

# News story: Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley, has today announced her intention to recommend the appointment of Mrs Marie Anderson as the new Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State said:

“My absolute priority is to see the restoration of the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

“In the interim my responsibility is to ensure good governance and stable public services in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.

“In the absence of an Executive, it is vital that we ensure stability and continuity for this important public appointment. My intention is to recommend the appointment of Marie Anderson to the role of Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.”

Notes to editors:

The appointment of Police Ombudsman is subject to the completion of the formalities of the appointment process.

The Office of the Police Ombudsman was established by the Police (NI) Act 1998 to provide an independent means of handling complaints against the police and a number of other bodies as set out in legislation. The Police Ombudsman is responsible for the investigation of complaints against the police and for the investigation of a range of other matters referred by the Department of Justice, the Policing Board and the Chief Constable. The term of appointment for the Police Ombudsman is seven years and is not renewable. The outgoing Ombudsman, Dr Michael Maguire was appointed in 2012 and his seven-year tenure will be completed in July 2019.

The Office of the Police Ombudsman currently has a staff of over 150. It is a non-departmental public body financed by a grant-in-aid from the Department of Justice. In the 2019/20 financial year, its budget is £9.288 million. Since the devolution of policing and justice in 2010, the First Minister and deputy First Minister have had the statutory responsibility for jointly recommending the appointment of the Police Ombudsman. In October 2018, the Secretary of State for NI introduced legislation in Parliament; the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 1 November. This legislation provides for the appointment to a number of public offices by the Secretary of State, including that of Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

The position was advertised widely by The Executive Office, with candidates

applying nationally and internationally.

Mrs Anderson is currently Northern Ireland's Public Services Ombudsman, where she has been in post since 1 April 2016. She will step down from this position on taking up office as Police Ombudsman. She also holds two other statutory offices – Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards and Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman. She has previously held a number of other high profile public service positions including the Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman and the Assistant Information Commissioner for Northern Ireland. Experience from these roles and others have developed important skills that Mrs Anderson will bring to the Police Ombudsman role.

The annual salary for this post is currently £134,841 (under review).

This appointment process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and the process has been conducted in accordance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland requires the political activity of appointees to be published. In this case, Mrs Anderson has not declared any political activity.

For media queries please contact NIO communications manager, Rosemary Neill on 07815145577.