

Press release: New members appointed to the Probation Board by Secretary of State

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon Karen Bradley MP today announced a number of appointments to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. In the absence of Northern Ireland Ministers, these appointments were made possible by the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018, which received Royal Assent on 1 November.

The current Chair and Board members are due to stand down on 30 November 2018. Dale Ashford will take up the position of new Chair from 1 December 2018 and will be joined by Neil Bodger, Jonny Byrne, Kelly Clarke, Kieran Donaghy, Theresa Donaldson, Paul Douglas, Patricia Keenan, Max Murray, and Alastair Ross as new Board members. The Secretary State has also re-appointed Judith Gillespie, Gearoid O'hEara and David Wall to the Board.

Mrs Bradley said:

I am delighted to make these appointments to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

The Board has a unique role in that it provides oversight and strategic direction to the Probation Service within Northern Ireland with the overarching aim of "Changing Lives for safer communities

I am confident these new appointments will enable the Board to fulfil its statutory role. The reappointments of Judith Gillespie, Gearoid O'hEara and David Wall will also ensure a degree of continuity on the Board.

In October 2018, I introduced the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018. The legislation enabled me to make key public appointments to a number of bodies including the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

Whilst I am pleased to announce these appointment and we will continue to make the necessary interventions to ensure good governance and the delivery of public services, this can never be a substitute for local decision making. It would be much better for

devolved Ministers to be in place to make these decisions – including on key public appointments.

That is why I will be engaging the parties urgently, along with the Tanaiste in line with the well-established three stranded approach, to work to find a solution that gets the Executive restored and delivering for the people of NI.

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

The Probation Board is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Justice; its statutory responsibilities are set out in the Probation Board (NI) Order 1982. The Board is normally appointed by, and accountable to, the Department of Justice. The Board consists of a Chair, a Deputy Chair and not less than 10 or more than 18 other members.

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 of members to the Board by the Secretary of State.

More information can be found on the Probation Board [website](#)

Terms of appointment

The positions are part-time appointments.

The Chair position attracts a fixed remuneration of £33,010 per annum for a commitment of two days per week.

The Board members positions attract a fixed remuneration of £5,050 per annum for a minimum time commitment of 2 days per month.

Biography of Appointees

Dale Ashford QSFM – Chair

Dale Ashford served the public of Northern Ireland for 30 years in various roles within the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue service before retiring, in 2017, having been Interim Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, and serving in operational roles at every level. During his time in NIFRS he served as head of training and development and was responsible for regulatory enforcement as well as leading on the Services approach to prevention and community engagement. He has served as an independent Member of the NI Prison Service Management Board and a Non-executive Director of the NI ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust Board. He was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal in 2015 in recognition of his services.

Neil Bodger

Mr Bodger has been involved in managerial and company finance at Senior Manager or Director Level for over 30 years. He was a Senior Management Consultant in corporate financial reconstruction for 8 years, 1986-94; and board Director of a German manufacturing company from 1994-2000. Mr Bodger has been the Panel Chair of the Education Authority Appeals Tribunals for 19 years, 1998 to date. He has worked as a Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committees for 22 years. He is currently a board Member on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (£6,000p.a.), and Governor and Audit and Risk Management Committee Chair for South Eastern Regional College (£3,500 p.a.).

Jonny Byrne

Dr Byrne is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Applied Social and Policy Studies at Ulster University. He is also a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's young people's reference group, and is an independent member of the PSNI culture, Ethics and Diversity Board. He has a wealth of experience of engaging with a diverse range of audiences in the public and private sector.

Kelly Clarke

Dr Kelly Clarke is Managing Director at Orryx where she works alongside organisations to help them innovate and transform for the future. Kelly was Head of Public Sector Reform Division in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (DoF) where she led a range of significant Executive reform programmes. She previously worked for KPMG and led internal consultancy services for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (DoF).

Kieran Donaghy

Kieran Donaghy retired as Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development from the Southern Health & Social Care Trust in August 2016. He currently sits on the Audit Committee of the Charity Commission as independent member. He has held this voluntary role since 2015. Mr Donaghy brings to the role a wealth of experience in change management, and has extensive knowledge of corporate governance issues, particularly within the public sector.

Theresa Donaldson

Dr. Theresa Donaldson achieved Chartered Director status with the Institute of Directors in 2018. She was Chief Executive of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (June 2014-September 2018) and Chief Executive Craigavon Borough Council (2010-2014). Prior to this Theresa held several senior management positions in health and social care and legal services in NI including as Director of Policy and Civil Service Delivery in the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission. Theresa is currently Vice Chair of Eirgrid remunerated at £8700 p/a. Theresa held a public appointment as Chair of a Health and Social Services Research Ethics Committee for 6 years (2004-2010) and a Judicial Appointment as Lay Member Charity Tribunal (2012-2014).

Paul Douglas

Mr Douglas was District Manager and then District Commander in the PSNI, where he worked closely with the District Policing Partnerships. He was previously a Non-Executive Director in the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland; a member of the NI Audit Committee and a Lay Representative in the Pharmaceutical Society; and is currently a Lay Commissioner for the Northern Judicial Appointments Commission (£294 per day). He also currently holds a non-executive role within the Environment Agency (£500 per day)

Judith Gillespie

Judith Gillespie left the Police Service of Northern Ireland as Deputy Chief Constable in March 2014. She is currently a Commissioner with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for which she receives remuneration of £5,000 per annum and a serving Probation Board Member remunerated at £5,050 per annum. Mrs Gillespie brings to the role a wealth of experience in leading and setting the strategic direction of a large organisation.

Patricia Keenan

Ms Keenan is a consultant and has worked with a diverse range of groups. From 2010 to 2014 she was a Board member for the Local Action Group in the Armagh and Newry council areas, which delivered rural development funding to the local voluntary and business community.

Max Murray

Mr Murray worked for the Northern Ireland Prison Service for 37 years, and was both a Governor and a Director, before retiring. During his time in the Prison service he was Governor of Magilligan Prison, Director of Offender Services, Director of Operations and Director of Estates. He is currently a consultant for the Council of Europe.

Gearoid OhEara

Gearoid OhEara has served on the Board of Directors of public bodies for over 30 years including Foras na Gaeilge, Arts Council NI, WELB the Northern Ireland Policing board, and is currently a member of the Probation Board remunerated at £5,050 per annum. He was an elected member of Derry City council and was Mayor in 2004-05.

Alastair Ross

Mr Ross was a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly from 2007-2017, where he had a number of roles including: Junior Minister in the Executive Office, Chair of the Justice Committee, Chair of the Standards and Privileges Committee, Chair of the ad hoc Committee on the Mental Capacity bill and Deputy Chief Whip. He is currently a Commissioner of the UK Electoral Commission Board.

David Wall

David Wall worked in the voluntary sector for twenty years followed by 15 years in the civil service as a Director in the Department of Social Development; he has also held a number of public and voluntary appointments. He is currently on the Board of Governors at Braidside Integrated Primary School, and is a serving Probation Board Member remunerated at £5,050 per annum. He brings to the Board a detailed knowledge of the public sector and has extensive experience in dealing with the dynamics of local neighbourhoods and socially deprived areas. He is currently carrying out research as part of a part time PhD at Ulster University investigating methods of evaluation for community development in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

CPANI Code of Practice

The appointment process has been regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (CPANI) and the appointments have been made in accordance with the CPANI Code of Practice.

Political Activity

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.

As highlighted in their bios, Gearoid O'hEara and Alastair Ross have undertaken political activity in the last 10 years. Dale Ashford has also declared that he has canvassed for the Alliance party.

Statutory Requirements

These appointments are made by the Secretary of State with regard to the equality provisions set out in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; Probation Board (NI) Order 1982; and, the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018