

Essential criteria	Indicators	How will this be tested?
Commitment to improvement and change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to enable, influence and support transformational change at an organisational and at a system-wide level. • Demonstrates an enthusiasm for securing improvement in public services. • Demonstrates insight and an understanding of how inequality impacts on local government and on people accessing services. 	<p>In the written application we want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>Plus a brief prepared verbal response as part of your interview.</p>
Team working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can work effectively with colleagues to deliver objectives. • Seeks opportunities to build constructive relationships and is able to challenge constructively. • Able to successfully influence others to a different perspective, and be influenced by others similarly. 	A discussion at interview .
Sound judgement based on good analytical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to assess complex data within the context of wider systems and weigh up conflicting opinions in order to reach an informed decision. • Confident in making reasoned judgements and able to articulate and justify the rationale for these – particularly in sensitive and complex situations. • Demonstrates an ability to test and challenge an organisation and its links to the wider system with an independent scrutiny and improvement role. 	A brief prepared verbal response as part of your interview.
Communication and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to build strong relationships with partner organisations and stakeholders – including councils, government and parliament. • Able to communicate effectively with stakeholders to ensure the credibility and engender a good reputation for the Accounts Commission. 	<p>In the written application we want you to tell us about how you meet this criteria.</p> <p>A discussion at interview.</p>

Duties and responsibilities of board members

The duties of the Accounts Commission are set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, you can find out more about what the board members do here: [What we do](#)

Remuneration and expenses

The role of a board member attracts a remuneration rate of £298.15 a day which is non-pensionable. This equates to £8,211.30 per year for 30 days, plus reasonable expenses. All reasonable receipted dependant-carer expenses, including childcare, and for support required helping you carry out your duties effectively will also be reimbursed, where applicable.

Time commitment

You will be expected to devote an average of 2.5 days per month. This will include attending meetings of the Accounts Commission and committees. Ordinary meetings take place once a month and normally occupy a full day. The Accounts Commission also meets occasionally to conduct formal statutory hearings. Applicants should note the weekly time commitment may vary depending on the workload, although it is unlikely the overall yearly commitment would increase.

Length of appointment

The initial appointment is for up to four years with the possibility of reappointment subject to evidence of effective performance and satisfying the skills and knowledge required at the time of reappointment and beyond. Any appointment and subsequent reappointment will not extend beyond a maximum of eight years, in total.

Meetings

Board meetings are held at the Accounts Commission office at 102 West Port, Edinburgh, EH3 9DN. Arrangements for meetings will be flexible and members are encouraged to make full use of hybrid working arrangements.

Key dates in this appointments round

Appointment publicised	10 June 2022
Closing date for applications	22 July 2022
Shortlisting meeting	2 August 2022
When applicants will be advised of the outcome of the shortlisting meeting	3 August 2022
Interviews – these will be ‘in person’ interviews at the Accounts Commission office in Edinburgh	26, 29, 30 August, and 1 September 2022
Ministerial decision	w/c 19 September 2022
Date applicants will be advised of the outcome	w/c 26 September 2022
Expected date of appointments (subject to Ministerial approval)	10 October 2022

Before you apply

Please consider the following requirements

Nationality/Disqualifications

Non-British nationals can apply for, and be appointed to, a public body board but they must be legally entitled to work in the UK.

By virtue of the [Scottish Parliament \(Disqualification\) Order 2020](#) a member of the Scottish Parliament may not also hold a public appointment for public bodies listed in the schedule to that order.

If applying for a Scottish public appointment former ministers and senior crown servants (director general level and above) should seek advice from the [Advisory Committee on Business Appointments \(ACOBA\)](#).

Applicants will also be ineligible to apply for this appointment if they have already served a total of eight years as a member of ACS board.

If you are an elected member of a Scottish council, while there is no legal disqualification preventing you from applying to be a member, the clear conflict of interest that would arise in your role would mean that you would not be able to fulfil the role effectively. You can, however, apply on the condition that you agree to resign from your elected member role if you are appointed.

If you are employed by Audit Scotland or a firm appointed by the Accounts Commission to carry out audits on its behalf, there will be a conflict of interest which would make it difficult for you to fulfil the role effectively.



Conflicts of interest

All applicants are asked to provide details of any other involvement in public life or potential conflicts of interest. The Ethical Standards Commissioner provides guidance on conflict of interest here: [Conflict of Interest Leaflet | Ethical Standards Commissioner](#)

If you want to discuss a potential conflict of interest before you apply, you should contact Paul Reilly, Secretary to the Accounts Commission, on 0131 625 1809 or by email PREilly@audit-scotland.gov.uk to discuss your concerns.

Political activities

All board members are required to declare any political activities and affiliations to Scottish ministers as part of the appointments process.

Further information

If you would like to find out more about the board member role, you are welcome to contact Paul Reilly, Secretary to the Accounts Commission on 0131 625 1809 or by email PREilly@audit-scotland.gov.uk.

Find out more about the Accounts Commission

Join us at one of our online events and find out more about the work of the Commission and hear from some of our current members.

Our online events take place on Thursday 30 June at 2pm and Tuesday 5 July at 6.30pm. Please contact Paul Reilly on 0131 625 1809 or by email PREilly@audit-scotland.gov.uk if you'd like to join one of these events.

The recruitment process

The selection panel for this round are:

- **Ellen Leaver**, panel Chair, Deputy Director for Local Government and Communities, Scottish Government
- **Dr William Moyes**, Chair, Accounts Commission for Scotland
- **Neena Mahal**, former Chair of NHS Lanarkshire, Independent panel Member.

To make sure that the process is transparent, and the appointment is made on merit, the selection panel will declare if they know anyone who has applied for these appointments.

Where an applicant and selection panel member have a close relationship the selection panel Chair has to refer the matter to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Commissioner can decide that the selection panel member should not be involved in the assessment of the applicant concerned and may ask the selection panel member to take no further part in the appointment round.



How to apply

Scottish ministers particularly welcome applications from people with protected characteristics that are under-represented on Scotland's public bodies, such as women, disabled people, those from minority ethnic communities and people aged under 50.

Please apply online via our website: Appointment Listings at [Scottish Government \(icims.com\)](https://www.scottish.gov.uk/icims.com)

Please refer to the [Person Specification](#) which details the skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities we are seeking and indicates how and at which stage in the process each of the criteria will be tested.

At application stage you should provide clear and succinct information about yourself and how you meet the criteria that are being tested. When asked to demonstrate a skill, you should give specific examples which best demonstrate to the selection panel what you did, the reasons for your actions, the skills you used and what specifically about your approach affected the outcome. When being asked to demonstrate knowledge, understanding or experience, you should describe how you gained this, the breadth and depth of this knowledge, understanding or experience and any situations where you have used this.

The selection panel will not make assumptions about your evidence so it is important that you take the time to ensure that you are comfortable with the information you are providing in respect of your application.

Further information and examples on completing a competency based application form can be found here: <http://www.appointed-for-scotland.org/how-to-apply/>

Completing the application form

Please note that you do not need to complete your online application in one sitting. You can save your online application form and come back at any time before the closing date to finish it and submit your completed application. The online application form requires you to provide an answer for all mandatory fields on a page before you can proceed to the next page.

If you need any of the application pack documentation in an alternative format or you have any difficulties in completing your application, please contact the Public Appointments Team by emailing public.appointments@gov.scot or 0300 244 1898.

Declaration statement

The application form also has a declaration statement, and by virtue of submitting your form, you are declaring the information you have provided is true and complete.

Disability – guaranteed interview

All people who apply for this appointment are asked to complete a diversity monitoring form. The information in that form will not be shared with the selection panel prior to shortlisting. At the assessment of applications (the shortlisting) the selection panel will score the applications as usual. The selection panel will score each criterion in the application from 1 to 5, where 1 is very poor or no evidence, 2 is poor or little evidence, 3 is acceptable evidence, 4 is good evidence and 5 is exceptional evidence. The panel will then identify the most meritorious applications on the basis of the scoring, with an aim to have 3 applicants shortlisted for each of the four posts. The Public Appointments Team will then note if any of the candidates who requested to be considered for a guaranteed interview scored 3 or above for every criteria in the application and who were not otherwise selected for interview: those applicants will also be invited to interview by the Public Appointments Team and added to the selection panel's list of interviewees. This approach may mean that more than three applicants per post will be interviewed. All applicants invited to interview by any method will be asked if they require reasonable adjustments to attend the interview. The interviews will then proceed.

Equalities monitoring form

Monitoring information submitted with applications is not shared with the selection panel.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence, is in line with the principles GDPR Articles 6(1)(c) and (e), which are the lawful bases for processing, and GDPR Article 9(2)(b) so we can comply with a legal obligation which is the condition for processing. It will not be placed on a personal file.

Social media checks

For those candidates shortlisted, the selection panel may consider information available in the public domain such as social media activity/posts, printed and other media. In accordance with GDPR article 6(1)(e) this information will only be used for the purpose of this application. For successful candidates this information will be retained and destroyed five years after your appointment term ends. For unsuccessful candidates this information will be destroyed after a period of five years. Any findings in this regard may be discussed with you during the interview as part of the Fit and Proper Person tests.

Reasonable adjustments

If you are invited to interview and require a reasonable adjustment, please let us know at this stage so that we can put arrangements in place. If the interviews are held face-to-face, we will ensure that the building where the interview is held is wheelchair accessible. We can also make a range of other adjustments, for example coloured paper, an introduction to the building where interviews will be held so that you are familiar with the layout, and adjustment of the time in the interview stage for any practical exercises. This isn't an exhaustive list and you should contact the Public Appointments Team by emailing public.appointments@gov.scot if you have any questions.

The fit and proper person test

Scottish ministers and the public must feel confident that people to be appointed are fit and proper persons to take up these positions. The appointments process will assess applicants suitability against the [nine principles of public life in Scotland](#).

It will also check that:

- conduct to date has been compatible with the public appointment
- there are no inappropriate or unmanageable conflicts of interest
- there is no bar to appointment by a requirement set out in the constitution of the body
- that applicants can meet the time commitment.

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 sets a 'gender representation objective' that a board should have 50 per cent of non-executive members who are women. In circumstances where there are two or more equally qualified candidates (a tie break), at least one of whom is a woman and one who isn't, then section 4(3) of the 2018 Act requires the appointing Minister to appoint a woman if doing so will result in the board achieving (or making progress towards achieving) the gender representation objective. In a tie break the appointing Minister can choose to appoint a candidate, who is not a woman, on the basis of another characteristic or situation and can give preference to that candidate (section 4(4) of the 2018 Act). The Accounts Commission for Scotland already meets the 'gender representation objective'.

Interviews

Interviews will be held at the Accounts Commission office, 102 West Port, Edinburgh, EH3 9DN.

Expenses for attending interviews

You can claim for reasonable expenses for attending the interview. This includes dependant carer expenses. We expect you to use the most efficient and economical means of travel, and the amount we reimburse will normally be restricted to this. If you need to stay overnight you must contact public.appointments@gov.scot or telephone 0300 244 1898 in advance for confirmation of current subsistence rates. If you're invited to the second stage these rates and a claim form, will be included in the invitation letter. You must provide receipts to support all claims.

Potential effect on benefits

Taking up a public appointment either paid or unpaid may have an effect on your entitlement to benefits or any benefits that you are in receipt of. This will depend on your individual circumstances, the type of benefit you receive and the appointment. You should seek advice from the office that deals with your benefit. Further information can be found at: www.gov.scot/publications/public-appointments-and-welfare-benefits-information/

Pre-appointment checks

Candidates chosen by Ministers for appointment will be required to complete a pre-appointment check called the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). This is a security check that is designed to provide Ministers' with assurance about a candidate's credentials and confirm their identity and residence.

If you are appointed, you will be required to produce a Basic Disclosure certificate less than 12 months old, and your appointment will be on a conditional basis pending receipt of a satisfactory certificate.

You can only apply online for a Disclosure certificate if your current address is in the UK and if you have been living at this address for at least twelve months. If you do not satisfy these criteria, you will have to apply using a paper application form.

Further information on Disclosure certificates and how to apply for a Basic Disclosure can be found at Disclosure Scotland's website www.disclosurescotland.co.uk or by contacting the details below:

Customer Liaison, PO Box 250, Glasgow, G51 1YU
Helpline: 03000 2000 40

What happens if you are appointed?

The Scottish Government will announce all new appointees. This will include:

- your name
- a short description of the Accounts Commission for Scotland
- a brief summary of the skills, knowledge and experience you bring to the role
- how long you have been appointed for
- any remuneration associated with the appointment
- details of all other public appointments you hold and any related remuneration you receive for them
- details of any political activity declared by you
- a statement that the appointment is regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner.

Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016

Appointees should be aware of the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 as these may apply to their communications with MSP's, Scottish ministers, Special Advisers and the Permanent Secretary who are covered by the terms of the Act. Applicants are expected to familiarise themselves with their obligations under the Act. For more information see www.lobbying.scot/.

Training and support

Board member induction will include (but not be restricted to) the following:

- an induction pack
- a welcome meeting and introduction to the organisation with the Commission Secretary
- a series of welcome meetings with members of Audit Scotland's management team and board
- a one-to-one meeting with the Senior Civil Servant from the sponsoring division in the Scottish Government
- tailored additional information and support identified as a result of the first phase of induction.

Termination of appointment

The appointment of all board members may be terminated prior to the expiry of the term of office mentioned in the appointment letter. The board member is entitled to resign his/her appointment with the Accounts Commission by giving written notice to Scottish ministers. In accordance with the conditions set out in the letter of appointment, Scottish ministers have the power to remove the board member from office if they are satisfied that the member:

- has been adjudged bankrupt
- has granted a trust deed for creditors or a composition contract
- has proposed a voluntary arrangement which has been approved
- has had his or her estate sequestrated
- has been absent from three consecutive board meetings of the Accounts Commission without the permission of the Accounts Commission
- is otherwise unfit or unable to discharge the functions of a member.

Code of Conduct

Board members are expected to follow the Accounts Commission Code of Conduct - this is available to [download here](#).

Complaints

This appointment is regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. If you have concerns with the way in which this appointment round was conducted, please contact the Public Appointments Team in the first instance on 0300 244 1898 or email at Public_Appointments_Complaints@gov.scot.

Details of our complaints procedure, can be found on the Appointed for Scotland website www.gov.scot/publications/public-appointments-making-a-complaint/.

[The who we are](#) leaflet describes the work of the Ethical Standards Commissioner, as it relates to public appointments, and the Commissioner's office. The Commissioner regulates appointments to the boards of many of Scotland's public bodies. The Commissioner is wholly independent of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government.

Please note that there is NO appeal process.

Ethical Standards Commissioner

What we do

Every one of us living in Scotland benefits from the essential services provided by our public bodies. Their boards play a vital role in guiding and shaping these services. Our job is to oversee appointments to these boards to help ensure that the people who serve on them are appointed on merit, using methods that are fair and open. That oversight is usually provided by one of the Commissioner's Public Appointments Advisers. While we regulate the process used to make appointments, it is run by civil servants on behalf of the Scottish ministers. Our website has a list of the bodies that we regulate and also has useful information on applying for a public appointment.

The who we are leaflet is sent to everyone who applies for a regulated public appointment in Scotland so that they know that the process is regulated and what to do if things go wrong.

Making a complaint about a public appointment

Anyone who believes that an appointment has not been made appropriately or who has concerns about the appointment process itself can make a complaint.

If you have a complaint about a public appointment you first have to complain to the Scottish Government and give its officials a chance to respond. If you are unhappy with the Scottish Government's response to your complaint you can then ask the Commissioner to investigate the matter for you.

If you are in any doubt about whether we can deal with your complaint, or if you want advice before raising a formal complaint, please contact us using the details provided below. You can read in more detail about the way in which we deal with complaints by downloading our complaints leaflet from our website. We can send you the leaflet in another format if you would prefer.

Our [website](#) also tells you what to do if you want to make a complaint.

Please contact us to find out more about this and other public appointments.

Public Appointments

Scottish Government

Area 3F (North)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Website: www.appointed-for-scotland.org

Email: pa_applications_mailbox@gov.scot

Telephone: 0300 244 1898

contact
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Candidate pack

Accounts Commission Board members

Accounts Commission's published material is available for download on the website in a number of formats. For information on our accessibility principles, please visit:

www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/accessibility

For the latest news follow us on social media or [subscribe to our email alerts](#).

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

Accounts Commission, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN

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www.accounts-commission.gov.uk