



Northern Ireland
Public Services
Ombudsman



Audit and Risk Committee Chair

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Candidate Information Booklet

2025 (NIPSO/ARCC/08-25)

CONTENTS

	Pages
1. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman’s Message	3
2. Who We Are	4
3. What We Do	5
4. Our Structure	7
5. Our Vision and Values	8
6. Our Financials	9
7. Role Profile	10
8. Person Specification	11
9. Remuneration	14
10. Selection Process	15
Appendix – ARC Terms of Reference	18

1. MESSAGE FROM MARGARET KELLY, NI PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

Thank you for your interest in the position of Audit and Risk Committee Chair at the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

This is an exciting time to join us to help us deliver our vision of making a positive difference to people and public services in Northern Ireland through impartially and independently investigating complaints of maladministration. We view complaints as an ‘early warning’ system to improve public services and our opportunity to inform public policy. We launched our new Strategic Plan in 2022-23 following consultation both internally and externally with the aim to make sure we have a relevant, modern and inclusive Ombudsman’s Office for the people of Northern Ireland.

We have a unique governance structure which reflects my position as the statutory holder of three offices – Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards. This requires a balance between appropriate controls and oversight, while preserving the independence of my role. NIPSO is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly Audit Committee for our budget and performance. We also have an independent Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) who provide independent scrutiny and assurance to the Ombudsman on our corporate governance, risk management and control systems.

In line with good practice and reflecting arrangements in other Ombudsman’s offices where the office holder is also a Corporation Sole, NIPSO’s ARC is comprised solely of non- executive members. As ARC Chair you will co-ordinate and lead the committee in fulfilling its role of supporting the Ombudsman as Accounting Officer in monitoring the corporate governance and control systems in NIPSO.

This is a challenging but interesting role. If you are excited about the work that we undertake and believe you have the skills and experience to make a difference, I very much look forward to receiving your application.

Margaret Kelly

Northern Ireland Public
Services Ombudsman



2. WHO WE ARE

The Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) was established in April 2016 in accordance with the [Public Services Ombudsman Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) (“the Act”). The Act replaced and extended the remit of the previous offices of Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. Since 2016, NIPSO’s workload has doubled and the organisation continues to grow

We are publicly funded but operate independently from all other public bodies in Northern Ireland. We currently employ approximately 60 staff and are based in Progressive House in central Belfast.

The Ombudsman’s main role is to investigate complaints of maladministration made about public services, including complaints about Government Departments and their agencies, local Councils, health and social care, education and other public service providers. We also play a key role in contributing to broader improvement in public services by sharing the learning from both individual complaints and systemic reports (work that we call ‘Own Initiative’).

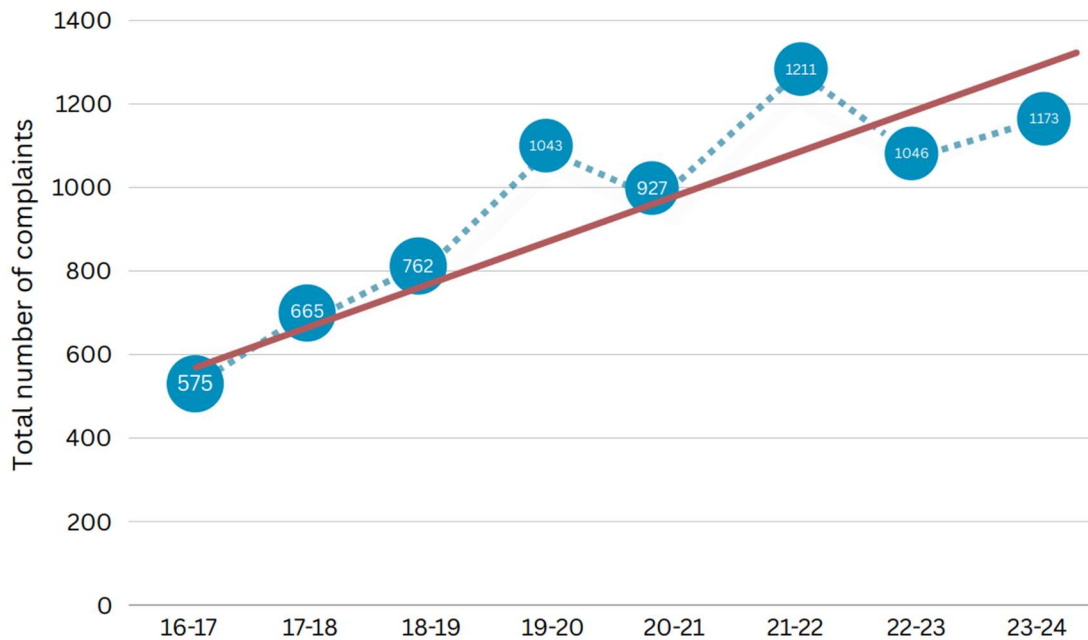
The Ombudsman is also the Local Government Commissioner for Standards and the office investigates and adjudicates on complaints where a Councillor is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Ombudsman is also the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman.



3. WHAT WE DO

The Ombudsman’s role is to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are served by a fair and efficient public administration that is committed to accountability, openness, and the provision of high quality public services.

Assessing and investigating complaints of maladministration, including professional judgment in health and social care is the largest single area of our work. During 2023-24 we received 1,173 complaints, an increase of 104% over the period since NIPSO was established in 2016 (when 575 complaints were received). The graph below illustrates the trend in new maladministration complaints received over the past five years:

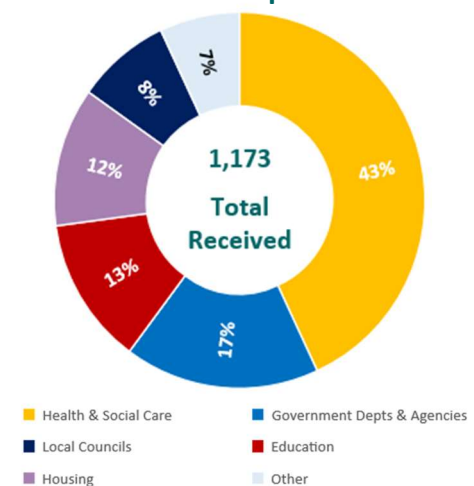


During 2023-24, 43% of the complaints we received related to Health & Social Care Services in Northern Ireland.

The other 57% of complaints related to Government Departments (17%), Education (13%), Housing (12%) and Councils (8%).

The remaining 7% were categorised as ‘other’ complaints.

Breakdown of Complaints 2023-24



In relation to our Local Government Ethical Standards role, during 2023-24 we received 31 allegations that Councillors may have breached the Local Government Code of Conduct. These related to social media posts, disclosure of confidential information and the registration / declaration of interests.

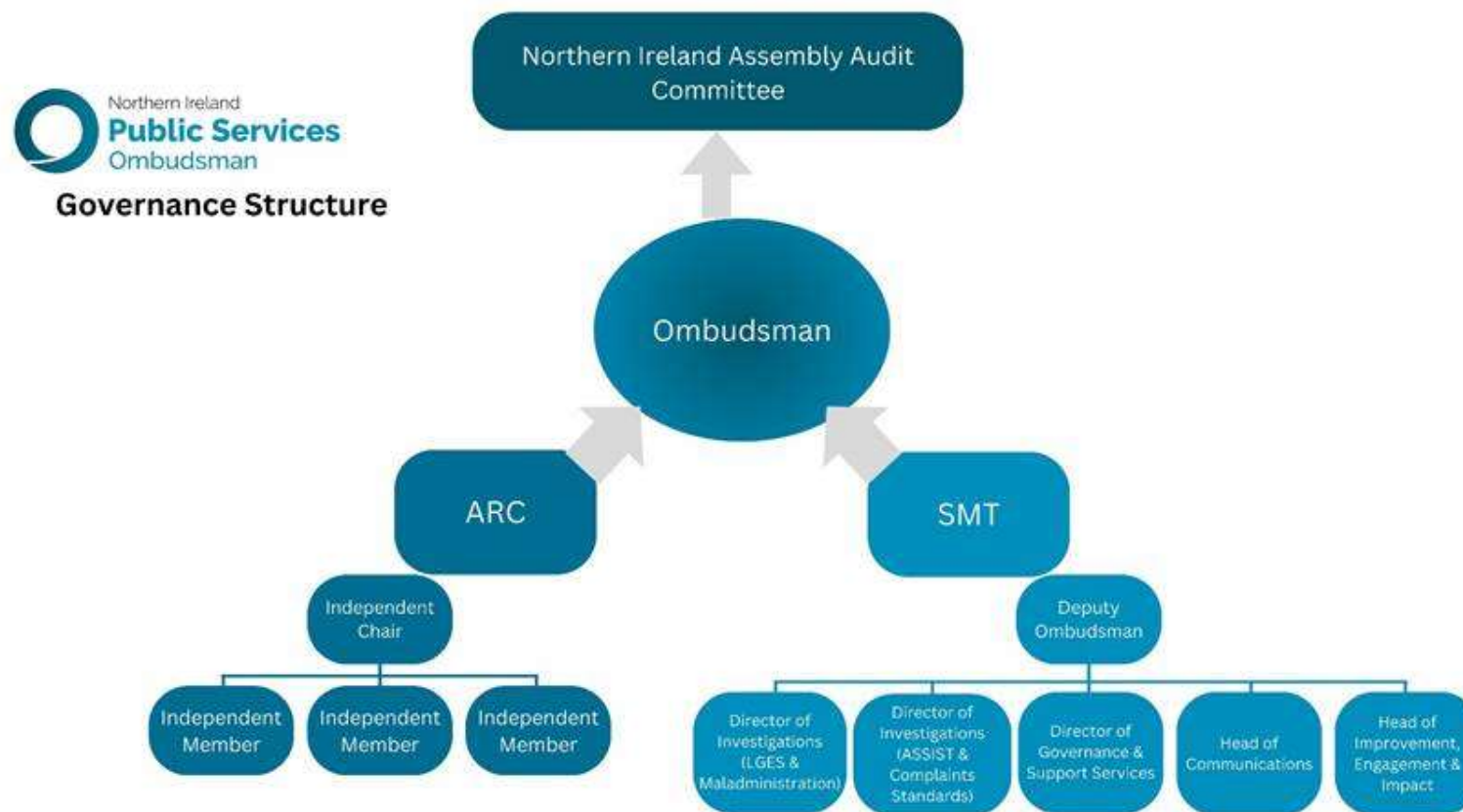
In 2023-24 we published an Own Initiative report on waiting lists communications, and overview report on Tree Preservation Orders and a follow up report on ‘PIP and the Value of Further Evidence’.

Interested candidates can read more about our future plans in our [Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#) and our annual performance in our latest [Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024](#).

4. OUR STRUCTURE

NIPSO has grown considerably since it was established in 2016 both in terms of functions, budget and staff numbers. As a result, NIPSO has embarked on a programme of improvement of its internal systems including the establishment of a new case handling system, a new finance system, establishment of a new records management system and we are embarking on updating the office human resource management system. The senior management team are focused on ensuring that we have effective systems to support the front-line staff of NIPSO, ensuring that we meet our statutory obligations and bring about improvements in public services through our work.

Our current governance structure is set out below:



5. OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision and values are very important to us and underpin everything we do as an organisation.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Make a positive difference to people and public services in Northern Ireland by providing individual resolution and improved services through learning from complaints.

OUR PURPOSE

Investigate unresolved complaints about public bodies, uphold standards and ensure accountability for both public bodies and for local Councillors. Contribute to broader improvement by sharing the learning from both individual complaints and systemic reports.

OUR VALUES

Our **values** underpin and drive all our decisions, actions, policies, processes and systems and how we engage internally and externally.

Independence

We are open, non-partisan, unbiased, and we act with integrity.

Fairness

We are honest and impartial, ensure all views are listened to and use an evidence-based approach to our decision making.

People Focused

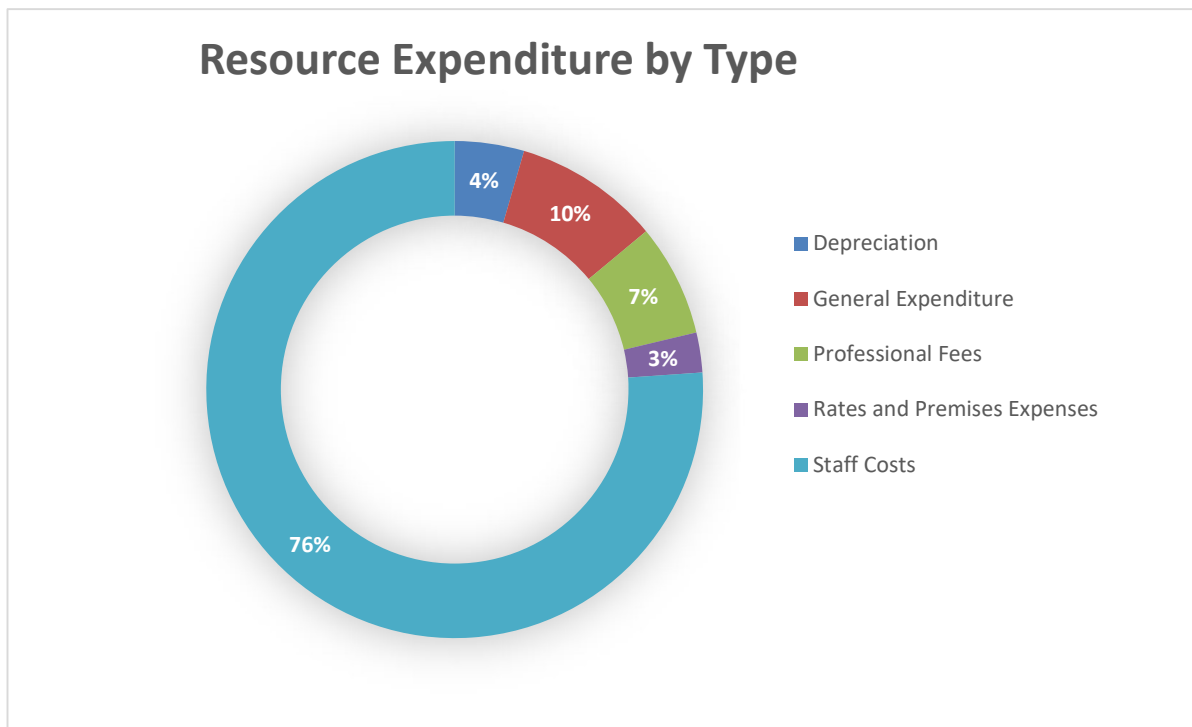
We treat people with respect and empathy and recognise and value individual experience. We are accessible and engage and explain our decision making.

Excellence

We deliver an excellent service, meeting our service standards with high levels of governance and accountability. We have a focus on continuous learning and improvement.

6. OUR FINANCIALS

We have a total annual operating expenditure of approx. £4m, the vast majority of which relates to our staff costs. The breakdown of our resource expenditure for 2023-24 is summarised below:



You can access our latest accounts in our [Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024](#).

7. ROLE PROFILE

Main purpose of role

The ARC chair will support the Ombudsman in ensuring that the unique accountability arrangements which underpin the office remain effective. In delivering on NIPSO's accountability and value for money obligations the ARC Chair will be mindful of the need to protect the Ombudsman's operational independence.

The Ombudsman, as Accounting Officer, has responsibility for issues of risk, control and governance. The Ombudsman appoints an Audit and Risk Committee to provide additional scrutiny and assurance. The ARC's role is not operational, neither has it any role in NIPSO's decision making processes. Rather the ARC's role is to advise and support the Ombudsman as Accounting Officer.

Summary of principal duties and responsibilities

- Advising on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance;
- Advising on the Annual Report and Accounts, including the Governance Statement, the process for review and submission for audit, levels of error identified, and management's letter of representation to the NIAO;
- Challenge and advise on strategic financial management;
- Advising on appropriate disaster recovery, contingency and crisis planning;
- Reviewing the planned activity and results of both internal and external audit;
- Advising on the adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's "Report to Those Charged with Governance" (RTTCWG);
- Assurances relating to the management of risk and corporate governance requirements for the NIPSO;
- Advising on anti-fraud policies, whistle-blowing processes and arrangements for special investigations;
- Provide assurance on the use of Direct Award Contracts;
- Provide assurance on appointment of Internal Audit services;
- Chairing all meetings of the ARC including agreeing agenda and minutes;
- Preparing an annual report on the ARC's work programme;
- Participation in the selection of new ARC members when required.

This role profile is subject to review and amendment as the demands of the role and the organisation evolve. Therefore the role holder will be required to be flexible and adaptable and aware that they may be asked to perform tasks, duties and responsibilities which are not specifically detailed in the job description but which are commensurate with the role.

8. PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Applicants must, as at the closing date for receipt of applications, be able to demonstrate by providing personal and specific examples on their application form that they have:

- (i) A minimum of two years' experience of chairing a committee or board.
- (ii) At least two years' experience of being a member of an Audit Committee, or group with responsibility for providing scrutiny on financial management, risk management and governance arrangements.
- (iii) A minimum of three years' experience of analysing issues and emerging risks at a strategic level.
- (iv) A minimum of three years' experience of ensuring good governance including the ability to question, challenge constructively and inform decision-making as part of the governance of an organisation.
- (v) A minimum of three years' experience of providing appropriate challenge and scrutiny to an organisation at a senior level¹ in at least three of the following areas:
 - (i) Audit;
 - (ii) Cyber Security;
 - (iii) Information Governance;
 - (iv) Financial Management and Reporting;
 - (v) Human Resources;
 - (vi) Legal; or
 - (vii) Risk management;

¹ Senior level is defined as membership of a Board or a team at the highest level of organisational management who have the day-to-day responsibilities of managing an organisation or company

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

In addition to the above essential criteria, NIPSO reserves the right to only shortlist those candidates who can also demonstrate, by providing personal and specific examples on the application form that they have:

- (i) A demonstrable understanding of public sector governance and accountability arrangements.
- (ii) Have successfully completed the professional examinations and be a full, current member of at least one of the following bodies:
 - a. Chartered Accountants Ireland
 - b. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland
 - c. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
 - d. The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
 - e. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
 - f. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy
 - g. The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Applicants must be able to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, competencies and attributes which will be tested at interview:

- Strategic Leadership
- Collaborative Working
- Analytical and Problem Solving
- Risk Management

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Committee on Standards in Public Life have defined seven principles (the Nolan Principles) which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. Accordingly, in carrying out the above duties, the post holder shall adhere at all times to the following principles:

1. Selflessness - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.
2. Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

9. REMUNERATION

Remuneration

The remuneration for this post is £650 per meeting.

Time Commitment

Meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee will normally be held four to five times per year. Additional meetings or other input (e.g. involvement in recruitment of other ARC members) may be required from time to time. Duties as chair of the ARC are expected to take up to 5 days per annum. This includes time to read papers in preparation for meetings, attending meetings and follow up actions arising.

Location

Meetings will normally take place in NIPSO offices, Progressive House, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN.

Term

3 years from appointment.

At the end of term, the Ombudsman may give consideration to a possible extension for a maximum period of a further 3 years.

This is not a public appointment nor does it constitute employment but it is subject to the NIPSO Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest policy.

10. SELECTION PROCESS

Applications for the post can be made on GetGotJobs Portal through the following link:
<https://nipso.getgotjobs.co.uk/registerJob/1c960dff-c349-32d0-f867-8bf712e9d0ca>

Completed application and monitoring forms must be submitted on the portal no later than **12 noon on Monday 03 February 2025**

Applicants who meet the shortlisting criteria will be invited to participate in a selection and assessment process.

In the event of a high volume of applications NIPSO reserves the right to apply additional criteria in order to achieve a manageable shortlist of applicants.

Reasonable Adjustments

NIPSO are committed to ensuring equal access to employment opportunities for all individuals. Applications from disabled applicants are welcome. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment and selection process, please contact us on 0800 34 34 24 or email monitoringofficer@nipso.org.uk and we will work with you to find an accessible method for you to submit your application.

Guidance notes for completing your application form

NIPSO is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all job applicants. The information you supply on this application form will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used solely for assessing your suitability for the post.

A candidate found to have knowingly given false information, or to have wilfully suppressed any material fact will be liable to disqualification from the process, or if appointed, to dismissal. All appointments are made on merit and in accordance with our Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Any canvassing of officers directly or indirectly in connection with an appointment will automatically disqualify the candidate.

Applications will only be accepted on the specific NIPSO application form. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. CVs, letters or any other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms and will not be made available to the shortlisting or interview panel.

Please also note:

- Applications which are received after the closing date or time will not be accepted.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the completed form, together with the completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, is returned by the closing date for applications.

Qualifications

You will be asked to provide original qualification certificates (or, where you have mislaid your original certificates, a certified statement of results from the relevant awarding body) and proof of memberships etc. that are relevant to the post applied for before any offer of employment can be made.

If you believe that your qualification is equivalent to the one required, you must provide specific evidence to demonstrate its equivalency in comparison to the qualification that was specifically detailed in the person specification.

If you possess any professional qualifications, please include the full details and include the date of the award.

If you have membership of a professional body please include the name of the body or organisation, the type of membership you hold (e.g., student, associate, fellow etc.), the date when this grade of membership was obtained and the expiry date (if any). If the membership has lapsed, please state this.

Experience

It is necessary to state your exact dates and periods of employment as at the application closing date (month/year) because this is calculated to the nearest month for shortlisting purposes. The shortlisting panel will only consider the information asked for in each separate box on the application.

You will be required to clearly demonstrate, by giving personal and specific details on your application form, how you meet the experience detailed in the person specification in the relevant box. If you do not supply sufficient information on your application form to clearly demonstrate that you meet the criteria, you will not be shortlisted.

Conflicts of Interest

Given the breadth of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction (namely her roles in investigating complaints about all public service providers in Northern Ireland and in investigating and adjudicating on alleged breaches of the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors), it is important that any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are declared.

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have an actual or perceived conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute an actual or perceived conflict, you should still complete this section in order to give the Selection Panel as much information as possible.

For further assistance you may wish to consult the Northern Ireland Audit Office good practice guide on conflicts of interest.

Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest detailed in the application form will not prevent you going forward to interview if you are shortlisted but will be explored further to establish how you would address the issue(s) should you be appointed.

Selection and Assessment Process

Shortlisting will take place during **week commencing 03 February 2025**. Candidates who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria and if required, the desirable criteria, will be invited to attend a competency-based interview.

Interviews are envisaged to take place **between 18 and 20 February 2025**. Further details of the process will be provided to candidates invited to participate in this process.

A reserve list of candidates meeting the standard will be held for twelve months and may be activated on a merit basis if a vacancy arises within that period.

Principles of the Appointment

NIPSO is committed to providing and promoting equality of opportunity and to the principle of recruiting on the basis of merit only. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates regardless of their gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, pregnancy and maternity, religious beliefs, political opinion, race, ethnic origin, colour or nationality, sexual orientation, disability, age, Trade Union membership or non- membership or criminal records.

All NIPSO offers of employment are conditional and subject to successful pre-employment checks and the successful applicant will be required to:

- provide documentation to confirm their identity and their right to work in the UK;
- provide documentation to verify information already provided on the application form, e.g. qualifications, professional registration, driving licence, etc;
- provide a basic AccessNI Check, which the successful candidate must obtain and the cost of which will be reimbursed upon appointment;
- provide satisfactory references, one of which must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer.

Further Information

If you would like to speak to someone about the role please contact Sean Martin, Deputy Ombudsman (sean.martin@nipso.org.uk).

If you have any further queries regarding the recruitment and selection process, then please contact the Monitoring Officer (monitoringofficer@nipso.org.uk).

NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (NIPSO)

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

- a. The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is appointed by the Ombudsman as Accounting Officer. It is an advisory body with no executive powers. It is appointed to support the Ombudsman as Accounting Officer in monitoring the corporate governance and control systems in the NIPSO Office.
- b. It fulfils this role by offering objective advice on risk management, the control environment, and governance. The integrity and the comprehensiveness of the financial statements and the reliability of the annual report of assurance.
- c. These issues are considered by reviewing the assurances on risk management, the control environment and governing provided management, in conjunction with consideration of the work undertaken by internal and external audit throughout the course of the financial year.

2 Authority

- a. The Committee is authorised by the Ombudsman to investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It is authorised to seek any information it requires from any member of staff and all staff are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
- b. The Committee meets in accordance with its Terms of Reference which, in turn, are informed by the core work programme laid out in HM Treasury's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook, March 2016.

3. Membership

- a. The Audit and Risk Committee membership consists of a non-executive chair and 3 non-executive members.
- b. The Office's External Audit Assignment Director, or their representative, and the Internal Audit Assignment Director, or their representative, are invited to attend meetings. Other attendees routinely include: the Ombudsman; the Deputy Ombudsman; and the Director of Governance and Support Services.
- c. The Committee routinely receives oral reports from representatives of the external and internal auditors on their work programmes, supplemented by formal audit reports at appropriate junctures during the year.
- d. The Committee is provided with a secretarial function by the administration section of NIPSO's Corporate Services.
- e. The Committee may also co-opt a member(s) for a period of time (not exceeding a year and with the approval of SMT) to provide specialist knowledge and/or experience if it is deemed necessary. This may also involve procuring a service or external expertise/experience on an ad-hoc basis.

4. Duties of the Committee

- a. The duties of the Committee are to review arrangements put in place by the Office and its management with regard to: risk, governance, independence and effectiveness of internal and external control; maintenance of proper accounting records and quality of financial statements; policies against fraud; implementation of new systems and compliance with laws and regulations; and more specifically to review:
 - the accounts for the year just finished prior to their finalisation and submission for audit;
 - the content of the Governance Statement for the year, presented alongside the finalised accounts;
 - Financial Management budgetary reports;
 - Internal Audit's finalised periodic work plan;
 - Internal Audit opinion for the financial year just finished;
 - the Internal Audit strategy and the periodic work plan for the financial year;
 - emerging findings from Internal Audit engagements;

- the emerging External Audit opinion for the financial year just finished and advising the Accounting Officer on signing the accounts and the Governance Statement;
- the implications of the result of the Accounting Officer's review of effectiveness of the system of internal control in relation to the Governance Statement;
- the External Audit management letter for the previous year, any emerging findings from the current interim / in-year work of External Audit, and External Audit's approach to their work;
- External Audit strategy proposed in respect of the current year's accounts;
- any residual actions arising from the previous year's work of both internal and external audit;
- re-visiting emerging findings from auditors and review actions in response to the External Audit management letter and internal audit reports;
- periodically its own effectiveness and report on that review to the Accounting Officer;
- Anti-fraud policies & whistleblowing practices for appropriateness and effectiveness;
- Issue of annual assurance reports to the Ombudsman as Accounting Officer;
- Review procurement single tender actions; and
- Disaster recovery contingency, crisis planning and business continuity

5. Information requirements

a. The Audit and Risk Committee will be provided, as appropriate, with:

- A report summarising any significant changes to the Office's Risk Register;
- A report on any internal audit reviews ;
- Internal Audit Charter;
- Draft and final accounts;
- Draft and final Governance Statement;
- A report on any changes to accounting policy;
- External Audit's management letter;
- A report on any proposals to tender for audit functions;
- A report on co-operation between Internal and External Audit;
- An Annual Audit Strategy from NIAO;
- A 'Report to Those Charged With Governance Report' from NIAO;
- Record of decision and matters arising from minutes of Senior Management Team Meetings;
- Report from external expert (as required);
- Annual NIPSO Business and Strategic Plans;
- Ombudsman's Report;

- Report on Office performance against KPIs;
- Reports on budgets and financial outcomes;
- Report on ongoing implementation of NIPSO functions and remits; and
- DAO and FD Letters.

b. In relation to strategic processes for risk, control and governance, the Committee, in the course of its work, aimed to secure assurances:

- that the risk management culture was appropriate;
- that there was a comprehensive process for identifying and evaluating risk, and for reviewing what levels of risk were tolerable;
- that the Risk Register was an appropriate reflection of the risks facing the NIPSO;
- that appropriate ownership of risk was in place;
- that management had an appropriate view of how effective internal control was;
- that risk management was carried out in a way that benefited the NIPSO and added value;
- that the NIPSO as a whole was aware of the importance of risk management and risk priorities;
- that the system of internal control was effective;
- that good corporate Governance priorities and arrangements are in place; and
- that the Ombudsman's Annual 'Governance Statement' was comprehensive and evidence based.

6. Meetings

- a. Meetings shall be held quarterly but the Chair may convene additional meetings as deemed necessary.
- b. The Ombudsman as Accounting Officer may seek the advice of the Audit and Risk Committee and may wish to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues.
- c. A minimum of 2 independent members of the Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.
- d. The Committee may ask other NIPSO officials of the Office to attend to assist it with its discussions on any particular matter.
- e. The Chair of the Committee should meet with the Ombudsman, Head of Internal Audit and the Director of External Audit bilaterally at least once a year.

7. Reporting

- a. Discussions at the Committee meetings shall be formally recorded and the Chair will advise the Ombudsman of the outcome of proceedings.
- b. Clear direct lines of communication and reporting will be maintained between the Chair of the Committee and the Ombudsman, Head of Internal Audit, Director of External Audit and the NI Assembly Audit Committee.
- c. The Committee will provide the Ombudsman with an Annual Report, timed to support finalisation of the annual accounts and the Governance Statement, summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the preceding year.

8. Responsibility

- a. In the event of a disagreement between the Committee and the Senior Management Team, the Ombudsman will take any necessary decision as she has ultimate responsibility, given her legal status as a Corporation Sole.

9. Conflict of interest

- a. It is the responsibility of the Committee members to proactively declare any potential conflict of interest arising out of business arising on the Committee's agenda or from changes in the member's personal circumstances. This should be a standing first item on the agenda of every Committee meeting. Should a conflict be declared the Chair of the Committee will then determine an appropriate course of action with the member.
- b. If it is the Chair who has a conflict of interest, the Ombudsman will ask one of the non-executive attendees to lead in determining the appropriate course of action.

10. Access

- a. The Head of Internal Audit and the representative of External Audit will have unhindered and confidential access to the Chair of the Committee.
- b. The Chair of the NI Assembly Audit Committee will have access to the Chair of the Committee.

11. Outline Annual Work Programme of the Audit and Risk Committee

- a. The Annual Core Work Programme is detailed at Appendix 1.

12. Review

- a. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

13. Publication of Terms of Reference

- a. The up-to-date Terms of Reference are publicly available on NIPSO's website.

Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Annual Core Work Programme.

The Audit and Risk Committee will ordinarily meet four times a year.

The meetings will be held in April/May, June/July, October/November and January/February. Meetings will normally be scheduled for the third/fourth Thursday of the month, apart from April/May which will be scheduled to meet the Annual Resource Accounts return to the NIAO and review of the Draft Governance Statement.

The following is the core work programme identified for each meeting. This is not a definitive list but is a guide to the core issues to be reviewed.

Late April/Early May

Committee Matters:

- Apologies
- Conflicts of interest
- Agree minutes of last meeting
- Review action points and update from last meeting

Performance:

- Comment on the annual report and accounts for the year just finished prior to their finalisation and submission for Audit (Financial sections only)
- Advise on the Governance statement for the year just finished
- Review Case Performance Management

Audit, Accountability and Governance:

- Consider any Internal Audit Reports and Internal Audit's opinion for the financial year just finished
- Review progress against NIPSO Strategic Plan

Risk:

- Consider the Risk Register (Summary)

General:

- Subject of Interest
- **For information**
- Schedule of progress made against audit recommendation
- Senior Management Team Meeting Minutes
- DAO's and FD issued
- Risk Register
- Financial Management Report
- Policy progress schedule

Prior to the June meeting the finalised Annual report section of the Annual Report and Accounts will be issued to the ARC for consideration in May for review, comments (if any) and onward submission to NIAO by early June.

Late June

Committee Matters:

- Apologies
- Conflicts of interest
- Agree minutes of last meeting
- Review action points and update from last meeting

Performance:

- Financial Review
- Case Performance Management Review

Audit, Accountability and Governance:

- Consider External Audit's Draft Report To Those Charged With Governance
- Review and Challenge Internal Audit's strategy and work plan for the current year
- Review progress made against NIPSO Strategic Plan including current year business objectives

Risk:

- Consider the Risk Register (Summary)

General:

- Subject of Interest

For information

- Schedule of progress made against audit recommendations
- Senior Management Team Meeting Minutes
- DAO's and FD issued
- Risk Register
- Financial Management Report
- Policy progress schedule

Late October/Early November

Committee Matters:

- Apologies
- Conflicts of interest
- Agree minutes of last meeting
- Review action points and update from last meeting

Performance:

- Financial Review
- Case Performance Management Review

Audit, Accountability and Governance:

- Consider External Audit's Final Report To Those Charged With Governance
- Consider mid-year report(s) from Internal Audit
- Review progress against NIPSO Strategic Plan including current year business objectives
- Agree the ARC Chair's Annual report to the Accounting Officer

Risk:

- Consider the Risk Register (Summary)

General:

- Subject of Interest

For information

- Schedule of progress made against audit recommendation
- Senior Management Team Meeting Minutes
- DAO and FD Letters issued since last meeting
- Risk Register
- Financial Management Report
- Policy progress schedule

Late January/Early February

Committee Matters:

- Apologies
- Conflicts of interest
- Agree minutes of last meeting
- Review action points and update from last meeting

Performance:

- Financial Review
- Case Performance Management Review

Audit, Accountability and Governance:

- Consider mid-year report(s) from Internal Audit
- Review progress against NISPO Strategic Plan and current year business objectives
- Consider the Committee's own Effectiveness in its work
- Review the overall Assurance Framework
- Consider the External Audit Strategy and work plan
- Review NISPO Strategic Plan including next financial year's Business Plan and objectives
- Review the Terms of Reference of the ARC including the core work programme for next the financial year

Risk:

- Consider the Risk Register (Summary)

General:

- Subject of Interest

For information

- Schedule of progress made against audit recommendation
- Senior Management Team Meeting Minutes
- DAO's and FD issued
- Risk Register
- Internal Annual Budget
- Policy progress schedule