

POLICE (NORTHERN IRELAND) ACT 2000

EXPLANATORY NOTES

SUMMARY

3. The purpose of the Act is to implement the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland in its report, "A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland" which were accepted by the Government following consultation.
4. The Independent Commission, chaired by Chris Patten, was set up as part of the Good Friday Agreement and tasked with bringing forward proposals which would produce a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from across Northern Ireland as a whole. The Commission's report (the "Patten Report") was published on 9 September 1999.
5. A number of the Patten Report's recommendations have been taken forward in the Act. Other recommendations involve administrative and structural changes which do not require changes in the law. The Government's overall approach to implementation of the Patten Report is set out in the "*Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland: Implementation Plan*" (June 2000) published by the Northern Ireland Office. The Government is committed to issuing a revised Implementation Plan now that the Act has been passed.
6. The main provisions of the Act are:
 - to provide for the name of the police in Northern Ireland;
 - to provide for the establishment of a Northern Ireland Policing Board to replace the Police Authority for Northern Ireland;
 - to require district councils to establish district policing partnerships;
 - to make changes to the police planning and objective setting process and introduce new efficiency arrangements;
 - to make changes in respect of the police including: a new declaration, a code of ethics for police officers to be issued by the Policing Board, to provide for police officers to inform the Chief Constable of any "notifiable memberships", to enable the Secretary of State to regulate the flags and emblems of the police;
 - to enable the contracting out of the recruitment of police officers; for special recruitment measures to redress the current imbalance in the composition of the police and its support staff in terms of community background and to provide for severance arrangements for police officers;
 - to enable the Policing Board to perform its function of holding the police to account through reporting and inquiry arrangements and to require the Board to monitor and assess police performance;
 - to make new provisions affecting the Police Ombudsman.

*These notes refer to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000
(c.32) which received Royal Assent on 23 November 2000*

- to repeal and replace parts of existing policing legislation in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 (the “1998 Act”).
- to provide for a Commissioner to oversee the implementation of changes in the policing of Northern Ireland.