



Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland

NEW CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

Scotland's new Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies comes into practice this week following in depth consultation and Parliamentary consideration. The Code is rigorous and is designed to offer a fair and transparent public appointments process, reinforcing the message that public appointments are open to all sections of Scottish society.

Drawn up by Karen Carlton, Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland, the new Code notably anonymises the initial stages of the selection process and removes questions relating to political activity to all but successful candidates. At the same time, it brings new rigour to the development of the selection criteria before any position is advertised.

The Code's launch follows an extensive, formal consultation where the views of politicians, civil servants, public bodies, interested organisations and the general public were sought. Karen Carlton said:

“Scotland deserves a fair, transparent and efficient public appointments system which will encourage a wide variety of people to apply for the many interesting and varied positions available. I regulate the process of appointment to public bodies as diverse as the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, SportScotland, the Deer Commission, The National Galleries of Scotland and Health Boards, all of which play a crucial role in the life of the country and all of which thrive on active engagement with members of the public.

“Historically public appointments have not been well understood. Many people believe that the appointments process is based on a ‘tap on the shoulder’ or the “old boy” network. Nothing could be further from the truth. The new Code of Practice ensures that transparency, fairness and rigour are to the fore during the appointment process. Every application is considered on merit, and merit alone.”

The Code requires applications to be anonymised so that they are judged purely on merit in relation to the post in question. The selection panel has no access to a candidate's name, age, gender, ethnic origin, geographical location, qualifications (unless required for the post) or the names of their referees. Candidate's names will be revealed prior to interview and information on political activity will no longer be collected from people who apply.



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An OCPAS Independent Assessor scrutinises each stage of every appointment to confirm compliance with the Commissioner's Code – the appointment cannot be made unless an assessor verifies that the process used to select the candidates or candidates followed the Code of Practice.

ENDS

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Note to editors:

For background information please see: www.publicappointments.org

The Commissioner, Karen Carlton, is available for comment.

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