

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: 2015-20 & BUSINESS PLAN: 2019/20

*Ensuring appointment on merit
& supporting ethical standards*

ROOM 105, STORMONT HOUSE, STORMONT ESTATE, BELFAST, BT4 3SH
t. 028 9052 3599 .f. 028 9052 7705 www.nicscommissioners.org

Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

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Our 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 or partiality.

Our Mission:

Promote public confidence in appointments to the NI Civil Service.

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;
Integrity;
Objectivity;
Accountability;
Openness;
Honesty; and
Leadership

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
2015-20 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

	Standards	Governance & Accountability	People	Resources	
What we do	Safeguard an impartial and independent Northern Ireland 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 authority.	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	<p>1.1 Maintain the principle of selection on merit as required by the Recruitment Code.</p> <p>1.2 Maintain and implement the General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply.</p> <p>1.3 Audit NICS recruitment policies & practices.</p> <p>1.4 Require the publication of NICS recruitment related information.</p> <p>1.5 Publish the permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.</p> <p>1.6 Consider and determine appeals under the Code of Ethics.</p>	<p>2.1 Develop and implement effective business planning arrangements.</p> <p>2.2 Discharge all statutory obligations as a public authority.</p> <p>2.3 Agree and implement a Management Framework Agreement.</p>	<p>3.1 Put in place arrangements to assist effective succession planning for the appointment and induction of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat.</p> <p>3.2 Deliver effective strategic leadership and performance management.</p> <p>3.3 Meet the learning and development needs of Commissioners and Secretariat.</p>	<p>4.1 Comply with sponsoring Department's financial requirements.</p> <p>4.2 Ensure the allocated resources effectively support the discharge of Commissioners' functions.</p>	Targets

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
2019/20 BUSINESS PLAN**

STANDARDS		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
1.1 Maintain the principle of selection on merit as required by the Recruitment Code.	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, as appropriate, with a view to identifying any improvements that can be made and their consequential impact on the Recruitment Code.	
	Following review of the General Regulations, including as appropriate, consultation with key stakeholders, seek approval from the Secretary of State for any revisions.	

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STANDARDS		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOME
1.3 Audit NICS recruitment policies & practices.	Agree, implement and report on the 2019/20 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.
	Review the requirements set out in Appendix C of the Recruitment Code in order to ensure that the information published by the NICS is relevant and effectively supporting Commissioners' Annual Report.	
1.5 Publish the permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.	Draft and publish the agreed Annual Report by end October 2019.	
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.
	Review the suite of Code of Ethics Guidance documents and the approach to dealing with Code of Ethics Appeals to ensure they are effectively supporting Commissioners' statutory role and meeting the needs of appellants.	

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
2019/20 BUSINESS PLAN**

GOVERNANCE and ACCOUNTABILITY		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
2.1 Develop and implement effective business planning arrangements.	Publish the agreed 2019/20 Business Plan during the first week in April 2019.	Compliance with all statutory and business requirements.
	Deliver the Business Plan and monitor and report progress quarterly.	
	Schedule a Business Planning event during the 2 nd quarter to consider priorities to review the 2015-20 Strategic Framework and inform drafting and development of a 2020/21: Business Plan; Risk Register; and Learning and Development Plan. Ensure agreed 2020/21 business planning documents are ready for publication in April 2020.	
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, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, Equality, Disability and Diversity and Health and Safety duties and 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
2019/20 BUSINESS PLAN**

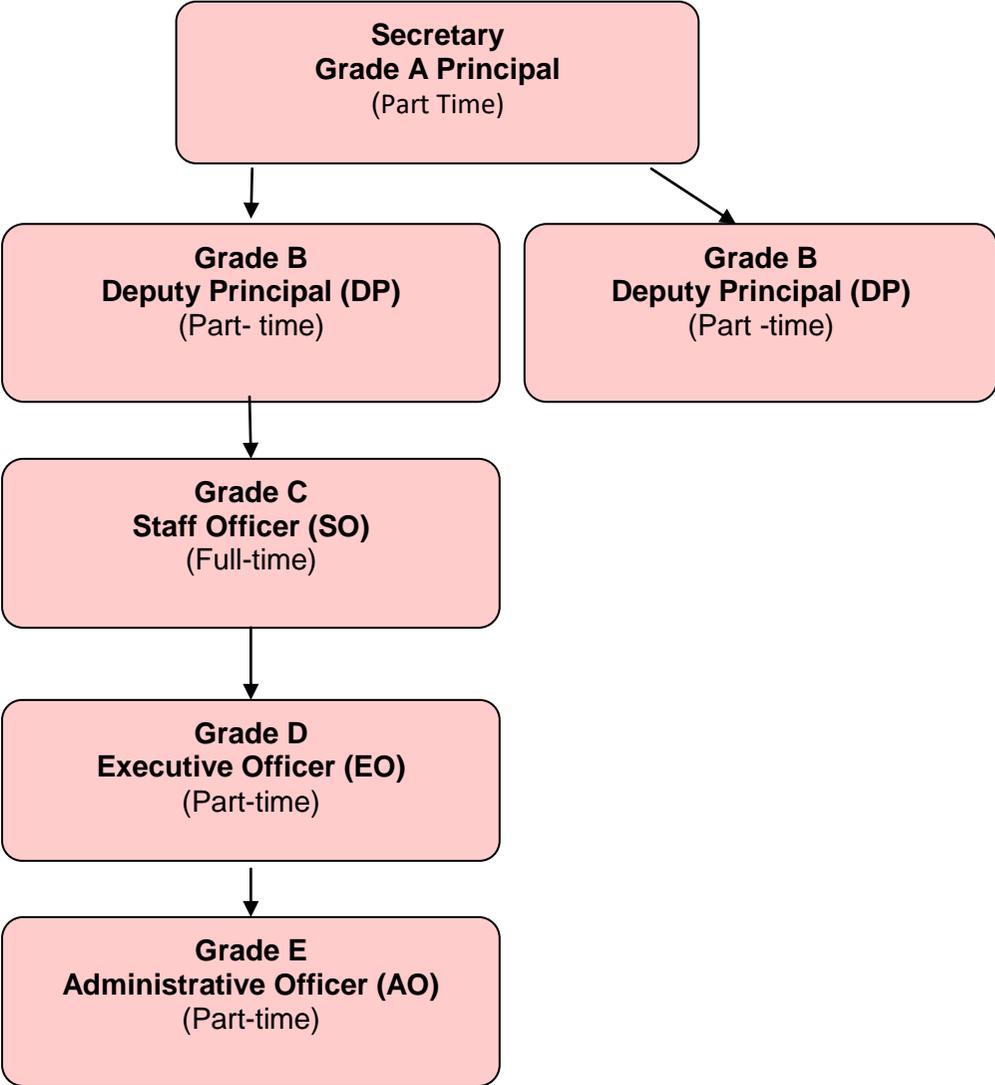
PEOPLE		
TARGET	ACTION	OUTCOMES
3.1 Put in place arrangements to assist effective succession planning for the appointment of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat.	Ensure staffing levels are adequate to discharge the functions of the Commissioners. Identify when vacancies are likely to arise and liaise with NIO with regard to replacements.	Effective delivery of Commissioners' responsibilities and the Business Plan
3.2 Deliver effective strategic leadership and performance management.	Ensure that the Chair carries 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. Agree, implement and monitor quarterly the learning and development plan.	Appropriate learning and development to meet business and professional needs

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
2019/20 BUSINESS PLAN**

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 and HMT requirements as an ALB.
4.2 Ensure the allocated resources effectively support the discharge of Commissioners' functions.	Monitor current and future resource requirements and ensure efficiency targets set by NIO are achieved within agreed timescales.	Best use of allocated resources and value for money.
	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.	

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

It is envisaged that the Secretariat support available to Commissioners during 2019/20 will be as follows:



Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
2019/20 BUSINESS PLAN

BUDGET ALLOCATION:

ITEM	ALLOCATION 2019/20
Commissioners' Fees	£31k
Staff	£207.5k
Training	£0.75k
Accommodation & Overheads	£23.25k
TOTAL	£262.5k