

## **Audit Summary of Reappointments made by Departments 2007- 2008**

### **Department of Health and Social Services (DHSSPS)**

DHSSPS made one re-appointment during the audit period. This related to the re-appointment of the Chair to the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency for a second term.

The Department provided documentary evidence of the performance assessment process completed prior to re-appointment. A performance assessment form was completed by the Department's Chief Social Services Officer and countersigned by the Permanent Secretary. This outlined the Chair's performance against four strategic objectives.

The Ministerial submission recommended re-appointment for a further four year term and the Minister's agreement was clearly documented.

A press release was issued. This contained the necessary requirements of the Code. There was also evidence that the Department had contacted the appointee prior to the issue of the press release to update the information held and confirm that he had not been involved in any political activity during the previous five years.

A copy of the press release was sent to OCPA NI.

### **Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)**

DARD made two re-appointments during the audit period. These related to the re-appointment of two members to the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority for a second term.

The Department provided documentary evidence that a performance assessment had been completed for both members prior to re-appointment.

This highlighted their attendance record at Board and Sub Committee/Working Group meetings.

Performance assessments were completed by the Chair who assessed both members against 6 main criteria and provided brief comments to support her assessment. The overall assessment of each member was assessed as “Very Good” and re-appointment was recommended.

It was good to note that the assessment form provided opportunity for the Chair to comment on whether there had been any instances of failure to adhere to the Principles of Public Life or Codes of Conduct and Accountability.

The Ministerial submission recommended that both members be re-appointed for a further term and the Minister’s agreement was clearly documented.

The Department issued a press release announcing the appointments. It failed to include some of the information required by the Code of Practice i.e. details of remuneration, any other Ministerial appointments held and the requisite statements about the process.

The Department failed to provide OCPA NI with a copy of the press release as required by the Code.

### **Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)**

DEL made two re-appointments to the Labour Relations Agency. Both members were re-appointed for a second term.

The Department provided documentary evidence of the performance assessment process completed prior to re-appointment. Both members completed a self assessment form highlighting performance during the reporting period and the Chair outlined the contribution made against a

number of criteria. The Chair recommended both members for re-appointment.

The assessment form also provided opportunity for the Chair to comment on whether there had been any instances of failure to adhere to the Principles of Public Life or Codes of Conduct and Accountability and if any conflicts of interest had been identified.

The Ministerial submission recommended re-appointment for a further three year term and the Minister's agreement was clearly documented.

The Department issued a press release announcing the re-appointments. This contained the vast majority of the information required by the Code. It should however include a list of other Ministerial appointments held and any remuneration received. If no other Ministerial appointments are held, this should be clearly stated.

The press release failed to state that one appointee held no other Ministerial appointments and whilst it did state that the other appointee was a member of the CCEA Council, it failed to include that she received travel and subsistence expenses for this post.

It also stated that no political activity was declared by either appointee, but it is not clear how this information was obtained.

The Department failed to provide OCPA NI with a copy of the press release as required by the Code.

### **Department of Social Development (DSD)**

DSD re-appointed the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, each for a second term.

The Department provided documentary evidence of the annual performance assessments that had been completed. In the case of the Chair, the relevant Deputy Secretary completed the performance assessment, whilst the Chair himself completed the assessment of the Vice Chair.

The Chair was assessed against three main criteria with the Deputy Secretary stating that re-appointment was “Highly Desirable”. The Vice Chair completed a thorough self assessment of her performance during the reporting period with the Chair providing general summary comments. Overall the Chair assessed her as “Excellent in every respect” and stated that re-appointment was “Highly Desirable”.

The Ministerial submission recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair should both be re-appointed for a five year term. The Minister’s agreement was clearly documented.

The Department issued a press release to announce the re-appointments. It failed to include most of the information required by the Code i.e. a brief summary of the appointee’s career/experience; the remuneration for the posts (Chair - £39,840 per annum, Vice Chair - £15,835 per annum); a list of other Ministerial appointments held; the statement regarding merit and political activity; and any reference to whether either appointee had declared political activity, or not.

A copy of the press release was sent to OCPA NI.

### **Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)**

DCAL re-appointed the Chair and eight members to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, each for a second term.

The Department provided documentary evidence of the annual performance assessments that had been completed. The Chair’s appraisal took the form of a self assessment against a number of key objectives and the review was

completed by the relevant Deputy Secretary, whilst the Chair herself completed assessments for the eight members.

Members were assessed against a number of criteria. Each performance was rated as very satisfactory with the member being deemed suitable for re-appointment.

The Ministerial submission recommended that the Chair and members be re-appointed for a second term. The Minister's agreement was clearly documented.

The Department issued a joint press release announcing the re-appointment of the Chair and eight members and the appointment of a new Vice Chair and five members. It failed to include most of the information required by the Code relating to re-appointments i.e. a brief summary of the appointee's career/experience; how long the appointments were for; the amount paid to the Chair (£10,000 per annum); a list of other Ministerial appointments held – if none this should have been clearly stated; and details of any declared political activity.

A copy of the press release was sent to OCPA NI.