

**Commissioner for Public Appointments for
Northern Ireland**

Business Plan 2022 - 2023

“Guardian of the Public Appointment Process”

Vision

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

Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPANI)

The post of Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland was established in 1995, in response to the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee).

The Commissioner is independent of Government.

This is the Business Plan of CPANI covering the period April 2022 - March 2023. It sets out the statutory duties of the Commissioner and the approach that the Commissioner and the office (CPANI) will take to fulfil those duties during the coming year.

Core Values

The core values of CPANI reflect the seven key principles of public appointments. They are that public appointments should be made on the basis of:

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

Mission Statement

The CPANI mission is to regulate and monitor public appointments to ensure that every Government Department operates systems that allow every citizen who wishes to contribute to the working of public bodies, who has skills or experience to contribute and who has the motivation and integrity to serve, to put his/her self forward for appointment and be

treated, throughout the public appointment process, in a manner that is fair, consistent, open and transparent, with the goal of selecting the best candidates, on merit, for board service.

The operation of this type of public appointment system supports the building and maintenance of high functioning public boards.

Statutory Duties of the Commissioner

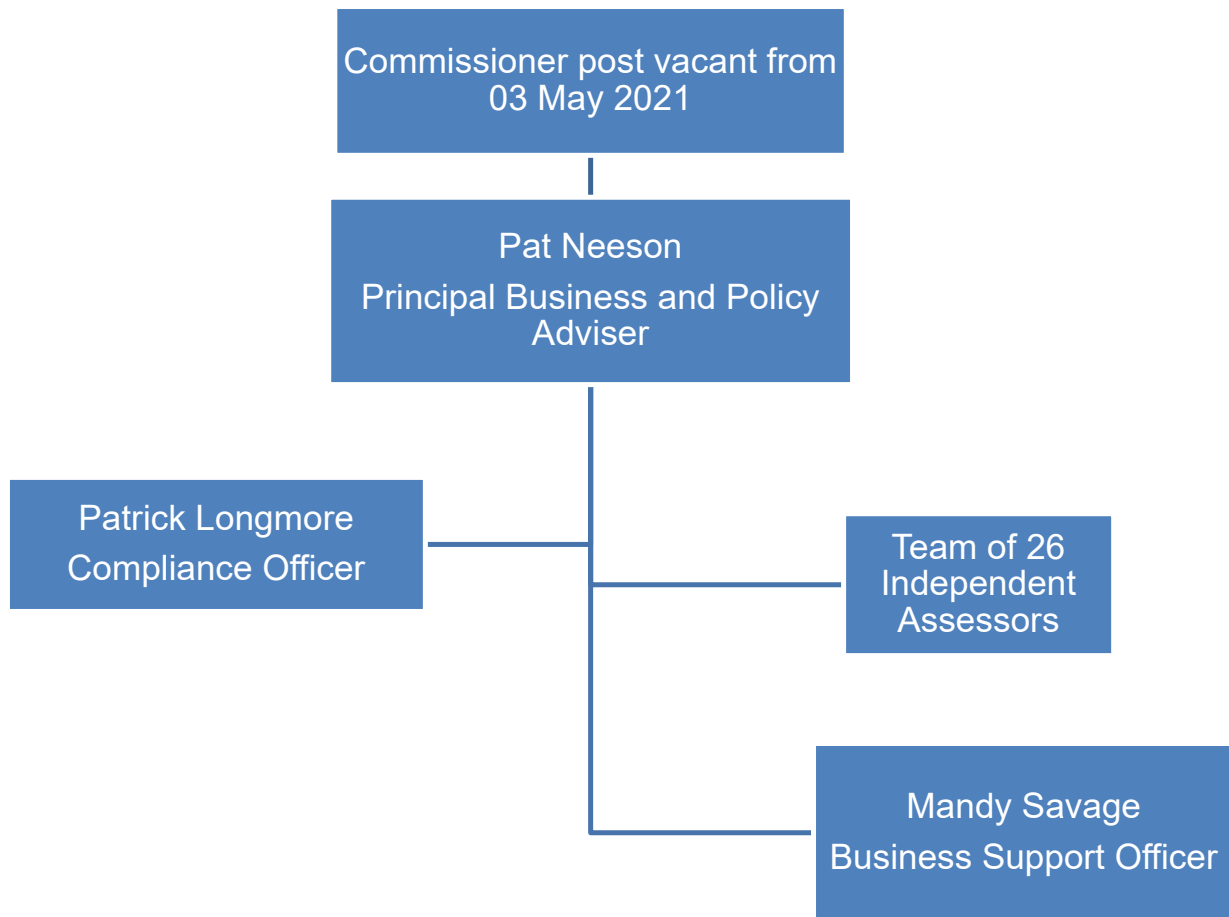
CPANI was established to regulate and monitor the compliance of the Departments with the Commissioner's 'Code of Practice for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland' (the Code). The Commissioner also provides advice and guidance, in the context of the Code, on processes of selection for public appointment, and investigates complaints.

The statutory duties of the Commissioner are set out in the Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 as amended. They are:

1. The Commissioner shall in the manner he or she considers best calculated to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the procedures for making public appointments, exercise his or 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 the principle of selection on merit for public appointment and shall adopt and publish from time to time such additional guidance to Departments 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 he or 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.

Organisational Structure



CPANI OPERATING PLAN: 01 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023

The activities listed below contribute to the objectives and outcomes described in the introduction.

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<p>1. CPA 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.</p>	<p>Monitor the implementation of the Code in recruitment processes. This takes place through a number of mechanisms: the audit and complaints procedures and the internal CPANI policy development process. To effect any necessary changes to the Code arising from these mechanisms within 2 months of publishing an audit or complaint report or finalisation of a new CPANI policy. This is continuous.</p> <p>Liaise closely with departmental Public Appointment Units and recruitment practitioners including Independent Assessors. This is continuous</p>
<p>2. Audit and Compliance Monitoring</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.</p>	<p>We will conduct audits to review the policies, practices and actions of Departments in making public appointments. This audit programme is based on the CPANI risk analysis which has an emphasis on diversity factors. 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.</p> <p>Carry out diversity spot checks on competitions that are considered high risk. Carried out in line with competition timetables.</p> <p>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.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<p>3. Complaints</p> <p>To conduct effective inquiries into Department policies, practices and actions on any public appointment process. The establishment, maintenance, publication and implementation of an effective and objective complaints system.</p>	<p>Investigate and report on complaints presented to CPANI. We will complete a complaint report within three months of commencement of the investigation of the complaint.</p> <p>Follow up necessary action with Departments. Six monthly following publication of complaint report.</p>
<p>4. Annual Report</p> <p>The provision and publication of a comprehensive 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>	<p>Collate relevant information for the year and publish annual report. Annual Report to be published no later than the end of June.</p> <p>Provide First Minister and deputy First Minister with an advance copy of report at least two weeks before the proposed publication date.</p> <p>Present report to NI Assembly following publication. Immediately following publication.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<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>	<p>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.</p> <p>Provide advice to Departments and others on the pursuit of diversity within public appointments. Such advice and guidance will be provided within 10 working days of request.</p> <p>To provide advice and guidance where relevant within 1 month of publication of an audit or complaint report.</p> <p>To provide an update on any relevant developments in public appointments to the Public Appointments Forum. This will be done quarterly.</p> <p>Provide an “open door” for queries from all sources. This is continuous.</p> <p>Maintain a system for handling, managing and recording all queries. This is continuous.</p>
<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>	<p>Provide training to departmental public appointment practitioners where the need arises or when requested by a Department. This is continuous.</p> <p>Provide training to selection panel members where the need arises or when requested by a Department. This is continuous.</p> <p>The provision of free public workshops to promote understanding of the public appointment system and provide support to potential applicants with a focus on under-represented groups. Continue to work with Departments in the delivery of the workshops. Hold at least four workshops during the business year.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<p>7. Independent Assessors</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>	<p>Manage, train, allocate and monitor a team of Independent Assessors. Meetings to be held with Assessors every six months.</p> <p>Provide training and advice to enable Independent Assessors to play a role as diversity champions within the appointments process. To provide at least one training seminar per year for Independent Assessors.</p> <p>Provide all necessary forms of support and guidance to Independent Assessors. To issue at least 4 information bulletins per year to Independent Assessors</p> <p>Provide timely response and advice to allocation requests for Assessors.</p> <p>Implement effective administrative procedures and records with regard to the management of the Assessors. This is continuous.</p> <p>Maintain the monthly operation of the system of payment for Independent Assessors. This will be done monthly.</p> <p>To maintain an adequate pool of Independent Assessors.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<p>8. Budget</p> <p>In co-operation with TEO Sponsor branch, to establish, implement and monitor the CPANI budgetary process and financial regime. 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>	<p>Implement effective, efficient and accurate processes of budgetary and financial management. This is reviewed monthly.</p> <p>Process payments, in a timely and accountable manner, using Account NI. This is continuous.</p> <p>Ensure that all procurement is compliant with the regulations stipulated by TEO sponsor branch. This is done on every instance of procurement.</p> <p>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.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<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"> - promote public appointment opportunities to a wide field of potential candidates; - promote diversity in public appointments in particular to promote the Executive targets for gender equality at Board member and Board chair levels. - increase public confidence in the fairness and openness of the public appointments system; - ensure that the public is aware of the independent functions provided by CPANI and of the right to avail of the CPANI complaints procedure. <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>Promotion of the NI Executive gender targets for appointment of members and Chairs of public boards.</p>	<p>Maintain strong working links with Ministers, Special Advisers and MLAs. Hold at least one meeting per month to discuss latest developments in public appointments with a Minister, Special Adviser or MLA.</p> <p>Maintain strong working links with senior Civil Service and Department contacts, and other bodies eg NI public sector Chairs Forum, Institute of Directors, Women’s groups, Professional and Business networks. Hold at least one profile raising/networking meeting/discussion per month with a relevant body.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with Departments on the promotion and development of public appointments. This is continuous.</p> <p>Continue proactive outreach programme. This will include meeting with under-represented groups to provide information on public appointments. Hold at least two profile raising/information provision meetings during the business year with an underrepresented group.</p> <p>Development of CPANI website to ensure it provides relevant information in a user friendly and engaging format. Keep website updated on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Contribute to the development and implementation of The Executive Office (TEO) strategy for promoting the NI Executive gender equality targets. This is continuous.</p> <p>Liaise with TEO on actions to deliver the strategy. This is continuous.</p> <p>Participate in the strategy delivery committee sub groups. This is continuous.</p> <p>Continue to support the Mentoring Scheme involving collaboration between the Queen’s University Belfast, The University of Ulster and Northern Ireland’s public sector. This is continuous.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<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>Monitor progress in line with each business plan key target, measure and action. This will be done on a quarterly basis. This is continuous and reviewed quarterly.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Manage the Commissioner's diary. This is continuous.</p> <p>Ensure that all Personal Performance Agreements are up to date and in line with current procedures. To be in place by April 2022, in year review carried out September 2022 and end year review by March 2023.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Address the ongoing shortage of administrative support, and increased work pressures for the office by March 2023.</p>
<p>11. Northern Ireland Executive Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>To provide a commitment to the objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive Asset Management Strategy</p>	<p>To provide a commitment to the objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive Asset Management Strategy. This is to be reviewed annually to determine any action needed.</p>

ACTIVITY	WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN
<p>12. 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>	<p>Monitor information assurance procedures. This takes place quarterly.</p> <p>Continue to apply data sharing agreements with all Departments. This is continuous.</p> <p>Ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This is continuous.</p>