



The Commissioner  
for Public Appointments  
Northern Ireland

“Guardian of the Public Appointment Process”

Follow up report on recommendations made in March 2013 audit of Labour  
Relations Agency public appointment selection process

Department for Employment and Learning

October 2013

A competition to appoint two members to the Labour Relations Agency was selected for audit as part of the 2012/2013 audit programme of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). This competition was administered by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).

Four recommendations were identified as a result of this audit and presented in a report published in March 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 ensure that it is satisfied that training has been undertaken by selection panel members within the 36 months prior to the commencement of the competition.

##### Implementation of recommendation 1

The Department provided evidence, from a subsequent competition, to show that the training of panel members is fully recorded, and in line with the CPANI Code of Practice, at the outset of the competition. This recommendation has been implemented.

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Department must ensure that a complete audit trail is readily available including all pertinent contemporaneous records, to ensure compliance with paragraph 5.3 of the Code.

##### Implementation of recommendation 2

The Department provided an assurance, in written form, that a full audit trail is readily available. This included information on the steps now taken by the Department to ensure compliance with paragraph 5.3 of the Code. This recommendation has been implemented.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Department should give consideration to a form of coding of monitoring forms and application forms, rather than using applicants' names, and should retain the forms separately at all times.

#### Implementation of recommendation 3

Monitoring forms used by the Department now carry a reference number, as opposed to the applicant name. The Department detailed the process in place to ensure monitoring forms are detached from application forms and retained separately. This recommendation has been implemented.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Department should provide more informative and detailed applicant summaries to assist the Minister in making his decision on which applicants to appoint.

#### Implementation of recommendation 4

CPANI reviewed a copy of an applicant summary presented to the Minister, this summary contained detailed information directly related to the candidate's skills and knowledge displayed at interview. 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.