

Press Release

Embargoed until 6.00 am Monday 30th November 2009.

Commissioner calls for ‘A Little Respect’

The Public Appointments Watchdog today called for ‘A little Respect’ to be shown to people applying for public appointments.

Felicity Huston Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland said; *“Many people who put themselves forward for appointment to our public bodies have a really bad experience. They are treated in an off-hand cavalier manner, often given the run around and generally made to feel unwanted. All I’m asking is for those organising these appointments to treat the public with the same respect and good manners they themselves would want. People don’t spend hours filling in those forms because they’re trying to pull a fast one, but because they have a genuine belief in public service.”*

The Commissioner added *“Over the next 6 to 12 months I will be concentrating on implementing my new Code of Practice. One of the new fundamental principles in this Code is ‘respect’. Several of the new provisions in the Code focus on changing the attitudes and practices of those managing public appointments for our Ministers. Departments must remember that applicants putting themselves forward are offering their skills, time and experience to the public appointments arena. We need these individuals to help make our public bodies reflective of the society we live in. We should encourage them, not give them the brush off.”*

The Commissioner today 30th November 2009 published her 14th Annual Report detailing the work of her Office during the year 2008/09.

It can be found at:

www.publicappointmentsni.org/index/publications

Highlights include:

- Ipsos Mori Survey March 09; 83% agree it is important that the public are informed about how appointments work. The same percentage support regulation of public appointments.
- Compliance by Departments with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments remains, at best, patchy.
- Complaints – 7 competitions investigated .

For further information please contact the Office via the details below.

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.