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Paterson Announces Appointments to Equality Commission

THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2010

PATERSON ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS TO EQUALITY COMMISSION

Secretary of State Owen Paterson MP today announced the appointment of Fidelma Carolan, Milton Kerr, Stephen McIlveen and Liam Maskey as new Commissioners to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Owen Paterson said: **“The Equality Commission under the leadership of Chief Commissioner Bob Collins plays a vital role in protecting and promoting equality for everyone in Northern Ireland’s diverse society.**

“The four new Commissioners bring with them skills, understanding and a wealth of knowledge that will contribute greatly to the Commission’s work.

“Eleven years after its establishment, the Commission continues to meet new challenges in the increasingly diverse, multicultural society in a testing economic environment. I am confident that the new Commissioners will help the Commission to meet these challenges and build on its considerable achievements so far.”

The Secretary of State also thanked the three outgoing Commissioners, Bryan Johnston, James Knox, Elaine Waterson and paid tribute to David Stevens, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

He said: **“The outgoing Commissioners have made a valuable contribution to the promotion of the equality 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 five years.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The ECNI is a key institution of the Belfast Agreement and has a vital role in protecting and promoting equality. Its main duties are to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and affirmative and positive action, promote good relations between persons of different racial groups, oversee the effectiveness of the statutory duties on public bodies set out in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; and the disability duties under the Disability Discrimination Order; and to keep relevant legislation under review. More information can be found on the Equality Commission’s website www.equalityni.org.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for making appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The funding and sponsorship of the Commission is otherwise a devolved matter.

2. Brief summary of appointees’ careers:

Fidelma Carolan is currently the UNISON regional manager for Lifelong Learning. She has over 15 years experience of working with the voluntary and community sector in a variety of managerial and consultancy positions.

Milton Kerr is a former Chief Inspector of the PSNI (now retired). From 2003 – 2008 he was Head of Community Safety in ‘G’ District (Foyle, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane).

Stephen McIlveen practiced as a solicitor from 1998 to 2007. Since leaving practice he has worked for a number of DUP MLAs as a researcher. He was also a legal volunteer at the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights in Phnom Penh. He is a member of the Senate of Queen’s University and Chair of Convocation.

News Releases

Paterson Condemns Attack on Dolores Kelly

FRIDAY 15 APRIL 2011

PATERSON ATTENDS ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT HOMECOMING EVENTS IN MARKET DRAYTON AND SHREWSBURY

TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2011

Heed the Words of Cardinal Brady - Paterson

WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2011

Written Ministerial Statement - Publication of the Report of the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry

TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2011

Written Ministerial Statement - Two Year Extension to Non Jury Trial System

TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2011

Owen Paterson - Oral Statement on the Murder of Police Constable Ronan Kerr

MONDAY 4 APRIL 2011

Liam Maskey founded the Newington/Cavehill Community Services Association (NCCSA) in 1989 and is both co-founder and Director of Intercomm, a cross community project operating in North Belfast. He was a founding Member of the North Belfast Partnership Board and served on the Belfast European Partnership Board from 1997 – 2006.

3. Terms of appointment

The new Commissioners will take up appointment on 8 November 2010. The Commissioners' terms will last for three years and will be on a part time basis (two days a month) for which an allowance of £5,000 is paid.

4. OCPA Code of Practice

The Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice stipulates that independent scrutiny is a mandatory element of every competition. No chair or non-executive member appointed to a public body within the Commission's remit may be made unless an independent assessor has been involved in the process to ensure that the procedures set out in the Code are applied. An independent assessor has been involved in the appointments process throughout. The procedures have complied with the OCPA Code of Practice for Public Appointments.

5. Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and 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 within the last five years to be made public.

6. Statutory requirements

These appointments were made by the Secretary of State, taking account of his statutory duty under section 73 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to ensure, as far as practicable, that the Commissioners, as a group, are representative of the community in Northern Ireland.

7. Commission Membership

The new Commissioners join Chief Commissioner Bob Collins, Deputy Chief Commissioner Jane Morrice and ten existing Commissioners: Stella Burnside, Kit Chivers, Patricia Feeney, Charo Lanao-Madden, Norman Trotter, Murray Watt, Anna Carragher, Peter Sheridan, Dermot Nesbitt and Lyn McBriar.