

## PUBLICATION SCHEME

### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REVISED MARCH 2015

#### 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 the 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 (NI) Order 1999. Sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office, we are entirely independent of Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service and we guard that independence fervently.

In essence we are regulators: and our main purpose is to regulate recruitment to the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that in every case, the best person is appointed to the job. This is what we refer to as the 'Merit Principle'. We ourselves are appointed following public advertisement and fair and open competition and we bring to the job wide experience from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The [1999 Order](#) confers on us a statutory 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.

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

The Commissioners have a [website](#) explaining their role 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 Mrs Joanne Dowling, Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners, and Mr Peter Murchan, Deputy Secretary, who can be contacted by telephone on 028 90523568 and 028 90523577, respectively.

For more detailed enquiries about this Publication Scheme, please contact Peter Murchan by telephone on 028 9052 3577 or by e-mail [peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.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

	<b>Information Published</b>	<b>Link/Document</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Organisation 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
Regulatory role	Legislation relevant to the OCSC functions	<a href="#">Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999</a>	OCSC website
	Role as regulators	<a href="#">What We Do</a> <a href="#">General Regulations 2007</a> <a href="#">Human Rights Policy Statement</a>	OCSC website
	Code of practice	<a href="#">Code of Practice</a>	OCSC website
	Audit function and Published Audit Reports	<a href="#">Audit role</a>	OCSC website
	The Recruitment Code	<a href="#">Recruitment Code 2012 (Revised July 2015)</a>	OCSC website

	Code of Ethics	<a href="#">About the NICS Code of Ethics</a>  <a href="#">The Code of Ethics</a>  <a href="#">NICS Code of Ethics: Core Guidance</a>  <a href="#">NICS Code of Ethics: Guidance for Departments</a>  <a href="#">NICS Code of Ethics: Guidance for Appellants</a>	OCSC website
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### Corporate Governance

	Information Published	Link/Document	Availability
Strategies and Action Plans	Business Planning	<a href="#">Strategic priorities: 2015 – 18 &amp; Business Plan: 2015/16</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="#">Human Rights Policy Statement</a>  <a href="#">Equality Impact Assessment Forms</a>	OCSC website
	Our Disability Action Plan	<a href="#">Our Disability responsibilities</a>  <a href="#">The Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners' Disability Action Plan</a>	OCSC website

Reports and Consultation documents	Public Consultations	<a href="#">Consultations</a>	OCSC website
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### **Publications** (including financial information)

	<b>Information Published</b>	<b>Link/Document</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Annual Reports	Our Annual Reports	<a href="#">Annual Reports</a> <a href="#">Archived Annual Reports</a>	OCSC website

### **Other Information**

	<b>Information Published</b>	<b>Link/Document</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Public information	Information in the public domain	<a href="#">About our Public Information</a>	OCSC website
	Business Meetings	<a href="#">Schedule of Meetings</a> <a href="#">Summary Record of Business Meetings</a>	OCSC website

### **Charges and How to Obtain the Information**

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 not 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

## 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 [joanne.dowling@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.dowling@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk) or Deputy Secretary [peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.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.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.dowling@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk) or Deputy Secretary [peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:peter.murchan@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk)