



Felicity Huston
Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

Press Release

Embargoed until 6.00 am Monday 3rd November.

Independent Regulator demands independent office

The Public Appointments' Watchdog has criticised the location of her office. Felicity Huston Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Public Appointments said "My position as an independent regulator of public appointments is compromised. My office is housed in the middle of the civil servants I regulate. My budget is controlled by a department I oversee. I cannot appoint my own staff.

Even my computer files are held on a central civil service system. This unacceptable situation has been recognised by politicians and stake holders alike. However the Northern Ireland Civil Service appears unable to either see or address the problem."

The Commissioner has today published her 13th Annual Report detailing the work of her Office during the year 2007/08. <http://www.ocpani.gov.uk/index/publications.htm>

Highlights include:

- The unacceptable leaks surrounding the Victims Commissioner(s).
- The New Code of Practice for 2009/10
- Praise for the Get on Board Course - the only measure taken by government to address the unrepresentative nature of our public bodies.

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Notes for editors

Felicity Huston was appointed Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland in August 2005. She is the first local to hold the post.

The Commissioner is responsible for regulating appointments to a wide range of public bodies.