It is a statutory requirement that selection to the civil service is made on merit on the basis of a fair and open competition, the law also requires the Civil Service Commission to publish its recruitment principles. This means that civil service departments have all of the information they need to appoint people based on merit and based on a fair and open competition. The recruitment principles are intentionally high level to allow departments to design recruitment processes that meet their business needs. The recruitment principles give straightforward common-sense definitions for fair merit and open competition, the recruitment principles clearly explained the minimum criteria for each selection panel: for example all panels must include two or more people and candidates must be assessed against clear criteria. Other areas covered include the role of Commissioners in chairing selection panels and the ways that ministers can be involved. Ministers can help draft job specs and they can meet all candidates but all appointments must be on the basis of merit. If you take a look at the recruitment principles you'll also find a number of exceptions to the merit requirement, these include people on short-term placements and anyone on the government employment program which includes care leavers and ex-offenders. The recruitment principles are available on the Commission's website or you can email us info@csc.gov.uk