

PUBLICATION SCHEME

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REVISED DECEMBER 2017

Introduction

Welcome to the Publication Scheme of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are responsible for ensuring that appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

This Publication Scheme is a guide to the information which Commissioners publish or intend to make routinely available to the public.

Role and Status of the Civil Service Commissioners

Civil Service Commissioners are individually appointed by Royal Warrant to exercise the powers and responsibilities set out in the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (the 1999 Order). Sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office, we are entirely independent of Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Our independence is central to the work that we do.

The primary role of Commissioners is to discharge the statutory duty placed upon them to ensure that recruitment to the NICS at all levels is on the basis of fair and open competition, thereby ensuring that in every case the best person is appointed to the job. This is what is referred to as the 'Merit Principle'. Commissioners themselves are appointed following public advertisement and fair and open competition and bring to their role wide experience from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The [1999 Order](#) confers on Commissioners a responsibility to:

- act as guardians of the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition;
- make General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply;
- publish and maintain a [Recruitment Code](#) on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle;
- audit recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the Civil Service to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed; and
- require the publication of specified information relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.

Commissioners also have a role in hearing appeals made by existing civil servants under the [NICS Code of Ethics](#).

In order to increase public awareness of their role, Commissioners have setup a [website](#) explaining their functions and presenting key documents.

The Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC) provides support to the Commissioners and comprises 6 staff.

Purpose of this Publication Scheme

This Publication Scheme responds to the requirements of the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) which requires all public bodies to adopt and maintain a scheme for the proactive publication of information. Such schemes are intended to ensure that information is made available to the public without the need for a specific request. Information which would be exempt under Part II of the Act, for example because it is sensitive or confidential, is not included in our Scheme. Such information may be edited out of documents published under the Scheme.

Our aim in developing this Publication Scheme is to set out:

- the classes of information we publish or intend to make available;
- how this information can be accessed; and
- whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment.

Responsibility for administering this Scheme rests with Joanne Dowling, Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners, and Janet Carnduff, Deputy Secretary, who can be contacted by telephone on 028 9052 3568 and 028 9052 3577, respectively.

For more detailed enquiries about this Publication Scheme, please contact Janet Carnduff by telephone on 028 9052 3577 or by e-mail Janet.Carnduff@nio.gov.uk
Contact details for the OCSC are as follows:

Address: Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland,
Room 105, Stormont House
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3SH

Telephone: 028 9052 3599

Fax: 028 9052 7705

Organisational Structure and Services

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Organisation structure	The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	The Civil Service Commissioners Northern Ireland	OCSC website
	About us	About us	OCSC website
	Meet the Commissioners	Meet the Commissioners	OCSC website
	The Secretariat	The Secretariat	OCSC website
	Contact details and office location	Contact us	OCSC website
	Register of Interests	Register of Interests	OCSC website
The role of Commissioners	Legislation relevant to the OCSC functions	Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 Amendments 2003 Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 Amendments 2007 Civil Service Commissioners (Amendment) Order (NI) 2016	OCSC website
	Role as regulators	What We Do General Regulations 2007	OCSC website

	Code of practice	Code of Practice	OCSC website
	Audit function and Published Summary Audit Reports	Audit role	OCSC website
	The Recruitment Code	Recruitment Code 2012 (Revised January 2017)	OCSC website
	Code of Ethics	About the NICS Code of Ethics The Code of Ethics NICS Code of Ethics: Core Guidance NICS Code of Ethics: Guidance for Departments NICS Code of Ethics: Guidance for Appellants	OCSC website

Corporate Governance

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Strategies and Action Plans	Business Planning	Strategic priorities: 2015 – 18 & Business Plan: 2017/18	OCSC website
	Equality Scheme	The Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners Equality Scheme ECNI Annual Progress Report Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme Equality Impact Assessment Forms Human Rights Policy Statement	OCSC website

	Disability Action Plan	Disability responsibilities The Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners' Disability Action Plan	OCSC website
Reports and Consultation documents	Public Consultations	Consultations	OCSC website

Publications (including financial information)

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Annual Reports	Annual Reports	Annual Reports Archived Annual Reports	OCSC website

Other Information

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Public information	Information in the public domain	About Public Information	OCSC website
	Business Meetings	Schedule of Meetings Summary Record of Business Meetings	OCSC website

How to Obtain the Information and Charges

The information in this Scheme is available on the Commissioners' website. For those without internet access, or who require a hard copy, a single printout or bound copy of any of the documents referred to in the Scheme, these can be obtained free of charge by post or by contacting the OCSC as outlined above. Requests made for larger print outs or for archived copies of documents which are no longer available on the web may attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopying, postage etc. You will be advised of the cost at the time of your request. Any charges will be payable in advance.

When requesting information please include the following details:

- your name and address;
- the information or documents you would like to access; and
- the way you would like the information sent to you i.e. hard-copy or e-mail.

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Further information on Crown copyright can be found at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/crown-copyright.htm>

Complaints Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response received from a member of the OCSC for information under this Scheme, he / she may seek an internal review of that decision. A member of staff who was not involved with the original request will undertake the review. An internal review should normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner. A request for an internal review of a decision not to disclose information should be made to the Secretary Joanne.Dowling@nio.gov.uk or Deputy Secretary Janet.Carnduff@nio.gov.uk who will respond within 20 working days.

If an applicant remains dissatisfied, he / she can seek an independent review by the Information Commissioner.

Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made writing direct to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700 Fax: 01625 525 510

Feedback

The Secretariat intends to review this Publication Scheme on an annual basis and would value your assistance in identifying ways in which you consider it might be improved. Any questions or comments about this Scheme, or its operation, should be forwarded to the Secretary Joanne.Dowling@nio.gov.uk or Deputy Secretary Janet.Carnduff@nio.gov.uk.