This chapter describes the various ombudsman offices, commissioners, and commissions that were set up in Northern Ireland under direct rule. It examines their structures, powers, effectiveness and inter-relationships, and compares them in relation to their uniqueness or otherwise in governance in the United Kingdom. It explains that action to safeguard against discrimination and respond to complaints became a major feature of direct rule and that the institutions developed were either groundbreaking or largely followed models adopted from Britain. This chapter describes the structure and functions of some of the institutions including the Human Rights Commission, the Police Ombudsman and Equality Commission.

Direct Rule and the Governance of Northern Ireland
Derek Birrell

This is a comprehensive study of direct rule as the system of governance that operated in Northern Ireland for most of the period between 1972 and 2007. The major institutions of governance are described and examined in detail, including the often-neglected sectors of the role of the Westminster parliament, the civil service, local government, quangos, ombudsmen offices, cross-border structures and the public expenditure process. The book explains how the complex system covering transferred, reserved and excepted functions worked and provided viable governance despite political violence, constitutional conflict and political party disagreements. In addition, a comparison is
drawn between direct rule and devolution, analysing both the positive and negative impacts of direct rule, as well as identifying where there has been minimal divergence in processes and outcomes.