



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee for Education
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To: Claire McCanny
Clerk to the Ad Hoc Committee

From: Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee for Education

Date: 21 May 2015

Subject: NIPSO Bill

Claire,

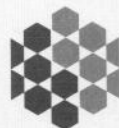
At its meeting on 20 May 2015, the Committee for Education noted correspondence from the NIPSO Ad Hoc Committee to the Chairperson in respect of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsperson (NIPSO) Bill.

The Committee agreed to forward recent relevant Ministerial correspondence it had received, to you for information. This is appended.

Regards

Peter McCallion
Committee Clerk

FROM THE MINISTER/ÓN AIRE



AN ROINN

Oideachais

Department of
Education

MÁNNYSTRIE O

Lear

www.deni.gov.uk

Cor 46/2015

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28 April 2015

Michelle a chara

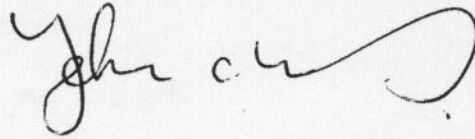
NI PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSPERSON BILL (NIPSO)

Thank you for your letter seeking my views on the NIPSO Bill and the implications for education and schools.

I understand that NIPSO will have enhanced powers of investigation in respect of maladministration in public services and the Bill will bring grant aided schools within NIPSO's remit. The inclusion of schools is not intended to override or duplicate existing current statutory provision in relation to appeals/complaints and there are a number of appeal mechanisms within the education sector, such as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, which are independent of the Department of Education (DE) and will sit outside the remit of NIPSO.

At present there is nowhere for a complaint to go beyond the Board of Governors (BOGs) other than to DE by way of Article 101 of the Education and Libraries Order 1986. Although this provision allows for DE to have an involvement in relation to the management of schools/discharge of the school functions, it was not intended to be a final stage review/complaints mechanism for day to day complaints from parents about schools. Bringing grant aided schools within NIPSO's remit will therefore allow these complainants to go beyond the BOGs without the need to invoke Article 101.

The draft Bill includes the Education Authority as a body subject to investigation and the Education (NI) Act 2014 has made the necessary change to the Commissioner for complaints Order. As such I am content with the Bill as drafted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John O'Dowd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Education