



**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**HANDLING COMMENTS, ENQUIRIES AND
COMPLAINTS**

**OFFICE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
COMMISSIONERS**

Ensuring appointment on merit & safeguarding ethical standards

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the process by which you can make a comment, an enquiry or a complaint in relation to the service you receive from the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC).

OCSC welcomes comments, enquires and complaints as everyone has the right to expect a good service from public bodies. We regard the obligation to respond to such comments, enquiries and complaints as an opportunity to improve the quality of the service which we provide.

2. Who can make a comment, an enquiry or a complaint?

Anyone, either civil servant or member of the public, may make a comment, enquiry or complaint about his / her experience of dealing with the Commissioners and / or Secretariat.

3. Where do I send comments?

If you would like to make any suggestions on how we can improve our service we would be happy to hear from you.

Please forward comments to us at: info@nicsscommissioners.org

4. Where do I send an enquiry?

Any general enquiry regarding the service provided by the OCSC can be made by e-mail at info@nicsscommissioners.org

5. Where do I send a complaint?

There are a number of ways in which you can make your complaint. However we will require you to put your complaint in writing.

You can:

- Write to the Commissioners' Secretary: Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners
7th Floor
Erskine House
20-32 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 4GF

- E-mail the Commissioners' Secretary: info@nicscommissioners.org
- Write to the Civil Service Commissioners' Chairperson at the address above.

6. What can I complain about?

If you consider that you have been treated in an unacceptable manner by the Commissioners and / or Secretariat you have the right to make a complaint. You can make your complaint directly to the OCSC and we will endeavour to resolve the matter to your satisfaction.

There are other avenues for complaint which are not related to a claim of unacceptable treatment. Existing civil servants may make a complaint under the [NICS Code of Ethics](#). A member of the public may bring a complaint with regard to information provided under the [OCSC Publication Scheme](#). A person may wish to make a complaint if it is considered that Commissioners have failed to comply with their [Equality Scheme](#). You can find further information and guidance on our [website](#).

7. How will my complaint be dealt with?

In considering complaints about our own service, we apply the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Principles of Good Complaint Handling which have been endorsed by The Northern Ireland Ombudsman as a worthy source of good practice for bodies within his jurisdiction. They are:

- Getting it right
- Being customer focused
- Being open and accountable
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Putting things right
- Seeking continuous improvement.

8. Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

We will do all we can to look into your complaint, although we ask that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is made within three months of the date on which the issue is alleged to have arisen.

9. What happens to my complaint?

We will send you an acknowledgement within 3 working days of receipt of your complaint.

If your complaint is about your treatment by a member of the OCSC staff then the Secretary to the Commissioners will investigate your complaint. Should your complaint be about the Secretary to the Commissioners then the Chairperson will investigate your complaint.

If your complaint is about your treatment by a Commissioner(s) then the Chairperson will investigate your complaint. Should your complaint be about the Chairperson to Commissioners then another Commissioner will investigate your complaint.

We expect to address your complaint within 20 working days of receipt. We will assess your complaint and take appropriate action to resolve the issue/s you have raised. Where resolution cannot take place within this target date you will be informed of the reason and advised of new date.

10. What if I still disagree?

Once your complaint has been investigated you will be notified of the decision, which will be regarded as final.

We will acknowledge any further correspondence from you but, unless it raises new issues that we consider to be significant, we will not send further replies.

11. Can I appeal against the decision?

If you remain dissatisfied with our response you can contact the Northern Ireland Ombudsman. www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk/

ANNEX A - Complaints Handling Procedure - External

