

Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Direction by the Committee on Standards and Privileges on a Code of Conduct and Requirement to Register Interests

In exercise of the power conferred by section 24 (2) (b) of the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, and by virtue of Standing Order 69A(3)(c), the Committee on Standards and Privileges gives the following direction to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards.

1. Citation and Commencement

- 1.1 This direction may be cited as the “Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (Code of Conduct and Requirement to Register Interests) Direction 2012” and shall come into force on Monday 12 November 2012.

2. Interpretation

- 2.1 In this Direction –

“the Act” means the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011;

“the Commissioner” means the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards;

“the Committee” means the Committee on Standards and Privileges; and

““Day” means calendar day.

3. Code of Conduct for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards

- 3.1 The Commissioner shall comply with the seven principles of public life and shall comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct specified at Annex A of this direction.

4. Registration of Financial and Other Interests

- 4.1 The Commissioner shall register details of those financial and other interests that he or she holds as per the requirements of Annex B of this direction within 28 days of this direction having been given. The Commissioner shall notify the Committee of any changes to the interests that he or she holds within 28 days of the change occurring.

Signed.....

**Alastair Ross MLA
Chairperson of the Committee on Standards and Privileges**

Date.....

Code of Conduct for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards

SELFLESSNESS

The Commissioner shall act solely in terms of the public interest. The Commissioner shall not act in any manner which results in financial gain or other material benefits either personally or to any individual or organisation.

INTEGRITY

The Commissioner shall not place himself or herself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out his or her functions the Commissioner shall be impartial, fair and objective as well as thorough and expeditious.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Commissioner is accountable for his or her decisions and actions and shall submit himself or herself to the appropriate scrutiny.

OPENNESS

The Commissioner shall be as open and transparent as possible within the requirements of the law, particularly in reporting to the Assembly on the outcome of any investigation where he or she will give reasons for the conclusions that he or she has reached. The Commissioner shall not disclose information contained in any complaint or referral or obtained as part of an investigation, except as permitted under the 2011 Act.

HONESTY

The Commissioner shall promptly declare to the Committee in an appropriate manner any private or outside interests which might reasonably be thought by others to influence or impact upon the Commissioner in the exercise of his or her functions. The Commissioner shall take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest. The Commissioner shall register his or her interests as set out in the categories of interest in Annex B of this direction.

LEADERSHIP

The Commissioner shall promote and support the seven principles of public life by leadership and example.

Categories of Registrable Interests

1 Directorships

Remunerated directorships in public and private companies should be registered in this section. This includes directorships which are individually remunerated but where remuneration is paid through another company in the same group.

2 Remunerated employment, office, profession etc

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation which is remunerated or in which the Commissioner has a financial interest should be registered in this section.

3 Elected/Public Office

Membership of all elected and public offices, whether remunerated or not, or if expenses only are payable, should be included in this section.

4 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

This section is for the registration of any gift, hospitality or material benefit to the Commissioner or his partner, with a material benefit exceeding £5, from any individual or body, which in any way relates to the responsibilities of the Commissioner.

5 Shareholdings

In this section, the Commissioner is required to register shareholdings which he or she holds either personally, or with or on behalf of a partner or dependent children, in any public or private company where either the nominal value of the shares held is greater than 1% of the total nominal value of issued share capital or where the market value of the shares exceeds £25,000.

6 Land and Property

The requirement in this section is to register any land or property, owned jointly or with a third party, either within or outside Northern Ireland, other than any home used for personal residential purposes by the Commissioner, his or her partner or dependent child, which is of a substantial value or from which a substantial income is derived.

7 Miscellaneous

Any other financial interests which might reasonably be thought by others to influence or impact upon the Commissioner in the exercise of his or her functions should be registered here.