

Communications Strategy Action Plan

# CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2006/07



02/06/2006

# **Communications Strategy Action Plan**

## **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS**

### **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2006-07**

The Commissioners are responsible for upholding the principle of appointments to the NICS being on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. They also have responsibility to hear appeals to them by civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

The Commissioners' Business Plan for 2006-07 sets out their objectives and targets for the year ahead. 2006-07 is a year of significant change for the Commissioners. A smooth transition with the appointment of a new Chairperson and 3 new Commissioners this year will be essential to maintaining the achievement of the Commissioners' Business Plan. The new Recruitment Code, supported by revised NICS policies and procedures was launched in June 2005 and over the next year will become embedded into the NICS recruitment practices. We look forward to developing an effective appropriate approach to audit NICS recruitment practices against the new Recruitment Code and completing an agreed Audit Programme. The prospect of a return to devolution requires a constant state of readiness in terms of maintaining key relationships in the NICS. The Cabinet Office will be taking decisions on the Civil Service Code which is likely have implications for the Code of Ethics and the Commissioners will continue to monitor proposals for legislation in respect of the Civil Service generally and nationality requirements in particular.

A priority for the Commissioners will therefore be the induction of the new Chairperson and Commissioners to ensure that the strong internal and external relationships established with key stakeholders continue to grow and strengthen. This strategy identifies those groups and areas on which the Commissioners will focus and describes the activities proposed to achieve the aims of this strategy which are:

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## Aims

- To raise awareness of the Civil Service Commissioners.
- To extend and strengthen relationships with “internal” and external stakeholders.
- To effectively establish relationships for the new Chairperson and Commissioners with the key stakeholders.
- To publish a Good Relations Strategy.
- To improve the effectiveness of the OCSC:
  - information management;
  - communication; and
  - website.

The Strategy also covers those areas in which the Commissioners have obligations. The Commissioners are committed to equality of opportunity and fairness and will carry out a 5 year review of their Equality Scheme during 2006-07. They will also seek to maximise their contribution to freedom of information by reviewing their Publication Scheme and using their website to its full potential.

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From the Business Plan, the key business areas for the purposes of this communication Strategy are:

## Customers

- 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.

## Resources

- Maintain a minimum of 6 Commissioners and successfully manage the transition of integrating the new Chairperson and new Commissioners to ensure a continuing balance of diversity and competence levels.

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## Processes

- To ensure the Commissioners have effective support and advice to enable the achievement of their statutory role and responsibilities.
- To support and assist the new Chairperson and Commissioners in developing their role.
- To produce an Annual Report on time.
- To develop and establish an effective appropriate approach to audit NICS recruitment practices against the new 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 improve and update the website.

## Organisational Learning and Growth

- To provide continuous professional development for Commissioners.
- To provide induction training for the new Chairperson and new Commissioners and to provide continuous professional development for Commissioners.
- To maintain a well managed, trained and motivated secretariat.

## Communications Strategy Action Plan

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
<p>1. NICS internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HoCS/full PSG</li> <li>• PSG Sub-Group</li> <li>• Perm Secs</li>   <li>• NICS Departments</li> <li>• CPG</li>   <li>• Recruitment Service</li> </ul>	<p>Invest time in establishing for the new Chair and Commissioners, and continuing to develop a strategic awareness of the Commissioners' role, NICS issues and discuss operational areas of interest e.g. Recruitment Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HoCS and Perm Secs</li> <li>• HoCS/2 Perms Secs and CPG</li> <li>• Individual Perm Secs links meetings (and PSG)</li> <li>• Personnel Directors/EOs</li> <li>• CPG Senior management and as issues emerge</li> <li>• Management team – e.g. implementing the Recruitment Code</li> </ul>	<p>Comms/Sec Comms/Sec Comms</p> <p>Secretariat Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p>	<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Annually Quarterly Annually</p> <p>Annually Quarterly</p> <p>3-4 times</p>	<p>Verbal reports by Comms</p>
<p>2. Section 75 Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a 5-year review of the Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Prepare report on the implementation of the 2005-06 Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Consultation of interest groups</li> <li>• Publish a Good Relations strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Comms/Sec</p> <p>Comms/Sec</p>	<p>Prepare Report Revised Equality Plan</p> <p>Agree Strategy</p>	<p>June</p> <p>June</p> <p>June</p>	



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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
5. Commissioners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK</li> <li>• RoI</li> </ul>	On-going <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting Autumn 06 meet new Chairperson (incorporate seminar on Code of Ethics for NICS)</li> <li>• Next meeting Autumn 06 (hosted by ROI)</li> </ul>	Comms Sec  Comms Sec	Meetings  Meetings	Annually  Annually	
6. OCPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the new Chair and Commissioners to the Chair of OCPA(NI)</li> <li>• Develop relationship with Ruth Bennett and share common areas of interest e.g. Diversity</li> </ul>	Sec  Sec	Meeting  Meeting	September  On-going	
7. Politicians	Review pending devolution		No Action Unless approach made		N/A
8. Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioners and Secretariat/RIR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction of new Chair and Commissioners</li> <li>• Induction pack for new Commissioners</li> </ul> Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular up-dates and summary papers</li> <li>• Training Plan</li> </ul>	Secretariat  Secretariat  Secretariat  Secretariat		May-Mar  May  On-going  On-going On-going	Evaluation of Training Plan

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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PUS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat – team meetings</li> </ul> <p>RIR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plan and resource allocation,</li> <li>• To discuss strategy matters with PUS</li> </ul>	Comms/ Secretariat		As required	
9. Promulgate the new Recruitment Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit NICS Personnel Directors/Establishment Officers</li> </ul>	Secretariat		On-going	
10. Annual Report 2005/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for publication by 30 June 2006</li> <li>• Alert NICS that stats are needed earlier</li> <li>• Launch Report                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Media incl role of Commissioners</li> <li>○ Evaluation sheet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Secretariat	Publish Report	June	Report based on feedback received

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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
11. Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile New chair in Belfast Telegraph Business News and local papers</li> <li>• Press release for Annual Report</li> </ul>	Secretariat  Secretariat	Public Awareness  Press release	Periodic  June	
12. Auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree new approach to Auditing the Revised Code</li> <li>• Review level of service</li> <li>• Agree audit plan</li> <li>• Plan for future contract tender</li> </ul>	Comms/ Secretariat		December	Report outcome of audits and implementation of recommendations
13. NISRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on data sources and updates</li> </ul>	Comms/ Secretariat	Awareness	Periodic	
14. Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-dates on-going</li> <li>• Review style and content</li> <li>• FOI- Review publications scheme</li> <li>• Publish schedule of Commissioners meetings</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings</li> <li>• Terms of appointments</li> <li>• Code of conduct</li> </ul>	Secretariat/ Comms	Information	On-going	Monitor 'hits' and queries from website

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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
15. File management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review on-going</li> </ul>	Secretariat	Information	On-going	Report progress
16. Publication Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and publish revised scheme</li> </ul>	Comms/ Secretariat	Review Scheme	June	Production of scheme

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### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS – BUSINESS PLAN – 2006/07

<b>CUSTOMERS</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote public confidence in recruitment to the NICS</li> <li>• To provide timely responses to queries from the Public and Ministers</li> <li>• To provide timely and appropriate advice to NICS Departments/NIO on interpretation of Recruitment Code/remit of Commissioners</li> <li>• To approve SCS appointments within the specified timescales</li> <li>• To progress Code of Ethics appeals by civil servants with minimum delay</li> <li>• To promote equality of opportunity and good relations duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998</li> <li>• To demonstrate our commitment to freedom of information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a minimum of 6 Commissioners and successfully manage the transition of integrating the new Chairperson and new Commissioners to ensure a continuing balance of diversity and competence levels</li> <li>• Maintain staffing levels required for the effective discharge of the Commissioners' functions</li> <li>• To deploy and manage resources to secure good value for money</li> </ul>
<b>PROCESSES</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND GROWTH</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the Commissioners have effective support and advice to enable the achievement of their statutory role and responsibilities</li> <li>• To support and assist the new Chairperson and Commissioners in developing their role</li> <li>• To effectively and efficiently manage Commissioners' meetings with the support of the secretariat</li> <li>• To produce an Annual Report on time</li> <li>• To develop and establish an effective appropriate approach to audit NICS recruitment practices against the new Recruitment Code and complete an agreed Audit Programme</li> <li>• To continually review processes for improvement including electronic records management</li> <li>• To monitor and report on exceptions to the merit principle</li> <li>• To improve and update the Website</li> <li>• To evaluate key outputs as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide effective strategic leadership and direction to the OCSC secretariat</li> <li>• To provide induction training for the new Chairperson and new Commissioners and continuous professional development for Commissioners</li> <li>• To maintain a well managed, trained and motivated secretariat</li> </ul>

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