

The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, Claire Keatinge writes for International Women's Day the 08th March 2026.

On International Women's Day I am pleased to celebrate the contribution and achievements of women through their public appointments, and in wider public life.

It is important to recognise how important it is that public appointments are made on merit – from the widest possible pool of applicants – and that women have great skills and experience to contribute.

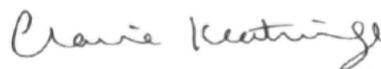
Public appointments are important in shaping the oversight, leadership and good governance of many public bodies across Northern Ireland. Delivering services in health, justice, communities, agriculture and the environment, infrastructure, culture, and equality, women contribute positively to shaping and transforming public services on which we all depend.

Making sure that women are encouraged to apply for public appointments, and have equal opportunities to contribute their experience, helps build effective and accountable organisations and create confidence.

There has been considerable positive progress in the numbers of women in public appointments, but there is still more to do.

I am committed to encouraging women from all backgrounds and with different life and career experiences to apply for public appointments, and to celebrate those women who already hold public appointments.

Fairness, openness and transparency in public appointment processes, together with active encouragement for women to apply for public appointments are vital in creating opportunities for women in public life – and in the transformation of public services to which the Northern Ireland Executive is committed.



Claire Keatinge

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)