



The Commissioner
for Public Appointments
Northern Ireland

“Guardian of the Public Appointment Process”

Follow up report on recommendations made in December 2013 Audit of DCAL –
Northern Ireland Screen

June 2014

Introduction

A competition to appoint a Chair to the Board of Northern Ireland Screen (NI Screen) was selected for audit as part of the 2013/2014 audit programme of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). This competition was administered by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

Five recommendations were identified as a result of this audit and presented in a report published in December 2013. The Department was advised that it should take action to address these recommendations, and that a follow-up to the audit would be conducted in six months' time. In order to conduct the follow-up, the Commissioner requested appropriate documentation based on public appointment competitions run by the Department since the publication of the audit report. A review of this documentation took place in order to ascertain if the recommendations were implemented.

Recommendation 1

The Department should give consideration to a form of coding of monitoring forms, rather than using applicant names, to ensure anonymity.

Implementation of recommendation 1

Monitoring forms used by the Department now carry a reference number, as opposed to the applicant name. This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 2

Requests for candidates to identify particular requirements for interview should be included in the application form and not the monitoring form.

Implementation of recommendation 2

Candidates are no longer asked to identify particular requirements for interview in the monitoring form, any such requests are now included in the application form. This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 3

Any procedure set out in the competition literature should be implemented and followed through by the Department.

Implementation of recommendation 3

The Department provided a written assurance that all procedures set out in competition literature are implemented and followed through. In subsequent competitions, the Department has requested by way of a letter, that those candidates who did not sign their application form do so before the interview stage of competition, as set out in the competition literature. This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 4

Those preparing the applicant summaries should strive for a better balance of use of information from the application form and the interview notes. The panel members, in signing-off the applicant summary, should have regard to this balance.

Implementation of recommendation 4

Applicant summaries from a subsequent competition displayed a better balance between information from the application form and interview. This included a more detailed synopsis of the selection panel's assessment of the applicant at interview. This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 5

The Department should ensure that all candidates are kept informed of the progress of their application.

Implementation of recommendation 5

The Department provided copies of letters notifying candidates of the current status of their application. This recommendation has been implemented.

Conclusion

All recommendations have been implemented. The Commissioner would like to thank the Department for its help in regard to this matter.