



**Commissioner for Public Appointments
for Northern Ireland**

Annual Report

2007-2008



FELICITY HUSTON
Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

The Commissioner's Foreword

I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the year 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.

As this report was finalised I was asked by the First and deputy First Ministers to continue for a further 3 year period as Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. I am delighted to accept this offer as I believe this will enable me to see through some important elements of work which will lead to improved practice in Public Appointments in Northern Ireland.

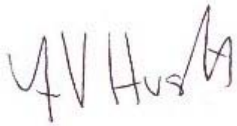
This has been both a very challenging and very productive year during which my team and I have made progress on several key matters.

I wish to express my thanks to the NI Executive, in particular the First and deputy First Ministers, as well as the Committee of the First and deputy First Minister for listening to me and helping me to resource my Office. I now have a team of four permanent staff; a Policy Advisor, an Auditor, an Office Manager and an Administrative Officer. This will help me to develop the regulation of Ministerial appointments and give assurance to both Ministers and the public that these appointments are being managed fairly through an open and transparent system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous First Minister, Dr Paisley, for all of his support and welcome our new First Minister Mr Peter Robinson.

I also welcome and look forward to working with the new Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Mr Bruce Robinson. There are many excellent staff in the NICS involved in the Public Appointments process and I hope to work with Mr Robinson on some of the ideas, achievements and progress that have been made.

Again I would like to thank the Comptroller and Auditor General John Dowdall, and his staff, for all their assistance during the past year. This support has been invaluable in enabling me to carry out my role as Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'FV Huston'.

Felicity Huston
Commissioner

Public Appointments – Time for Change

I intend to produce a new Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments. My plan is to have the new Code ready for implementation in 2009 – 2010.

In my last Annual Report I referred to the Code of Practice and amendments I made to the Code to make it more user friendly. So why do we need more changes?

The current Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland is a hybrid based on the Code of Practice in GB. It sets out the regulatory framework for the public appointments process. It aims to provide departments with a clear and concise guide to ensure a fair, open and transparent appointments process. A process that both commands public confidence and produces a quality outcome. I do not believe that the current Code meets these objectives as well as it should.

My aim is to produce a Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments that is 'fit for purpose', reflective of the needs of the new political climate in Northern Ireland. A Code that will extend the reach of the selection process to reflect the diversity of people, experience and skills in Northern Ireland.

So how will this be achieved?

Developments so far

I held a workshop in November 2007 to review the current code and look at suggestions for the new one. This workshop was attended by 61 people including the OCPANI Assessors, representatives from 10 of the 11 Civil Service departments, the NIO and representatives from interested organisations. The

discussions at the workshops were open and constructive and a number of key themes emerged including:

- **The need for plain English throughout, together with a simpler format.**
- **The need for diversity to be rigorously addressed in the new Code.**
- **The need for clear, unambiguous commitment from the NICS to the new Code.**
- **The need for Ministerial support for the project and its outcome.**

We require a fundamental change in selection methods to ensure that personal qualities, commitment and potential are also tested during the process. The NICS use the competency based selection system. This limits individuals to the experiences they already have, preventing any exploration of potential. Such a method favours those who are already part of 'the system' and as such is a block on diversity.

I have taken these themes and ideas, amongst others, and a lot of work has continued since the November workshops.

In order to enable 'buy in' to the process I have set up a working group to develop the new Code. This group includes NICS public appointments staff and other experienced key players from the public appointments sector. The members are Martina Hanna and Denise Phillips (OCPA NI), Michael Ferguson (OFMDFM CAU), Catherine Synnott (DETI), Lynne Taylor (DEL), Philip Robinson (OCPA NI Assessor), Delia Van Der Lenden (OCPA NI Assessor), Paddie Blaney (OCPA NI Assessor), Eileen Mullan (Belfast Metropolitan College) and Julie Erskine a Get On Board student and 'customer' of the appointments process.

I have also set up a Steering Group who will have final sign off on the new Code of Practice. The Steering Group consists of myself as 'Senior Responsible Owner' of this project, Professor Rick Wilford and Dr Sydney Elliott from the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queens University

Belfast, Mr Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner - Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Mrs. Deirdre Kenny, Director of Corporate Services – Office of the First and deputy First Ministers.

I am delighted that these individuals have agreed to assist me in developing this Code which will govern how Ministerial public appointments processes are managed.

Work is now progressing well and next year's report will deal with the new Code and its implementation.

OCPA NI Team



Martina Hanna joined OCPA NI in May 2006 and works directly to the Commissioner as her Policy Advisor. Prior to this, Martina spent a number of years with the Department for Social Development (DSD) as a Development Manager in Belfast Regeneration Office South and East team before moving to the DSD, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.



David Best is the Commissioner's Auditor and Complaints Investigator. He was formerly a Fraud Investigating Officer in the Department of Health and Social Services and spent a number of years as a Welfare Officer before becoming Manager of the Staff Care Unit in the Social Security Agency. David joined OCPA NI in June 2008 from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety where he was Head of the Public Appointments Unit for three years.



Andrew Patterson is the OCPA NI Office Manger and is responsible for the day to day running of the Office. He joined OCPA NI in August 2008 having previously worked in the Private Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers. Prior to this Andrew was employed in the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment from 2000 to 2006.



Valerie Parkinson is a Senior Personal Secretary with the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. She joined the Department in 1998, as PS to the then Deputy First Minister's Special Adviser. During her Civil Service career she has worked for a number of Senior Civil Servants and is currently on loan to the Commissioner.



Denise Phillips provides administrative support to the Commissioner, the Policy Advisor and the Auditor. Since joining the Civil Service in June 2001 she has worked in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Ministers' Economic Policy Unit and Reinvestment and Reform Initiative Team. Denise moved to North Belfast Community Action Unit in November 2004 until joining OCPA NI in October 2006.

Review of the Year

Commissioners for Victims and Survivors

The most notable appointment(s) in 2007/08 were probably those for the Commissioner(s) for Victims and Survivors.

I have completed my audit report of this competition. Given the current judicial review, I believe it would be inappropriate to publish while the court is still considering the matter.

I must however express my deep disappointment at the leaking of information about candidates throughout the process.

Northern Ireland is a small place and rumours of 'who's getting what' abound. However I understand that in this competition some candidates heard the outcome of their application directly from the press before the department had been in contact with them! I was approached in venues as diverse as my local supermarket and an airport lounge with the names of successful candidates, well before such names had been announced.

This is the only occasion since I became Commissioner in 2005 that individuals' details have been so comprehensively leaked and become the source of gossip and prolonged press speculation.

In general all departments guard such information with great care. This is perhaps why the Victims Commissioner(s) case is so remarkable.

It is unacceptable for such leaks of personal information to occur. Individuals must be able to apply for a public appointment and know that they will be treated with dignity and confidentiality. One wonders how those who leaked would feel if

similar information about their job applications etc was shared with all and sundry?

My Code of Practice makes it clear that all applicants are entitled to confidentiality. Only at the time of appointment are names to be made public.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly we have not received any formal complaints about this competition.

Regulated and Monitored Competitions

In 2007/08 we allocated a total of 43 OCPA NI Assessors to work on a variety of competitions with NI Departments and the NIO (on behalf of OCPA GB) –listed below. The number of competitions run in 2007/08 is lower than in 2006/07. This is mainly due to the implications of the Review of Public Administration and the reviews being carried out by Ministers. This produced a large number of requests for extensions (123 positions in 27 Boards). These extensions etc enabled Boards to continue whilst their fates are being decided by Ministers. Separate competitions would have been uneconomic and inappropriate in a situation where a Board had a limited life of 6 or 12 months.

Public Appointment Competitions 2007/08

Dept	Competition	Reg/Mon/ TPO
DARD	Livestock & Meat Commissioner for NI	Regulated
DARD	NI Fisheries Harbour Authority	Regulated
DCAL	Sports Council for NI	Regulated
DCAL	NI Library Authority Board	Regulated
DCAL	National Museums NI	Regulated
DEL	Labour Relations Agency (LRA)	Regulated
DEL	Construction Industry Training Board	Regulated
DETI	NI General Consumer Council	Regulated
DETI	NI Tourist Board	Regulated
DETI	Invest NI	Regulated
DETI	Health & Safety Executive NI	Regulated
DETI	NI General Consumer Council	Regulated
DHSSPS	NI Ambulance Service	Regulated
DHSSPS	Mental Health Commission for NI	Regulated
DRD	NI Transport Holding Company	Regulated
DSD	NI Housing Executive	Regulated
OFMDFM	Commissioner for Victims and Survivors NI	Regulated
OFMDFM	Strategic Investment Board (SIB)	Regulated
DCAL	NI Screen	Monitored
DEL	FE College - Northern Region	Monitored
DEL	Industrial Court	Monitored
DOE	Council for Nature Conservation & the Countryside	Monitored
DOE	The Historic Monuments Council	Monitored
DRD	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Monitored
DRD	NI Water Board	Monitored
OFMDFM	Planning Appeals & Water Appeals Commission	Monitored
DETI	NI Science Park	TPO
DHSSPS	Local Commissioning Groups	TPO
OFMDFM	Community Relations Council	TPO

Northern Ireland Office/Court Service Public Appointment Competitions

07/08

	Competition	
NI Court Service	NI Legal Services Commission	OCPA GB Reg
NI Court Service	NI Judicial Appointments Commission	OCPA GB Reg
NIO	Human Rights Commission	OCPA GB Reg
NIO	NI Equality Commission	OCPA GB Reg
NIO	Parades Commission	OCPA GB Reg
NIO	Criminal Justice NI	OCPA GB Reg
NIO Police Division	RUC GC Foundation Trustee Appointments	OCPA GB Reg

We also provided advice and support to both departments and assessors regarding a great many of these appointments’.

The advice and support offered to all 11 departments has been vital in ensuring that the process results in a good outcome through an open, transparent and fair process. Advice is given on a daily basis. This area of our work takes up a large part of our time but is less obvious than the direct regulation of specific competitions.

The following are some examples of advice and guidance offered:

- Can all the female applicants for a particular public appointment be interviewed, even though none of them met the criteria for appointment? – short answer NO. Longer answer – next time look at the criteria to ensure they are applicable, appropriate and do not produce this unfortunate outcome.

- How to attract applicants to a competition which has 'failed' i.e. it has produced insufficient quality candidates to provide the Minister with a choice? Where should adverts be placed; can the wording be improved; how do we involve the local media in the campaign to attract applicants; are the criteria as described a barrier to diversity and applications in general?
- How to develop and write criteria to ensure a board has Northern Ireland representation, whilst still providing the necessary mix of skills and experience to enable the board to function properly?
- Advice on responding to a letter from an elected representative on behalf of one of his constituents, about the manner in which a competition had been run.
- How does a selection panel deal with conflicts of interest when the board itself is set up with representation from trade and industry organisations—the same organisations which fund the work of that board?

OCPA NI Assessor Training

The workshop I held in November 2007 was combined with formal training and team building for my team of Assessors.

The training topic was 'Equality' and the training was provided by the Equality Rights and Social Needs Division of OFMDFM. I would like to thank OFMDFM personnel, for providing this training.

The term of my current team of Assessors is due to expire at the end of September 2009. As part of the Code revision the role of the Assessor is being re-evaluated and I expect the next cadre to function in a very different way from now.

Once the role has been finalised I intend to hold an open public competition to recruit new OCPANI Assessors.

If anyone is interested in receiving details of this competition please email your contact details to info@ocpani.gov.uk and my team will keep you posted regarding developments.

Full details of all the current team of OCPA NI Assessors can be found on our website at:

www.ocpani.gov.uk/our-role/ocpa-ni-assessors

Third Party Organisations (TPO's)

TPO appointments are made, not by Ministers, but by Civil Servants. Until recently such appointments were subject to no form of regulation whatsoever. As a result of a Westminster PAC recommendation such appointments are to be overseen by me.

Progress on this matter has been slow. A more exhaustive list of bodies is being pulled together by DFP and some advice for the departments managing these appointments has been drawn up. In the meantime my office has overseen 3 rounds of TPO appointments during this reporting year. My intention is to audit at least one of these competitions.

OFMDFM Committee

During 2006/07 I met with the OFMDFM Committee to present my views on the challenges facing my Office, but more importantly those facing the public appointment process as administered by the NICS. Both sessions have been lively – a full and frank exchange of views took place.

I welcome the Committee's interest in my work. OFMDFM has responsibility for 'policy' on public appointments. The Committee's interest has I believe ensured better communication with OFMDFM staff. It may eventually lead to the changes required for my Office to carry out its role properly.

Review of OCPA NI Office and Resources

In July 2006 I made a request to the Head of the NICS for additional resources. Some 24 months later DFP's Delivery and Innovation Division completed its report. This report confirmed that I had insufficient staff and that those I had were working under great pressure. I now have a Policy Advisor, an Auditor, an Office Manager and an Administrative Officer. After 24 months of deliberation there is a net increase of 1 new clerical member of staff. However even this new establishment is subject to review by OFMDFM.

I would like to thank my team in OCPA NI for all of their efforts over the long period of time during which they performed with insufficient staff. I appreciate the temporary clerical assistance provided by OFMDFM. I also am very grateful for the help given to me by the NIAO. Without NIAO assistance I would not have been able to carry out my audit duties.

Whilst I am appreciative of the additional staff, my team is still located on the 5th Floor of Castle Buildings in the Stormont Estate and my office is still sponsored and funded directly by OFMDFM. Even our computer files are held on an OFMDFM system. The problems regarding such arrangements have been recognised by politicians and stakeholders alike. OFMDFM runs and manages a range of Ministerial Public Appointments including Victim and Survivors Commissioner(s) and Children and Young Peoples Commissioner. I regulate these appointments through my legislative remit. There is a clear conflict in my regulating the work of a department that in turn funds and sponsors my office. In a nutshell, OCPA NI is not independent of the department it is charged with regulating. Although this conflict of interest is as clear as the nose on one's face

to everyone else, the NICS struggles to recognise it, let alone resolve the problem.

I have been pushing the issue for more independent status and independent location and I will continue the struggle.

The Key areas of work that I have responsibility for are listed at Annex 3.

Liaison with the Commissioners of England and Scotland

I met formally with my colleagues, Janet Gaymer, the Public Appointments Commissioner for England and Wales, OCPA, and Karen Carlton, The Public Appointments Commissioner for Scotland, OCPAS in June and November 2007. Whilst there is ongoing liaison between our offices it has proved very beneficial for us to meet. These latest meetings have resulted in a new concordat between our three offices.

We have continued to share information regarding advice on best practice offered to departments. Items discussed, amongst other things, have been:-

- OCPAS Equal Opportunities strategy.
- The role of our team of independent Assessors in Public Appointments.
- The level of independence and statutory remit of each of the Public Appointment Commissioner's offices.
- The measures that we need to consider should policing and justice matters be devolved to the NI Assembly – Currently appointments sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Court Service are regulated by Janet Gaymer the Commissioner for England and Wales.
- Legal precedents &
- Impact of Public Accounts Committee hearings and reports.

Diversity on Public Bodies

I have been very vexed, since taking up my appointment as Commissioner, over the lack of progress in relation to the recommendations developed by the short-term working group on diversity in public appointments. These recommendations were published in July 2005. A copy can be accessed through the OCPA NI Website at:

www.ocpani.gov.uk/working-group-diversity

Diversity was one of the themes emerging from the consultation workshop held in November 2007. It has also been raised with me by a variety of stakeholders. It appears to me that there is a need to tackle the diversity issue but no mechanism to do so.

I reported last year that the only way forward is for me as Commissioner to amend my Code of Practice to force government departments to make diversity an issue to be dealt with in their appointments processes.

This commitment is now being followed through and has been highlighted in the Terms of Reference for my new Code of Practice.

“Get on Board” – Preparing People for Public Life



I have made previous references to and continue to support fully the **“Get On Board”** course run by the Belfast Metropolitan College.

This course is a strong tool in addressing the diversity challenge facing us.

I have been advised by DEL that ‘Get on Board’ has now been placed on the department’s Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ). This should ensure that the course is available to people from all walks of life.

If you are interested in participating on this course details can be found on the Institute website at the following address:

[Access further information on 'Get on Board' course](#)

In October 2007 I ran an event co-hosted by Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) to celebrate the success of the course and its participants. Over 25% of them are now serving on some sort of public body.

We were delighted that Junior Minister Paisley attended and said

“Taking up a public appointment means playing a part in helping to influence and shape government policy. It means managing the delivery of services to the public and carrying out valuable and necessary regulatory functions.

It is important that individuals from a wide range of backgrounds take up public appointments so that the Boards of our public bodies reflect the rich diversity of our society. It also helps them to better understand the needs of the communities they serve.

Involving individuals from all walks of life in the running of public bodies has a number of advantages. It provides greater accountability and brings a wider range of skills and experiences into play.

Ultimately it helps to support the democratic process by allowing ordinary people the opportunity to play an important and constructive role in the process of local, regional and even on occasion national government.

Playing a part in public life requires dedication and commitment.

Participating in the ‘Get on Board’ course is an important first step; it demonstrates your willingness to get involved”.



Above: Junior Minister Paisley speaking at the Get on Board 'Recognition of Achievement' Event held jointly by BMC and OCPA NI




(L-R) Junior Minister Paisley, Get on Board Student Deirdre Hanna and the Commissioner

The course has also been run outside Belfast. To date over 30 women have successfully completed the Get On Board training through the Northern Ireland Rural Women's network, who sponsored 2 courses; one in Cookstown and one in Ballyclare. Feedback from participants has been very positive. NIRWN are funding a further 20 places in the autumn /spring semester. This course will be aimed at rural women who are interested in serving on public bodies throughout Northern Ireland. The training will provide women with a clear understanding of what it takes to be successful both during the appointments process and whilst serving on a Board.

The long term future of this course remains uncertain. I understand that Belfast Met have requested funding of c.£130,000 over 3 years from DEL to ensure the course continues and develops to reach the communities that remain under-represented on public bodies. We are talking around £43,000 per annum. This is a drop in the ocean when compared with the annual DEL budget – £753.3m.

Communication

During the year I was invited to speak at several different events. These gave me an opportunity to talk about my work as Commissioner and what public bodies are all about. Some of these events included:

- Women into Politics training event June 2007
- Women Mean Business September 2007
- NIRWN – World Rural Women's' Day October 2007
[Link to Report from Rural Women's Day Conference](#) 
- Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) Graduation – November 2007



(L-R) The Commissioner, Brian Turtle from BMC and Noel Thompson at the BMC Graduation November 2007

- (Below) Reception, hosted by President McAleese at her residence in Dublin, attended by Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen from across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. The purpose of the reception was to recognise the work of the Commissioners and Ombudsmen at building bridges across jurisdictions in the important area of information and human rights.



Complaints

I have a duty to investigate complaints and regard an easily accessible complaints system as a fundamental part of an open and transparent appointments process.

Somewhat surprisingly we received no formal complaints in 2007/08. However in the year 2008/09 we have already received five

What Lies Ahead

The following is a list of the main issues for the 2008/09 year with a brief summary of actions proposed.

OCPA NI Annual Report

1. To produce the narrative section of my 13th Annual Report for issue by the end of October 2008. Further Annual Reports will focus more closely, as per my legislation, on departmental compliance with the principle of selection on merit.

Audit 2007/08

1. Analyse the impact of the new approach to the Audit Report by December 2008.
2. To ensure that the annual audit of appointments processes is carried out effectively and in line with the Commissioner's new audit policy and also includes a selection of appointments made to TPO's.
3. To ensure that Performance Assessments are included in the audit for those departments that have extended the terms of appointees.
4. Revisit the 06/07 audit recommendations, as far as practicable.

Departmental Advice

1. Provide appropriate and timely advice to queries raised by departments and other sources.

Complaints

1. To ensure that complaints about appointments processes are investigated according to the process set out in the Code of Practice.

OCPA NI Code of Practice

1. To develop a new Code of Practice suitable for the Ministers in the NI Executive.

OCPA NI Office Review

1. To manage the DID Report and Recommendations and to implement the outcomes in collaboration with CAU.
2. To continue to lobby for independent status of OCPA NI including resources and location.

Third Party Organisations

1. To ensure that the list supplied by DFP is the complete and final list.
2. To assist DFP in finalising the guidance for departmental management of the TPO's appointment process.

OCPA NI Assessors

1. To administer the allocation of OCPA NI Assessors (OA's) to departments.
2. To ensure that OA's are kept informed of developments in the public appointments field.
3. To organise training sessions and lunchtime seminars.
4. To commence and follow through on the recruitment drive for the new team of OCPA NI Assessors.
5. Assessors to be trained re TPO's as soon as the updated list and guidance is in place.

Prerogative Order

1. To manage the outcome of this when the Prerogative Order is signed including the issue of ad hoc and interim Ministerial appointments.

Preparing People for Public Service

1. Continue to support the Get on Board Course via the departments and publicly.

Liaison with the Commissioners in England and Scotland

1. Provide input and support to the joint Commissioners meetings.

OCPA NI Website

1. To ensure that the website is maintained efficiently and updated regularly.
2. Staff to have effective training to enable the website to be managed by OCPA NI.

Liaison with Ministers, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Northern Ireland Civil Service and other key Stakeholders

1. To maintain strong working links with the Ministers, their advisors and the Assembly. To ensure updates regarding key OCPA NI issues are related to the Ministers and their advisors as appropriate and continue our work with MLAs.
2. **NICS** – to maintain strong working relationships with the Head of the NI Civil Service and his team of Permanent Secretaries as well as our departmental contacts.
3. **Key Stakeholders** – to develop and maintain relationships with Key Stakeholders and engage as appropriate in relation to OCPA NI matters.

Annex 1

Profile of Felicity Huston


Felicity is a director of Huston Ltd, Tax Consultants in Belfast - a practice she runs jointly with her husband Adrian.

Before moving to the private sector, she was a HM Inspector of Taxes, having joined the service as a Direct Entrant Inspector. During her time in the Revenue, she specialised in the investigation of tax fraud and evasion.

Felicity has a wide and varied experience of public life. For many years she has had a particular interest in Consumer Issues; serving on:

- The Personal Investment Authority's Consumer Panel in London
- The Post Office Users Council for Northern Ireland
- The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland – as deputy Chairman
- Northern Ireland Consumer Committee for Electricity – as Chairman

In May 2000, she was appointed by the Prime Minister to be an Independent Member of the House of Lords Appointments Commission. The Commission is tasked with recommending individuals for appointment to the Cross-benches of the Upper House and with vetting the nominations made by party-political leaders. The Commission is made up of three Independent Members and three political Peers – Lord Hurd, Lord Dholakia and Baroness Dean. It is chaired by the well known businessman Lord Stevenson.

- [Access further information on the House of Lords Appointments Commission](#) 


- [Access the House of Lords Appointments Commission Annual Report 07/08 \(PDF 383 KB\)](#) 

As part of her portfolio of public appointments, she also served as a General Commissioner for Income Tax and represented Northern Ireland on the National Advisory Body.

Felicity served on the Board of Clifton House – Belfast Charitable Society (BCS), for almost 10 years and was, until November 2005, its Honorary Treasurer. During this period, BCS has celebrated its 250th anniversary, built a state-of-the-art nursing home for 100 residents at Carlisle Circus and renovated and developed the historic Clifton House in partnership with BIH housing association. Felicity resigned from the Board of Clifton House in line with her own policy that Board members should not serve more than ten years.

Her interest in energy matters led to her becoming a non-executive director of Northern Ireland Energy Holdings Ltd and its associated companies, including Moyle Financing PLC. NIEH is a company limited by guarantee, set up in the interests of Northern Ireland energy consumers. Felicity is chairman of the company's audit committee.

Felicity was brought up in Portadown and Belfast. Her husband Adrian is a farmer's son from Co Londonderry, so she has wide experience of life in rural and metropolitan Northern Ireland. She was educated in Northern Ireland – being one of the few women who can claim to be an Old Campbellian - before attending Nottingham University, where she graduated with a BA Hons in Politics.

Given her life long interest in animal welfare, Felicity is delighted to be a trustee of [Assisi Animal Sanctuary](#)  in Newtownards.

Away from work Felicity has two sons. Her interests revolve around feeding her family and pets.

Annex 2

Abbreviations used in this report

The following abbreviations are used in this Report:

DARD	Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department of Employment & Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
DOE	Department of the Environment
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
NIAO	The Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	The Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIO	The Northern Ireland Office
TPO	Third Party Organisation

Annex 3

Remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

- To oversee and regulate Ministerial Public Appointment competitions.
- To manage and train team of OCPA NI Assessors.
- To promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the procedures for making public appointments.
- To prescribe and publish a code of practice on the interpretation and application by departments of the principle of selection on merit for public appointments and to adopt and publish from time to time additional guidance to departments.
- To carry out an audit to review policies and practices of departments in making public appointments to establish whether the OCPA NI Code of Practice is being observed.
- To conduct inquiries into policies and practices pursued by a department in relation to public appointments.
- To manage and investigate complaints related to appointment procedures that concern an individual's experience as an applicant, the way a department has handled an appointments process or a challenge to the appointment of the successful candidate.
- To offer advice to Ministers and departments when requested on various public appointment issues.