

# The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

The Commissioner for Public Appointments, regulates and monitors ministerial appointments to a number of public bodies. Government departments are required to follow the Commissioner's Code of Practice and detailed guidance when processing these public appointments.

The Commissioner is also charged with the responsibility for investigating complaints. The Commissioner will examine the process used to make an appointment or the manner in which an application for appointment was handled. The Commissioner will only investigate reasons for non-selection if they feel that the Code has been breached. The Commissioner does not investigate how a body is run or the actions of its members.

If you feel you have reason to complain you should first direct your concerns to the relevant department. If after receiving a comprehensive response you are still concerned, you can write to the Commissioner at the address below.

Departments are required to provide the Commissioner with a detailed report on all complaints received by them.

If you would like more information on either the role of the Commissioner or the appointment process, please contact this office:

The Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Appointments for  
Northern Ireland  
Room A5.34  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SR

Telephone: 028 9052 8187  
Facsimile: 028 9052 8237  
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Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Appointments  
for Northern Ireland

# The Code of Practice for Public Appointments

## **The Principles**

The Code of Practice covers all ministerial appointments to the boards of executive non-departmental public bodies and health bodies.

## **Ministerial Responsibility**

The ultimate responsibility for appointments rests with Ministers.

## **Merit**

All public appointments should be governed by the overriding principle of selection based on merit, by the well-informed choice of individuals who, through their abilities, experience and qualities, match the needs of the public bodies in question.

## **Independent Scrutiny**

No appointment shall take place without first being scrutinised by an independent panel or by a group including membership independent of the department filling the post.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Departments should sustain programmes to promote and deliver the principles of equal opportunities.

## **Probity**

Board members must be committed to the principles and values of public service and perform their duties with integrity.

## **Openness and Transparency**

The principles of open Government must be applied to the appointments process, its working must be transparent and information must be provided about appointments made.

## **Proportionality**

The appointments procedures need to be subject to the principles of “proportionality”, that is they should be appropriate for the nature of the post and the size and weight of its responsibilities.