



## Defence Committee

Chairman, Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis MP

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The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and  
Minister for Defence People and Veterans  
Ministry of Defence  
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5<sup>th</sup> March 2019

*Dear Tobias,*

During the Committee's oral evidence session with the Service Complaints Ombudsman on 26 February 2019 she explained that lengthy delays in vetting new staff members was impacting on the operational effectiveness of her office. The Ombudsman's office has frequently lost talented people because they took other employment while waiting for the vetting process to be completed. This has caused a backlog in complaints, impacted on the general morale of other staff members and at times has left her office chronically understaffed.

The Committee is concerned by the disproportionately great effect of such delays on the small office complement of the Ombudsman's staff, which leads in turn to longer delays for the Service complainant.

We would therefore be grateful if you could set out what steps UKSV takes to ensure that small organisations such as the Ombudsman's office do not suffer from having to carry gaps in their staff as a result of vetting delays. It would be helpful if the Committee could receive a response by 20 March 2019 to assist with this inquiry.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Julian*