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Select Committee on Public Administration [Fifth Report](#)

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Orders for state servants: no automatic awards

1. We recommend that the Government should announce its intention to cease the award of honours in the Orders of the Bath and of St Michael and St George at an early opportunity. The Government should make it clear that in future honours will not be conferred on a person simply because they hold a particular post. Measures should be taken to ensure that these changes do not disadvantage state servants in the general allocation of honours. (Paragraph 148)

### The Order of the British Empire

2. We therefore recommend that there should be no further appointments to the Order of the British Empire. A new Order, the Order of British Excellence, should be founded in its place. (Paragraph 153)

### Titles and levels of awards

3. We recommend that the levels of the Order of British Excellence should be Companion, Officer and Member. The only other national honour (i.e. except those awarded for gallantry and those in the personal gift of the Queen) should be the Companion of Honour. Consideration should be given to a substantial increase in awards of the Companion of Honour and to a matching decrease in awards of knighthoods and damehoods, with the objective of phasing out the awards of knighthoods (including knights bachelor) within five years. (Paragraph 160)

### **An independent system for making recommendations**

4. We recommend that the Commission examines the Australian system and considers whether it is appropriate to adopt the same methodology in order to achieve greater diversity in the UK honours lists. (Paragraph 163)
5. We recommend that the honours selection committees should be replaced by an Honours Commission, which would take over from ministers the task of making recommendations to the Queen for honours. It should be established by statute, following the precedent of the Electoral Commission. (Paragraph 168)
6. The members of the Honours Commission should be independent and appointed through 'Nolan' procedures. There should be a requirement on those appointing the members of the Commission to ensure that, as far as possible, its membership should reflect the diversity of the country. (Paragraph 169)
7. The names of all members of the Honours Commission should be published and the Commission's policy on the transparency of its procedures should be based on best practice in similar bodies in other countries. (Paragraph 170)
8. We recommend that the secretariat of the Commission should be similar in size and functions to the current Ceremonial Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, augmented by staff with experience in publicity, recruitment and community involvement, who would be responsible for increasing public awareness and encouraging appropriate nominations for honours. (Paragraph 171)
9. We recommend that the Government should, on a regular basis, set out publicly, as guidance to the Honours Commission, its proposals for the allocation of honours between various sectors of the community in the light of public priorities. (Paragraph 172)
10. We recommend that the Honours Scrutiny Committee should be abolished. (Paragraph 173)

### **Clearer criteria and more recognition for local service**

11. We recommend that explicit criteria, along the lines proposed by the Australian government and reported in the Wilson Review, should be published for each level of award in the Order of British Excellence. Like the Australian proposals, the criteria should emphasise that eminent service at local level would be regarded as being just as meritorious as the same sort of service at national level. (Paragraph 175)

### **The role of Parliament**

12. We therefore recommend that the Honours Commission should submit an annual report to Parliament, and that it should be examined by a select committee of this House. (Paragraph 178)

## Reaching out: encouraging diversity and raising awareness

13. We recommend that the Honours Commission should maintain and publish as part of its annual report a digest of detailed statistics on the honours system, including the regional and ethnic origin of those who receive awards. The statistical analysis in the Annex of this report could form the basis for such a digest. (Paragraph 185)
14. We recommend that the Honours Commission should set indicative targets to ensure that future honours lists reflect more closely the diversity of the UK population. (Paragraph 186)
15. We recommend that the Honours Commission should implement a strategy to increase public awareness of the honours system and encourage more public nominations, based on the recommendations on publicity contained in the Wilson Review of the system produced in 2000 and 2001. A particular emphasis should be placed on attracting nominations for those whose service has been rendered at local level. (Paragraph 187)
16. We recommend that the citations for all honours should be published. (Paragraph 188)
17. We recommend that recipients of honours should be presented with a modest badge or brooch suitable for wearing with non-formal dress. (Paragraph 189)
18. Through this the service and achievement of teams and organisations can be properly recognised. The Queen's Award for Industry provides a useful model here, and could be supplemented by similar awards (e.g. Educational Achievement, Civic Achievement) across a range of activities and organisations. We consider that a development of the honours system in this way would be widely welcomed and valued, and we so recommend. (Paragraph 191)

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