

PRESS NOTICE
Embargoed to 10.00am on 13 October 2008



PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Judicial Member of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

The Lord Chancellor has appointed Sir Patrick Coghlin to be a judicial member of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (the Commission). He will take up post as a Judicial member with effect from 13 October 2008. His appointment is for a period of 5 years. The appointment is unpaid. Lord Justice Coghlin succeeds Sir Anthony Campbell whose term as a judicial member ended on 14 June 2008.

Notes for Editors

Jack Straw MP is the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission was established in June 2005 to recommend appointments to judicial office up to and including High Court judge. The Commission is a Non-Departmental Public Body funded by Government through the Northern Ireland Court Service and is located at Headline Building, Victoria Street, Belfast, BT1 3GG. Its web site address is www.nijac.org.

Under the chairmanship of the Lord Chief Justice for Northern Ireland, Sir Brian Kerr, the Commission comprises twelve members, including 5 members of the judiciary, 5 lay members, a barrister nominated by the General Council of the Bar for Northern Ireland and a solicitor nominated by the Law Society for Northern Ireland. The Commission, at present, is made up of 8 men and 4 women. As of October 2008, in terms of community balance, 6 are regarded as Catholic, 3 are regarded as Protestant and 3 are regarded as belonging to neither community.

The current membership of the Commission is as follows:

- The Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Sir Brian Kerr
- Mrs Sinead Burns, Lay Magistrate
- The Honourable Lord Justice Coghlin, Lord Justice of Appeal
- Peter Cush, Barrister at Law
- Donal Flanagan OBE, Lay Member
- John Gordon, Solicitor
- Dame Joan Harbison CBE DBE, Lay Member
- Mrs Ruth Laird, Lay Member
- Her Honour Judge Loughran, County Court Judge
- Professor John Morison, Lay Member
- Dr Raymond Mullan OBE, Lay Member
- The Honourable Mr Justice Weatherup, High Court Judge.
- There is a vacancy at District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) level.

The Commission has 4 key statutory responsibilities:

- 1) to conduct the appointments process and make recommendations to the Lord Chancellor in respect of all appointments up to and including High Court judge;
- 2) to recommend candidates on the basis of merit using transparent procedures to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that appointments to listed judicial office are such that those holding judicial offices are reflective of the community in Northern Ireland;
- 3) to engage in a programme of action, so far that it is reasonably practicable to do so, to ensure that a range of persons reflective of the community in Northern Ireland is available for consideration by the Commission for appointment; and
- 4) to publish a report annually on its activities.

Pen Picture

Sir Patrick Coghlin

Career and Experience

Sir Patrick was appointed as a High Court Judge in 1997 and as a Lord Justice of Appeal in 2008. He was called to the Bar in 1970 and took silk in 1985. Sir Patrick was Chairman of the General Council of the Bar from 1991 until 1993 and was Senior Crown Counsel until 1997. Prior to his appointment as a Lord Justice of Appeal, Sir Patrick was the senior judge of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court.

Sir Patrick is currently President of the Lands Tribunal and is chairman of a group of tribunal chairmen and presidents which is considering issues concerning tribunal reform in Northern Ireland.

He was a former Deputy Chairman of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland.

Other Public Appointments Held and Remunerations Received

No other public appointments held currently.

This appointment was made on merit and political activity played no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any is declared) to be made public. Sir Patrick Coghlin has not carried out any political activity in the past 5 years. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice.

If you have any queries regarding the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission please contact:

**Patricia Quinn
Press Officer
Communications Group
Northern Ireland Court Service
Windsor House
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7LT
Tel. 028 90412387
Mob. 07780 680838
Email. pressteam@courtsni.gov.uk**