



Loyal Orange Institution

Fairness & Fear:

*An investigation of the
treatment of Protestants in
the Northern Ireland Civil Service*

19th March 2016

Background

Over the past number of years, the Orange Order has received complaints from members and their families about various aspects of working in the Civil Service.

This has ranged from allegations of outright discrimination because of their membership of the Orange Institution or the fact that they are Protestants through to complaints about a prevailing Nationalist ethos within some departments or sections.

These complaints have increased over the past couple of years which has led the Institution to seek information mainly through Freedom of Information requests.

This publication reflects our members' concerns about what is happening in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The 25 statements were all written by the authors in their own words.

When we received and analysed these statements we realised that a few words came up again and again.

Fair, fear, fearful and afraid.

In summary, our members are saying to us that they are not being treated fairly and they are afraid to speak out.

Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

The *Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* is compiled by the Department of Finance and Personnel every three years as provided for by Article 55 of the *Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998*. The latest report was published in May 2015 to cover the year 2013.

The report highlighted a number of issues related to the under-representation of Protestant staff members in various grades and departments.

“There continues to be a lack of fair participation by Protestants in both the Administrative Officer grade and in the supervisory/junior management grades of Executive Officer 2 and 1.”¹

Accordingly, the following table indicates the representation of staff by religious identity and grade.²

Grade	NICS STAFF		NI WORKFORCE		VARIATION	
	P	RC	P	RC	P	RC
AA	48.3%	51.7%	51.6%	48.4%	-3.3%	3.3%
AO	46.4%	53.6%	52.4%	47.6%	-6.0%	6.0%
EO1 / EO2	47.6%	52.4%	54.4%	45.6%	-6.8%	6.8%
SO	51.4%	48.6%	55.2%	44.8%	-3.8%	3.8%
DP	54.5%	45.5%	56.0%	44.0%	-1.5%	1.5%
GRADE 6 / 7	52.5%	47.5%	56.4%	43.6%	-3.9%	3.9%
GRADE 5	57.0%	43.0%	55.9%	44.1%	1.1%	-1.1%
GRADE 3+	61.4%	38.6%	57.8%	42.2%	3.6%	-3.6%

*P = Protestant; RC = Roman Catholic

Whilst Administrative Officer (AO) and Executive Officer 2 and 1 (EO1/EO2) were found not to have fair participation by Protestants, it should also be noted that the grades Administrative Assistant (AA), Staff Officer (SO), Deputy Principal (DP) and Grade 6 / 7 feature less Protestants represented than the Northern Ireland workforce data suggests should be employed. Indeed only Grade 5 and Grade 3+ have a greater number of Protestants employed than Roman Catholics according to the Northern Ireland workforce data and **NO grades featured a lack of fair participation by Roman Catholics.**

Casual Staff also have a lack of fair participation by Protestants with just 41.7% of staff being Protestants compared to 58.3% who are Roman Catholics, **a decrease from 2010 when 45.6% of casual staff were Protestants and 54.4% were Roman Catholics.**

¹ 2013 *Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* 6.3, pg. 16

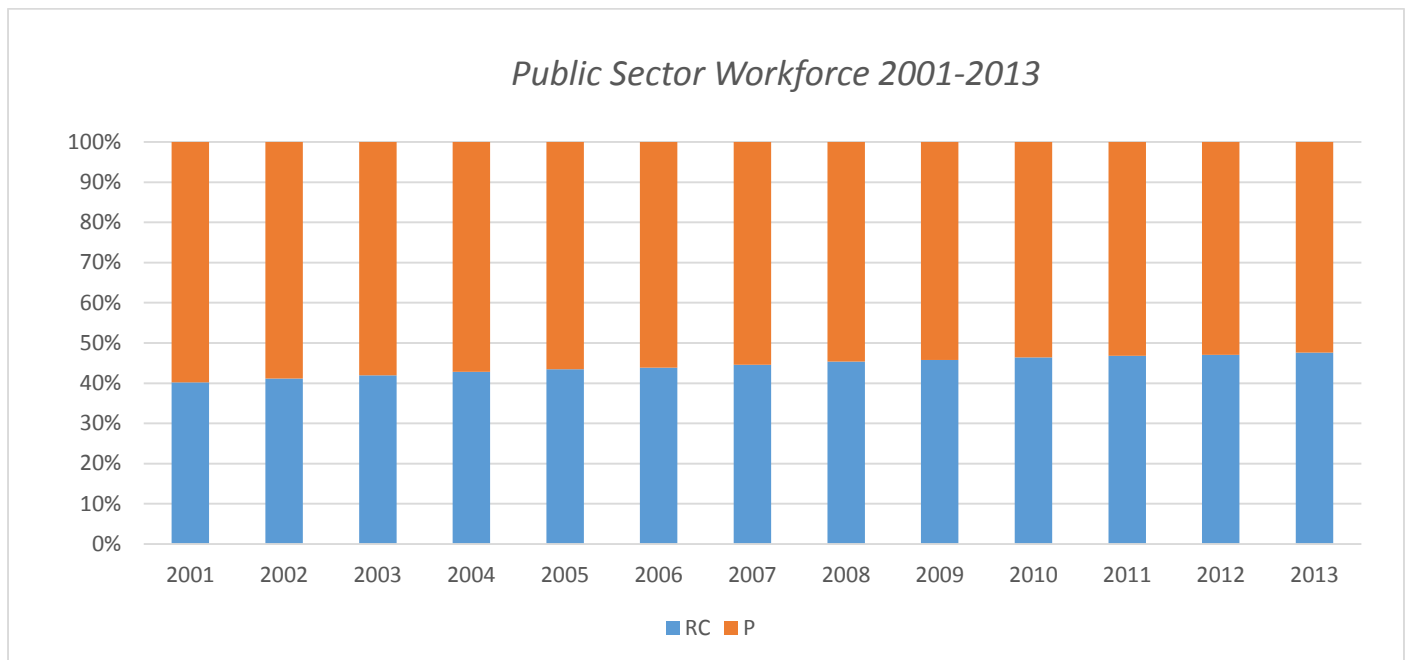
² Ibid, Annex D

Changes 2001-2013

There has been a significant shift within the public sector workforce as a whole in recent years with a steep decline of the Protestant workforce and contrasting increase in the Roman Catholic workforce.

This has roughly equated to a 1% annual swing from Protestant to Roman Catholic employee ratio.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 ³
RC	66,288	69,083	72,322	76,606	80,275	80,140	81,051	81,700	82,371	83,638	82,919	83,416	83,427
P	98,564	98,690	100,006	102,289	104,303	102,676	100,749	98,297	97,401	96,524	94,181	93,712	91,801
Net	-32,276	-29,607	-27,684	-25,683	-24,028	-22,536	-19,698	-16,597	-15,030	-12,886	-11,262	-10,296	-8,374
	-2,669	-1,923	-2,001	-1,655	-1,492	-2,838	-3,101	-3,101	-1,567	-2,144	-1,624	-966	-1,922
	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-2%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%



Retirement Data

Retirement data indicates a worrying trend whereby there are significantly more Protestants than Roman Catholics exiting the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

	<i>Protestants</i>	<i>Roman Catholics</i>
2010	174	94
2011	184	94
2012	181	72
2010-2012	539	260 ⁴

This data indicates a significant decrease of Protestant representation within the NICS. More than twice as many Protestants than Roman Catholics left the NICS between 2010 and 2012.

³ Fair Employment Monitoring Report No. 24, *Equality Commission for Northern Ireland*, pg. 15

⁴ 2013 *Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* 6.3, Annex B, pg. 26

This is further compounded by a recruitment freeze currently operating within the Service. This is specifically addressed by the Review which states:

“The embargo on recruitment and the planned voluntary exit scheme makes it difficult to set new goals and timetables which are meaningful and achievable. Following consultation with the Equality Commission we have decided our goals should be related to recruitment, i.e. should any recruitment exercises take place before the next review our goal will be to have an applicant pool that is in line with the relevant part of the NI workforce.”⁵

This statement is particularly concerning as it effectively rules out any remedy for the situation in absence of a fresh recruitment drive within the NICS.

Voluntary Exit Scheme 2015

To further compound the lack of fair participation by Protestants and retirement data above, the Northern Ireland Civil Service introduced a voluntary redundancy scheme in Spring 2015.

A breakdown of applicants to this scheme by Department and religious identity is indicated in the following table:

	Total Staff	Male Applicants	Female Applicants	Protestant Applicants	Catholic Applicants
DARD	2702	442	334	391	358
DCAL	346	38	46	28	25
DE	627	60	103	86	41
DEL	2056	187	494	272	401
DETI	557	74	66	53	54
DFP	3557	390	422	449	347
DHSSPS	583	64	80	41	35
DOE	2684	189	256	235	181
DOJ	1927	192	436	393	193
DRD	1582	333	171	245	244
DSD	6869	635	1344	762	1181
OFMDFM	404	31	69	40	26
TOTAL				2995	3086

This data indicates that, on the whole, there are similar numbers of Protestants and Roman Catholics applying for voluntary redundancy but, as has been evidenced above, in an environment currently dominated by Roman Catholic staff members, this situation will only continue.

Assessing the Impact of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme

In November 2015, the Department for Finance & Personnel was asked the following question, in order to establish the likely further impact that the voluntary redundancy scheme would have on the Protestant representation within the workforce of the NICS;

“With reference to the Northern Ireland Civil Service, please provide the total number of people by grade, gender and religion within each grade who left under the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme (September 2015) in each of the 12 NICS departments.”

This request was denied, with the Department citing the following reason,

“Exempt from release under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act, which allows information to be withheld if it is intended for future publication. The information requested is being collated and it is intended for publication at the end of the Scheme, which is likely to be in the first half of 2016.”

⁵ 2013 Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 6.17, pg. 19

Positive Action

“The NICS will continue to work within the law to address areas of under-representation, by encouraging under-represented groups to apply for job vacancies and through other appropriate measures.”

“New goals and timetables have been set to increase Protestant application rates for recruitment exercises at Administrative Officer and Executive Officer Grade 2 level.”⁶

In spite of these assurances of positive action offered in the 2010 Review, the goals set at this time were not achieved for these grades by the time of the 2013 Review.

Despite this, the NICS undertook an outreach campaign to encourage Roman Catholics to join another Department – the Northern Ireland Prison Service. In the 2013 Review’s own words:

“As part of the pre-recruitment campaign a number of outreach measures were undertaken by NIPS in order to encourage applications from members of the under-represented community and promote a positive image of the Prison Service as an equal opportunity employer. Links were developed with our Universities and the Northern Ireland Schools and Colleges Association (NISCA). Information on career opportunities in NIPS was subsequently presented to approximately 20 schools throughout the province under the NISCA Experience of Work programme during the period November 2012 – February 2013.”⁷

“In preparation for future recruitment campaigns, NIPS have met the Gaelic Athletic Association’s (GAA) Head of Community Development, Strategy and Public Affairs to explore how NIPS and the GAA might work in partnership to promote NIPS as a career.”⁸

“The organisation acknowledges that confronting the issue of under-representation is vital to moving forward.”⁹

Whilst it is commendable that one department of the NICS, the Northern Ireland Prison Service is attempting to address a religious imbalance, departments elsewhere in the NICS which have a disproportionate Roman Catholic numerical bias have not demonstrated the rigour and priority which has been given to addressing the Protestant majority imbalance in the Prison Service.

Furthermore, the NIPS has met with the GAA (a Nationalist sporting and cultural organisation whose members are overwhelmingly Roman Catholics) and yet the Northern Ireland Civil Service has not approached Unionist and Loyalist equivalent organisations such as the Loyal Orange Institution and other Loyal Orders. This appears totally inconsistent.

A worrying development appears to be the ending of the ‘Northern Ireland Civil Service Diversity Champion’ role which was in existence and referenced by the 2010 Review but not the 2013 equivalent. When there are such clear issues with diversity and lack of fair participation throughout the NICS, it is extremely questionable why this role was abandoned.

Despite the well-documented and clearly evidenced problem of under-representation, the *Northern Ireland Civil Service Employment Equality and Diversity Report 2011* makes no reference whatsoever to this issue, despite detailing figures on the composition of the NICS in terms of religion, disability and ethnicity. It is clear that this important matter is not receiving the attention it demands and deserves within the management of the NICS.

⁶ 2010 Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, March 2012 1.6, 1.7 pg. 5-6

⁷ ibid. 8.10 pg. 22

⁸ ibid. 8.11 pg. 23

⁹ ibid. 8.12 pg. 23

Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service

The report entitled *Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (based on staff in post at 1 January 2013)* was compiled by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in conjunction with HR Consultancy Services for the Department of Finance and Personnel.

This report builds on the data already made available by the *Review of Fair Participation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* mentioned previously.

This document details a number of worrying conclusions based on statistics about the composition of the NICS.

*“Overall, the community background percentage composition of the NICS closely matches that of its comparator population though the difference equates to about **300 fewer Protestants / more Catholics employed** than would be the case if the NICS exactly reflected its comparator population”¹⁰*

*“The Protestant proportion among General Service staff, the largest occupational group in the NICS, is 5.3 percentage points less than in the comparator population. This translates into some **950 fewer Protestants employed in these grades.**”¹¹*

“Over the period 2000-2013, Catholic representation has increased by a little over 6 percentage points, from 41.7% to 47.8%...with an increase of over 6 percentage points, the NICS has seen a larger increase in its Catholic representation than in the NI economically active population over a similar time period.”¹²

*“Protestants had a similar resignation and health leaving rate to Catholics, but a **noticeably higher retirement rate than Catholics.**”¹³*

This Report highlights a number of issues with employment, recruitment and retirement within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and illustrates the dramatic compositional changes encountered in the NICS within the last ten years and also alludes to the challenges in terms of composition which the NICS will experience in the next period.

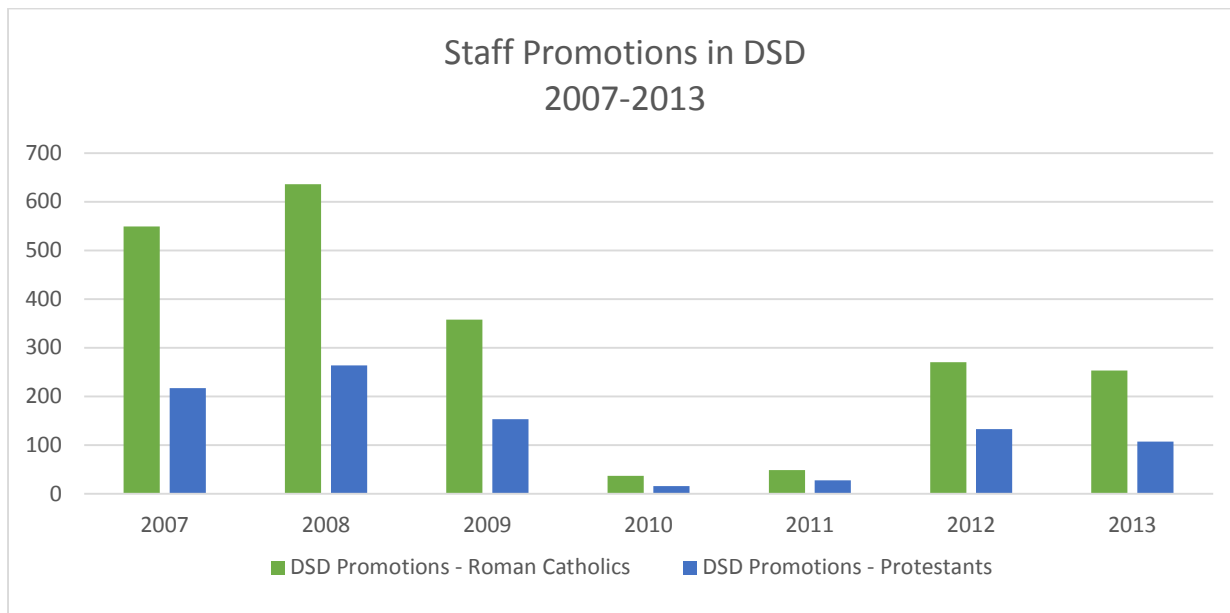
¹⁰ Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2013, 2.11 (pg. 7)

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.* 2.12 (pg. 8)

¹³ *ibid.* 5.4 (pg. 35)

Freedom of Information Responses

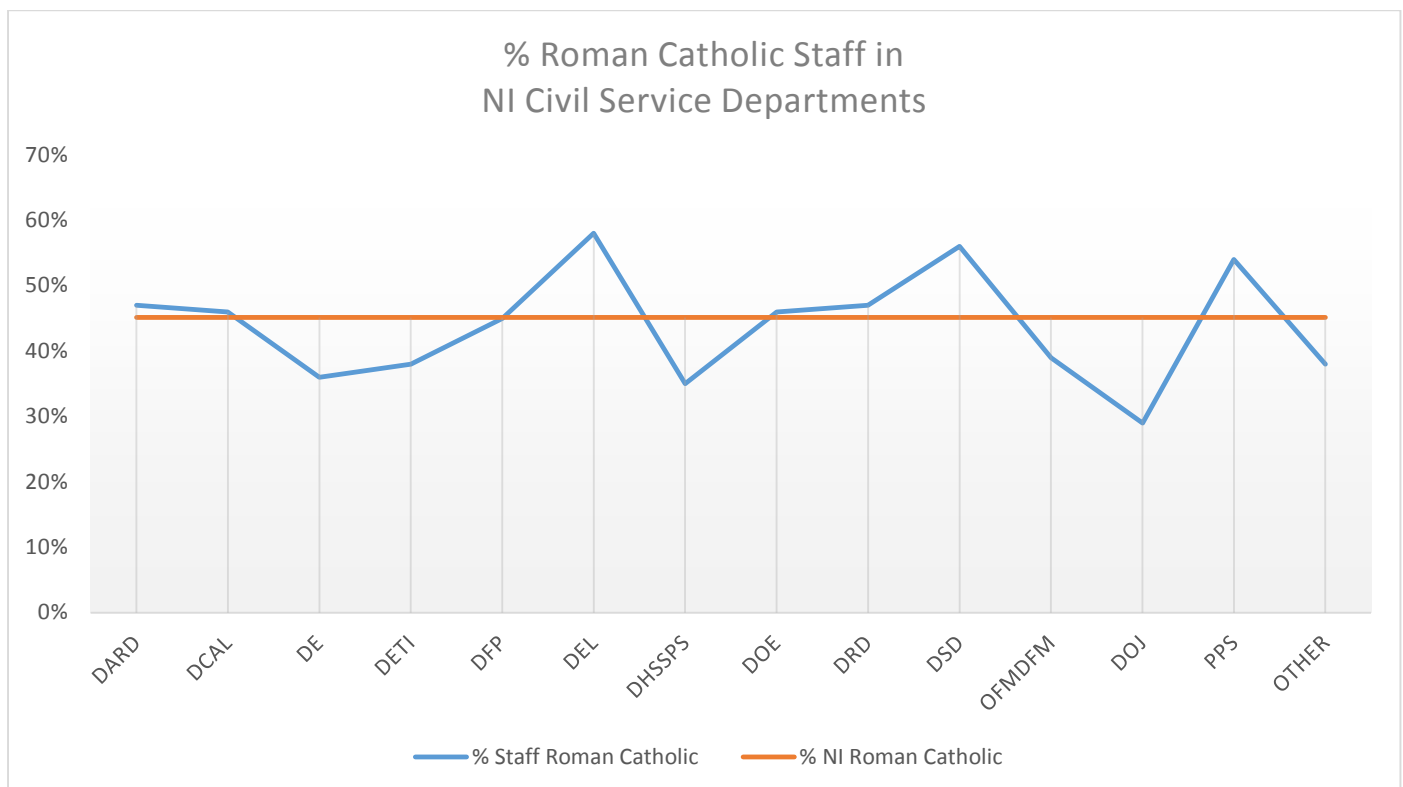


*“It is clear...that DSD has, with the exception of DEL, a higher representation of Catholics than all other Departments and that **this disproportionately high representation of Catholics is evident across many grades**”*

“We would expect the percentage of Catholics recruited into DSD to broadly reflect the overall NICS position. This does not appear to be the case.

***A disproportionately high number of Catholic recruits are being placed in DSD and this causing an imbalance in the community background composition of the Department.**”*

**Head of HR Consultancy Services (NISRA)
April 2013**



“Since 2000 the NICS has seen Catholic representation rise, and Protestant representation fall, by 5.5%, a change close to that seen in the public sector as a whole (6.4%)”

**Human Resources Director, DSD
April 2013**

*“[There were] considerable imbalances in a number of occupational groups. The largest imbalance was amongst the 18,600 General Service Staff, with some **950 fewer Protestants / more Catholics employed** than would be the case if this occupational group matched the comparator population.”*

**Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service based on staff in post at 1 January 2013
Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency**

“Among staff not on NICS pay scales, Protestant median earnings are 8.9% below Catholic median earnings. As mentioned above, this covers all levels as NICS analogous grades are not available for these staff, and one reason for this gap is there is a larger proportion of Protestants than Catholics in lower paid jobs.”

**Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2015
Page 4**

General Service Promotion Competitions within DSD

Grade	Launch Year	Applicants		Listed	
		Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
Grade 7	2008	39%	61%		
DP	2007	43%	57%	40%	60%
SO	2007	41%	59%	41%	59%
EOI	2008	43%	57%	42%	58%
DP	2012	42%	58%	43%	58%
SO	2013	39%	61%	34%	66%

DSD Intranet (Internal Website) News Articles January-March 2014

News Articles Featuring Orange Order

News Articles Featuring GAA

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Rejection of Meeting Request with Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service

In March of 2015, the Grand Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Drew Nelson, wrote to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Dr. Malcolm McKibben, requesting a meeting. This request was rejected in a letter received on behalf of Dr. McKibben with the following explanation offered,

“I am sure you appreciate that it would be inappropriate for Dr. McKibben to meet with the Orange Lodge or any other external body in relation to staffing matters within the NICS. I would suggest that if some of your members do have concerns, that you advise them to raise those concerns through the proper internal channels.”

'Liofa' Initiative

The Sinn Féin Culture Minister Carál Ní Chuilín introduced the 'Liofa' Irish Language initiative in 2011.

As part of the programme, an Irish language newsletter, 'Liofa', was published and distributed on a monthly basis to all Northern Ireland Civil Service staff across all departments. The newsletter's sole aim is of propagating the Irish Language.

The expenditure incurred for Liofa, since being launched in September 2011 to 30 September 2014 was £519,665, a significant expense and undertaking.

Not confining distribution of this publication to her own department, the Minister has exercised significant influence throughout the Northern Ireland Civil Service in the promotion of the Irish Language. This has encouraged the perception within the NICS that it is only the Irish identity and language which is to be endorsed and encouraged.

Naturally, as the Irish language is espoused overwhelmingly by the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland, the newsletter features articles and photographs bearing many Sinn Féin and Nationalist politicians, GAA sporting teams and officials and a clear deficiency of Unionist themes.

This initiative has had the effect of further isolating the Unionist workforce within the NICS.

It has also increased the perception that there is a Nationalist bias within the NICS and this has the effect of discouraging Unionists from applying to join. This exacerbates the situation further.

It is a **cold-house factor**.

*"People from our community are **afraid** of speaking out for **fear** of being labelled a bigot and/or troublemaker and also they feel if they do speak out it will jeopardise their job or career."*

DSD Employee referring to the culture of **fear in speaking out within their department**

Northern Ireland Civil Service's 'Dignity at Work' Policy

'Forms of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct

2.6 The following list, while not exhaustive, provides guidance as to the common forms of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct dealt with under this policy.

Visual display of pornographic, sexually explicit or suggestive pictures, objects or written material (including the use of e-mail to send such material), political posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting, emblems **and the wearing of distinctive clothing or sportswear which may be deemed offensive by others, for example, football, GAA, rugby tops**, any clothing containing lewd or offensive images/slogans.'

Northern Ireland Civil Service Dignity at Work Policy¹⁴

The NICS *Dignity at Work* Policy is sufficiently clear – the wearing of distinctive clothing or sportswear such as GAA jerseys and rugby tops constitutes 'unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct'.

The Director of Corporate HR went further in providing the following explanation:

"I can confirm that the Dignity at Work policy forms part of the terms and conditions of service for Northern Ireland Civil Servants."

Director, Corporate HR

This position is repeatedly maintained through numerous bulletins to staff which remind them of dress code whilst working in the NICS.

"The NICS Handbook, section 6.09 Dignity at Work (DAW) describes various forms of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct. This includes the wearing of distinctive clothing or sportswear which may be deemed offensive by others, for example football, GAA, rugby tops, any clothing containing lewd or offensive images/slogans. Such clothing is not permitted.¹⁵

Child Maintenance Service Dress Standards, June 2015

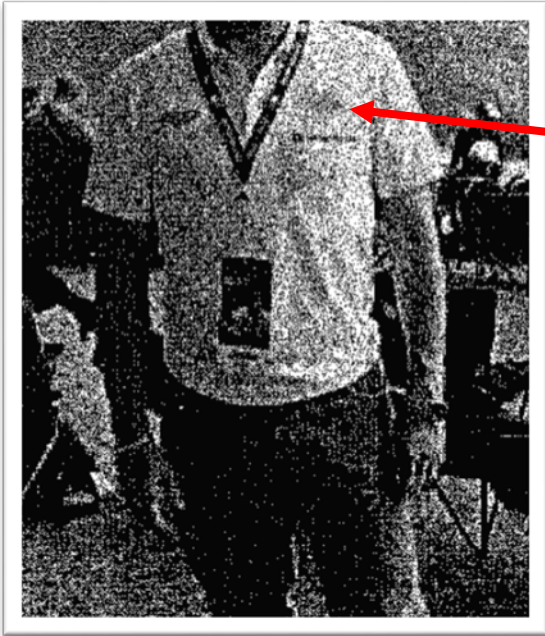
In order to reinforce the *Dignity at Work* policy, NICS have edited photographs of staff members to obscure logos and emblems of the Northern Ireland Football Team and Ulster Rugby before posting them on their Intranet accompanying a story on a staff member's visit to the Ryder Cup.



Sporting Logo blurred out

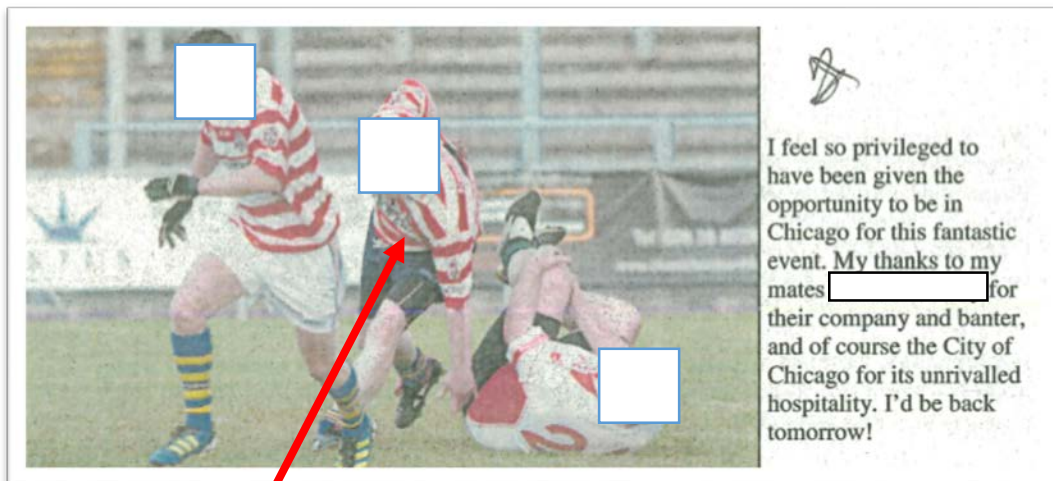
¹⁴ <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/dignity-at-work.pdf>

¹⁵ P 8/02 (Rev)



Northern Ireland Football Team
Logo blurred out

In spite of this well-stated and sufficiently clear policy, the NICS saw fit to publish a story featuring staff members at a charity GAA event in Casement Park. The story accompanied pictures of staff members actually participating in the sport, including sporting jerseys etc. Indeed, the article referred to the stadium as the 'hallowed ground of Casement Park'. This indicates not only the flagrant breaches of the *Dignity at Work* policy, but also the special esteem with which the GAA is held within the NICS and the promotion it receives therein.



GAA Logo not blurred out



DSD Intranet Screenshot

Footy action in Casement Park raises over £1,300 for the Childrens Hospice

SSA 20th Anniversary champion in Belfast West and Lisburn, writes:

As part of our celebrations a few of us in Andersonstown organised a charity gaelic football match which I am delighted to say raised £1,326.29 for the NI Children's Hospice. What made the event so special for everyone was the support shown by the whole district making up the two teams.

This approach appears to clearly breach existing policies and guidelines which are routinely enforced when dealing with sports other than the GAA.

A staff member complained about the publishing of these photographs at the time and the photographs were removed. They were, however, reinstated following intervention from a senior manager within the Department.

Statements from serving or retired Civil Servants

STATEMENT 1 DSD/DARD

My Partner is a member of the Orange Order and when he asked me had I endured any experiences as a Civil Servant, I was happy to provide the following information.

I moved into DARD from another Civil Service department, DSD. Whilst working in SSA/DSD I was appalled at how Protestant staff were under represented at all grades, the lack of promotion and development opportunities and how Protestants never seem to fill posts of influence compared to Catholic employees. I believe this is a deliberate ploy by DSD senior grades, who are also mostly Roman Catholic, to ensure their wishes are carried out.

I was disgusted at how various policies were ignored such as Dignity at Work and Equal Opportunities for Roman Catholic staff yet when it came to anything about Protestant staff people from our community were made to abide by them.

In this department we are sent 'Liofa' magazine which is written in Irish with an English translation. In one of the stories it tells of how Protestants are claiming the Irish language as their lost heritage. I and many other Protestant staff I have spoken to do not want to read this nationalist propaganda, endorsed obviously by our Sinn Fein minister. We also see articles on our intranet site regarding obituaries which refer to how the staff member was an active member of the GAA. I haven't seen anything about Protestants being keen Unionists or how they had achieved anything that would identify with the Protestant or Unionist community.

In DARD there are similarities to DSD in regard to senior management grades from DP and above. There appears to be a large percentage of these staff who are Roman Catholic in comparison to Protestants. They all look out for one another and help in terms of career progression and development opportunities. This is totally unacceptable and not at all fair.

It isn't long after a Protestant joins DARD that they face open discussion about Roman Catholic religion and associated sports such as GAA and Camogie which Protestants rarely play, if at all.

At meetings, I have learned it is clear there are few Protestants in key posts, especially those posts which can influence an individual's career. Line Management openly let their staff know (Catholic and Protestant) of the sports their children play, specifically Camogie and GAA and the schools their children attend. I see this as letting Protestant staff know who they are. It is also common for them to favour Roman Catholic staff and progress their career by devolving profile work which assists with promotion opportunities.

Some managers have even thought it necessary to talk about working in previous offices where they allege some "Christians" had religious tracts on their desks and that they had openly told them to stop this. Yet, my experiences are that some Roman Catholic staff deem it acceptable to display Mass Cards around their desks.

I would ask that the Orange Order do not disclose my name as I fear being victimised by the Civil Service which history has shown does not afford fair treatment to people from the Protestant community.

STATEMENT 2
DSD

I am a Protestant female in my early thirties and my Dad is a member of the Orange Order. I am writing to make you aware of my experiences as a Civil Servant in the DSD. I have been employed in that department for a few years and was formerly working in the Social Security Agency in the Belfast Benefit Centre. I do not want to say where I work now as I am afraid of the department finding out who I am and that it could get me into trouble.

It was in the Plaza Building that I saw first-hand how Protestant staff are treated differently to our Roman Catholic colleagues. For example, a few years ago it must have been around the time of a GAA football match someone put a poster up on a pillar in one of our offices of what I assume to be the winning GAA team. A male colleague objected to the manager of the section about this poster but was told by another colleague not to be sensitive as it was "only for a laugh". My colleague sent me a text asking that I call up to his office so I could view this poster for myself, which I did. From the people I knew there, I would guess the office where he works is probably about 65/35 Roman Catholic which is probably the split in the SSA, if not worse.

We have a policy in DSD called the Dignity at Work Policy that clearly states that no sportswear including GAA should be worn in work and that nothing should be done to make staff feel uncomfortable. Obviously this policy doesn't apply in the SSA when nothing was done about this GAA picture.

I know other people felt uncomfortable about this poster as I heard other colleagues talking about it in the lobby and on their way out of the building. My friend who worked in the office where the GAA poster was put up told me he was made aware by others that he could and should complain to our Equal Opportunities people and when I asked him what he was going to do so he said "no point, sure nothing ever gets done when people do complain".

Another thing that is evident in DSD is the promotion lists which in my opinion are nearly always majority Roman Catholic staff. It is a standing joke among Protestants when a list comes out to "spot the Prod" which if it wasn't true would be laughable. It is ridiculous when the department runs a competition and a list is published there are always many more Catholics who get promoted than there are Protestants.

One other thing I feel is important to point out is that there is always bias towards things of a Nationalist persuasion on our intranet site. For example, about a year or so ago there was a picture and story of a GAA game with photographs of the people in GAA kits. Again I thought this should not have been allowed on the intranet. I heard that an Orangeman complained about this but lost his complaint.

There are other things but I hope something can be done that will allow Protestant people to be treated the same and have the same opportunities as our Catholic colleagues. I thought that was what Equality was all about.

STATEMENT 3
DSD

I am from a Protestant working class family with close relatives who are members of the Orange Order and I am writing to make you aware of difficulties I encountered whilst an employee of the Social Security Agency.

In particular I would like you to know the way things are for Protestants who work in Castle Court. When I worked there I witnessed a Protestant employee being subjected to sectarian abuse, being ostracised and bullied because of her Protestant religion. Daily jokes were made about "Prods", staff flaunted clothing in Green, White and Gold and various tables were compiled and produced to record departmental information in these same 3 colours.

This particular employee and other Protestant staff were treated in an appalling manner. They were excluded from internal and external work events and attempts were made to make them look foolish in front of other colleagues and managers. This behaviour continued for some time until the individual complained and had to move jobs. I don't think it was coincidental that this person was picked on due to their religion and that they had family in the Orange Order and also because the individual worked part-time in the Security Forces. The people who treated the individual in this manner were of a nationalist background.

This Nationalist/Republican culture has to stop in DSD/NICS once and for all. I hope the Orange Order can protect my name from being told to people in the NICS and can help in the elimination of persecution of Protestants within the Civil Servants.

How could anyone encourage a Protestant to join the NICS when this type of behaviour is allowed to go on and when some Roman Catholic managers simply turn a blind eye to it.

STATEMENT 4 DSD

I am writing to make you aware of the difficulties I have encountered for reasons I believe to be solely because of my Protestant community background and membership of the Orange Order.

I am an Administrative Officer in the Social Security Agency and I work in a Social Security Office in central Belfast.

Each of the last 2 years around July I have to listen to snide and despicable sectarian comments from colleagues such as "I wonder is our friend well rested for his walk" and "what a waste of time, hope it lashes on those Orange Bastards". None of these comments of course are said to my face.

I have never told anyone of my community background or my membership of the Order and have never asked anyone about what they do outside of the workplace.

I am not aware of any other members of the Order within my place of work therefore I have to attribute these comments to me.

I have not worked in the SSA all that long but it is without doubt a predominantly Roman Catholic workforce. Talk of the GAA games is commonplace each Monday. I have observed photos on desktops of GAA teams and the Republic of Ireland international team. The crazy thing is we are all asked to sign forms twice a year to say we will abide by the Dignity at Work Policy; however the blatant display of these pictures are very much against what that policy is supposed to be there for.

The managers say nothing. In fact they openly join in the conversations about the GAA.

I am frightened to make a complaint as I fear it will come to nothing and also ruin any chance I have of a career in the NI Civil Service, especially if I am stuck in the SSA. That's the way it is for Protestants in this department.

I now have started looking at the Weekly Opportunities Bulletin in the hope I can get a move to another department, especially one where Protestants do not have to put up with all this blatant sectarian behaviour.

STATEMENT 5
DSD

I have worked in SSA/DSD for over 20 years and in various offices throughout the SSA in particular. I started work as an Administrative Assistant and progressed my career to management levels. No matter what branch I have worked in I was shocked by the Nationalist and sometimes Republican ethos within the department.

It is evident Protestant staff are under-represented at various grades and importantly at managerial levels. There are very few Protestants in profiled posts such as the Chief Executive's office, Private Office, Learning & Development, HR Branch. These are all offices that assist in progressing an individual's career prospects. I highlight this point because these posts also involve important decision making powers in particular, HR Managing Attendance Unit, Equal Opportunities Unit where those in managerial grades/positions are few and far between.

No matter which branch I have worked in it is easy to ascertain who the Roman Catholic staff are and who Protestants are. It is important to also point out that from my experiences, Protestant staff abide by departmental and corporate policies whereby their Roman Catholic colleagues openly talk about GAA, their religion, going to Mass, Ash Wednesday, come into work with Ash on their heads, their children's confirmation etc.

I have experienced that it is evident that before reaching a branch in the SSA/DSD or within a few days of getting to the new office, staff know your religion and where you live. Quite alarming is how this information, which is confidential, is quickly spread throughout a branch.

It is common practice to go to a management meeting and be the only Protestant around a table of maybe 20 people.

Also, when promotion lists or temporary promotions are issued, very few Protestants are listed. This has been going on for a long time.

Promotion panel compositions are also an issue of concern, the ratios are usually 2 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant. How is this fair?

HR Branch make daily decisions which could impact on an individual's career and how could any Protestant feel comfortable with a Grievance about their religion when there are no Protestants in the decision making role up to and including the Grade 3 role?

Also, another issue of concern is that some Roman Catholic employees choose to ignore the corporate Dignity at Work policy and I have overheard throughout the years a number of comments against Protestant staff and the Protestant faith.

I have witnessed sectarian jokes about Protestants, the NI football team, Unionist politicians, the Orange Order etc. I even overheard a conversation some years ago (when the 2 British soldiers were brutally murdered) from a female employee when she stated "the bastards got what they deserved". A few days later for a male colleague's birthday (he was from West Belfast) a cake was brought in replicating the Tricolour. Management did nothing about this.

More recently, senior management within DSD (including the SSA Chief Executive) chose to ignore the corporate Dignity at Work policy and agreed to the publication of a GAA story on the intranet site which glorified Casement Park where two British soldiers were brutally murdered some years ago. This was a breach of the Policy and I know a lot of Protestant employees feel as I do, sickened by the actions of management and the discrimination/unfair treatment by DSD and its employees. However, they are afraid to speak out, frightened of reprisals if they do complain. The SSA CEO also felt it necessary to publish an article on the summer school in Maynooth with a statement regarding how the Priests must have felt. Why was this statement necessary in the workplace?

The Protestant staff's culture is not promoted by DSD. In stark contrast on their intranet site they choose to airbrush out any pictures which recognise the Union such as the Union flag. This applies to the Dignity at Work policy, yet this same policy does not come into force when a "Roman Catholic" sport is freely published and endorsed by senior management in the department.

It is clear that DSD have a problem with religious imbalance within their department and work needs to be done to correct this as a matter of urgency. Additionally, Protestant staff need to be deployed to more profile/decision making posts to assist with career advancement and provide Protestant staff with an assurance there is a balanced approach within the department and to gain their confidence. Work also needs to be done on promotion board compositions.

DSD may have taken some measures by issuing a Diversity Survey but this was an NICS-wide Survey and not just for DSD. The Survey questions were not gauged to allow anyone to highlight their concerns and therefore not fit for purpose. I also believe their quote of anonymity is not believed by staff given that you can only complete the survey once as if you attempt another survey it tells you about your first entry. This lack of anonymity is a deterrent in itself.

Protestant staff are treated like second class citizens and DSD needs to address this urgently and not brush over it. We have had enough of being treated in this way and having our British identity eroded or removed.

My family are in the Orange Order and I have total faith that the Orange Order will protect my anonymity in terms of written submissions shared with the NICS officials.

STATEMENT 6 CMS/DSD

I have been a Civil Servant for nearly 27 years and a member of the Orange Order for nearly 8 years. I have suffered discrimination, harassment and less favourable treatment at the hands of my employer since it became known I was an Orangeman.

The ill-treatment I suffered occurred whilst I was employed in the Social Security Agency and based in Castle Court in Belfast.

Some Examples of the less favourable treatment I suffered were:

*I was deprived of overtime for me and my teams whilst being distributed out freely to other staff
I had malicious stories circulated about me and a ridiculous Grievance taken against me.
I lodged proceedings with the Office of Fair Employment Tribunal. I could go on but I'm sure DSD is well aware of the other reasons why I was forced to lodge proceedings against DSD.*

Sadly I lost this case against my employer and was then once again threatened by my employer (by way of another Calderbank letter for costs should I proceed with a claim for victimisation). I subsequently met with the HR Director of DSD who proceeded to belittle me saying "I thought you might have sent a thank you note when we didn't pursue you for costs after you lost your case."

When I met the DSD HR Director she felt the need to tell me she attended an all-girls Roman Catholic school.

Despite the findings of the Tribunal panel who dismissed my case on the grounds the wearing of GAA sportswear was for charity, I and many other Protestant staff I have spoken to will always know that DSD blatantly contravened the NICS Dignity at Work Policy by displaying GAA sportswear on its intranet site.

A former Grade 3 in the CSA made a public apology in the Belfast Telegraph for wearing a Tyrone GAA shirt in a published picture in the staff magazine whilst on official business in the USA.

I am also in possession of copy papers received under Discovery for my IT case that when voluntary work was carried out in a Unionist area DSD felt the need to airbrush out Red, White and Blue lampposts from the

photographs that accompanied that story. Is that consistent and even-handed treatment from any employer never mind a Government department?

Statistics show that SSA/DSD has a high percentage of Roman Catholic staff. Statistics also show that promotions within the Department are given to more Roman Catholics than Protestants. It is also widely known that when Promotion panels are convened for DSD Promotion competitions, most if not all panels are comprised of two Roman Catholics and one Protestant. I firmly believe this is indicative of the anti-Protestant culture that exists within the DSD.

I am aware of many Protestant staff who are afraid to speak out about the difficulties they encountered in SSA/DSD for fear of ending their career prospects. The fact that staff within the DSD Employee Relations Unit (with decision making powers in cases taken against the department) are all of the Roman Catholic background deters Protestant people from taking complaints on the grounds of their Religious Belief/Political Opinion. Is that a coincidence? I and many others think not.

The sooner someone puts a stop to the anti-Protestant/British/Unionist culture within SSA/DSD the better for all of its staff.

STATEMENT 7 SSA/DSD

My main issue remains with the imbalance of the religious make up of staff within the SSA. Throughout my career there has always been more Catholics than Protestants employed. As a result there has always been some who have pushed the boundaries. GAA is the favoured method. Tops, bags, coats, pictures etc. The Ulster Championship always brings it to the surface. They don't seem to care who they annoy. It is always a small minority but the problem is they are never checked and get away with it. A blind eye is turned.

STATEMENT 8 DSD

I am a member of the Orange Order and work in DSD. When I worked in a well-known central SSO I had jokes made about me, especially around July. I was younger then and just ignored them but not that I look back I realise I was being bullied because I am a Protestant and a member of the Orange.

I believe I and other Protestants do not have the same career prospects because we are vastly outnumbered in this department. Even the panels seem to be weighted towards the Catholic community. It is well known there is under-representation of Protestants in the department and that nothing is ever done about it. So much for equality of opportunity for everyone.

There is a clear favouritism towards the Roman Catholic community, for example, virtual glorification of the GAA which has appeared on our intranet site on quite a few occasions. I don't think there has ever been anything about the Orange Order or anything else that would identify with the Protestant or Unionist community. I remember the City Hall picture appearing with the flag not visible. This was before the decision by the Council to have designated days. It was a popular discussion amongst the Protestants in my office about why the flag was not in the picture.

So much for NICS policies that are supposed to prevent that sort of thing; clearly DSD believe they can do their own thing with no recourse.

Protestant workers are fed up with less favourable treatment and having people taking liberties with making the rules up to suit themselves. By this I mean high grades in DSD/SSA.

People don't complain for fear of being identified and the ramifications that would bring or they simply have no faith or confidence in anything being done.

When is the Civil Service going to ensure Protestants have fair treatment? I hope something is done soon.

STATEMENT 9
DSD

I am a Civil Servant with in excess of 30 years' service and have been employed by the same Department (DSD formerly known as DHSS) all of my career.

Over the past 10 years and particularly more so since devolution and the inception of the Northern Ireland Assembly, I am of the belief that my British identity is being eroded. I feel I am being subjected to an Irish cultural acceptance which I find to be offensive.

The following are some examples:

- *While employed in a City Centre Social Security Office, a change was made at Staff Officer Grade (Manager). This manager came from the Catholic community. The Royal British Legion, since I joined this office in 1984, traditionally left a collection box in the office, for both staff and public in aid of the annual Poppy Appeal. The Staff Officer ceased this annual practice on the first occasion it arose following their appointment. I found this to be offensive.*
- *Londonderry is very rarely referred to in this form in either written or verbal communication. Senior Managers especially, do not take into consideration those employees who do not come from the Catholic/Nationalist community when addressing this City by name. The DSD Intranet is strewn with references to 'Derry'. I find this to be offensive.*
- *Approximately 2 years ago, DSD Intranet site contained an article about a fund raising event in aid of the Northern Ireland Hospice held in Casement Park, Belfast. In this article it referred to Casement Park as 'hallowed ground'. I found this to be offensive as my memories of this place is that of 2 soldiers being brutally massacred. The article carried with it a picture of staff in full GAA regalia. I found this to be offensive.*
Twice per year I have to sign a declaration that I have read the Department's guidance on Dignity at Work, which advises amongst other things, what I should and should not wear in the workplace. This policy also advises me that staff taking part in events outside of the workplace should consider this to be an extension of the workplace and these policies apply. I found this article and photographs to be in breach of DSD Dignity at Work Policy.
- *Again, approximately 2 years ago, a photograph appeared on the DSD Intranet of the Minister, Nelson McCausland and a former Lord Mayor in front of City Hall, Belfast. It was quite clear that the Union Flag had been airbrushed from this photograph. At that time the Union Flag flew above City Hall every day. I found this to be offensive as the Union Flag is the National Flag of the United Kingdom of which we in Northern Ireland are a part of.*
- *While employed in a mainly Catholic/Nationalist staffed office, some staff were being relocated to Lisburn. Those staff affected openly spoke of their disgust of having to work in a building that flew the Union Flag on designated days. I found this to be offensive and inappropriate for discussion in the workplace.*
- *Again, while employed in a mainly Catholic/Nationalist staffed office, a disused building adjacent to the staff entrance had graffiti scrawled on the wall 'Huns Out', which was visible to all staff entering the office. No attempt was made to have this graffiti removed even though senior management was aware of its existence.*
- *In October/November last year there was an incident in the office I am now employed with regard to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. A collection box is traditionally placed in the foyer. A receptionist refused to allow the Poppies and collection box to be placed in sight of staff but instead abruptly put them in a drawer. The incident was brushed over by senior management and no action taken.*

STATEMENT 10
DSD

I am a member of the band fraternity in Belfast and work in a well-known part of DSD. I have close family members who are in the Orange Order and I will likely join and keep up the family tradition.

DSD is a majority Roman Catholic department, not just in terms of its size but the way in which it shows itself when it comes to anything that will show Roman Catholics in a better light. For example it displays things about the GAA, something I always thought was not allowed. I don't remember ever seeing anything about my community or Unionists. The CSA is also known to have a mostly Roman Catholic majority.

I have witnessed staff coming into work and using the gym wearing GAA tops and shorts. This makes me feel uncomfortable and removes the neutral and harmonious work environment that the Equal Opportunities policy says we are all entitled to in the workplace. If I came into work before a band parade wearing my band uniform I would immediately be sent to Personnel Branch to be disciplined.

The more I think of it there has been quite a few pictures of the GAA on the intranet and old staff magazine. The department like other departments promotes the Irish culture and language. It is like a strategy to erode our British identity.

One last thing, the promotion competitions are steered towards making sure more Catholics get promoted than Protestants. It has always been like that in DSD and the CSA and the next EO2 competition will only make things worse.

STATEMENT 11
DSD

I am an employee of the Department of Social Development and work in an office in Belfast. Both my brother and Father are members of the Orange Order in North Belfast. I am keen to retain anonymity due to the real fear of being identified and the ramifications this would very likely have on my career prospects. It is sad that I state this but that is the reality of working in the department that I do.

When I was asked by family members some weeks ago if I had experienced any forms of less favourable treatment in the workplace I was not keen to come forward, but having thought about things I feel it is important that somebody at least tries to put a stop to how people from the Protestant religion in DSD are treated in comparison to Roman Catholic staff who seem to get on in their careers better than Protestants.

My place of work seems to have a majority of Roman Catholic workers. Some of my friends work in other parts of this department and it has arisen in conversation that their offices are of a similar set up.

It is probably not as bad in some offices as it used to be if some stories from colleagues with longer service than me are to be believed but overall things like having the GAA on the internet makes me feel that the Equal Opportunities policy isn't being applied fairly.

I have heard stories about how the EO2 promotion competition which is due on a few months will mean more Catholic staff get on in their careers than Protestants but I am not sure if this is correct. If it is then it is worrying, especially in this day and age when I thought there were rules for employers on the religious composition of their workforce.

I hope this information can help to ensure we all have a fair chance in our careers.

STATEMENT 12
DSD

As a member of one of the most famous flute bands and employee of DSD I believe that cultural equality in DSD is non-existent. In the past, I have been ignored and frowned upon by uneducated republican colleagues

for wearing a poppy on Remembrance Day and I have been advised that I cannot wear an Italian football tracksuit.

Other members of staff come into work in DSD carrying GAA bags and sport black marks on their foreheads for Ash Wednesday. What is the difference between them and me?

STATEMENT 13

DSD

I have worked in DSD for a few years and have family in the Orange Order. To put things simply, DSD is, and in my opinion always will be, biased towards the Nationalist community in many ways. Things have been a little quieter recently but historically it is only a matter of time before the department promotes something that favours or is sympathetic towards those of a Nationalist persuasion.

Look at the composition of the workforce for example, predominantly Roman Catholic in every grade. It's been going on for years. If it's not GAA it's about the Republic of Ireland and if anyone dares speak out they are quickly put down. When will it be reflective of the workforce in Northern Ireland?

STATEMENT 14

DSD

I have family members in the Orange Order and am myself a former member of the junior Orange Order. When I was asked by a family member who is an Orangeman for my experiences in the Civil Service this got me thinking.

For fear of being identified all I want to say is I work in the Social Security Agency which is part of DSD and I have worked in the Civil Service for over 20 years.

In that time I have watched how Civil Servants from the Protestant community seem not to get on in their careers at the same rate of success than those staff with a Roman Catholic background.

The same principle seems to apply to the recruitment of Protestants compared to the numbers of staff joining the NICS from the Nationalist community. Is this an NICS wide issue or is it simply unique to my department, I feel that needs to be explored and addressed.

I have not bothered going for promotion opportunities for some time now. The reason I did this was because I became disillusioned with the whole process and in particular due to the results from the competitions. Basically I looked at a succession of promotion lists and thought 'what is the point?'

I looked at those same promotion lists and saw the hugely disproportionate amount of people listed for promotion with a Roman Catholic background compared to those from the Protestant community. It is still going on to this day. I know a few senior managers in the department who sat on promotion panels and often wondered what am I not doing that those listed for promotion are to get them promoted over people like me? The conclusion I came to is I did nothing different it more a case of clearly I am of the wrong religion. This goes right to the top of the department

Maybe it is just my department, I don't know, but what I do know is, it's been going on for as long as I can remember.

I wish the Orange Order well in bringing these facts to the fore and I hope equal treatment will in future be applied to all staff.

STATEMENT 15

DSD

I have worked for the NICS for the past 9 years and 5 months. During this time I have witnessed on several occasions discrimination and victimisation based on personal beliefs. This appears to me to be one-sided. I have seen people, including myself looked down on and treated differently for things such as wearing a poppy. Also during the 2 minutes silence on Armistice Day I have seen line managers making noise and banging things

whilst laughing and making jokes of a sectarian nature regarding people who lost their lives in wars. This was done within earshot of other managers and nothing was said about it.

On another occasion I was at a union meeting and the topic of Marian Price was raised and whether we would pass a motion to get her released. I don't think this was a topic that should be in the Workplace in any form and I strongly voiced this at the meeting.

Managers of all grades supported this motion and as I was one of a minority that opposed it they looked upon and treated me very differently. People who had previously spoke to me now ignored me and several others were openly hostile.

Due to these situations and due to the fact that I am a member of a band, an Orangeman, Apprentice Boy and a member of the Royal Black Preceptory I feel like the cards are stacked against me with regards to promotion or advancement in the NICS. I feel like my opportunities are limited and the problem with that is that I feel this is completely one sided. I have noticed people bringing bags into work that bear the name of a GAA team named after Kevin Lynch, who was a convicted terrorist and belonged to an illegal organisation which murdered innocent people.

Nothing is said about this even though this is specifically banned in the NICS. How can this be seen as okay, yet I am looked down upon for wearing a poppy to remember people who died for our freedom. I have been told of people who have been stopped coming into work for wearing a Linfield football jacket yet it is okay to wear clothing bearing the names of terrorists.

This to me demonstrates all that is wrong with the NICS.

STATEMENT 16 DSD

I am a member of staff at a DSD building where I have worked for a number of years and have noticed a large increase in Roman Catholics being employed by this DSD department. This makes a mockery of the equal opportunity terms. Sometimes I feel intimidated in my workplace; I use the gym in the building and was once told by a Catholic member of staff that I was not allowed to wear Northern Ireland football shorts which I had on at the time or any other football regalia. Despite this, on numerous occasions while I have been in the gym I have noticed employees wearing GAA shorts. Also while I am in the changing rooms most of the conversation seems to be about GAA or HURLING which can be intimidating as they know that I'm member of the Protestant community. There is quite a large GAA fraternity in my building at a senior level also.

STATEMENT 17 STUDENT CONSIDERING A CAREER IN NICS

My friends and I have just finished our "A" levels and with jobs thin on the ground we are all keen to make a career for ourselves and put our qualifications to good use. We have discussed the NICS as a possible option for a career but are concerned that we do not appear to have the same opportunities to join as Roman Catholics because it is apparent that those who are fortunate enough to get into the NICS are from the Roman Catholic religion. When I also saw the information on the numbers of people who then get on in their careers it was clear to me that those from the Roman Catholic community seem to do better than Protestants. Surely this cannot be fair and is very discouraging for young Protestants. I think that if that type of information was shared with other young Protestants to let them see the difficulties that lay ahead should they join the NI Civil Service then a smaller number would apply to join and the problem would only get worse.

STATEMENT 18 NI CIVIL SERVANT

I am a member of the Orange Institution and Royal Black Preceptory. I am a Civil Servant with over 15 years' service and in that time have watched the systematic demonization of Protestants within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Older colleagues tell me in their view it is not a coincidence since the Good Friday Agreement came into being that the Government felt it fit to ensure the NICS became a place where Protestants and known members of the Orange Order are demonized, treated as 2nd class citizens and have their career prospects severely reduced to ensure senior positions within the Service are filled by Roman Catholic staff.

Once it became known I was a member of the Order I have experienced frowns, alienation, degrading office chat and have had to endure jibes about my political beliefs and religion. I made no complaints as that would publicise my faith and put the final nail into my ever decreasing promotion prospects, something I cannot afford with a family to consider.

I have always given of my best in any post I have been in but it is obvious I suffer reduced career prospects because simply I am the wrong religion. I have watched staff that in other places of employment would not be in a job never mind getting promoted ahead of people who give no trouble and regular and effective attendance.

A succession of senior managers may have come and gone from my department which has always been top heavy but one thing remains constant, the best jobs are given to those close to senior managers. I do not have any statistics to back this up but I would be of the opinion the people in higher Civil Service positions would be able to confirm that the majority of positions filled on promotion lists and probably in recruitment competitions are from the Catholic community. I say this because any time there are new staff to the department they always seem to be of the Roman Catholic community and they are not afraid to make that fact known from the outset.

There needs to be a fairness applied to all aspects of the Civil Service and it will be interesting to see when the current voluntary redundancies are finally sorted if it makes any difference to the religious composition of the Civil Service. I fear it will not and the problem will get worse for Protestants.

STATEMENT 19

16 YEAR OLD STUDENT CONSIDERING CAREER IN NICS

I am from a working class Protestant family who started in lower 6th form in September 2014. My Dad and other family members are members of the Orange Order and I will be joining the Order after my 17th birthday. I was discussing future career options with my family and friends and the possibility of working in the Civil Service was one of the places where I would potentially like to work.

I have seen how it looks like certain places in the NICS treat Protestants differently from Catholics and this is putting me off trying to get a job there. Why would I want to join an organisation where I would be treated unfairly and not have as much of a chance as progressing than someone of the Catholic religion?

I am not the only one who thinks like this. Some of my friends say the same to me and when we had career advice in 5th form it was disappointing that nobody from the Civil Service came to my school career convention to let us all know about the Civil Service.

I hope that by the time I finish my A Levels things might improve as it is important that we all have the same chances for a career and future.

STATEMENT 20

DCAL

I am writing to you to make you aware of issues I have encountered as a NI Civil Servant and of general things that I have witnessed whilst working in the same employment.

My Father and Uncle are long-standing members of the Orange Order as are other members of my family. I am proud to be a supporter of the Protestant and Unionist tradition and as a young boy would regularly accompany my Dad on the 12th July. I live in a Protestant area of Belfast and this would be widely known to my colleagues in work. It is a smallish office after all.

I currently work for DCAL in Belfast and was previously in another department where I thankfully didn't have to endure such bias towards the Nationalist tradition. You will appreciate that out of fear of being identified and thus having what little career prospects I and many Protestants/Unionists have these days in the NICS I will not enclose my name or grade in this letter. I will however happily provide this to you separately.

I am tired of having the Irish language, GAA and Nationalism in general rammed down my throat on an ongoing basis. Some of my colleagues had the audacity to bring their GAA sports tops into work and one had a GAA mug on his desk. I thought that those things were against the rules but when I spoke out the manager turned a blind eye.

The promotion of Nationalism is actually driven on many occasions by our Minister. We get news all the time about how we should embrace the Irish language, we get emails and newspapers in Irish and I am tired of hearing about the GAA. This makes me feel uncomfortable in work and I thought the Dignity at Work Policy was there to protect all staff about having to endure such pressure. I often ask myself will we ever see equal treatment for people of the Protestant/Unionist beliefs or any promotion of things like Ulster Scots etc.

I have thought so many times of taking a complaint to the Equal Opportunities people in my department but I know it will be washed away like they always do to Civil Servants who complain.

All I ask is that I am allowed to come into my work without having to feel uncomfortable and having Nationalism promoted so openly. I don't think that is too much to ask.

STATEMENT 21 DARD

Things are more anti-Unionist since Sinn Fein has more control and input over Northern Ireland departments. Some examples include:

- 1. The promotion of the Irish Language by the 'Liofa' newsletter being emailed each month. This sometimes mentions GAA clubs which promote the Irish language. The impression is that the Culture minister is only interested in promoting one culture.*
- 2. When attending dignified Orange Sunday church parades, the Culture minister is standing there protesting at the parade.*

In the late 1980s/1990s there was IRA graffiti in the toilets of Dundonald House which referenced the Enniskillen bombing, 'Remember Remembrance Day November 1987, IRA 11 Prod Scum 0'. Also, 'Victory to INLA Ballykelly Disco Heroes' (a reference to the Droppin Well Bombing). Graffiti such as 'kill all Prods', 'Brits out' was also present. This went on for a number of years in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. At one stage the DARD Permanent Secretary put out a memo to all DARD staff warning that the full rigour of the law would be applied to anyone caught writing sectarian graffiti. He noted that the police had been contacted about these incidents.

STATEMENT 22 DARD

I work in DARD and my brother is a member of the Orange Order as is my nephew who works in the Social Security Agency. A few weeks ago we were discussing Protestant employment in the NICS and my brother asked me about what it was like as a Protestant working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. My experiences are that the Service is geared more towards staff of the Roman Catholic background when it comes to things that are more identifiable with the Nationalist culture than Unionist culture. My own department has a Sinn Fein Minister who blatantly promotes the Irish language and culture with staff magazines in Irish.

My nephew was reluctant to put comments forward personally as he is relatively new to the NICS and is fearful of being identified and thus putting his job in jeopardy.

What he did say however is he would me to tell you that it is widely known that the workforce in DSD is predominantly Roman Catholic and this is particularly prevalent in certain big offices in the greater Belfast area and Londonderry. He has similar views about DEL and the Trade Union NIPSA who abuse the facility of the department's emails to encourage their members to support protests in support of the Palestinians. His department ignore the feelings of staff not wanting to read such political statements. I would agree with his points.

Regarding the composition of the workforce in his department, he feels this is hindering his career prospects when it is clear Protestants are outnumbered. He is correct in his assumption.

STATEMENT 23

DEL

I am female AO in DEL and my brother is a member of the Orange Order in Belfast. He asked me recently about my views and experiences of working in the Civil Service and had I any evidence of different treatment of Protestants in the Civil Service. I would like to make you aware that in my opinion there is different treatment of people from the Protestant community in my department, especially when it comes to getting on in your career. I do not have figures but I know that some older colleagues think it is pointless going for promotions because our department seems to have many more Catholic workers than those from our background, especially in the management grades and they reckon it is because they seem to get all the promotions. If that is correct then surely that is illegal. My friend works in the SSA and said it is the same there and has been that way for years. One last thing, the Civil Service need to have a look at the religion of the people they recruit because from what I can see it always seems to be more Catholics that get the jobs than Protestants. When I was younger the Government made sure there was better representation of Catholics in the police so why can't they make sure Protestants get a fair chance and are better represented in the Civil Service and especially when we try to get on in our careers.

STATEMENT 24

DFP

I am an Admin Officer in the Department of Finance and Personnel and a member of a well-known Flute Band. I am a married man with a young family and am keen to and have been trying hard to get on in my career since joining the NICS.

I hold a strong view that there is different treatment of Protestants in the Civil Service compared to our Roman Catholic colleagues particularly when I have observed come colleagues wearing GAA sportswear in the office and in terms of the ratio of Roman Catholic colleagues being more successful in promotion competitions in comparison to Protestant staff.

I believe the wearing of sportswear on the office contravenes the Dignity at Work Policy but nothing appears to be said to these colleagues by managers.

I appreciate there has been an embargo on Promotions for some time but before that came into force there is clear differences in the numbers of Roman Catholic staff promoted and appointed to positions in comparison to Protestant staff.

At times I have felt isolated and bullied and also by-passed for opportunities within my work environment and I feel this is attributable to the fact it is known I am a member of a Flute Band.

I have sought the confidence of Protestant colleagues in other Departments for advice as I don't want to nor do I have the confidence of addressing the matter internally for fear of being branded a troublemaker. Secondly I have no faith in the internal processes as it looks to me that the NICS closes ranks when someone makes a complaint.

I need this job to support my family and am fearful of speaking out. I always thought the NICS as a government employer would ensure we all got fairness and the same opportunities but from what I see that doesn't appear to be the case if promotions and recruitment are anything to go by.

Also, when the NICS starts to recruit again and have promotion competitions I feel my chances of a promotion are less than I believe they should be due to competing against more Roman Catholic colleagues who from my experiences seem to get on in their careers better than people from my community.

STATEMENT 25

DSD

I have been in the Civil Service for more than 10 years and work in AO grade having started as an AO with no opportunities to get up the grades. I have spent most of my service in the Social Security Agency which is a part of DSD.

This is a department that is known for having an imbalance of Roman Catholic staff compared to Protestants. I was told this by friends before I started. From my experiences, local SSA offices, in particular, are heavily weighted, in staffing make-up, with a majority Roman Catholic staff.

*I have witnessed and overheard both open and quite blatant comments by clearly pro-Nationalist staff not least before and immediately after the Protestant marching season when derogatory comments are common practice. These comments range from "I hope it lashes done on those scum" to "it's a f'ing disgrace those orange B***** are allowed to shut the town down so they can have their parades and triumphalism". Nothing is ever done about it and I don't think ever will be.*

My Uncle is a member of the Orange Order and has been for 40 years. We were discussing the NI Civil Service recently and the fact that our politicians seem intent in towing the Government's line of massive reductions to the numbers of NICS staff. I don't think there has been any recruitment for a few years, in fact it is temporary staff who are getting jobs and I have been told some of them are being temporarily promoted rather than permanent staff.

My fear is that when the Civil Service starts to recruit again and allow for promotion competitions to start up to fill the hundreds of vacancies that exist following the exit scheme that Protestant staff will be up against it when it comes to getting a job or a promotion.

I am all for equality but it is clear to me and other Protestant staff I know who are also Civil Servants that the NICS will continue to heavily show its bias towards staff from the Roman Catholic community. It would be interesting to see the figures of the number of staff who left under the exit scheme to see how the religious make-up of the NICS now sits. I do know that a lot of older colleagues who applied and left were Protestants.

I hope the NICS will realise the effect the religious imbalance is having on working class Protestant staff in the lower grades who want the same chance to get on in their careers that is given to our Roman Catholic colleagues.

