

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BUSINESS PLAN

2007/2008

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Business Plan – 2007/2008

Mission Statement

“Ensuring appointment on merit and safeguarding ethics”

What we do

Commissioners are appointed under the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 which requires them to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the Northern Ireland Service (NICS) should be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. Commissioners also prescribe and monitor appointments made by exception to the merit principle. Additionally, Commissioners have a responsibility to hear appeals made by, and consider taking complaints directly from, existing civil servants under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics.

Who we are

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland were first appointed by Royal Warrant in 1923. They are independent of the NICS and bring to the job wide experience from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The current Commissioners have different backgrounds, careers and interests and none is a serving member of the Civil Service. This diversity helps them to provide insight into how the NICS can best serve the public.

Commissioners:

Brenda McLaughlin CBE (Chairperson)

Brian Carlin OBE

Dame Joan Harbison

Alan Henry

Ruth Laird

Alan Lennon

Sid McDowell CBE

How we carry out our work

We seek to achieve excellence in the manner in which we carry out our responsibilities. We have identified the risks of failing to achieve excellence and monitor these risks on a regular basis. We also evaluate our achievements against the actions, measures and targets contained in this Business Plan, and report on them in our Annual Report.

Core Values

The Commissioners support and seek to adhere to the core principles of public life in all their activities. The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

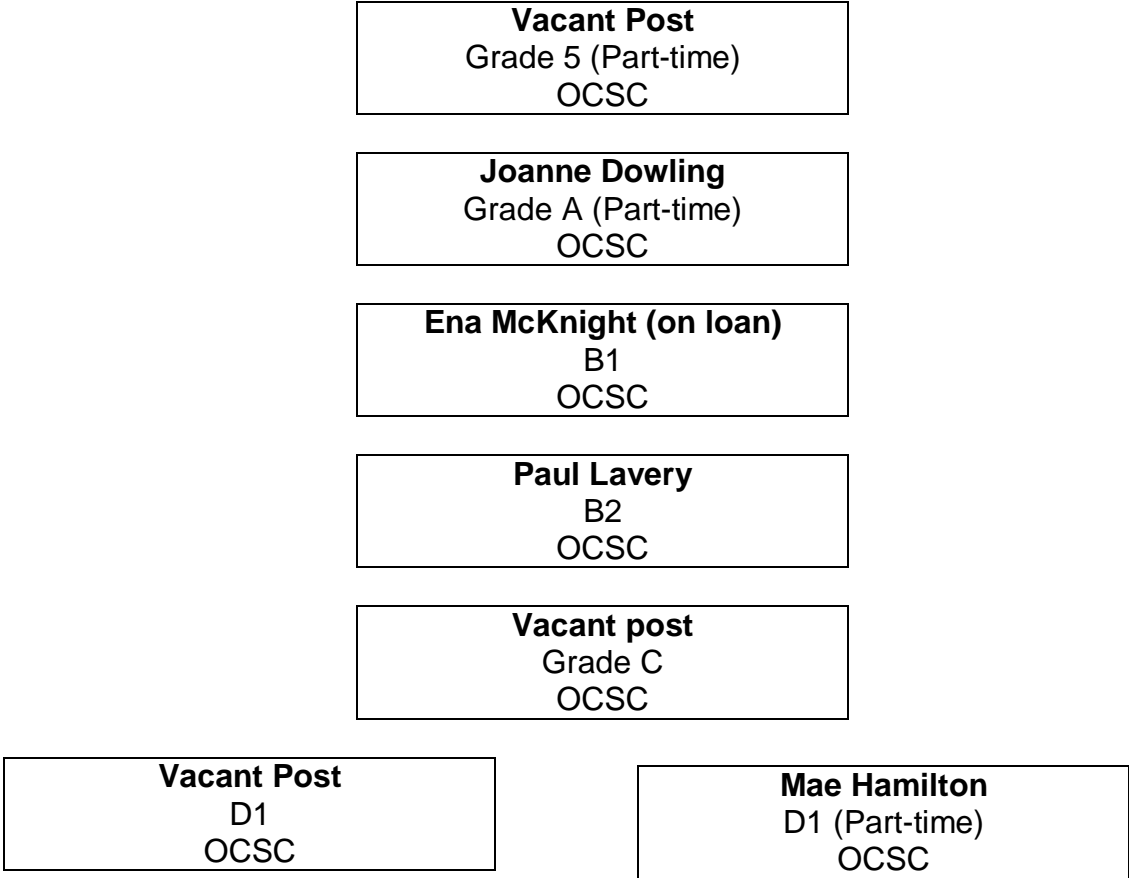
Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Commissioners welcome the introduction of the new NICS Code of Ethics which emphasises the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality in the civil service.

Civil Service Commissioners Office Secretariat

The organisational structure for the secretariat at the start of Financial Year 2007/08 is illustrated below –



BUDGET ALLOCATIONS 2007/08

ITEM	ALLOCATION
Commissioners' Fees	£58k
Staff	£160k
Training	£5k
Accommodation & Overheads	£70k
Capital	£2k
Total	£323 k

KEY PRIORITY AREAS FOR 2007-08

We have identified three key priority areas which we will focus on for the purposes of this year's Business Plan:

- establishing clarity of roles for the Commissioners, the NICS and the proposed outsourced supplier of personnel services to the NICS. We believe that this will require a number of business sessions with the Director of Central Personnel in DFP and the new supplier, as their respective responsibilities are determined;
- effective management and chairing of panels in all external competitions for appointments to the Senior Civil Service. We shall continue to work with the NICS in developing the most effective recruitment techniques and assessment tools, in addressing diversity in attracting applications and in dealing with areas of under-representation in the NICS;
- outcomes from the new approach to auditing NICS recruitment policies and practices under the 2005 Recruitment Code. New auditors will be appointed in May 2007 and we shall review the effectiveness of the new approach before the end of 2008.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS – BUSINESS PLAN – 2007/08

CUSTOMERS	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote public confidence in recruitment to the NICS • To provide timely responses to queries from the Public and Ministers • To provide timely and appropriate advice to NICS Departments/NIO on interpretation of Recruitment Code/remit of Commissioners • To approve SCS appointments within the specified timescales • To progress Code of Ethics appeals by civil servants with minimum delay • To promote equality of opportunity and good relations duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 • To demonstrate our commitment to freedom of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the staffing levels required for the effective discharge of the Commissioners' functions • To deploy and manage resources to secure good value for money
PROCESSES	ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND GROWTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the Commissioners have effective support and advice to enable the achievement of their statutory role and responsibilities • To support and assist the Chairperson and Commissioners in developing their role • To manage Commissioners' meetings effectively and efficiently with the support of the secretariat • To produce an Annual Report on time • To effectively audit NICS recruitment practices against the Recruitment Code and complete an agreed Audit Programme • To continually review processes for improvement including electronic records management • To monitor and report on exceptions to the merit principle • To keep website up-to-date • To evaluate key outputs as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide effective strategic leadership and direction to the OCSC secretariat • To provide training and continuous professional development for the Commissioners • To maintain a well managed, trained and motivated secretariat

OCSC: CUSTOMERS

Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To promote public confidence in recruitment to the NICS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise profile of the Commissioners' roles and responsibilities through a Communications Strategy • To ensure appointments are made on merit • To ensure exceptions to the merit principle comply with the Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful implementation of the Communications Strategy • Compliance with the Recruitment Code • Effective Chairing of all SCS competitions • Compliance with the Use of Consultants Protocol in all SCS competitions • Compliance with the Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet key stakeholders • Develop effective relationships which contribute positively to the achievement of objectives • Audit Departments • Monitor appointments • Oversee each stage in Chairing SCS competition recruitment processes • Regularly assess and keep under review recruitment methodologies and techniques with DFP • Oversee the Use of Consultants Protocol • Completion of evaluation report after each competition • Approve appointments relating to needs of NICS • Monitor exceptions to the merit principle

Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To provide timely responses to queries from the public and ministers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that accurate and timely advice is given to the public and ministers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely responses Number of complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor response time Investigate issues Obtain legal advice where necessary Consult with all Commissioners when necessary
<p>To provide timely advice to NICS Departments/NIO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that accurate and timely advice is given to Departments /NIO on interpretation of the Code/remit of Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely responses Feedback from Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor response time Investigate issues Obtain legal advice where necessary Consult with all Commissioners when necessary Respond as appropriate
<p>To approve SCS appointments within specified timescales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the SCS recruitment process meets the requirements of the Recruitment Code To ensure that SCS approvals are completed in the agreed timescale for each stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve against agreed criteria Feedback from audit programme Delays identified and action taken to ensure timely responses Feedback/complaints from Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor competitions and address any problems as appropriate Recommendations from audit reports implemented Scrutinise SCS competitions at each stage and query as necessary Process within agreed timescales

Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To progress Code of Ethics appeals with minimum delay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure all new complaints are processed in accordance with the Commissioners' agreed procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints managed effectively Complaints processed in a timely way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider/ screen complaint, investigate, report and make recommendations as appropriate
<p>To promote equality of opportunity and good relation duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the implementation of the Recruitment Code To review the Commissioners' Equality Scheme within 12 months of the Equality Commission's report on effectiveness of section 75 Prepare report on implementation of 2006-07 Equality plan by 30 September 2007 To achieve the targets set in the Good Relations Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with the Recruitment Code through Audit and chairing of SCS competitions Internal review of Scheme by 31 December 2007 Timely submission of report to Equality Commission Implementation of the Good Relations Strategy Development of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit programme completed by 31 March 2008 Feedback from SCS competitions Prepare revised scheme as appropriate Commissioners' approval Submit to the Equality Commission Preparation of report Commissioners' approval Submit to the Equality Commission Monitor implementation of Good Relations Strategy Implementation of the

Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
		relationships with Section 75 groups as appropriate	Communications Strategy

OCSC- Processes

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To ensure that Commissioners have effective support and advice to enable the achievement of their statutory role and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all necessary support and advice is provided to Commissioners accurately and within appropriate timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Business Plan Effective communication Feedback from Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise regularly with the Chairperson and Commissioners Provide advice/ information on a timely basis Secure adequate resources from NIO Process remuneration claims within 5 working days of receipt Arrange meetings, briefing etc on a timely basis Obtain relevant legal advice Arrange meetings
<p>To support and assist the Chairperson and Commissioners in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop good working relationships with senior management of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective working relationships with key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Communications Strategy

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
developing their role	NICS/NIO/Ministers/ other Commissioners etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links meetings with departmental Permanent Secretaries • Clarity of respective roles of Commissioners, DFP and HR Connect provider established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange Links meetings • Arrange meetings with CPG Project Manager and contractor • Monitor progress on RPA and arrange briefings as appropriate • Liaise with NIO on progress of political talks to restore devolution
To effectively and efficiently manage the Commissioners' meetings with the support of the secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide papers at least one week in advance of meeting • Provide responses to queries within one day of receipt where all information is available • Prepare draft minutes of meetings within one week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful meetings with clear outputs • Feedback from Commissioners on quantity and quality of information • Achievement of objectives • Constructive responses to decisions • Draft minutes prepared and sent to Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare all relevant papers and distribute at least one week prior to meeting • Liaise with Departments/legal adviser on specific requests/issues • Seek feedback on an annual basis from Commissioners • Implementation of the Communications Strategy • Prepare draft minutes

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
To produce an Annual Report on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Report content and format by 30 April 2007 • Obtain statistics from recruitment points by 1 May 2007 • Draft report by 15 May 2007 • Finalise report by 31 May 2007 • Publish and distribute report by 30 June 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Annual Report • Published and distributed by due date • Feedback from stakeholders/recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with publishers • Agree front cover and layout with designers • Agree content and layout with Commissioners by 31 May • Proof final draft by 8 June 2007 • Confirm database for recipients • Distribute report by 30 June 2007 • Evaluate feedback
To effectively audit NICS recruitment practices against the Recruitment Code and to complete an agreed Audit Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To award a new audit contract by 31 May 2007 • To agree an audit programme for 2007-08 • To ensure that reports are completed by agreed timescales • Each audit report reviewed within one week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract awarded • Audit programme agreed with auditors • Production of audit reports in accordance with terms of reference and on time • Feedback from audited departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish relationship with auditors • Commissioners identify/agree audit topics • Agree timetable with Auditors/CPG/ Departments • Agree terms of reference for each audit with Commissioners, auditors and CPG • Monitor progress against agreed timetable • Consider audit reports • Provide report to Commissioners

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
	<p>of receipt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare papers for Commissioners on issues arising from the audits as required • To identify and implement any action required as a result of agreed audit recommendations within agreed timescale • To review the effectiveness of the new approach to auditing the 2005 Recruitment Code by end 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from consultants • Issues considered and discussed • Recommendations implemented to Commissioners' satisfaction • Review completed 	<p>and disseminate key issues to practitioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with relevant parties • Preparation of relevant papers • Action recommendations as appropriate • Identify scope of review and timetable for outcome • Consider report • Action as appropriate

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To continually review processes for improvement including electronic records management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review SCS approval process in light of the NICS' Recruitment Guidelines on SCS appointments • Identify any process which needs to be developed/reviewed, as appropriate • To continue to develop branch records to make best use of OASIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise/review process implemented as appropriate • New processes mapped out and recorded • Effective electronic record management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct process mapping exercise for each key area • Record mapping process • Integrate into Business Plan as appropriate • Keep the team up-to-date with Oasis filing system • Develop and maintain usage of the system
<p>To monitor and report on appointments by way of exceptions to the merit principle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure compliance with the Recruitment Code on exceptions to the merit principle • Monitor and report in the Annual Report on appointments by way of exceptions to the merit principle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to the Recruitment Code regarding exceptions to merit principle • Feedback to NICS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Commissioners' approval as necessary • Monitor and advise NICS as appropriate on a quarterly basis • Monitor position on new RPA organisations • Address areas of non-compliance
<p>To keep website up-to-date</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to improve website access and layout and make it user friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website up-to-date and fit for purpose • User feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-date regularly

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish all public documents on website within 1 week of publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely information on website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly publish relevant updates and document on website

OCSC: RESOURCES

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>Maintain the staff levels required for the effective discharge of the Commissioners' functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain appropriate staffing levels within the secretariat To effectively induct the Commissioners' new Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of OCSC Good Relations Strategy, Business Plan, Communications Strategy and Training and Development Strategy Effective induction of new Secretary Clear understanding of role and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular team meetings Agreed FJP's Regularly review of Good Relations Strategy, Business Plan and Communications Strategy Implementation of the Training and Development Strategy Regular feedback To identify and implement training needs for the new Secretary

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions				
<p>To deploy and manage resources to secure best value for money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To live within our budget for the financial year • Measure actual spends against forecast • To secure additional financial resources as required to achieve this year's business objectives • 100% scrutiny of bids, business cases and in-year expenditure • To meet all response dates for Estimates, in-year monitoring and other financial exercises • Delivery of timely, accurate and complete reports and submissions for the Divisional Coordinator/FSD within FSD deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have achieved objectives within allocated budgets as follows – <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><i>2006/07</i></td> <td><i>2007/08</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">323K</td> <td>323K</td> </tr> </table> • Increased baseline • Timely submissions • Timely submissions • Accurate completion of submissions 	<i>2006/07</i>	<i>2007/08</i>	323K	323K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular reports to Commissioners • Regular contact with Divisional Liaison Officer • Submit business case for additional resources • Check monthly reports by FSD deadline • Complete August and December Monitoring Rounds by FSD deadline • Request and complete FIS forms as required • Attend financial information seminars to gain understanding of operations and processes
<i>2006/07</i>	<i>2007/08</i>						
323K	323K						

OCSC: ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND GROWTH

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To provide effective strategic leadership and direction to the OCSC secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage and implement the 2007/08 Business Plan • Establish FJPs within 15 working days of new reporting year • All staff understand their individual contribution • To induct new staff and agree PDPs within 2 months • Perform 95% of PAIs within 5 working days of the end of the agreed period • Establish an agreed 2008/09 Business Plan by 1 April 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of targets outlined in the Business Plan • Monitor progress and re-prioritise as appropriate • Performance Improvement • PDPs agreed • PAIs completed on time • 2008/09 Business Plan agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review of business plan • Establish FJP's by 15 April 2007 and review in-year • Meet with staff regularly and re-prioritise as necessary • Provide support, recognition and guidance to the team • Induct new team members and agree PDPs • Complete PAIs • Commence Business Planning process • Secure agreement

Branch Objective	Targets	Measures	Actions
<p>To provide training and continuous professional development for the Commissioners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to provide appropriate development plans for Commissioners • To ensure implementation of the Training and Development Strategy • To ensure that networking opportunities are maximised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective development of Chair and Commissioners • Increased understanding of role • Increased knowledge of related legislation and developments • Implementation of the Training and Development Strategy • Commissioner feedback • Feedback from other bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement training needs of the Chair and Commissioners • Regular meetings with key stakeholders • Identify and attend training events • Arrange training identified in plan • Evaluate training • Arrange development/information seminars • Arrange visits and guest speakers
<p>To maintain a well managed, trained and motivated secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Training and Development Strategy • To ensure completion of PDPs within 15 working days of 1 April 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training delivered/evaluated • Progress against Personal Development Plans • Improved performance • Increased skills and competences for the team • Production of Management info relating to Training and Development needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training events arranged and evaluated • Complete PDPs • Individual appraisal • Quarterly Reviews • Training Plan monitored and evaluated