

Preferred candidate for chair of the Independent Monitoring Authority



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The Lord Chancellor, the Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC, confirmed today (12 November 2020) that his preferred candidate to be the first chair of the Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements (IMA) is Sir Ashley Fox.

Sir Ashley has been selected following a rigorous assessment process conducted in accordance with the principles of the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The role is subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the Justice Select Committee. Pre-appointment scrutiny is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny to the appointment process.

Pre-appointment hearings are held in public and allow a select committee to take evidence before a candidate is appointed. Ministers consider the committee's views before deciding whether to proceed with the appointment.

Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements

The IMA is a brand-new public body, which has been established under the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 (EUWAA). The IMA needs to be operational by the end of 2020. The chair of the IMA will play a crucial role in establishing the IMA's early direction and effectiveness, and in winning the confidence of its stakeholders.

Under the provisions set out in EUWAA, the IMA will have the

power to receive complaints, launch inquiries and initiate legal proceedings. The IMA will also have a role in reviewing the effectiveness of the citizens' rights legislative framework, for instance by reviewing draft legislation. The legislation also provides that it is important for the IMA to focus on general or systemic failures in the implementation of the citizens' rights agreements, as well as receiving and investigating individual complaints. The IMA will have to publish guidance on how it will exercise its functions.

Ashley Fox biography

Sir Ashley is a business consultant providing strategic advice on the European Union. Since 2015 he has been the lay member on the Leadership Nomination Committee of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Sir Ashley served as MEP for the South West of England and Gibraltar from 2009 to 2019. He was Leader of the Conservative MEPs from 2014 to 2019. Prior to being elected Sir Ashley practised as a solicitor in Bristol.

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