



## NEW MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

**Maria Eagle has been appointed Minister for the Department of Education as part of the Cabinet reshuffle on 5<sup>th</sup> May.**

Maria has been MP for Liverpool, Garston since 1997. She was previously Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Work and Pensions from 2001 to 2005 and the Department for Education and Skills from 2005 to 2006.

Before entering Parliament, Maria practised as a solicitor specialising in housing, personal injury and employment law.

Her other Ministerial responsibilities are for the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Minister for Children.

### RPA AT TOP OF NEW MINISTER'S AGENDA

The Minister has stated that RPA will be a top priority for her.

*"I am pleased to be involved in the important and exciting*

*changes taking place under the RPA.*

*The reform of education is at the top of my agenda and I will do everything possible to ensure that Northern Ireland sees the positive changes that the Review will make to the provision of education here as quickly as possible.*

*Throughout the Review, we are working to ensure that the people who use the education service every day continue to receive the high level of service they expect and deserve, and that, through the Review, we can release funds to improve front-line services over time.*

*All of us who work in and make use of the education service are in this together and I want to thank you for your dedication, hard work and commitment to the service."*

## Public Service Commission

A Public Service Commission, to advise on the transfer of staff to the new organisations being created following the Review of Public Administration has been set up.

Speaking on 8 March, the Secretary of State, Peter Hain said: "Implementing the Review of Public Administration will be the greatest single challenge to the public sector here in more than 30 years. We need to ensure that members of staff affected by the changes are treated in a fair and coherent manner across all the areas involved."

He also said he would expect the Commission to make recommendations to government on the guiding principles and steps necessary to safeguard the interests of staff and to ensure their smooth transfer to new organisations established as a consequence of government decisions on the Review of Public Administration, taking into account statutory obligations, including those arising from section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

On taking up the position of Chairperson, Sid McDowell, former Deputy General Secretary of NIPSA and chair of the Local Government Staff Commission, said "The challenge facing the Commission will be to work to safeguard the interests of staff, to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect so that their transfer to new organisations is a smooth one".

He said the Commission would be seeking the co-operation of employers, existing sectoral commissions and relevant trade unions to ensure consistency across the public sector.

The Commission delivered its first guiding principle in May - 'An Effective Communications Strategy'.

The Department fully endorses the first guiding principle, and will continue to work closely with the PSC throughout the RPA in the interests of all staff.



Department of **Education**

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AN ROINN **Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O **Lear**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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# HUMAN RESOURCES PROJECT

The May Edition of the Newsletter advised that DE had set up a Human Resources (HR) Project to identify the HR issues arising from RPA in partnership with stakeholders and to develop and implement proposals to address these.

The Senior Responsible Owner for the HR Project is DE's Head of Corporate Services, **Maura McCusker**. Maura will be supported by the Project Manager, **Matthew Alford** and Project Team Member, **Wendy Eager**.

To date an **HR Project Board** and **Project Assurance Group** have been established and include representatives from across the Education Sector and Trade Union Side (TUS).

The **HR Project Board** members from the Education Bodies will be the decision makers on the HR Policies & Procedures. The Board met for the first time on 14 June. Membership of the Project Board is as follows:

## HUMAN RESOURCE PROJECT BOARD

Maura McCusker - Senior Responsible Owner  
Patricia Weir - Staff Commission for ELBs  
Alison Millar - TUS  
Lily Kerr - TUS  
Patricia Mellon - BELB  
Hilary McVitty - SEELB  
Robin Harper - NEELB  
Terry Heron - SELB  
Helen Duffy - WELB  
David Guilfoyle - YCNI  
John Curran - Interboard Services Manager  
La'Verne Montgomery - CCMS  
Lorna McAlpine - NICIE  
Neil Anderson - CCEA  
Pol O'Mordha - CNaG  
Matthew Alford - HR Project Manager  
Wendy Eager - Secretary to Board

**The Project Assurance Group** will quality assure the HR Policies & Procedures produced by the HR Project Team on behalf of the Project Board. Membership of Project Assurance Group is as follows:

## HUMAN RESOURCE PROJECT ASSURANCE GROUP

Barbara Medhurst - DE Establishment Officer  
Albert Mills - TUS  
To be confirmed - TUS  
Robbie McGreevy - BELB  
Mary Walker - SEELB  
Gerry Laverty - NEELB  
Pat Keating - SELB  
Mary Ferris - WELB  
La'Verne Montgomery - CCMS  
Lisa Johnston - CCEA  
Margaret Taggart - RTU  
Sheila Rader - YCNI

In addition an **HR Project Team** is being established which will be tasked with developing the HR Policies and Procedures. It is hoped that the Team will be populated by HR practitioners from both the NICS and the wider Education Sector.

## What else has been happening?

Throughout March and April the HR Project Team met with Education Sector HR Stakeholders who identified what the main HR issues will be for their staff and their organisation as we move towards the establishment of the ESA in April 08.

Some of the areas of concern highlighted at the meetings were understandably about bread and butter issues like Terms and Conditions, Location, Pensions and Redundancies. All of these issues will need to be addressed and DE will work closely with the Public Services Commission and the cross sector HR Group to ensure that all staff affected by RPA will be treated equitably.

Until decisions are made on key RPA issues concerning the structure, processes and location of the new ESA it will not be possible to say exactly how RPA will impact on individuals. The HR Project Team will be developing the HR Policies & Procedures that will be needed to support these key decisions. The HR Team will develop proposals concerning the following:

- Vacancy Control;
- Retaining staff;
- The aggregation of staff into the ESA;
- Policy & Procedures for re-deployment;
- Policy & Procedures for Relocation of Staff;
- Training & Development needs of staff; and
- Framework for Equality Plan.

## Trade Union Side (TUS)

In addition to TUS representation on both the HR Project Board and HR Project Assurance Group, work is underway to establish an HR Education Sector TUS Forum.

# STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

## RPA Communication Steering Group Membership

Organisation	Member
South Eastern Education and Library Board	Nicky McBride
Southern Education and Library Board	Brendan O'Hara
Western Education and Library Board	Oliver Kelly
Belfast Education and Library Board	John Martin
North Eastern Education and Library Board	Daryll Kenny
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Paul O'Connor
Governing Bodies Association	John Miskelly
Northern Ireland Teaching Council	Mark Langhammer
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Deborah Girvan
Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	Karen Gribbon
Transferor Representatives' Council	Revd Ian Ellis
Association of Northern Ireland Colleges	John D'Arcy
Youth Council	Karen Witherspoon
Comhairle na Gaelscoliochta	Pol O Mordha
Catholic Trustees	Rev Timothy Bartlett
Regional Training Unit	Chris Dardis
YouthNet	Mary Field
Staff Commission for ELBs	Deirdre Vaughn
NICICTU	Brian Campfield
DCAL	Gareth Nicholson
DEL	Angela McAllister
DE	Chris Stewart Liam Barr Christine Kidd Wendy Eager Kim Martin

**In each issue of 'Moving Forward', we plan to include an article written by one of the education stakeholders involved in the RPA, giving their perspective of the Review and how it will affect them.**

## Working and making change together, we can make a difference

### Karen Gribbon, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Northern Ireland is moving towards a new era in education. CCEA welcomes this change and believes that the ESA has the potential to deliver a fresh, innovative and value for money service for learners and in particular young people. We are keen to play our part in developing an education body with strong leadership, clearly defined responsibilities and delivering quality assured services.

The Partnership Management Board (PMB) is a strategic planning group representing a range of education partners. It has been set up to coordinate the roll out of the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements. Through PMB, we have already had the opportunity to work much closer with our colleagues in the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), Regional Training Unit (RTU), Classroom 2000 (C2K) and a wide range of other education bodies. Whilst these partnerships have worked well and we have always enjoyed excellent working relationships with our education partners, we look forward to the benefits of working in a fully integrated education service.

Change is undoubtedly necessary. However a change programme of this scale will certainly bring with it a degree of discomfort and concern for each organisation and individual involved.

One way of managing these concerns is making sure all involved in the process are kept informed of all the latest developments in the Review of Public Administration (RPA). Through the RPA Communications Steering Group, we hope to do just that with a programme of planned and timely communications. This Steering Group has a wide representation from across the education sector.

Within CCEA, we will continue to use our existing internal communications channels to ensure that staff are kept up to date in a timely and effective way. This will include, amongst others, the use of the intranet, all staff email and briefings.

Working and making change together, we can make a difference.

## RPA FAQs

### Q. *What are the implications for Outdoor Education and Outdoor Education Centres under the RPA?*

Outdoor education centres operated by the Education and Library Boards will come under the control of the ESA, similar to Board youth centres. Staff in both settings will potentially become ESA employees.

The details of how the ESA operates these centres will be worked out in more detail after the ESA Chief Executive (designate) is appointed. This work will continue well after the establishment of the ESA, as will be the case for many of the functions.

### Q. *Am I going to have a job after the RPA is implemented?*

Staff currently employed in all the Education bodies affected by RPA are naturally concerned about their future employment.

It is our intention to do everything possible to ensure that all staff are kept fully informed about what plans are being considered and what decisions are made throughout the RPA. Although we understand that some staff are frustrated that detailed decisions about their future have not yet been taken, this is because we need to ensure that all the relevant issues are properly considered and organisations such as the Public Service Commission are fully consulted.

It will be best for all concerned if we can retain, as far as reasonably possible, the valuable experience and expertise of the staff presently in these organisations. We will consider staffing closely and take all reasonable steps to ensure there will be no need for compulsory redundancies.

### Q. *Where will jobs be based after the RPA?*

The location of the ESA is yet to be decided. When this decision is being made, all staffing and equality issues will of course be taken into account.

Although the establishment of the ESA will mean centralisation of functions in one organisation; this does not mean that the service provided by the ESA will be sited in one location. It is very likely that the ESA will have locations throughout Northern Ireland to ensure services are close to the point of delivery.

### Q. *When will a decision be made on which functions will transfer out of the Department of Education?*

The initial work on the Internal Review of Operational Functions has been completed and the recommendations have been passed to the Minister for Education.

The Minister will now consider the recommendations in detail to make a decision on this and will inform the Department, staff and stakeholders as soon as possible as to the outcome.

## Contacts & Comments

Do you have any further questions about RPA? Would you like us to answer them in the next issue of our newsletter? Please

email: [rpa@deni.gov.uk](mailto:rpa@deni.gov.uk)

call: 028 91 279853

or

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