



Boundary  
Commission  
for England

# Boundary Commission for England

## Assistant Commissioners recruitment

Candidate information pack

Expected number of vacancies: 18



# Contents

A message from the Deputy Chair of the Commission	<b>3</b>
About the Boundary Commission for England (BCE)	<b>4</b>
About the role of Assistant Commissioners (ACs)	<b>6</b>
Person specification	<b>9</b>
Terms of appointment	<b>10</b>
Application process	<b>12</b>
Recruitment process	<b>14</b>
Indicative timetable	<b>16</b>
Other information	<b>17</b>
Appendix A	<b>21</b>
Contact us	<b>22</b>

# A message from the Deputy Chair of the Commission

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England.

You may already have some idea about the important work of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE). The following pages will tell you more about the purpose of the Commission and the nature of the role, as well as the application process.

If after reading the material, you have further questions about any aspect of the role, or about the appointment process, then please contact the BCE Secretariat on 020 7276 1102 or email: [acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk](mailto:acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk).

If you believe you have the experience and qualities we are seeking, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Mr Justice (Peter) Lane

**Deputy Chair of the Commission**



# About the Boundary Commission for England (BCE)

The **Boundary Commission for England (BCE)** is one of four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions, covering each part of the United Kingdom, first established by the House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Act 1944. Each Commission is fully independent of Government, non-political and impartial and each has completed five general reviews of parliamentary constituency boundaries since it was established.

The BCE is a permanent body constituted under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 which, as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, Part 2 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 and the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020, requires all four Commissions to keep parliamentary constituencies under review by conducting a review of all the constituencies in their area every eight years (after completion of the 2023 Review).



The Chair of the Commission is the Speaker of the House of Commons, but by convention he or she does not participate in the conduct of boundary reviews or formulation of the Commission's recommendations.

The Deputy Chair therefore leads the Boundary Commission for England in its work. The Deputy Chair must be a serving Judge of the High Court, and is appointed by the Lord Chancellor. The Deputy Chair is supported by two Commissioners whose appointments are made by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

## About the BCE *continued*

The current review formally started in January 2021 and is to be completed by July 2023. The three Boundary Commissioners require a number of Assistant Commissioners to work with them on this review.

The BCE is supported by a small team of civil servants and led by the Secretary to the Commission.

The BCE is sponsored by the Cabinet Office and this recruitment is undertaken jointly by both bodies. Successful candidates will be appointed by the Secretary of State but accountable to the Boundary Commissioners.

Please note that these are not regulated public appointments, therefore the Public Appointments Team are unable to answer any queries in relation to this vacancy.

Further information about the BCE and the current review can be obtained from the website, at:  
[www.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk](http://www.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk)

# About the role of Assistant Commissioners (ACs)

**Assistant Commissioners (ACs)** are appointed to assist the Commission in conducting the review of parliamentary boundaries. There are expected to be **18 vacancies** available.

Two Assistant Commissioners are expected to be appointed for each of the nine regions in England, one of whom in each region will be designated as the 'lead Assistant Commissioner' for that region. Please state in your application form: a) if you have a preference of which region(s) you would like to work on; and b) whether or not you wish to be considered for the 'lead' role in a region.

As an AC you may be asked to:

- attend (and, if designated a 'lead' AC, chair) one or more public hearings in a region of England to which you are assigned;
- assist with the Secretariat's analysis of all representations relating to that region following the initial and secondary consultation periods; and
- contribute to the production of a written paper from the Secretariat to the Boundary Commissioners recommending any revisions to the proposals for that region;
- Be assigned to a second region in exceptional circumstances .

## About the role of ACs *continued*

Lead ACs will be expected to chair all the public hearings in their region. Assistant Commissioners will also be expected to attend and contribute to the presentation of the paper to the Boundary Commissioners with recommendations for the region, working with the Secretariat.

The BCE may also ask any AC to assist it in the discharge of such other of its statutory duties as it sees fit.

Public hearings will be held during the secondary consultation period on the Commission's proposals, scheduled to likely take place between early and late spring 2022.

In chairing public hearings, you will be required to:

- read and assimilate prior to the hearings the initial proposals of the Commission in respect of the region concerned, including maps and associated written documentation;
- travel across the region, to attend the hearings;
- chair each hearing in a fair and efficient manner, within statutory time limits and procedural guidelines established by the Commission, including calling registered speakers to give their presentations, and asking and allowing questions of clarification as appropriate, including in a digital manner, as required.

## About the role of ACs *continued*

In conducting analysis of representations and working with the Secretariat, you will be required to:

- analyse written responses to the initial proposals, and any counter representations made during the secondary consultation period, including oral responses, review and check any digest, summary or compilation produced by the Commission's Secretariat of multiple representations making the same argument;
- assess the relative merits of the arguments made in those representations, applying the relevant statutory factors and rules, and make recommendations as to whether – and, if so, to what extent – revisions should be made to the Commission's proposals; and
- contribute to and oversee the Secretariat's drafting of a formal paper to the Commission, setting out the arguments made in the representations, an assessment of them and reasoned recommendations as to why each argument should or should not be accepted by the Commission.

# Person specification

## Skills/experience required

It is important through your CV and Statement of Suitability that you give evidence and examples of proven knowledge, skills and experience of each of the selection criteria detailed.

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following essential skills and experience:

### Essential criteria

- Integrity and independence of mind;
- Ability to work accurately at speed and under pressure, quickly absorbing detail, and analysing large quantities of information objectively;
- Ability to produce clear and succinct evidence-based recommendations, both orally and in writing;
- Ability to work well as part of a team with the BCE's Secretariat and one other Assistant Commissioner;
- Ability to work flexibly as required;
- Ability to explain procedures, to inspire respect and confidence, and to maintain authority when challenged, particularly in a public hearing context;

- Ability to treat everyone with respect and sensitivity whatever their background and to demonstrate patience, courtesy and tact when dealing with the general public.

### Desirable though not essential

- Experience of working with spatial or geographic data and/or in the constitutional field.

**Examples of where these have been displayed in the context of working within a statutory and/or public framework will be particularly welcome.**

For this post, a person cannot be appointed as an Assistant Commissioner, if he/she has unspent criminal convictions, is subject to bankruptcy, disqualification as a company director, or has been publicly active in support of a registered political party in the last 5 years. There must be no employment restrictions, or limit on your permitted stay in the UK.

# Terms of appointment

## Remuneration, allowances and abatement

The remuneration terms are as follows:

- Assistant Commissioners will receive a remuneration of £350 per day (£175 per half-day);
- Remuneration is taxable under Schedule E of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (as amended) and subject to Class I National Insurance contributions;
- It is not pensionable;
- Those appointed will also be eligible to claim reasonable allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on BCE business.

## Appointment, tenure and commitment

Assistant Commissioners are appointed by the Secretary of State.

The term of appointment will be for 12 months, starting **1 October 2021** and concluding on **30 September 2022**. The work is anticipated to be required in focused periods starting with up to 10 days between **early and late spring**. Future time required is difficult to predict accurately, but as a guide candidates should be able to commit at least **25 days in the summer of 2022**.

# Terms of appointment *continued*

Assistant Commissioners will be asked to undertake the following and must be available to do so:

- Induction training session – likely to last around half a day, in the BCE offices in central London, in autumn 2021;
- Chairing/attending public hearings – a maximum of five in each English region, each of which lasts two days, taking place in specified towns and cities, between early and late spring 2022;
- Analysis of written representations and hearing transcripts, and working with the Secretariat in writing up a paper with recommendations to the Commissioners – office/home/desk-based work during the summer of 2022, although there are likely to be a few days where attendance in the

BCE offices will be required. Amount of time required will depend on the number and complexity of responses received, but we estimate a maximum of around 25 days' work.

It will be important that an Assistant Commissioner's other commitments do not cast any doubt on their ability to act independently and impartially in discharging the role; any potential conflict of interest - in particular personal involvement with a political party - must be declared in the monitoring forms.

# Application process

To apply, you will need to complete and submit the following documents to [boundarycommission.grs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:boundarycommission.grs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk) by no later than **23.55pm on Wednesday 10 March 2021**.

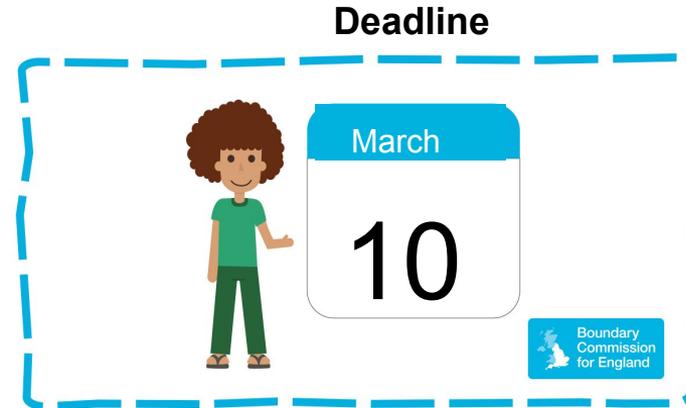
1. An application form with following:
  - a. A **CV** - setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements as well as your education and professional qualifications. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps within the last two years;
  - b. A **Statement of Suitability** (no longer than 1,250 words) explaining how you consider your personal skills, qualities and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification.
2. A **Candidate Supporting Information form**. All data will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Failure to to submit all the documents will mean the panel have only limited information on which to assess your application against the criteria in the person specification. Please ensure that both documents contain your full name.

# Application process *continued*

As part of the application process, you will be asked a number of diversity-related questions. If you do not wish to provide a declaration on any of the particular characteristics, you will have the option to select 'prefer not to say'. The information you provide when submitting your application will help us monitor our progress towards the BCE and Civil Service becoming an inclusive employer but will not be disclosed to the panel assessing your application.

If you have specific requirements during the completion of your application, please contact **Wotey Tannoh** at: [acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk](mailto:acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk)



# Recruitment process

The process is one of fair and open competition, and follows the principles of the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

You will receive an acknowledgment of your application through the online process.

## **Selection process**

The panel will be chaired by a BCE Commissioner, and will include:

- An independent panel member; and
- The Secretary to the Commission.

Shortlisting for an interview is made on the basis of merit. All applications are assessed to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided against the criteria set out in the Person Specification. Failure to address any or all of these may affect your application.

The timeline later in this pack indicates the date by which decisions are expected to be made, and all shortlisted candidates will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter.

# Recruitment process *continued*

## **Interviews**

If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to attend a panel interview in order to have a more in-depth discussion of your previous experience and professional competence in relation to the criteria set out in the Person Specification.

**The final selection panel interview will be held in London at the BCE Office or via video conference depending on Government's advice in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. You will be advised of the format in advance.**

Full details of the process will be made available to shortlisted candidates.

## **Offer of appointment**

Regardless of the outcome, we will notify all candidates as soon as possible after the final interview.

We regret that we are only able to offer feedback to candidates who have been unsuccessful at the interview stage.

If you have a complaint about the way your application has been handled at any stage of the process, please see the complaints process section below.

# Indicative timetable

We will try and offer as much flexibility as we can, but it may not be possible to offer alternative dates for interviews due to the limited availability of the selection panel members. You are therefore asked to note the below timetable. Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

Closing Date	23.55pm on Wednesday 10 March 2021
Shortlisting likely to be held	Week commencing 15 March 2021
Successful candidates invited to interview by	Week commencing 29 March 2021
Interviews likely to be held	April and early May 2021
Provisional appointment start date	1 October 2021

# Other information

## How to make a complaint

If you are not completely satisfied with the way your application is handled at any stage of the competition, please raise your complaint in the first instance with Head of Corporate Services at [corporateteam@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk](mailto:corporateteam@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk).

Your complaint will be investigated by someone who was not involved in the recruitment process. We will reply to your complaint within 20 days.

## Equal Opportunities

Diversity of opportunity is something the Cabinet Office and the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) care passionately about. Applications are encouraged from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or gender identity. We particularly welcome applications from women, those with a disability and those from a black or ethnic minority background.

## Disability Confident Scheme (DCS)

Disabled applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria in the job specification are guaranteed an interview. Selection will be on merit. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident Scheme, you should complete the relevant section of the online application. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If you want to apply under the DCS simply complete the declaration on the form.

# Other information *continued*

## Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. Candidates will be expected to abide by “the Seven Principles of Public Life” set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see **Appendix A**).

## Use of your personal information

Once you have made an application, your information and application may be shared with The Government Recruitment Service (GRS) to assess your suitability for the role. GRS facilitates recruitment of high-quality candidates to roles across government, agencies and other public bodies. GRS is working with BCE as part of this recruitment campaign. Cabinet Office and the BCE are committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and do so in accordance with data protection

law including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All the information you provide will be used to proceed with the appointments listed in this information pack, and in the case of diversity monitoring information it may be anonymised and used solely for monitoring purposes. The way we collect and use personal information about you is described in a privacy notice. This notice can be found on the BCE website, at:

**[www.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk](http://www.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk)**

## Diversity monitoring information

The information you provide on the diversity monitoring form is not used in the selection process. The information will be removed on receipt and is not seen by the panel assessing your application. We use this information to monitor the diversity of candidates we attract and those we appoint.

# Other information *continued*

## Political activity declaration

Assistant Commissioners will need to show political impartiality during their time with the Boundary Commission England (BCE) and must declare any party political activity they undertake in the period of their appointment.

Due to the nature of the BCE it is not appropriate for Assistant Commissioners to occupy paid party political posts or hold sensitive, senior or prominent positions in any political organisation. Nomination for election to political office is not considered compatible with working on the boundary reviews.

Significant political activity is defined as being employed by a political party, holding significant office in a party, standing as a candidate for a party in an election, having publicly spoken on behalf of a political party or having made significant donations or loans to a party. Significant loans and donations are those of a size which are reported to the Electoral Commission, in line with a central party's reporting threshold.

If you are unsure of whether any political involvement you may have had is sufficient to rule you out, please contact the BCE Secretariat on 020 7276 1102 or email: [acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk](mailto:acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk).

The Political Activity Declaration will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the selection panel prior to interview. However, it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision-making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should include it separately in your application.

If you are successfully appointed to the post, details of your response to the Political Activity Declaration will be included in any announcement of your appointment.

# Other information *continued*

## **Disqualification from appointment**

Anyone in the categories listed below will not be considered for appointment as an Assistant Commissioner (also see 'Political Activity' above):

- Employed in the civil service of the state
- Unspent criminal convictions
- Bankruptcy
- Disqualification as a company director.

## **Termination of appointments**

Appointments may be terminated prior to the conclusion of the period of appointment if the Minister is satisfied that the Member is unable, unwilling or unfit to perform the functions of the office.

## **Reimbursement of expenses**

Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you, for any

expenses incurred during this process.

## **Conflict of interests**

Public bodies are expected to maintain a register of members' interests to avoid any danger of commissioners being influenced – or appearing to be influenced – by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. Candidates invited to interview will be questioned about any real or perceived conflicts of interest. These do not constitute an automatic bar to appointment, but they must be manageable. Appointed individuals will be expected to contribute relevant information (for example ownership of property in an area being considered) to a published Register of Interests.

The successful candidates will need to declare any conflicts of interests that arise in the course of the Boundary Commission's business.

# Appendix A

## The Seven Principles of Public Life

All candidates for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



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## **Contact Us**

If you wish to get in touch with us at any time, please do so by the following methods:

- E-mail us at: [acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk](mailto:acappointments@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk)
- Call us on: **020 7276 1102**

