

GUIDANCE FOR MINISTERS IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARCH 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the procedures to be followed by Ministers in the effective exercise of their duties and responsibilities and in circumstances where those duties and responsibilities may engage with personal, party political or business interests. The guidance applies to all members of the Executive Committee and to Junior Ministers.
- 1.2 This guidance is intended to support, and should be read in conjunction with the following: -
- (i) **The Ministerial Code**, incorporating the Pledge of Office; the Ministerial Code of Conduct; and the Seven Principles of Public Life; and
 - (ii) **Conduct of Executive Business**, incorporating Guidance on Executive and Ministerial Business.
- 1.3 This guidance will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary to include any changes or additions to the requirements and obligations placed on Ministers when holding office.

2. MINISTERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

General Principle

- 2.1 Ministers shall exercise the functions assigned to the Ministerial office which they hold.**

Exercise of functions by Ministers

- 2.2 Ministers must act in accordance with the Pledge of Office. In exercise of the functions of the department over which they are in charge, Ministers have full executive authority within any broad programme agreed by the Executive and endorsed by the Assembly, and in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code.
- 2.3 The Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 provides that the functions of a department shall at all times be exercised subject to the Minister's (or Ministers' in the case of TEO) direction and control.

3. MINISTERS' ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE ASSEMBLY

General Principle

- 3.1 **Ministers must at all times be accountable to the Assembly for the decisions and actions of their departments and agencies, including the stewardship of public funds and the extent to which key performance targets and objectives have been met;**

Provision of information

- 3.2 Ministers must be as open as possible with the Assembly and Assembly Committees, advising them of announcements and ensuring that all requests for information are agreed in accordance with the requirements of the law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and in a timely manner;
- 3.3 The Assembly's Standing Orders set out the timescales within which Ministers are required to respond to Assembly Questions and Ministers are expected to comply fully with these requirements. Performance statistics for each of the departments will be published.

Ministerial availability during plenary sessions

- 3.4 Ministers are expected to give priority to Assembly business during plenary days.

Handling cross cutting issues

- 3.5 Current Assembly procedures provide that only one Minister can respond to a debate on issues which cut across the responsibilities of more than one Minister.

Support for Executive business in the Assembly

- 3.6 Ministers should support the agreed position of the Executive on any matters which arise in the Assembly. They should not speak or vote against any agreed Executive position, or in favour of any motion which would have adverse financial or other implications for the Executive.

Information given to the Assembly

- 3.7 Ministers must give accurate, timely and truthful information to the Assembly, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity. Any Minister who knowingly misleads the Assembly will be expected to resign

Ministers and Assembly Statutory Committees

- 3.8 The roles and powers of Assembly statutory committees are described in paragraph 9 of Strand One of the Belfast Agreement and in sections 29 and 44 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (as amended) and the relevant Assembly Standing Orders. Statutory committees require departments and Ministers to provide accurate, comprehensive and timely information.
- 3.9 In formulating policy, Ministers should develop an open, transparent and inclusive approach to their Departmental committee. Ministers and departments should include their statutory committee in any public consultation exercise which they undertake, including proposals for primary and subordinate legislation.
- 3.10 Ministers will be expected to agree forward work programmes with their respective committees and endeavour to provide evidence in accordance with agreed timescales. The presumption is that a request from a Committee for evidence – oral or written – will be agreed to.

Provision of sensitive information

- 3.11 When committees request information which is regarded by the Department as sensitive, careful consideration should be given to such requests. The objective should be in all cases to reach a mutually acceptable agreement with the committee on appropriate handling. Other options are (a) to provide the papers sought on the basis that they will not be published and will be treated in confidence; or (b) to provide a synopsis of the information contained in the papers.

4. MINISTERS' PRIVATE INTERESTS

General Principle

- 4.1 **Ministers must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, financial or otherwise; not use information gained in the course of their service for personal gain; nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests.**

Responsibility for avoiding a conflict of interest

- 4.2 It is the personal responsibility of each Minister to avoid a conflict of interest, or the perception of such a conflict.
- 4.3 Upon assuming office, Ministers will complete the *Ministerial Declaration of Interest Framework* document (Annex) and make a full declaration of all interests which might be thought to give rise to a conflict. The list should also cover interests of the Minister's spouse, partner, close family member(s) or friends, where known and which might be thought to give rise to a conflict). This should be provided to the Permanent Secretary of the department who will consider any potential conflicts of interest. Where it is decided that a Minister may retain a relevant interest that information will be published. Ministers will update the *Ministerial Declaration of Interest Framework* document as interests emerge and change on an ongoing basis.
- 4.4 The personal information which Ministers disclose to those who advise them will be handled in the strictest confidence. However, a statement covering relevant Ministers' interests will be published twice yearly.
- 4.5 Ministers should also list in the Assembly's Register of Members' Interests any direct or indirect pecuniary interests which members of the public might reasonably think might influence their judgement.
- 4.6 The Minister should also declare any retained private interests to Ministerial colleagues if they have to discuss public business which in any way may be affected by it; and the Minister should remain detached from the consideration of that business.
- 4.7 In some cases, it may not be possible to devise such processes to avoid actual or perceived conflict of interest, for example, because of the nature or size of the investment, or of the nature of the department's work. It may therefore ultimately be necessary for the Minister, in consultation with the nominating officer of the relevant political party, to consider whether it is appropriate for him or her to continue to hold office.

Public appointments

- 4.8 On taking up office, Ministers should give up any other public appointment they may hold in any non-departmental body, agency or other body in receipt of public funding from government.

All-Party Assembly Groups

- 4.9 In order to avoid any conflict of interest, Ministers on taking up office should give up membership or chairmanship of an All-party Assembly Group. This is to avoid any risk of criticism that a Minister is seeking to influence the Assembly process.

5. MINISTERS' CONSTITUENCY AND PARTY INTERESTS

General Principle

- 5.1 Ministers must ensure that official resources are not used for party political purposes.**

Use of property and resources

- 5.2 Ministers should undertake their constituency work as they would if they were private Assembly Members.
- 5.3 Government property and resources should not generally be used for constituency work or party activities. Official facilities and resources may not be used for the dissemination of material which is essentially party political.

Constituency interests

- 5.4 Where Ministers have to take decisions within their departments which might have an impact on their own constituencies, they should take particular care to avoid any conflict of interest.
- 5.5 Ministers are free to make their views about issues arising in their constituency known to the responsible Minister by correspondence, leading deputations or by personal interview provided that they make clear that they are acting in the capacity of their constituents' representative and not as a Minister.
- 5.6 Ministers are advised to take particular care in relation to representations to other Ministers, for example in cases relating to planning applications, to present the views of their constituents rather than express a view themselves. When they find it unavoidable to express a view they should: -
- (i) make clear that the views they are putting forward are expressed in their capacity as constituency representatives;
 - (ii) confine themselves to comments which could reasonably be made by those who are not Ministers;
 - (iii) take account of any potential implications which their comments could have on their own departmental responsibilities; and
 - (iv) avoid criticism of decisions taken by the Executive Committee.

Once a decision has been announced, it should normally be accepted without question or criticism.

- 5.7 Particular care also needs to be taken over cases in which a Minister may have a personal interest or connection, for example because they concern family, friends or employees. If, exceptionally, a Minister wishes to raise questions about the handling of such a case they should advise their Permanent Secretary and write to the Minister responsible, as with constituency cases, but they should make clear their personal connection or interest. The responsible Minister should ensure that any enquiry is handled without special treatment.

Complaints to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

- 5.8 Although members of the public may submit complaints directly to the NIPSO, they may choose to approach their MLA for assistance or ask them to act as their representative in dealing with the NIPSO. When Ministers are asked by members of the public for assistance they should in the first place invite them to approach another MLA for the same constituency. If that is not acceptable they should, where possible, act no differently from other Assembly Members. Ministers should accordingly consider requests on their merits in deciding whether to refer complaints to the NIPSO; to refer the case to the relevant Minister; or to decline to take action. Their choosing not to become involved will, however, in no way preclude the submission of a complaint to the NIPSO.
- 5.9 Where the complainant is not from the Minister's constituency, the Minister may prefer to refer the case to an MLA from the relevant constituency. Any Minister minded to provide assistance in relation to a case referred to the NIPSO should inform the Minister of the department concerned in advance.
- 5.10 Where a complaint from a constituent is against the Minister's own department the Minister should ask another MLA to consider the case and refer the complaint to the NIPSO as appropriate.

References for constituents

- 5.11 On occasions, Ministers are asked to provide personal references for constituents. Ministers should only do so provided they make it clear that they are doing so as an MLA and not as a Minister. Particular care must be taken to avoid any conflicts of interest; in some cases, it may not be appropriate for a Minister to provide a reference, even as an MLA.

Presentation of Policy

- 5.12 Official facilities financed out of public funds are to be used for departmental policy and advertising and may not be used for the dissemination of material which is essentially party political.

Media interviews, speeches etc.

- 5.13 Ministers should seek the advice and guidance of their Departmental Information Officer in relation to departmental and Ministerial publicity matters, including media handling, media planning, media responses, etc.
- 5.14 Ministers should normally comment only on issues concerning their departmental responsibility and should refrain from publicly commenting on Executive matters which are not their responsibility, unless with the prior agreement of the responsible Minister. In all cases Ministers should ensure that their statements are consistent with any relevant Executive position.
- 5.15 Ministers should only use official facilities for distributing texts of speeches and news releases when they concern departmental business, as distinct from party policy. Speeches made or information on activities undertaken in a party political context should be distributed through party machinery.

News conferences/broadcasts

- 5.16 As part of their general presentational duties, Ministers will be expected to speak to the news media, through interviews and news conferences. The advice of the departmental press officer should be sought before any such events are arranged. Ministers should be mindful that when responding to direct approaches from members of the media, their comments will be understood to represent the Executive's position; they should therefore avoid criticizing the Executive or saying anything which would compromise any future position that the Executive may take.

Press articles and other publications

- 5.17 Ministers may contribute to a book, journal or newspaper, including a local newspaper in their constituency, provided that publication will not be at variance with their obligations to the Executive and Assembly. No payment should be accepted for such articles.
- 5.18 Ministers may not, while in office, write and publish material on their ministerial experience.

Payment for speeches, media articles, etc.

- 5.19 Ministers should not accept payment for speeches or media articles of an official nature, or which directly draw on their responsibilities or experience as Ministers; even with a view to donating the fee to charity.

Social media

- 5.20 Ministers may retain personal social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), but it is a Minister's personal responsibility to ensure that social media activity in their name does not bring the Executive or their department into disrepute.

Statistics: Pre-release access rules

- 5.21 The UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice defines good practice in relation to official statistics, observance of which is a statutory requirement on all organisations that produce National Statistics in accordance with the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.
- 5.22 Ministers also need to have regard to the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order (NI) 2009, which places strict conditions on access to official statistics in their final form and significantly limits access ahead of publication. The Order imposes restrictions upon pre-release access to a minimum number of persons and prohibits any statement or comment to the press ahead of release of the statistics.

6. TRAVEL

General Principles

6.1 Ministers must ensure that their travel arrangements are efficient and cost-effective. Official transport should not normally be used for travel arrangements arising from Party or private business, except where this is justified on security grounds.

Framework for Ministerial travel

6.2 In planning their official travel, Ministers should adhere to the guiding principles set out below:-

- (i) Official transport should not normally be used for travel arrangements arising from party or private business.
- (ii) On ministerial visits, whether in the UK, Ireland or abroad, Ministers and officials should make sure that there is no confusion about who is and is not a member of the Ministerial party.
- (iii) Ministers should ensure that the provisions of the Ministerial Code of Conduct are observed, and are reminded of the provision in Section 2.10 of the Ministerial Code that meetings of the Executive take precedence over all other business.

Foreign visits

6.3 Ministers should make it their personal responsibility to approve the size and composition of Ministerial delegations for which their department is responsible, keeping delegations as small as possible. Ministers will wish to be satisfied that their arrangements could be defended in public.

6.4 Departments will publish details of all foreign travel by Ministers on a quarterly basis.

6.5 When Ministers travel on official business, their travel and hospitality expenses should normally be borne by the departmental vote. Offers of free travel should not normally be accepted. The only exception to this is in the case of an offer of transport from a foreign government, provided no undue obligation is created.

6.6 The expenses of a Minister's spouse/partner when accompanying a Minister on official duties may occasionally be paid from public funds provided that it is clearly in the public interest that he or she should accompany the Minister. The relevant Permanent Secretary should be consulted before such travel.

- 6.7 When holding meetings in a foreign country with Ministers and/or officials from foreign governments, or where official business is likely to be discussed, Ministers should always ensure that an official is present. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and finds themselves discussing official business without an official present any significant content should be passed back to their Private Secretary as soon as possible after the event.

Visits within the UK

- 6.8 Ministers intending to make an official visit within Northern Ireland must inform the MLAs for the relevant area. It is recognised that there will be occasions when visits are organised or the details confirmed at short notice, but as much advance notice as possible should be given.
- 6.9 Ministers intending to make an official visit within the United Kingdom must inform in advance the MPs whose constituencies are to be included within the itinerary.
- 6.10 Similar courtesies should be extended when Ministers are making an official visit within the constituencies of members of the Scottish Parliament or the National Assembly for Wales.
- 6.11 Ministers who are planning official visits to Wales or Scotland which would involve a public engagement should inform their respective counterparts.

Party political occasions

- 6.12 Where a visit is a mix of political and official engagements, it is important that the department and the Party each meet a proper proportion of the actual cost.

Air Miles

- 6.13 Air miles and other benefits earned through travel paid for from public funds, other than where they are de minimis (for example, access to special departure lounges or booking arrangements which go with membership of regular flier clubs), should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. If it is impracticable to use the benefits for government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity if this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

7. MINISTERS AND OFFICIAL INFORMATION

General Principle

- 7.1 Ministers must at all times adhere to the rules regarding the management of official information.**

Handling of Information

- 7.2 Ministers have a personal responsibility to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of official papers, including Executive papers. Failure to maintain good security can cause damage to the interests and reputation of the Executive Committee and Northern Ireland departments, and may prejudice the effective conduct of official business.
- 7.3 Ministers must use official email systems for all communications relating to official business. Exceptionally, where this is not possible, the Minister must copy any message to their official email account. Information generated in the course of government business must be handled in accordance with the requirements of the law (including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), GDPR and Public Records Act (NI) 1923), regardless of how it is communicated.
- 7.4 When a Minister leaves office, he or she should ensure that all papers received in his or her Ministerial capacity are returned to the department.

Meetings

- 7.5 Ministers must ensure that an appropriate official is in attendance at all meetings concerning departmental or Executive business, and that records of all such meetings are maintained.
- 7.6 It is recognised that third parties and other relevant stakeholders may initiate discussions with a Minister in relation to departmental or Executive business, in unscheduled and/or less formal contexts. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and finds themselves discussing official business without an official present any significant content should be passed back to their Private Secretary as soon as possible after the event.
- 7.7 When holding meetings with Ministers and/or officials from foreign governments, or where official business is likely to be discussed, Ministers should always ensure that an official is present and that a record of the discussion is maintained.
- 7.8 Details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations/individuals will be published by Departments on a quarterly basis. Exceptionally there may be a

need to consider cases where publication at certain times may engage commercial sensitivities, or where another relevant Freedom of Information exemption or ERI exception applies. Where such information is withheld, the rationale for doing so will be recorded and the details published as and when the matter covered by the exemption/exception is no longer relevant.

8. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, HOSPITALITY AND SERVICES

General principle

8.1 Ministers must at all times adhere to rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

Acceptance of gifts and hospitality

8.2 A Minister should not accept gifts, hospitality or services from anyone which would, or might appear to, place him or her under an obligation. The same principle applies if gifts *etc.* are offered to a member of their family.

8.3 The application of the rules is primarily a matter which must be left to the good sense of Ministers, but any Minister in doubt or difficulty over this should seek the guidance of the Permanent Secretary of the department. The following specific rules apply: -

- (i) Each Private Office must keep a Register of Gifts and Hospitality, recording both offers made and acceptances or refusals.
- (ii) Gifts of small value (currently set at up to £50), may be retained by the Minister, or if not retained, handed over to the department for disposal.
- (iii) Gifts of a higher value should be handed over to the department for disposal, except that:-
 - (a) the Minister may purchase the gift;
 - (b) if the department judges that it would be of interest, the gift may be displayed or used in the department; and
 - (c) if the disposal of the gift would cause offence or it might be appropriate for the Minister to use or display the gift on some future occasion as a mark of politeness, then the gift should be retained in the department for this purpose.

While (i) to (iii) above make it clear that no Minister should accept a gift which would, or might appear to, place him or her under an obligation, it is recognised that there may be occasions when it may be difficult to refuse a gift from members of other governments, or organisations, without the risk of apparent discourtesy.

8.4 Details of gifts and hospitality received by Ministers will be published by Departments on a quarterly basis.

8.5 Gifts, hospitality and services provided to Ministers in their capacity as constituency MLAs or members of a political party fall within the rules relating to the Assembly's Register of Members' Interests.

9. MINISTERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

General Principle

- 9.1 **Ministers must uphold the political impartiality of the civil service, not asking civil servants to act in any way which would conflict with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics.**

Ministers and the Civil Service

- 9.2 Ministers should be professional in their working relationships with the Civil Service and treat all those with whom they come into contact with consideration and respect.
- 9.3 Ministers will:
- give fair consideration and due weight to informed and impartial advice from civil servants, as well as to other considerations and advice, in reaching policy decisions;
 - ensure that civil servants are not asked to engage in activities likely to call into question their political impartiality, or to give rise to the criticism that officials, paid from public funds, are being used for party political purposes.
- 9.4 Ministers should require civil servants who give evidence before Committees of the Assembly on their behalf and, under their direction, to be as helpful as possible in providing full and accurate information, in accordance with the duties and responsibilities of civil servants as set out in the Code of Ethics. The presumption is that a request from a Committee for evidence will be agreed to.

Advice to Ministers

- 9.5 Party representatives should not attend departmental meetings, nor should they be sent official papers.

Role of the Accounting Officer

- 9.6 Heads of departments and the chief executives of executive agencies are appointed as Accounting Officers. This is a personal responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he or she is responsible; for keeping proper accounts; for the avoidance of waste and extravagance; for compliance with Section 75; and for the efficient and effective use of resources. Accounting Officers answer personally to the Public Accounts Committee of the Assembly on these matters, within the framework of Ministerial accountability to the Assembly for the policies, actions and conduct of their departments.

- 9.7 Accounting Officers have a particular responsibility to ensure that appropriate advice is tendered to Ministers on all matters of financial propriety and regularity, and more broadly as to all considerations of prudent and economical administration, efficiency, effectiveness, equality of opportunity, and value for money. If a Minister in charge of a department is contemplating a course of action which the Accounting Officer considers would breach the requirements of propriety or regularity, the Accounting Officer will set out in writing his or her objections to the proposal, the reasons for the objection and the duty to inform the Comptroller and Auditor General should the advice be overruled.
- 9.8 If the Minister nonetheless decides to proceed, the Accounting Officer will seek a written instruction, or Ministerial direction, to take the action in question. The Accounting Officer is obliged to comply with the instructions and the relevant procedures set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI), which may include referral of the matter to the Executive. A similar procedure applies where the Accounting Officer has concerns about whether a proposed course of action offers value for money. This notification process enables the Public Accounts Committee to see that the Accounting Officer does not bear personal responsibility for the actions concerned.

Civil servants and party political events

- 9.9 Ministers should not ask officials to attend or take part in party conferences or meetings. Where exceptionally a Minister requires an official(s) to be in attendance at party political events in order to support them when carrying out urgent departmental business, the relevant Permanent Secretary must be consulted before any arrangements are agreed to.
- 9.10 If a Minister wishes to have a factual brief for a party political occasion to explain departmental policies or actions, this may be requested from officials. However, officials should not be asked to draft party political material for speeches, press releases, etc.

10. MINISTERS AND APPOINTMENTS

General Principle

- 10.1 **Ministers have a duty to make civil service and public appointments in accordance with the relevant legislation and the relevant recruitment codes; and ensure that the rules on the management and conduct of special advisers, including discipline, are adhered to.**

Special Advisers

- 10.2 Special advisers are a critical part of the team supporting Ministers. Their employment adds a political dimension to the advice available to Ministers, and provides Ministers with the direct advice of experts in their professional field, while reinforcing the political impartiality of the permanent Civil Service by distinguishing the source of political advice and support.
- 10.3 Special Advisers may be appointed under the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, as amended. The First Minister and deputy First Minister may each appoint up to three Special Advisers at any one time; the other Ministers may appoint one Special Adviser each; and the Junior Ministers in the Executive Office may appoint one Special Adviser each.
- 10.4 The appointments of Special Advisers are made personally by Ministers.
- 10.5 The appointment process for special advisers is set out in the Code for the Appointment of Special Advisers.
- 10.6 The responsibility for the management and conduct of Special Advisers, including discipline, rests with the appointing Minister.
- 10.7 The total pay bill for Special Advisers, salaries and any severance payments will be published annually by the Department of Finance.

Assembly Private Secretaries

- 10.8 The First Minister, deputy First Minister and Executive Ministers may each appoint an MLA as an Assembly Private Secretary. There is a separate Protocol for the Appointment, Role and Functions of Assembly Private Secretaries.

Public appointments

- 10.9 Public appointments must be made in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

10.10 In general, the responsibility for public appointments rests with the relevant Minister. The Minister must make appointments based on specific criteria and with regard to public accountability, and the requirements of the law and the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

Civil Service appointments

10.11 Civil service appointments must be made in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code.

ANNEX

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF INTEREST FRAMEWORK

Name of Minister	
Department and role	

Section 1: Financial Interests

Please list your financial interests (assets and liabilities).

You **need not give** the valuation of your assets but simply specify their nature, the name of any relevant financial institution or individual through which the interest is held and whether they are self-managed or fully discretionary.

Please list investments other than shareholdings in individual companies (for example ISAs, PEPs, blind trusts and family trusts);

Tax Affairs

a) Are your tax affairs up-to-date?

b) Are you under investigation by HM Revenue and Customs?

c) Please alert us to any involvement in any arrangements that may be perceived to be tax avoidance schemes.

Section 2: Directorships and Shareholdings

Please list:

a) Any directorship you hold, whether in a public or private company. Please specify if remunerated;

b) Any shareholdings or share options you have in individual companies. Please specify the name of the companies, the nature of their business and the percentage and value of your shareholding in each.

Section 3: Investment Property

Please list:

a) Any property you own which you rent or lease out;

b) Any property you are renting or leasing from another person on preferential terms.

Section 4: Public Appointments

Please list here any public appointments you hold, including school governorships, membership of Non-Departmental Public Bodies, etc.

Section 5: Charities

Please identify here any links you have with charities as a patron, trustee or member. (It is not necessary to identify charities to which you simply donate.)

Section 6: Any other relevant interests

Please include any other private interests you hold which might reasonably be perceived as relevant to your Ministerial responsibilities, including trade union membership.

Please list any particular interests in your constituency which are directly relevant to your responsibilities as a Minister.

Please list any acquaintances or associates who you know to have contractual relationships with the department or who are involved in any other issues which are related to your department.

Section 7: Interests of Spouse, Partner or Close Family Member or Friend

Please list details of any interests held by your spouse, partner or a member of your immediate family (including parents, siblings or children) or close friend in any of the above categories, which might reasonably be perceived as relevant to your Ministerial responsibilities.

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Signed	
Date	