

Press release: Secretary of State appoints new members to Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Helen Ferguson, Helena Macormac, Paul Mageean, Samuel John McCallister, Edmond Rooney and Graham Shields will replace Christine Collins, John Corey, Milton Kerr, Grainia Long, Alan McBride, Marion Reynolds and Paul Yam who are standing down after serving two terms.

Mr Brokenshire said:

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission under the leadership of Chief Commissioner, Les Allamby, plays a vital role in protecting and promoting human rights for everyone in Northern Ireland's diverse society.

I am delighted to make these appointments to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and I am confident that the new Commissioners will continue to enhance the Commission's central role in protecting and promoting human rights in Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State also thanked the outgoing Commissioners. He said:

The outgoing Commissioners have made a real and valued contribution to the promotion of the human rights agenda in Northern Ireland.

Their dedication to the work of the Commission has been invaluable and I am extremely grateful to them for their commitment over the last six years.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is a national human rights institution with an 'A' status accreditation from the United Nations (UN). The Commission is funded by the UK Government, but is an independent public body that operates in full accordance with the UN Paris Principles.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for making appointments to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

More information can be found on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

website <http://www.nihrc.org/>

Terms of appointment

The positions are part-time appointments for three years.

The positions attract a fixed remuneration of £7,500 per annum for a commitment of approximately three days a month.

These positions are not pensionable.

Biography of Appointees

Helen Ferguson was a Director, Carers Northern Ireland, from 1994-2015. She has over 30 years' experience of working in the community and voluntary sector. She is currently a member of the Equality Commission.

Helena Macormac is a lawyer currently employed as Policy Director for National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT).

Paul Mageean is currently the Director of Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Queens University and a Parole Commissioner. He is a former Head of Criminal Justice Inspectorate.

Samuel John McCallister is in the farming industry and formerly served as a UUP MLA from 2007 to 2013.

Edmond Rooney is a retired Senior Civil Servant who was Deputy Secretary in OFMDFM (now The Executive Office) and a former Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency

Graham Shields is the former Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland and a retired senior police officer.

Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

As noted in the biographies Samuel John McCallister has declared political activity in the past ten years.

OCPA Code of Practice

The appointment process has been regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment (OCPA) and all stages of the process were overseen by an independent panel member.