



CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: 2015 – 18 & BUSINESS PLAN: 2015/16

Ensuring appointment on merit

& safeguarding ethics

ROOM 105, STORMONT HOUSE, STORMONT ESTATE, BELFAST, BT4 3SH

t. 028 9052 3599 .f. 028 9052 7705 w. www.nicscommissioners.org

CONTENTS

	PAGE(S)
Core Values	3
Strategic Framework 2015 - 2018	4
Business Plan 2015 - 2016	5-9
Civil Service Commissioners' Secretariat	10
Budget Allocation: 2014/ 15 – 2015/16	11

CORE VALUES

In fulfilling their responsibilities under this Plan, Commissioners and the Secretariat will seek at all times to adhere to the core principles of public life, which 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 are fully committed to their duty of considering appeals under the NICS Code of Ethics which emphasises the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality in the civil service.

COMMISSIONERS' 2015-18 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision: *A Civil Service for Northern Ireland which recruits and promotes the best and most diverse talent available in accordance with merit and free from personal and political patronage.*

Mission: *Promote public confidence in appointments to the NICS*

	Standards	Governance & Accountability	People	Resources	
What we do	Safeguard an impartial and independent Civil Service by providing assurance that Civil Servants are recruited on the basis of fair and open competition.	Comply with Sponsor Department's governance requirements and fulfil our obligations as a public body	Support the appointment and development of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat.	Secure, deploy and account effectively for the use of financial and other resources.	Strategic Aims
How we do it	1.1 Maintain the principle of selection on merit 1.2 Maintain and implement the General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply 1.3 Audit NICS recruitment policies & practices 1.4 Require the publication of NICS recruitment related information 1.5 Publish the permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle 1.6 Consider and determine appeals under the Code of Ethics	2.1 Develop and implement effective business planning arrangements 2.2 Agree and implement a Management Framework Agreement 2.3 Discharge all statutory obligations as a public authority	3.1 Put in place arrangements to assist effective succession planning for the appointment of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat 3.2 Deliver effective strategic leadership and performance management. 3.3 Meet the learning and development needs of Commissioners and Secretariat	4.1 Comply with sponsoring Department's financial requirements 4.2 Ensure the allocated resources effectively support the discharge of Commissioners' role	Targets

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

STANDARDS		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
1.1 Maintain the principle of selection on merit	Monitor the continued effectiveness of the Recruitment Code	Public confidence in the independence and effectiveness of the NICS appointments process
	Scrutinise and process requests under the SCS 4-stage authorisation process.	
	Undertake an annual audit of the management of the SCS 4-Stage Authorisation procedure	
	Chair Senior Civil Service competitions	
	Engage with key stakeholders to ensure promotion of Recruitment Code and its embedding into NICS recruitment practices	
	Engage with GB and Irish counterparts to share good practice and learning	
1.2 Maintain and implement General Regulations	Scrutinise and challenge requests made by NICS in relation to appointments by way of exception to the Merit Principle	Public confidence in the effective development and implementation of the General Regulations
	Monitor and report on the outcome of all requests for and appointments made as exceptions to the Merit Principle.	
	Review the General Regulations with a view to identifying any improvements that can be made.	
	Following review of the General Regulations, including consultation with key stakeholders, seek approval from the Secretary of State for any revisions	

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOME
1.3 Audit NICS recruitment policies & practices.	Agree, implement and report on the 2015/16 Annual Audit Plan	Public confidence that NICS appointments are made on merit
	Conduct audits and reviews in line with Commissioners' Audit and Review Guidance and publish the outcomes in the Annual Report	
	Monitor the implementation of all audit recommendations and ensure follow-up action plans are implemented	Promotion of improved recruitment practice.
1.4 Require the publication of NICS recruitment related information and the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle	Require the NICS to publish relevant recruitment information in accordance with Appendix C of the Recruitment Code.	Enhanced public access to information about recruitment to the NICS and the work of Commissioners.
1.5 Publish the permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.	Produce and publish the Annual Report by end October 2015.	
1.6 Consider and determine appeals under the Code of Ethics	Manage the appeals process for the NICS Code of Ethics in line with the Commissioners' Guidance.	Effective handling of Code of Ethics appeals.

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

GOVERNANCE and ACCOUNTABILITY		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
2.1 Develop and implement effective business planning arrangements	Publish the 2015/16 Business Plan on 1 st April 2015	Compliance with all statutory and business requirements.
	Deliver the Business Plan and monitor and report quarterly	
	Schedule a November Business Planning event to review the 2015/18 Strategic Framework Document and to develop a 2016/17 Business Plan and Risk register	
2.2 Discharge all statutory obligations as a public authority.	Put in place the necessary systems and procedures to ensure compliance with Government Information Assurance, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety requirements	
2.3 Agree and implement a Management Framework Agreement with Sponsor Department, NIO	Comply with the requirements of the Framework Document and report to NIO biannually	

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

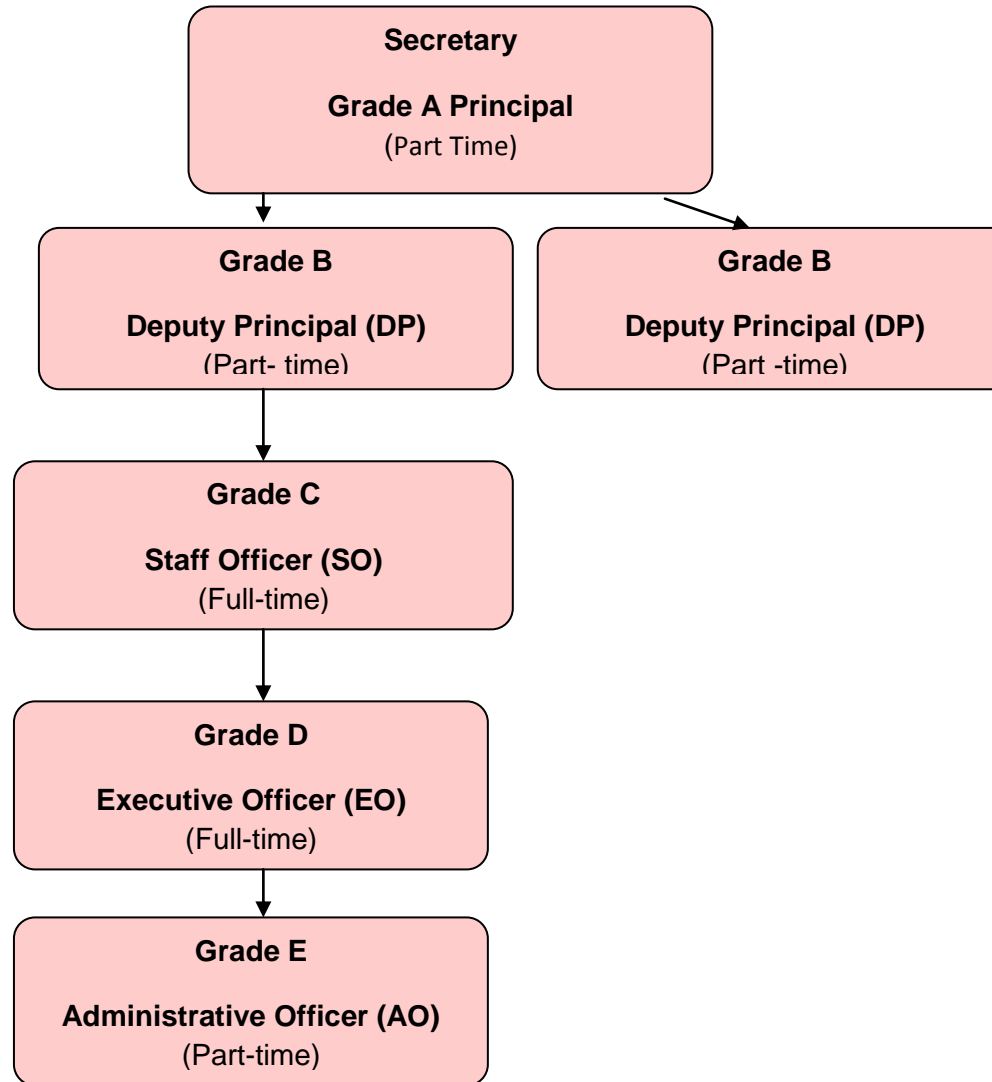
PEOPLE		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
3.1 Put in place arrangements to assist effective succession planning for the appointment of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat.	<p>Ensure staffing levels are adequate to discharge the functions of the Commissioners</p> <p>Identify when vacancies are likely to arise and liaise with NIO with regard to replacements</p>	Effective delivery of Commissioners' responsibilities and the Business Plan
3.2 Deliver effective strategic leadership and performance management..	Carry out the appraisal of Commissioners and ensure that the Secretariat understands fully the commitments in the Plan and their role in contributing to its effective delivery as reflected in all Forward Job Plans.	Clarity of purpose leading to the achievement of objectives.
3.3 Meet the learning and development needs of the Commissioners and Secretariat	Identify the learning and development needs of the Commissioners and Secretariat	Appropriate learning and development to meet business and professional needs
	Agree, implement and monitor quarterly the learning and development plan.	

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

RESOURCES		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
4.1 Comply with sponsoring Department's financial requirements	Ensure financial systems, procedures and practices meet with NIO requirements	Compliance with NIO requirements as an ALB
4.2 Ensure the allocated resources effectively support the discharge of Commissioners' responsibilities.	Monitor current and future resource requirements and ensure efficiency targets set by NIO are achieved within agreed timescales.	Best use of allocated resources
	Monitor profiling against expenditure and conduct mid-year review of expenditure and advise NIO on need for in-year bid or budget easement.	
	Maximise the benefit of available IT systems.	

Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016
OFFICE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS – SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

It is envisaged that the Secretariat support available to Commissioners during 2015/ 16 will be as follows:



**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
Business Plan 2015-2016**

BUDGET ALLOCATION:

ITEM	ALLOCATION 2014/2015	ALLOCATION 2015/2016	ALLOCATION 2016/2017*
Commissioners' Fees	£42,601	£36,329	£TBC
Staff	£223,360	£216,384	£TBC
Training	£5,738	£1,200	£TBC
Accommodation & Overheads	£28,841	£31,477	£TBC
TOTAL	£300,540	£285,390*	£TBC

- * To be confirmed by sponsor department – The Northern Ireland Office