

**15 March 2018**

**Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
Process to Identify and Recommend Persons for Appointment**

The Public Appointments Service (PAS) wishes to put on record the process used to identify and recommend persons for appointment to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). This is in response to recent media commentary.

The process of appointment as a member of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is set out in [Section 13 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014](#). This is the first time that vacancies on the Commission have been filled since the commencement of the Act.

Members of the Commission are appointed by the President on the advice of the Government and following the passing of a resolution of each House of the Oireachtas recommending the appointment.

The legislation underpinning the appointments to the Commission assigns the selection function to the Public Appointments Service (PAS). PAS conducted a selection process in order to make recommendations to the Government in respect of those persons to be appointed as members of the Commission.

It was agreed in advance, with the Department of Justice and Equality, that the channel used to advertise State Board appointments, was appropriate in the context of these appointments. However, there is a key point of difference with the standard State Boards selection process, in which PAS provides a slate of eligible and qualified candidates from which the relevant Minister makes the selection. In the case of appointments to the IHREC, the selection is made by PAS and the Government is provided with the same number of names as there are vacancies to be filled on the Commission.

On this occasion PAS was asked to select names to fill seven vacancies on the IHREC. In order to meet the statutory requirements regarding gender representation on the Commission, the seven appointments had to include a minimum of:

- four men
- two women
- and one member of either gender

PAS adopted an open, rigorous, competitive selection approach to this process in order to meet the statutory requirements.

### **Advertising**

A notice seeking applications was placed on the State Boards website on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This notice included an explanatory [Information Booklet](#) which clearly set out the requirements for appointment to the Commission. The vacancies were also advertised via social media (LinkedIn, Twitter). Campaign alerts issued to over 6,245 registered individuals on stateboards.ie.

Information regarding the campaign was also circulated to key stakeholder organisations with an interest in human rights and equality matters.

The campaign closed for applications on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and 149 applications were received.

### **Assessment Process**

Details of the criteria for selection, based on the requirements for membership as set out in the Information Booklet, are provided again for ease of reference in the Appendix to this report. The requirements for membership of the Commission were agreed in advance by the Minister for Justice and Equality and PAS in accordance with Section 13 (6) of the Act.

In addition, and as mentioned above, in order to meet the statutory requirements regarding gender representation on the Commission, the seven appointments had to include a minimum of:

- four men
- two women
- and one member of either gender

In conducting this assessment and selection process the PAS adhered to our grounding principles of probity, equity and fairness and to our commitment to the highest standards in assessment and selection.

## **Selection Process**

PAS convened a Selection Panel to consider the 149 applications received and decide which applicants would be called forward to interview.

The panel met on the 8<sup>th</sup> November and was constituted as follows:

### **Chairperson:**

#### **Mr. Fred Barry**

Mr Barry is a chartered engineer and a qualified barrister with over 30 years' experience in senior leadership roles in the public and private sector, most recently as CEO of the National Roads Authority. He is a non-executive director of PM Group.

### **Nominee of the**

#### **Fundamental Rights Agency:**

#### **Mr. Constantinos Manolopoulos**

Deputy Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – nominee of the Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Act.

### **Board Members:**

#### **Ms. Emily Logan**

Chief Commissioner  
Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission

#### **Ms Bernie Gray**

Ms. Bernie Gray is an executive coach and Management Consultant. She is an accountant, with relevant qualifications and expertise in a number of areas including public administration, corporate governance, change management, HR, business coaching and business restructuring. She is currently a member of the Accountability Board of the Civil Service, Business in the Community, the Audit Committee of the RCSI and is a member of the Board of Governors of DCU.

Following this initial assessment of applications, 15 potentially appointable candidates were invited to interview. The interviews took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017 and the Panel selected 7 candidates for appointment, taking account of the legal and other requirements set out above.

The seven candidates selected were subjected to background checks on public record information. The selected candidates also confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest or legal impediments which would be likely to interfere with their ability to play a full role as members of the Commission.

The results of the selection process were issued to the Dept of Justice & Equality on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The Government accepted the recommendations of the PAS selection process at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

**End.**

## Appendix – Selection Criteria

Applications were invited from members of the public who considered they satisfied the criteria as outlined below:

Having regard to section 13(13) of the Act, the appointments made will reflect the need to ensure that members of the Commission broadly reflect the nature of Irish society and that such persons possess knowledge of, or experience in the following areas:

- human rights matters;
- the promotion of equality in employment and service provision;
- specific equality grounds as follows:
  - (i) gender;
  - (ii) civil status;
  - (iii) family status;
  - (iv) sexual orientation;
  - (v) religious belief;
  - (vi) age;
  - (vii) disability;
  - (viii) race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
  - (ix) membership of the Traveller community

Having regard to the role envisaged for IHREC once UN CRPD is ratified, one or more of the persons to be appointed in this selection process will have lived experience of disability.

In addition to the specific requirements set out in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, as listed above, it is essential that candidates demonstrate significant experience at an appropriately senior level of at least one of the following:

- **Corporate Governance and Risk Management**  
Strong corporate governance skills at an appropriately senior level in a complex organisation of scale or equivalent business experience.
- **Financial Planning**  
A career history at a senior level in a complex organisation of scale or equivalent business experience which demonstrates experience in accountancy, audit or financial planning and the presentation and interpretation of financial performance.
- **Strategic Change**  
Experience of working with a wide range of public sector bodies to introduce significant strategic change and reform processes while ensuring maximum buy-in from all stakeholders.
- **Sectoral Knowledge/Experience**  
A background in social sciences or economics and experience, academic or otherwise in interculturalism and integration.
- **Previous Experience of Board Membership**  
Previous experience of board membership to include experience of chairing or sitting on advisory committees.

In addition to the foregoing specific skills and experience, it is also desirable that candidates be able to demonstrate the following:

- The capacity to quickly understand the complex cultural, social, strategic, political legal and regulatory environment within which the Commission operates;
- An understanding of the equality and human rights issues that can arise for public and private sector organisations;
- Experience of implementing equality and human rights approaches in public and private sector organisations;
- Open-minded strategic thinking and an ability to bring own experience to bear on issues under discussion;
- A strong sense of ethics and integrity together with a clear understanding of good governance practices;
- Commitment to an evidence-based approach, and the capacity to appreciate the implications of complex and multi-faceted evidence;
- The ability to make important and difficult objective decisions;
- The ability to challenge constructively the opinions of others, work to achieve a shared consensus and accept collective responsibility for Commission decisions;
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written, and the ability to express themselves clearly and succinctly; and
- The ability to work as part of a team and act to avoid or address any conflict which may arise with proven track record of collaborative working towards a common goal.

The process also required that the seven appointments should include a minimum of:

- four men
- two women
- and one member of either gender