



**Civil Service  
Commissioners**  
for Northern Ireland

## **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

### **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**UPDATED MARCH 2024**

#### **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 the Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners, who can be contacted by telephone on 028 9052 3577.

For more detailed enquiries about this Publication Scheme, please contact the Secretary at [info@nicsscommissioners.org](mailto:info@nicsscommissioners.org). Contact details for the OCSC are as follows:

**Address:** Office of the Civil Service Commissioners  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Erskine House  
20-32 Chichester Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4GF

**Telephone:** 028 9052 3577

**Email:** [info@nicsscommissioners.org](mailto:info@nicsscommissioners.org)

## Organisational Structure and Services

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Organisational structure	The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	<a href="#">The Civil Service Commissioners Northern Ireland</a>	OCSC website
	About us	<a href="#">About us</a>	OCSC website
	Meet the Commissioners	<a href="#">Meet the Commissioners</a>	OCSC website
	The Secretariat	<a href="#">The Secretariat</a>	OCSC website
	Contact details and office location	<a href="#">Contact us</a>	OCSC website
	Register of Interests	<a href="#">Register of Interests</a>	OCSC website
The role of Commissioners	Legislation relevant to the OCSC functions	<a href="#">Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999</a>	OCSC website
		<a href="#">Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 Amendments 2003</a>	
		<a href="#">Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 Amendments 2007</a>	
Role as regulators	<a href="#">What We Do</a> <a href="#">General Regulations 2007</a>	OCSC website	
Code of practice	<a href="#">Code of Practice</a>	OCSC website	

	Audit function	<a href="#">Audit role</a>	OCSC website
	The Recruitment Code	<a href="#">Recruitment Code</a>	OCSC website
	Code of Ethics	<a href="#">The NICS Code of Ethics</a>  <a href="#">Civil Service Commissioners' Guidance Document on Raising a Concern under the NICS Code of Ethics</a>	OCSC website

### Corporate Governance

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Strategies and Action Plans	Business Planning	<a href="#">Strategic Plan 2020-2025</a>  <a href="#">CSC(NI) Business Plan 2023-24</a>	OCSC website
	Equality Scheme	<a href="#">The Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners Equality Scheme</a>  <a href="#">ECNI Annual Progress Report</a>  <a href="#">Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme</a>  <a href="#">Equality Screening Forms</a>	OCSC website
	Disability Action Plan	<a href="#">Disability responsibilities</a>  <a href="#">The Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners' Disability Action Plan</a>	OCSC website

### Publications (including financial information)

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
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Annual Reports	Annual Reports	<a href="#">Annual Reports</a>	OCSC website
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**Other Information**

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Public Information	Business Meetings	<a href="#">Schedule of Meetings</a> <a href="#">Summary Record of Business Meetings</a>	OCSC website
	Handling Comments, Enquiries and Complaints	<a href="#">Handling Comments, Enquiries and Complaints</a>	OCSC website
Quick Links	Data Protection Notice	<a href="#">Data Protection Policy</a>	OCSC website
	Privacy Notice	<a href="#">Privacy Notice</a>	OCSC website

## How to Obtain the Information and Charges

The information in this Scheme is available on the Commissioners' website. Documents may be made available in other formats on request.

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.

## Copyright

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Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

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 at [info@nicommissioners.org](mailto:info@nicommissioners.org) 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:

ICO Office – Northern Ireland  
3rd Floor  
14 Cromac Place  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

Telephone: 0303 123 1114  
Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

## **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 at [info@niccommissioners.org](mailto:info@niccommissioners.org).