

Communications Strategy Action Plan

# CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2007/08



Draft 02/04/2007

# Communications Strategy Action Plan

## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

### COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2007-08

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 from, and consider taking complaints made directly to them by, civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

The Commissioners' Business Plan for 2007-08 sets out their objectives and targets for the year ahead.

#### **Priority for 2007-08**

The key priority for the Commissioners in relation to our Communications Strategy will be to concentrate on a small number of key stakeholders who are central to our main business activities. Over the course of the next 12 months, these are perceived to be:

- the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Permanent Secretaries of DFP and NIO to keep abreast of the civil service reform programme and continuing political developments, in particular, any proposed restructuring of Departments or devolution of new responsibilities;
- the NICS and trade unions in relation to the intended outsourcing of personnel services;
- Departmental Permanent Secretaries and the Chief Executives of SSA and CSA to maintain and strengthen relationships and provide an arena for the exchange of views on issues of relevant, mutual interest;
- DFP and NISRA in regard to the effectiveness of current recruitment processes and procedures, including the management of Senior Civil Service appointment competitions;

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- the Public Service Commission in relation to those impacts of the Review of Public Administration which may have implications for our business;
- relationships with our counterparts in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

### Aims

- To raise awareness of the work and role of the Civil Service Commissioners.
- To extend and strengthen relationships with “internal” and external stakeholders.
- To establish effective relationships for the Chairperson and Commissioners with the key stakeholders.
- To promote the spirit of the Good Relations Strategy and implement its key actions.
- 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 revise their Equality Scheme during 2007-08. 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

- To maintain staffing levels required for the effective discharge of the Commissioners' functions.
- To deploy and management resources to secure good value for money

## 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 Chairperson and Commissioners in developing their role.
- To effectively and efficiently manage Commissioners' meetings with the support of the secretariat.
- To produce an Annual Report on time.
- To develop and establish an effective appropriate approach to audit of 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.

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## Organisational Learning and Growth

- To provide effective strategic leadership and direction to the OCSC secretariat.
- To provide training and continuous professional development for Commissioners.
- To maintain a well managed, trained and motivated secretariat.



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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION/CONTACT	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
	Commissioners' role in the Code of Ethics appeal process  Awareness of Commissioners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departmental magazines</li> </ul>	Comms/Sec	magazines  Meetings NICS staff magazines Local Newspaper Article	Periodic	Monitor queries
3. TUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIPSA</li> <li>• FDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer annual meetings</li> <li>• As necessary</li> </ul>	Comms/Sec	Meetings	Annually	
4. Public Service Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of RPA and implications for Civil Service Commissioners</li> </ul>	Comms/Sec	Meetings	Periodic	
5. Commissioners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK</li> <li>• Rol</li> </ul>	On-going <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting Autumn 07 (hosted by UK)</li> <li>• Next meeting 2007 (hosted by Rol)</li> </ul>	Comms Sec Comms Sec	Meetings  Meetings	Annually  Annually	

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6. Section 75 Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the Commissioners' Equality Scheme</li> <li>Prepare report on implementation of the 2006-07 Equality Scheme</li> <li>Consultation of interest groups</li> <li>Implement targets in the Good Relations strategy</li> </ul>	Comms/Sec  Comms/Sec	Revised Equality Plan Prepare Report  Implement and monitor Strategy	Dec June  Quarterly	
7. OCPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of the Chair and Commissioners to the Chair of OCPA(NI)</li> <li>Develop relationship with OCPA secretariat and share common areas of interest e.g. Diversity</li> </ul>	Sec  Sec	Meeting  Meeting	September  On-going	
8. Politicians	Review pending devolution		No Action unless approach made		N/A
9. Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners and Secretariat/RIR</li> </ul>	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular up-dates and summary papers</li> <li>Training Plan</li> <li>Secretariat – team meetings</li> </ul> RIR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Plan and resource allocation,</li> </ul>	Secretariat  Secretariat  Comms/ Secretariat		On-going  On-going On-going  As required	Evaluation of Training Plan

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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	ACTION/CONTACT	WHO	WHAT	WHEN	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PUS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To discuss strategy matters with PUS</li> </ul>			Annually	
10. Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press release for Annual Report and for 2007/08 business priorities</li> <li>• Profile Chair in Belfast Telegraph Business News and local papers</li> </ul>	Secretariat  Secretariat	Press release  Public Awareness	June April  Periodic	
11. Auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new audit contract and agree 2007/08 Audit programme</li> <li>• Review effectiveness of new approach to auditing the 2005 Recruitment Code</li> <li>• Monitor level of service</li> </ul>	Comms/ Secretariat		April  December 2008	Effective Audit provision Outcome of review Quality of Audit report
12. Public Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-dates on-going</li> <li>• FOI - Review Publication Scheme Publish schedule of Commissioners meetings</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings</li> <li>• Term of appointments</li> </ul>	Secretariat/ Comms	Information	On-going	Monitor 'hits' and queries from website