

Appointment of Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

Press release

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The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Brandon Lewis MP has announced the reappointment of Sinead Burns as a Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

The appointment has been renewed for a period of five years until 7 March 2026.

Sinead Burns is an Occupational Psychologist and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development with over 20 years' experience in Human Resource Management gained within the public, private and charitable sectors. She served as Commissioner for Judicial Appointments in Northern Ireland from 2005 until 2013.

She is currently a Lay Magistrate and a Member of Council for the General Optical Council, which regulates optical professionals and businesses throughout the UK. She is also a Fitness to Practice Panel Member with the Health & Care Professions Council.

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are independent of Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and have a statutory responsibility to uphold selection on merit for appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). The Commissioners also hear appeals under the NICS Code of Ethics. Commissioners work in partnership with the NICS and other stakeholders to uphold the merit principle and promote public confidence in recruitment.

Terms of appointment

The position attracts a remuneration of £300 per day and is not pensionable.

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.

The appointee has declared no such political activity in the past five years.

Regulation

This appointment is not regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

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Call for evidence: An inspection of the use of hotels and barracks as contingency asylum accommodation

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has begun an inspection of the use of hotels and barracks as contingency asylum accommodation and is inviting anyone with relevant knowledge or experience to submit their evidence to chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk.

The call for evidence will remain open for four weeks (until 19 February 2021).

This inspection will examine the use made of hotels and other forms of contingency asylum accommodation, including Penally Camp and Napier Barracks, since the beginning of 2020. It will focus on the roles and responsibilities of the Home Office and the accommodation service providers, and of other parties, in relation to the use of contingency asylum accommodation, including:

- communication between the Home Office and the accommodation service providers, and with other stakeholders (for example, local authorities, health services, NGOs who provide support to asylum seekers), regarding the need for contingency asylum accommodation in particular areas

- the process(es) for identifying potential contingency asylum accommodation and for testing and deciding about the suitability of specific sites, including with regard to Covid-19 safety
- decisions about individual asylum seekers and their needs in terms of accommodation and other support, including information sharing, record keeping, oversight and review, particularly with regard to vulnerabilities and risks
- communication between the Home Office and/or the accommodation service providers and individuals (“service users”) regarding their asylum accommodation, including any changes to that accommodation
- the strategy for reducing the requirement for contingency asylum accommodation in the short- to medium-term (to the end of 2021-22) and longer-term (through to the end of the current Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts)

ICIBI would welcome evidence in relation to any of the above points, but also in respect of any other matters that those with knowledge and experience of contingency asylum accommodation consider relevant.

Since the end of 2020, ICIBI has been speaking to and receiving evidence from a number of stakeholders, along with residents of both Penally Camp and Napier Barracks. There is no need for those who have already provided evidence to re-submit it, unless they wish to update or add to it.

Please Note: The Independent Chief Inspector is unable to assist with individual asylum claims or with complaints, but where anyone considers that the details of a claim or complaint are relevant they may include them in their evidence submission.

Data Protection

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we need your permission to process and retain the information you submit, by clicking [here](#) a consent statement will automatically be added to your email.

However, if you are using a non-compatible email client then please send your submission to chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk with ‘Contingency Asylum Accommodation submission’ in the subject line and include the following consent statement in the body of your email: “I consent to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration retaining and processing the information and data in this email.”

Please do not include this statement if you do not wish to give your consent. The information you submit may be quoted in the final inspection report, but it is the ICIBI’s practice not to name sources and to anonymise as much as possible any examples or case studies.

Sellafield Ltd plays key role in drone development challenge

Sellafield Ltd has a key role in a consortium of industrial, aerospace and aviation giants that has won a share of a £30 million government challenge fund to develop and test a remotely operated drone system.

The futuristic system will enable remote inspection and monitoring of nuclear sites and has a range of other applications including on construction sites, oil and gas installations, road, rail and telecoms infrastructure and in providing live support to emergency services.

Led by the specialist drone command and control solution developer, Sees.ai, the consortium includes BAE Systems, Atkins, Skanska, NATS, Vodafone and a host of other organisations with unique specialisms and perspectives.

Mark Foster, Head of Specialist Equipment Services, Sellafield Ltd, said:

The specialist equipment services team provides engineering and maintenance support to the whole of Sellafield and we continually seek out areas of innovation to improve services on our complex and congested site.

This new technology has huge potential for our future operations; making our work safer, faster and more cost effective.

We're proud to be at the forefront of a national challenge and our experienced team, together with our local supply chain partners, is demonstrating every day how we can truly make a difference for our mission and beyond.

The funding comes from the Future Flight Challenge, Phase 2 competition, part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund delivered by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish.

As a publicly funded organisation itself. Sellafield Ltd will not receive any of the challenge fund but the Sellafield site offers a unique testbed for the use of this technology on nuclear licensed sites and already has its own team of highly skilled and experienced drone pilots.

The drone system, which uses similar technology to autonomous cars, enables autonomous drones to be flown under tight human supervision by pilots based in a central control room hundreds of miles away.

The challenge put the drone system through a series of increasingly complex tests to see how it would respond in a range of circumstances, demonstrating significant potential for inspections and maintenance of congested and hazardous areas.

Peter Allport, Remote Handling Lead for Specialist Equipment Services, Sellafield Ltd Engineering and Maintenance said:

This technology has the potential to revolutionise how we use drones at Sellafield, increasing the operational envelope and transforming the way in which drones are piloted.

It also closes the loop between our engineering and maintenance and robotics and artificial intelligence programme; ensuring we are always using the best available technology so we can continuously improve our service to the Sellafield site and the rest of the NDA Group.

[Working with the Premier League to make recruitment safer](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) recently worked with the Premier League to deliver an online awareness session for clubs, looking at the work that DBS does and how we can work together to make recruitment safer.

The Partnership and Engagement team at DBS, who are also responsible for delivery of the [DBS Conference](#), work regularly with other organisations, looking at how we can collaborate and share key messages amongst the safeguarding community.

This recent session with Premier League clubs looked at a number of different topics, including:

- an overview of the work that DBS does, alongside a general update
- the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and [DBS' response to this](#), including the introduction of 24-hour emergency Barred List(s) checks and other temporary measures
- a look at the [new filtering rules](#) that were introduced in November 2020

The Premier League clubs involved in this session were also encouraged to ask questions about the work that we do at DBS to maximise understanding, and

were invited to remain in contact with DBS as we continue to build effective relationships, and look at how we can work together with safer recruitment in mind.

The session also provided the Partnership and Engagement team with the platform to introduce our new DBS regional teams and Outreach Officers to the Premier League. The focus of this new regional outreach service is to work collaboratively with safeguarding organisations and organisations that are recruiting.

Head of Partnership and Engagement at DBS, Helen Chandler, said:

We have been delighted to have the opportunity to develop our relationship with the Premier League and support them, and their clubs, by increasing awareness and understanding of the role that DBS plays in making recruitment safer. We are learning from them what works well for their clubs, and adjusting our approach to take advantage of communication technology, and the added support that our new regional outreach officers can give to organisations and communities at a local level, at the time that it is needed.

As detailed in the [DBS 2020-25 Strategy](#), keeping people informed and increasing public understanding of the work we do at DBS is one of DBS' strategic objectives, and this type of work is a key part of meeting these objectives over the next five years.

For more information about this piece of work, or the work of the Partnership and Engagement team, please contact: [Danielle Oakford](#), Safeguarding Engagement Manager.

DBS is looking forward to continuing this work in collaboration with the Premier League.

[UK's new Information Commissioner formally appointed](#)



Update on 29 October 2021:

Elizabeth Denham's term as the Information Commissioner comes to an end on 30 November.

John Edwards, who is currently serving as the New Zealand Privacy Commissioner, was approved by the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee as the next Information Commissioner after a pre-appointment hearing on 9 September 2021. Mr Edwards is expected to take up his position on 3 January 2022.

Paul Arnold, the ICO's Deputy Chief Executive, will be designated as the ICO's Accounting Officer from 1 December 2021 until 2 January 2022. The regulatory responsibilities of the Commissioner are delegated to Deputy Commissioners through the ICO's Scheme of Delegation. This ensures continuity of regulatory decision making during this period.

Update on 25 January 2021:

Following a request from the Secretary of State for the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham has agreed to extend her term of office by just over three months ending on 31 October 2021 while the recruitment process for her successor is completed.

Ms Denham will take up the role from 18 July 2016 for a period of five years, replacing Christopher Graham whose term of office ended on 28 June 2016.

This follows approval by the Culture, Media and Sports Select Committee after a pre-appointment hearing on the 27 April 2016.

Ms Denham was previously the Commissioner at the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, Canada.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights. The Department for Media, Culture and Sport is the ICO's sponsoring department within Government. Further information about the ICO and its work can be found online at www.ico.org.uk.

Notes for editors

1. Elizabeth Denham has held senior leadership positions in the field of information rights in Canada over the last 12 years. Since 2010 she has been the Commissioner at the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, Canada, where she is responsible for enforcing the Canadian Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), and the Lobbyists Registration Act (LRA). Previously (2007-10) she was the Assistant Privacy Commissioner of Canada in Ottawa; having been a Director at the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (2003-7).
2. The salary for the role is £140,000. The appointment has been made in accordance with the OCPA Code of Practice. It is a requirement of the Code that political activity by those appointed is declared. Elizabeth Denham has declared no such political activity.

Published 15 July 2016

Last updated 29 October 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 29 October 2021

Updated information about Elizabeth Denham's term.

2. 25 January 2021

An update line stating that Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham has agreed to extend her term of office by just over three months, ending on 31 October 2021.

3. 15 July 2016

First published.