

# ANNUAL REPORT

COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC  
APPOINTMENTS  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



**CPANI**

The Commissioner  
for Public Appointments  
Northern Ireland

Guardian of the Public  
Appointment Process

22 August 2025 – 31 March 2026

[www.publicappointmentsni.org](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org)



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# 1. Commissioner's foreword


I am pleased to present this report, and to welcome the restoration of independent public appointments regulation. I believe that independent regulation is at the heart of fair, transparent and accountable public appointments processes.

This report provides an overview of the work of CPANI during the period 22 August 2025 – 31 March 2026. This reflects the first 7 months of my part-time, 75 days a year, 5-year term of office, as Commissioner.

Regulation matters because it protects and supports the integrity, fairness, independence and effectiveness of the recruitment of public appointees to the public bodies on which we all rely. Regulation contributes to:

- good quality public services
- public trust, accountability, and confidence in devolved government
- encouraging the widest possible range of people to apply for public appointments
- promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- fair and equal treatment of individuals who apply for public appointments
- transparency and accountability
- appointment of public appointees on merit
- protection of the independence of public bodies

I was appointed as Commissioner in August 2025. This followed a significant gap, since May 2021, when there was no Commissioner in-post. This gap in



regulation, monitoring, and reporting on Ministerial public appointments to the Boards of public bodies in Northern Ireland is regrettable.


There has been an operational task in reestablishing the key regulatory functions of CPANI. Managing staff turnover, inducting and training new staff, establishing key stakeholder contacts, as well as providing services and support in line with my statutory duties to departments and to the public has been challenging.

My statutory functions are detailed in the Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended) (The 1995 Order). The 1995 Order was most recently updated in 2010, and I welcome the work that is underway through The Executive Office (TEO) to bring forward proposals for its updating.

Meetings with Ministers, Committee for TEO, public appointees, organisations and individuals who champion good governance and positive leadership, and other regulators, has been heartening. There is a widespread and genuine desire to recruit and appoint public appointees with wide ranging experience who can bring their strategic leadership, governance and independent oversight skills to the public bodies on which we all rely.

I have also heard many voices in support of attracting the widest possible range of people, with broad and diverse life and work experience, to come forward and apply to become public appointees. This is very welcome for fairness, equality and inclusion of people from all sections of society.

It is also very welcome because the wider the range of life experience, volunteering and work backgrounds that public appointees have, the better the performance and governance of public bodies is likely to be.




My appointment, and the re-establishment of the functions of my office, marks a welcome political commitment to integrity, transparency and accountability. Independent oversight of public appointments is a key safeguard that I exercise diligently, fairly, proportionally, with openness and with integrity.

It is important to rebuild trust in the regulatory process. I am committed to working constructively with Ministers and their departments, Arm's-Length Bodies, applicants, and stakeholders to ensure that public appointments are clearly understood to be open to everyone who has the skills, knowledge and expertise – and that appointments are made through a process that is fair and based on merit.

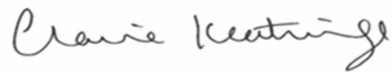
Looking forward, I will continue to strengthen compliance with my Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland; provide support and guidance to departments; investigate and audit the processes of departments in making public appointments; investigate and report on complaints by applicants for public appointments who feel that they have not been fairly treated; and undertake a programme of outreach and engagement to encourage the widest possible range of people to consider applying for public appointments.

I will continue to support confidence in, and understanding of, public appointments; and exercise my regulatory powers and duties. This will ensure that fairness, equality, inclusion and diversity are key principles throughout the recruitment processes – and that merit is the basis for every public appointment in Northern Ireland.



I would like to recognise the work of Independent Assessors, officials in the CPANI office, officials within the Central Appointments Unit of TEO, the Public Appointment Units of all departments and everyone who has applied for or who serves as a public appointee. Your work and commitment are invaluable. Thank you.

This is the start of a 5-year journey for me as Commissioner. I am pleased to be able to provide this report, and to reflect a positive and constructive beginning to my work.



Claire Keatinge

Commissioner



## 2. Executive Summary

### **Section 1 - Commissioner's Foreword**

- Re-establishing statutory functions.
- Why Public Appointments and public trust matters.
- Commissioners focus.

### **Section 2 – Executive Summary**

### **Sections 3 and 4 – Vision, Principles and Role of CPANI**

These are set out for readers.

### **Section 5 – The Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland (The Code)**

Introduction to The Code.

### **Section 6 – Independent Assessors**

- The role of the Independent Assessor and how they are managed.
- Arrangements to allow a panel of Independent Assessors to conduct the sift of applications.

### **Section 7 – Public Appointment Activity 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026**

- Departments advised CPANI of 53 public appointment positions that were advertised between 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026.
- Departments advised CPANI of 52 reappointments that were made between 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026.
- 9 terms of public appointments were extended between 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026 and notified to CPANI by departments.
- 2 requests for exceptions to The Code were supported by the Commissioner between 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026.



## **Section 8 – CPANI Activity 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026**

### **The Commissioner**

During the period covered by this report the Commissioner was contracted to work 46 days.

### **CPANI staffing**

CPANI has a team of 3 full time staff who are civil servants ‘on loan’ from TEO.

The CPANI staff team has had to be re-established with the recommencement of regulatory functions. By the end of this reporting period there was a complement of 3 staff who are working to support the Commissioner in developing and delivering the work of CPANI.

### **Independent Assessors**

CPANI recruits and supports a team of Independent Assessors. They act as independent panel members for recruitment processes for public appointments. Independent Assessors advise on The Code throughout the selection process; highlight or challenge where necessary; and act to ensure that the process is fair, and identifies appointable candidates based on merit.

Independent Assessors have been part of each Ministerial public appointment that has been made during the period of this report.



## **Advice and guidance to departments**

CPANI operates an open-door approach for departments and others seeking advice and guidance on public appointments. This approach strengthens existing contacts and relationships, builds new relationships, creates better understanding of good practice in public appointments, and ensures that potential problems with public appointment processes can be avoided or resolved at the earliest opportunity.

## **Extensions of public appointee terms of office**

Requests for extensions of public appointee terms of office have been made by departments on several occasions. Extension to public appointee terms of office have only been supported by the Commissioner in line with The Code. Extensions to public appointee terms of office will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances, and for a short period, as set out in The Code.

## **Working with departments and Public Appointment Units**

Engagement with departments and their public appointment units has been constructive and positive. Clear and open communication with CPANI staff and the Commissioner have enabled departments to obtain training and advice, seek early resolution of issues, and to have clarity on the regulatory functions of CPANI.



## **Engagement Programme**

CPANI staff have provided a programme of training and advice for public appointment practitioners and selection panels.

The Commissioner has undertaken a number of political, media, outreach and engagement activities to communicate the work of CPANI and hear the views of key stakeholders. This has been invaluable in hearing a wide range of views about public appointments, and in communicating the re-establishment of the regulatory function and key priorities of CPANI.

## **Annexes**

The Report ends with four annexes.

- I. List, provided by each department, of public bodies to which regulated and unregulated appointments were made
- II. CPANI Operating Plan 22nd August 2025 to 31st March 2026
- III. Statement of Expenditure for 2025/26
- IV. List of Independent Assessors for Public Appointments during the period 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026



## 3. Vision and Principles of CPANI

### 3.1. Vision

The CPANI vision is that all public appointments are made on merit, in a fair and transparent manner, and that opportunities to serve as a public appointee are open to the widest possible field of candidates.

### 3.2. Principles

The core principles of CPANI are those that are also expected of Ministers and their departments in making public appointments. These are:

- Merit
- Diversity
- Equality
- Openness, Transparency and Independence
- Integrity
- Proportionality
- Respect



## 4. Role of CPANI

### 4.1. Legislation

The post of Commissioner was established in 1995 by the 'Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) Order' (**The 1995 Order**) following the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Nolan Report). The legislation has been amended on three occasions, most recently in 2010, to take account of the progressive devolution of powers and duties to the Northern Ireland Executive.

CPANI has engaged with TEO to support their planned updating of The 1995 Order. This should ensure that it is modernised and is accurately reflective of the intended regulatory reach and statutory functions of CPANI. This work continues into 2026/27.

### 4.2. CPANI Mission Statement

- To regulate and monitor the policies and procedures of Ministers and their departments in making public appointments.
- To ensure that departments operate systems that allow everyone who has skills and experience to contribute and who has the motivation and integrity to serve, to put themselves forward for appointment.
- To ensure that applicants are treated, throughout the public appointment process, in a manner that is fair, considerate, consistent, open and transparent, with the goal of selecting the best candidates, on merit, for public appointment.
- To promote good governance including equality and diversity in our public bodies.




### **4.3. What does the Commissioner do?**

The Commissioner regulates and monitors the compliance of departments with the Commissioner's 'Code of Practice for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland' (The Code). She also provides advice and guidance on the process of selection for public appointments, can carry out audits and investigations into matters relating to public appointments, and can investigate complaints from applicants for public appointments who are dissatisfied with the recruitment process.

### **4.4. How does the Commissioner regulate public appointments?**

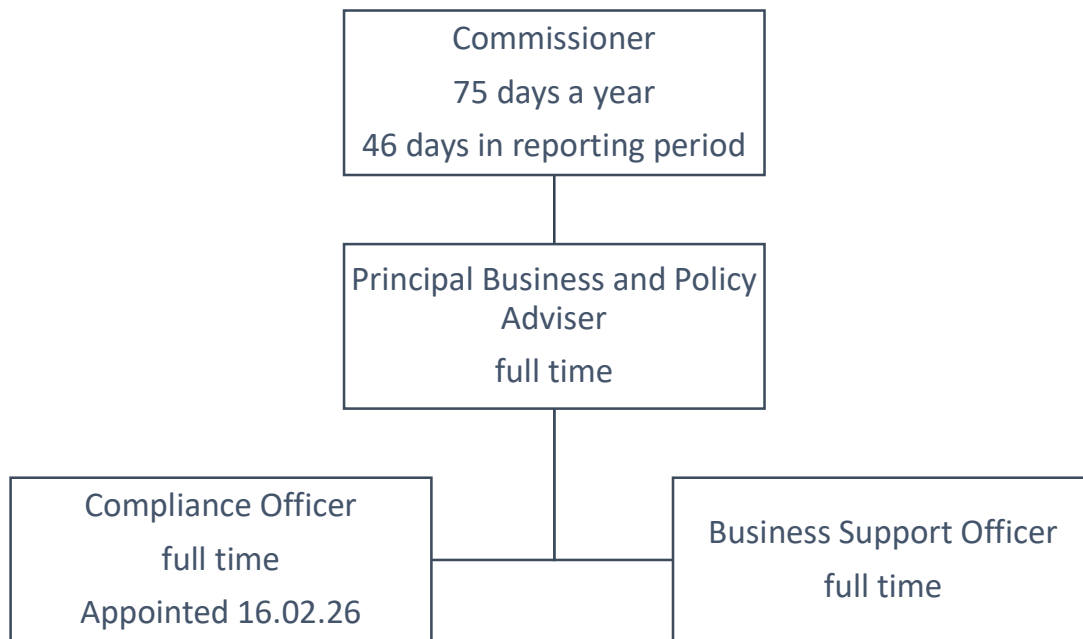
The Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (Amended 2001, 2008 and 2010) which can be viewed on the CPANI website on the 'Our Role' page, sets out formally the statutory duties of the Commissioner as:

1. The Commissioner shall in the manner she considers best calculated to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the procedures for making public appointments, exercise her functions with the object of maintaining the principle of selection on merit in relation to public appointments.
2. The Commissioner shall prescribe and publish a Code of Practice on the interpretation and application by Departments of Government on the principle of selection on merit for public appointments and shall adopt and publish from time to time such additional guidance as the Commissioner shall think fit.

- 
3. The Commissioner shall carry out an audit to review the policies and practices of departments in making public appointments to establish whether the Code of Practice referred to in paragraph 2 is being observed.
  4. The Commissioner may require any department to publish such summary information relating to selection for public appointments as she may specify in writing.
  5. The Commissioner may from time to time conduct an inquiry into the policies and practices pursued by a department in relation to any public appointment or description of any public appointment.
  6. The Commissioner shall publish an annual report which shall include;
    - a. information as to the application by departments of the principle of selection on merit in relation to public appointments and as to the observance by departments of the Code of Practice, and
    - b. an account of the audit of policies and practices of departments in making public appointments.

#### 4.5. CPANI Organisational Structure


The Commissioner operates with a team of three staff who are civil servants ‘on loan’ from TEO. In addition, a team of Independent Assessors is managed by the Commissioner. The pool of Independent Assessors has reduced since 22 August 2025 when there were 11 Independent Assessors. As of 31 March 2026, there were 7 Independent Assessors. Section 6 of this report deals with Independent Assessors.



#### 4.6. CPANI staff resourcing challenges

The staff resources available to the Commissioner since her appointment on the 22 August 2025 have fluctuated significantly.

An experienced team was moved from CPANI to other civil service roles shortly following the Commissioners appointment.



Several staff were made available to CPANI by TEO from September 2025 onwards.

Staff promotions to other civil service roles, temporary appointments, and the time taken to complete recruitment competitions created a significant turnover in staff.

The full complement of staff was in place from February 2026.



## 5. The Code of Practice

### 5.1. Introduction

**The 1995 Order** requires the Commissioner 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. CPANI regulates and monitors the work of the departments to ensure they comply with the Code.

### 5.2. Regulated and Unregulated Public Bodies

Public appointments to public bodies which are regulated by CPANI must be made in full compliance with The Code.

Public Appointments to public bodies which are not regulated by CPANI should still operate within the ‘spirit’ of the Code.

Annexe I gives the latest list of public bodies as supplied to CPANI by departments, showing which they identify as regulated and which as unregulated.



## 6. Independent Assessors

### 6.1. Role of the Independent Assessor


All public appointment competitions must include a demonstrable element of independent participation in the assessment of applicants. The Commissioner recruits, manages, supports and ensures the training of Independent Assessors (IAs). Independent Assessors are full selection panel members who provide independent scrutiny as part of the process of appointing public appointees; assist Ministers and departments to make public appointments that are open, transparent, based on merit, and command public confidence, and support compliance with The Code.

The competition for every public appointment process operating to The Code or in the 'spirit' of The Code must include an Independent Assessor. A list of the pool of Independent Assessors who worked on public appointment competitions during the period 22 Aug 2025 to 31 Mar 2026 can be found at Annexe IV of this report.

With their extensive experience, Independent Assessors have brought significant value and rigorous impartial challenge to recruitment processes to support compliance with The Code at every stage. Thanks are due to all of the Independent Assessors for their diligence and constructive approach.

### 6.2. Independent Assessor sift panel

The sift stage of a public appointment process can place a significant burden on senior departmental officials, removing them from their duties for significant periods of time, especially where there are a large number of applicants.



Considering this, departments may employ a panel of three Independent Assessors to conduct the initial sift of written applications for a public appointment. The decision to employ the Independent Assessors in this way rests with each department.

One of the three Independent Assessors will remain on the selection panel throughout the selection process and any decisions taken by the Assessors must be reviewed and agreed by the interview selection panel.

This has not been required during the period covered by this report.



## 7. Public Appointment Activity

The Commissioner's focus has been about re-establishing the functions of CPANI as a regulator.

### Activity to support appointments

CPANI has provided information, advice, guidance and support as required to departments, members of the public and individuals about all aspects of the CPANI functions.

### Independent Assessors

CPANI has managed, trained and allocated Independent Assessors to public appointment competitions run by departments throughout the reporting period.

CPANI has initiated a competition to increase the number of Independent Assessors in the 2026/27 reporting year.

### CPANI Legislation, Functions & Powers

The Commissioner has engaged with TEO to support progress on their updating of The 1995 Order. It is important that The 1995 Order is updated to modernise it and confirm the statutory duties and regulatory reach of the Commissioner.

## **7.1. Appointments and Reappointments**

During the period 22 Aug 2025 to 31 Mar 2026, CPANI was notified by departments that 105 public appointment positions were available for appointment or reappointment.

**CPANI has been notified by departments of 53 public appointment positions that were advertised during the period 22 Aug 25 to 31 Mar 2026. CPANI has received departmental press releases that showed 52 reappointments for the same period.**


## **7.2. Extensions to Public Appointments**

The Code states that a public appointment term may, in exceptional circumstances, be extended for a short period. Departments should notify the Commissioner of all proposed extensions, together with the reason for the extension. The Commissioner considers each request and advises the department on whether the extension request is in accordance with The Code. A public announcement of all public appointment extensions is required.

During the period 22 Aug 2025 to 31 Mar 2026, 9 public appointment extensions were supported by the Commissioner.

## **7.3. Exceptions to The Code**

Departments wishing to depart from any aspect of The Code must obtain written approval from the Commissioner to do so. Every case is carefully considered, and exceptions are not supported lightly.



Two exceptions were supported by the Commissioner during the period 22 Aug 2025 to 31 Mar 2026. These are set out below.

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>PUBLIC BODY</b>	<b>NATURE OF EXCEPTION</b>
DfC	NI Building Regulations Advisory Committee	Streamline application process by reducing the number of criteria required at the application stage.
DOJ	Probation Board for NI	Appointment of Deputy Chair from Board members



## 8. CPANI Activity 2025/2026

### 8.1. Introduction

CPANI continues to operate an open-door approach for departments and others seeking advice and guidance on public appointments. This approach strengthens existing relationships and ensures that potential problems with appointment processes are resolved at the earliest opportunity. It is helpful to departments and ultimately to applicants for public appointments. CPANI will continue to offer this service to all who require it.

CPANI worked with TEO to plan and develop for the relaunch of Public Appointment workshops in 2026/27. CPANI also started the process for updating the Common Guidance Handbook used by Public Appointment practitioners across departments. CPANI has also developed and conducted selection panel training as required by selection panels.

The Commissioner has undertaken a range of outreach and engagement activities.

In all these activities, the Commissioner has shared her views and vision about the importance of effective regulation of public appointments; encouraging and welcoming applications from people with broad and diverse life and work experience; equality, diversity and fairness; and ensuring that appointments are made on merit.

The Commissioner thanks all the organisations and individuals who have shared their views and ideas about public appointments with her.



Pictured left: The Commissioner with Keith Fraser, Chair of the Public Sector Chairs Forum (GB) at the Leadership & Governance conference in Belfast on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Pictured right: The programme of the Leadership & Governance conference in Belfast on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026.



Pictured left: The Commissioner with Sarah Wakfer, Board Member at USEL (Ulster Supported Employment) at the Leadership and Governance Conference in Belfast 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026.



The stakeholder engagement and media work that the Commissioner has undertaken has established positive relationships, shared views and ideas, and sought collaborative approaches to supporting the recruitment and work of public appointees.

The Commissioner has engaged with her counterparts in the other jurisdictions to share best practice and expertise.

She has begun to develop an engagement programme to encourage a wide range of people to apply for Public Appointments; to influence views on the value of good governance through public appointments; and to recognise the value that public appointees bring to the delivery of public services. This work will continue.



Pictured left: The Commissioner providing evidence to the Committee for the Executive Office in February 2026.

The Commissioner has made herself available to organisations and the media.

She outlined her role and statutory duties; heard the views and experience of people with an interest in leadership and governance; provided advice, guidance

and support in relation to public appointments; and highlighted the importance of regulation of public appointments.

## Woman described as 'guardian of the public appointment process' deeply frustrated at lack of quango diversity

In first interview since appointment last August Claire Keatinge laments lack of data on who sits on NI boards

✕ Expand



Commissioner for Public Appointments Claire Keatinge

Pictured right: The Commissioner engaging with media on public appointments. Irish News



Pictured left: The Commissioner engaging with media on the value of Public Appointments. BBC Radio Ulster Good Morning Ulster



## **8.2. Engagement with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers & The Committee for the Executive Office**

Following appointment in August 2025, the Commissioner welcomed and accepted an invitation to meet with the First and deputy First Minister.

Additionally, the Commissioner wrote to all Northern Ireland Executive Ministers setting out her responsibilities.

The Commissioner received replies from all Northern Ireland Executive Ministers indicating their agreement to their responsibilities and acknowledging the Commissioners role and offer of support.


The Commissioner held meetings with DOJ, DAERA and DfE Ministers at their request.

The Commissioner provided oral evidence to the Committee for The Executive Office in February 2026, setting out her role, powers and functions.

### Advice, Guidance and Queries.

Throughout the reporting period CPANI responded to requests for information from members of the public, applicants for public appointments, and current members of public boards. This engagement has assisted CPANI to strengthen relationships between stakeholder groups, and provide information to members of the public.

Engagement from departments with CPANI has continued. This engagement is very welcome as it allows for challenges and issues to be identified and dealt with early in the public appointment process. This supports departmental officials and selection panels, creates confidence that The Code is being used



effectively, and supports a fair and positive experience for applicants throughout the appointment process.

### **8.3. Capacity Building**

The re-establishment of a full staff team of 3 people at CPANI enabled the delivery of relevant training for public appointment practitioners and selection panel members to take place. Joint work with TEO will enable additional training and awareness sessions to be delivered in the year ahead.

#### Training for public appointment practitioners and selection panels

Staff within departments who organise and manage Public Appointment competitions, and the panels who select applicants from which the Minister can make their choice of public appointee, should receive appropriate training as set out in The Code. This training includes understanding The Code, the processes used in appointments, the values and behaviours expected of panel members, and best practice in information provision and recording.

Training on the preparation of clear and unbiased applicant summaries is provided to selection panels to ensure that Ministers receive a fair assessment of all appointable applicants for public appointments. It is these applicant summaries that Ministers rely on to make a public appointment decision.

CPANI has developed awareness and training for panel members and practitioners to assist both groups deliver successful Public Appointment competitions.

Selection panel and applicant summary training was delivered twice during the period of this report.

## **8.4. Business Planning**

CPANI creates an operating business plan each year, in which objectives are identified and for which resources are sought. The CPANI team conducts regular reviews of its performance against the plan and takes corrective action. The operating plan used during 2025/2026 was developed prior to the Commissioners appointment. This report covers activities undertaken or delivered from 22 August 2025 to 31 March 2026 and these are set out in Annexe II.

The key deliverables from the operating plan include:

- Recruitment and bidding for resources to re-establish regulatory functions
- Recruitment and bidding for administrative staff
- Engagement and outreach to Ministers, Committees, Senior Civil Servants, Stakeholders, delivery colleagues and Independent Assessors
- Establishing statutory functions and supporting the updating of The 1995 Order.

The operating business plan can be found at Annexe II of this report.

## **8.5. Audit and Compliance programme 22 Aug 2025 – 31 Mar 2026**

A CPANI staff member was appointed in February 2026 to lead the compliance programme.

These compliance functions will commence in full in 2026/2027.



## **8.6. The complaints process**

The Commissioner can investigate complaints from applicants for public appointments who are dissatisfied with the recruitment process. In considering whether a complaint will be investigated by the Commissioner, there is a two-step process.


Complaints regarding the appointment process will normally, in the first instance, be handled by the relevant department, to which the initial complaint should be referred.

The Commissioner may decide to investigate a complaint which has come to her directly. In this situation, the department will be involved as appropriate.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the department's response, they may go to the second stage and ask the Commissioner to investigate the complaint.

Departments must have an effective system in place for handling complaints and for documenting the details of each complaint. The department must make complainants aware of their right to ask the Commissioner to investigate if they are dissatisfied with the department's response.

On an annual basis, each department reports the number of challenges (not a formal complaint), and formal complaints they receive and handle in relation to public appointments they make. During this reporting period, departments reported that they received a total of 3 challenges to decisions on public appointments and a total of 2 complaints were received.



A number of issues have been raised by applicants for public appointments, but no formal complaints or investigations have been completed during this reporting period.

### **8.7. The CPANI Website**

The CPANI website contains useful information about the role and work of the Commissioner. It requires updating, and CPANI plan to undertake a refresh of the website in the year ahead.

## ANNEXE I – List of Public Bodies

Departments have notified CPANI of public bodies that are regulated and unregulated during this reporting period.

### Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

DAERA Regulated	DAERA Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Wages Board for NI</li> <li>• Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute</li> <li>• Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside</li> <li>• Fishery Harbour Authority (NI)</li> <li>• Livestock and Meat Commission for NI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAFRE College Advisory Group</li> </ul>

### Department for Communities (DfC)

DfC Regulated	DfC Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architecture &amp; Built Environment Ministerial Advisory Group for NI</li> <li>• Armagh Observatory &amp; Planetarium Board of Governors</li> <li>• Armagh Observatory &amp; Planetarium Management Committee</li> <li>• Arts Council of NI</li> <li>• Charities Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Charity Commission for NI</li> <li>• Historic Buildings Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vaughan's Charity Trustees</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Historic Monuments Council</li><li>• Libraries NI</li><li>• Local Government Staff Commission</li><li>• National Museums NI</li><li>• NI Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee</li><li>• NI Museums Council</li><li>• NI Housing Executive Board</li><li>• Sport NI</li><li>• Ulster Supported Employment Ltd</li></ul>	
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**Department of Education (DE)**

DE Regulated	DE Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta</li><li>• Council for Catholic Maintained Schools</li><li>• Diocesan Education Committees of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools</li><li>• Education Authority</li><li>• General Teaching Council for NI</li><li>• NI Council for Integrated Education</li><li>• NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment</li><li>• Youth Council for NI</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exceptional Circumstances Body</li><li>• Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd</li></ul>

## Department for the Economy (DfE)

DfE Regulated	DfE Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification Officer for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Construction Industry Training Board</li> <li>• Consumer Council for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Further Education Colleges               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College</li> <li>- Northern Regional College</li> <li>- North-West Regional College</li> <li>- South-Eastern Regional College</li> <li>- Southern Regional College</li> <li>- South-West Regional College</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Executive for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Invest Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Labour Relations Agency</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Screen</li> <li>• St Mary's University College</li> <li>• Stranmillis University College</li> <li>• Tourism Northern Ireland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial Tribunals &amp; Fair Employment Tribunal</li> <li>• Industrial Court</li> <li>• Matrix</li> <li>• Ofcom</li> <li>• Skills Council</li> </ul>

## Department of Finance (DoF)

DoF Regulated	DoF Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NI Authority for Utility Regulation</li><li>• NI Building Regulations Advisory Committee</li><li>• Legal Services Oversight Commissioner</li><li>• NI Statistics Advisory Committee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NI Civil Service Pension Board</li></ul>

## Department for Infrastructure (Dfi)

Dfi Regulated	Dfi Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Belfast Harbour Commissioners</li><li>• Drainage Council for Northern Ireland</li><li>• Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners</li><li>• NI Transport Holding Company</li><li>• NI Water</li><li>• Warrenpoint Harbour Authority</li></ul>	

## Department of Health (DoH)

DoH Regulated	DoH - Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Services Organisation</li><li>• Health and Social Care Trusts<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Belfast HSC Trust</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and Social Care Pension Board</li><li>• Pharmaceutical Society</li></ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Western HSC Trust</li> <li>- Southern HSC Trust</li> <li>- Northern HSC Trust</li> <li>- South-Eastern HSC Trust</li> <li>- NI Ambulance Service Trust</li> <li>• NI Blood Transfusion Service</li> <li>• NI Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>• Children’s Court Guardian Agency for NI</li> <li>• NI Medical and Dental Training Agency</li> <li>• NI Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery</li> <li>• NI Social Care Council</li> <li>• Patient and Client Council</li> <li>• Public Health Agency</li> <li>• Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority</li> <li>• Safeguarding Board for NI</li> </ul>	
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**Department of Justice (DoJ)**

DoJ Regulated	DoJ Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal Justice Inspection NI</li> <li>• Independent Assessor of Police Service of Northern Ireland Recruitment Vetting</li> <li>• Independent Reviewer Criminal Record Certificates</li> <li>• NI Law Commission</li> <li>• NI Policing Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses of Crime for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Independent Monitoring Boards</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Commissioner for the Retention of Biometric Material</li> <li>• Parole Commissioners</li> <li>• Prisoner Ombudsman for NI</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Police Fund</li> <li>• Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust</li> <li>• Probation Board NI</li> <li>• Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation</li> </ul>	
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**The Executive Office (TEO)**

TEO Regulated	TEO Unregulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner for Children and Young People</li> <li>• Commissioner for Older People</li> <li>• Commission for Victims and Survivors for NI</li> <li>• Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation</li> <li>• NI Judicial Appointments Commission (Lay member)</li> <li>• Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI</li> <li>• Strategic Investment Board Limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attorney General for NI</li> <li>• Commissioner for Public Appointments</li> <li>• Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse</li> <li>• Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board</li> <li>• Victims and Survivors Service</li> </ul>
<p>As at 31.03.26 the regulatory status of the following public bodies was in the process of being confirmed.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner for the Ulster-Scots and the Ulster-British Tradition</li> <li>• Irish Language Commissioner</li> <li>• Office of Identity and Cultural Expression</li> </ul>	

## ANNEXE II – Operating Business Plan

CPANI Operating Plan 22 August 2025 to 31st March 2026

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>1. CPANI Code of Practice</p> <p>To prescribe and publish, and update as necessary, a Code of Practice on the interpretation and application by Departments of the principle of selection on merit for public appointments.</p> <p>This includes the effective maintenance, development and promotion of the Code of Practice and associated guidance. (Subject to resourcing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the implementation of The Code in recruitment processes.</li> <li>• Liaise closely with departmental Public Appointment Units and recruitment practitioners including Independent Assessors. This is continuous.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of The Code has been ongoing through review of recruitment competitions paperwork, press releases and engagement with PAUs.</li> <li>• Consideration of updates to The Code commenced following the Commissioners appointment in Aug 2025.</li> <li>• Liaison with PAUs is regularly undertaken, with engagement with IAs undertaken as required, in particular during allocation.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p><b>2. Audit and Compliance Monitoring</b></p> <p>A CPANI programme of audit, and a compliance monitoring regime, designed to ensure that appointment processes are carried out effectively, fairly, openly, efficiently and proportionately and in line with the Commissioner’s Code. (Subject to resourcing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will conduct audits to review the policies, practices and actions of departments in making public appointments. We will report on findings, produce recommendations and publish. Such reports will issue promptly at end of each audit. We will carry out at least two full audits every year.</li> <li>• To conduct regular compliance checks on documentation and processes used and issued by departments, including Advertisements and Press Releases. Carried out in line with competition timetables.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of staff resources until February 2026 and need for training and induction prevented audits in 25/26.</li> <li>• Compliance checks on documentation and processes used by Departments has been ongoing, however it has been impacted by lack of staff resources and experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Complaints</b></p> <p>To conduct effective inquiries into departmental policies, practices and actions on any public appointment process. The establishment, maintenance, publication and implementation of an effective and objective complaints system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and report on applicable complaints presented to CPANI. We will complete a complaint report within three months of commencement of the investigation of the complaint.</li> <li>• Follow up necessary action with departments. Six monthly following publication of complaint report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All enquiries and requests for complaints received during the period covered by this report were acknowledged, reviewed to determine if admissible under regulatory functions, engagement with departments undertaken and appropriate communication with complainants.</li> <li>• No formal complaints or investigations have been completed by CPANI during the period 22 Aug 25 – 31 Mar 26.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>4. Annual Report</p> <p>The provision and publication of an annual report which serves the requirements of all internal and external stakeholders, including the political and administrative systems of Government and the general public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate relevant information for the period 22/8/25 – 31/3/26 and publish an annual report for the same period. Annual Report to be published no later than the end of June 26.</li> <li>• Provide First Minister and deputy First Minister with an advance copy of report at least two weeks before the proposed publication date.</li> <li>• Present report to NI Assembly following publication. Immediately following publication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of report for the period 22 Aug 25 – 31 Mar 26 to be published by end of June 2026.</li> <li>• Report will be provided to First and deputy First Minister two weeks in advance of publication date.</li> <li>• Report will be presented to NI Assembly following publication by end of June.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>5. Advice and Guidance</p> <p>To provide advice and guidance in the conduct of effective and fair public appointment procedures that are compliant with The Code. To provide prompt and high-quality responses to queries on The Code and its application, from panel chairs, Independent Assessors and other relevant parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular updates, advice, guidance and training to Independent Assessors, departmental representatives and other relevant parties. Such advice and guidance will be provided within 10 working days of request where possible.</li> <li>• Provide an “open door” for queries from all sources. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Maintain a system for handling, managing and recording all queries. This is continuous.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular advice and guidance has been provided to Independent Assessors, departmental representatives and other parties on a regular basis through the period this report covers. When feasible replies have been provided within 10 days, unless awaiting 3rd party information or replies.</li> <li>• An open-door policy for the provision of advice and support has been operated successfully throughout the report’s period.</li> <li>• A system for handling, managing and recording all queries operated within CPANI however lack of staffing resources impacted on this system.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>6. Capacity Building</p> <p>To contribute to the planning and implementation of a training and development programme for public appointment practitioners and selection panel members.</p> <p>To build greater understanding of and access to public appointments among the public and especially within underrepresented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to departmental public appointment practitioners where the need arises or when requested by a department. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Provide training to selection panel members where the need arises or when requested by a department. This is continuous.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection panel training and applicant summary training was provided twice during the report period.</li> <li>• The provision of free public appointment workshops was agreed to be provided by TEO instead of CPANI in March 26. No public appointment training was delivered by CPANI during the report period.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>7. Independent Assessors (IAs)</p> <p>The effective recruitment, management and monitoring of a trained, competent and experienced team of Independent Assessors who provide an effective and efficient service in all public appointment recruitment processes. These Assessors are independent of government and the Commissioner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit, manage, train, allocate and monitor a team of Independent Assessors. To provide at least two information/training seminars per year for Independent Assessors.</li> <li>• Provide all necessary forms of support and guidance to Independent Assessors.</li> <li>• Provide timely response and advice to allocation requests for Independent Assessors.</li> <li>• Implement effective administrative procedures and records with regard to the management of the Independent Assessors. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Maintain the monthly operation of the system of payment for Independent Assessors. This will be done monthly.</li> <li>• To maintain an adequate pool of Independent Assessors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A business case was developed and finance secured to commence a recruitment exercise for Independent Assessors (IAs) in December 25. This competition commenced in March 26 and will be delivered in 26/27.</li> <li>• Support has been provided to IAs as required during the report period.</li> <li>• The effective administration of IAs was impacted by the change and lack of staff resources during the report period. Following the full complement of staff, this administration is effective.</li> <li>• The monthly operation of the system of payment for IAs has operated effectively, however lack of staff resources did impact a number of months during the report period.</li> <li>• The recruitment exercise for IAs will significantly increase the pool of IAs, however not until Autumn 2026 following appointment.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>8. Budget</p> <p>In co-operation with TEO Sponsor branch, to establish, implement and monitor the CPANI budgetary process and financial regime for the period 22/8/25 – 31/3/26. To adhere to all financial and budget guidance issued by TEO and successfully manage the budgetary and financial processes set out in the Financial Memorandum and other relevant documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement effective, efficient and accurate processes of budgetary and financial management. This is reviewed monthly.</li> <li>• Process payments, in a timely and accountable manner, using Account NI. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Ensure that all procurement is compliant with the regulations stipulated by TEO Sponsor branch. This is done on every instance of procurement.</li> <li>• Ensure that the necessary resources are secured to meet the full requirements of CPANI and its customers, allowing for levels of complaints, issues arising from audit and compliance work, ad hoc legal advice and research requirements. This takes place when setting the budget and is ongoing throughout the year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective, efficient and accurate reporting of the CPANI budget has been maintained throughout the report period. Approvals, business cases and Managing Public Money processes have been delivered.</li> <li>• Payments for services have largely been timely and always accountable. The impact of staff turnover has resulted in occasional delays.</li> <li>• All procurement undertaken has been compliant with TEO requirements.</li> <li>• The full current complement of staff was achieved only in March 2026. However, with the re-establishment or the regulatory functions and renewed interest there is likely to be the need for an increased complement of staff and this will be addressed in 26/27.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Liaison with stakeholders including provision of relevant information to the public</p> <p>To raise the profile of CPANI and its functions, within and without the political and administrative systems of government, in order to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain strong working links with Ministers, Special Advisers and MLAs.</li> <li>• Maintain strong working links with senior Civil Service and department contacts, and other bodies e.g. NI public sector Chairs Forum, Institute of Directors, Women’s groups, Professional and Business networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with all NI Executive Ministers undertaken, with meeting held with FM &amp; dFM and DAERA, DoJ and DfE Ministers during report period.</li> <li>• Engagement with all NICS Permanent Secretaries and engagements with a range of officials across the public and wider sectoral organisations.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promote public appointment opportunities to a wide field of potential candidates;</li> <li>- promote equality and diversity in public appointments.</li> <li>- increase public confidence in the fairness and openness of the public appointments system;</li> <li>- ensure that the public is aware of the independent functions provided by CPANI and of the right to avail of the CPANI complaints procedure.</li> </ul> <p>An increased awareness, by all internal and external stakeholders, of public appointment opportunities and of a fair and open merit-based recruitment process.</p> <p>(Subject to resourcing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work in partnership with departments on the promotion and development of public appointments. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Development of CPANI website to ensure it provides relevant information in a user friendly and engaging format. Keep website updated on a fortnightly basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous engagement and partnership with departments on the promotion and development of public appointments and the need for standards and adherence to The Code.</li> <li>• The Code has been maintained during the report period, however staff resources has prevented CPANI from undertaking a review of need for its development or significant updating.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>10. Administrative Support</p> <p>To plan and co-ordinate the work of the Commissioner’s office to meet the Business Plan targets in the most effective, efficient and value-for-money manner. To provide an efficient and effective service to the Commissioner and all stakeholders.</p> <p>(Subject to resourcing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress in line with each business plan key targets for the period 22/8/25 – 31/3/26, measure and action. This will be done on a quarterly basis. This is continuous and reviewed quarterly.</li> <li>• Fulfil the requirements of the sponsor branch as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and other relevant documents. This is continuous and reviewed quarterly.</li> <li>• Manage the Commissioner’s diary. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Ensure that all Personal Performance Agreements are up to date and in line with current procedures.</li> <li>• Ensure that all staff are provided with appropriate training opportunities to help them fulfil their respective roles and meet their business objectives. Reviewed with setting of PPA/PDP and again at in and end year reviews.</li> <li>• Address the ongoing shortage of administrative support, and increased work pressures for the office following the appointment of the Commissioner from 22/08/25.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress has been monitored and reported through quarterly and annual assurance during the report period to TEO. No issues raised.</li> <li>• All requirements of the Sponsor Branch have been fulfilled during the report period.</li> <li>• All internal performance agreements for staff were up to date by March 2026.</li> <li>• Significant work pressures have been experienced across the report period, as a result of lack of Staff resources, and the re-establishment of regulatory functions and having a Commissioner in-post for the first time in over 4 years.</li> <li>• Work pressures, training, induction and demands on the office, including demands on the Commissioner’s limited contracted days will continue to be monitored and additional resources sought.</li> <li>• A new Partnership Agreement was developed with TEO in March 2026.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN	DELIVERY AGAINST PLAN
<p>11. Information Management</p> <p>To ensure all information managed and stored by CPANI is in line with all relevant legislative requirements and departmental policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor information assurance procedures. This takes place quarterly.</li> <li>• Continue to apply data sharing agreements with all Departments. This is continuous.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This is continuous.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All information, GDPR and data requirements have been monitoring, met and updated as per guidance and best practice.</li> </ul>

## ANNEXE III – Statement of Expenditure

Whilst being independent of government and the NI Civil Service in the exercise of its statutory functions, CPANI is part of TEO financial and resource management arrangements. The Commissioner, as a statutory post holder described as ‘Senior Accountable Officer’, has a duty to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively. All expenditure and procurement by CPANI is routinely monitored and is in line with TEO guidance and requirements.


The Commissioner is accountable for expenditure for the period since appointment, the 22 August 2025 to 31 March 2026. However, the expenditure provided covers the full financial year.

### CPANI Financials

Independent Assessor Training & Engagement	£1,151.00
IT Services	£962.00
Subscriptions	£484.00
Staff Travel and Subsistence	£213.00
Non-Staff travel and subsistence	£85.00
Legal Costs	£4,300.00
<u>Other Operating costs</u>	<u>£66.00</u>
<u>Refunds &amp; Credits</u>	<u>-£632.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,629.00</b>

The Statement of Expenditure above does not include remuneration which is as follows:

The Commissioner is contracted to commit 75 days per year to her post and receives remuneration of £22,857 for a full year. For the period in post from 22 Aug 25 to 31 Mar 26 the Commissioner was contracted to work 46 days and received remuneration of £14,018.96. The 3 staff members on loan to CPANI from TEO who make up the Commissioner’s staff are remunerated at their respective Civil Service grade rates.



## ANNEXE IV – List of Independent Assessors during the period 22 August 2025 - 31 March 2026\*

- Joan Ballantine
- James Beatty
- Angela Coffey
- Mary Hanratty
- Bronagh Hinds
- Tom Irvine
- Karin Jeffrey
- Kate Magee
- Maeve Marnell
- Audrey McKeown
- Bronagh McKeown
- Stephen McVey
- Raymond Mullan
- Nathan Nathan
- Dolores O'Reilly

\* A number of assessors resigned during this period.