



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments Information Booklet

**THE REGULATION AND QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY
(RQIA 1/26)**

1 X AUTHORITY CHAIR

Information packs and application forms can be provided in alternative formats, such as, Braille, large print, audio, etc. and applicants who require assistance will be facilitated on request, provided this is made prior to 6 May 2026.

DoH Public Appointments Unit
Room 16, Annexe 1
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 02890 523386 or 02890 520038 (Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

Email your request to: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk



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KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale*
Closing Date for Applications	5pm BST, 25 May 2026
Sift	4 June 2026
Interviews	6,7 August 2026
Planned Date of Appointment	1 October 2026

* These dates may be subject to change.

Privacy Notice

DoH will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting an Authority Chair to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-unit-privacy-notice>

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Health ("the Department") is committed to the principle of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic group, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. Applications are welcome from women, young people, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority communities who are currently under-represented across the governing bodies of the Department's Arm's Length Bodies. Applications from those who have not previously held a public appointment are also encouraged.
- 1.2 The Department administers health and social care (HSC) which includes policy and legislation for hospitals, family practitioner services, community health and personal social services. HSC provides an integrated system of health and personal social services to promote the health and social wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 In terms of service commissioning and provision, the Department discharges this duty primarily through its Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) and by delegating the exercise of its statutory functions to the Public Health Agency (PHA) and to a number of other HSC bodies created to exercise specific functions on its behalf. All these HSC bodies are accountable to the Department which in turn is accountable, through the Minister of Health, to the Assembly for the manner in which this duty is performed.
- 1.4 A new framework for planning and managing health and social care services in Northern Ireland, the Integrated Care System for NI (ICS NI), is being implemented in Northern Ireland. ICS NI is underpinned by a population health approach, with the objective of improving health and wellbeing outcomes and the reduction of health inequalities through collaboration and partnership in the design, delivery and management of health, social and community services.

The strategic direction to the system is set through a Strategic Outcomes Framework conveying the identified health and wellbeing needs of the population, as well as the Ministerial/Departmental priorities.

Appointment of Authority Chair to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

- 1.5 The Department is inviting applications for appointment as Authority Chair to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA).
- 1.6 **The position is based at James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2JA with an expectation of attendance in person where possible, and travel as necessary to off-site meetings. The Authority continues to adopt a hybrid approach to meetings as necessary.**
- 1.7 It is expected that the successful candidate will take up appointment by 1 October 2026.
- 1.8 Information on disqualifications can be accessed at **Annex A**.
- 1.9 This appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI), and the competition may be examined by CPANI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

Section 2 - Background Information on the RQIA

- 2.1 The RQIA is established as a body corporate by Article 3 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (“the 2003 Order”). It consists of a Chair and Members appointed by the Department. It is an Arm’s Length Body of the Department. The RQIA’s general duties are to keep the Department informed about the provision of health and social care in Northern Ireland and in particular their availability and quality, and to encourage improvement in the quality of these services. The Department’s Framework Document, published in accordance with section 5 of the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act 2009 sets out that (although accountable to the Department) the RQIA is an independent health and social care regulatory body, whose relationship with the Department and other HSC bodies is driven by its independent role.
- 2.2 The RQIA works to ensure that everyone in Northern Ireland experiences a better quality of health and social care as a result of the RQIA’s regulatory actions, inspections, reviews and audits. The RQIA strives to ensure care is safe, effective, compassionate and well-led, listening carefully to patients and service users, and working in partnership with providers of services so that they can deliver improved care. The RQIA has some 141 full-time and part-time staff in place and has a budget of approximately £10.67m, (part from fee income from registered services; and part from Departmental funds).

RQIA Vision

- 2.3 To secure and improve safety and quality in health and social care in Northern Ireland.

RQIA Values

- 2.4 The RQIA is committed to the regional HSC Values of Working Together; Excellence; Openness and Honesty; and Compassion. In addition, in its role as independent regulator, the Authority has adopted Values of putting those impacted by the health and social care system at the heart of all we do; using

evidence as the foundation of all our actions; and speaking and acting with integrity whilst working in partnership with others. These underpin all its work and internal and external relationships.

RQIA Purpose

2.5 The RQIA's functions include:

- Keeping the Department of Health informed about the provision, availability and quality of health and social care services;
- Promoting improvement in the quality of health and social care services;
- Reviewing, investigating and inspecting arrangements by statutory bodies for monitoring and improving the quality of their health and social care services; reporting findings to the Department and if appropriate, issuing an Improvement notice;
- Regulating (registering, inspecting, and enforcing compliance with regulatory standards) a wide range of health and social care services, mainly provided by the independent sector such as Care Homes; Domiciliary Care Agencies, and independent clinics and hospitals;
- Advising the Department about any changes which it considers should be made in the standards set by the Department;
- Providing advice, reports or information to the Department on the exercise of its functions;
- Under the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 and the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, keeping under review and where appropriate making inquiry into the care and treatment of patients and clients with a mental disorder or learning disability;
- Acting as a designated body with Responsible Office functions – in the context of medical governance under the Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) Regulations (NI) 2010;
- Monitoring and inspecting compliance with regulations for medical equipment using ionising radiation in Northern Ireland under the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018; (The Department of Health is the Relevant Enforcement Authority); and

- Under the United Nations Optional Protocol for the Convention against Torture oversees UK compliance by using its powers to visit individuals in places of detention and to prevent cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, as part of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism.
- 2.6 The RQIA is determined to improve the safety and quality of services through active listening, dialogue and engagement with the public, service users, and health and social care workers and to ensure that its actions are properly informed by on the ground realities and lived experience.
- 2.7 The Authority Chair is appointed in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the Regulation and Improvement Authority (Appointments and Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. The Authority consists of a Chair and not more than 12 other Authority Members appointed by the Department.
- 2.8 Further information is available at: <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

Role of Authority

- 2.9 The Authority is responsible for ensuring that the RQIA fulfils its statutory duties and functions and supports the aims and objectives set in the Executive's Programme for Government and by the Minister and Department of Health, and for ensuring the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources. To these ends, and in pursuit of its wider corporate responsibilities, the Authority:
- works, supported by its Chief Executive, to establish the overall strategic direction of the RQIA within its statutory remit and the policy and resources framework determined by the Department and the Minister;
 - constructively supports and oversees the Chief Executive in their planning, target setting and delivery of functions;
 - ensures that the Department is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of the RQIA or on the delivery of

its statutory functions, and determines the steps needed to deal with such changes;

- ensures that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with;
- ensures that it operates within the limits of its statutory powers and any delegated financial authority agreed with the Department, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds;
- ensures that, in reaching decisions, the Authority takes into account all relevant guidance issued by the Department of Finance and the Department;
- ensures that it receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of the RQIA;
- ensures that it is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the activities of the RQIA; and provides positive assurance to the Sponsor Branch within the Department that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;
- demonstrates high standards of corporate governance at all times, including by using the Audit and Risk Committee, and other Authority Committees to scrutinise and address the key financial and other risks facing the RQIA;
- appoints a Chief Executive to the RQIA (with approval of the Department); and
- in consultation with the Department, sets the Chief Executive's performance objectives and remuneration terms, which give due weight to the proper management and use of public monies.

2.10 The Authority Chair is appointed with the approval of the Minister in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

Section 3 - Authority Chair Role Profile

Accountability

3.1 The Authority Chair is accountable to the Minister, through the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health.

Role

3.2 The key tasks of the Authority Chair include the following:

- Setting the agenda and managing the Authority to enable collaborative and robust discussion of issues and effective decision making;
- Developing and motivating the Authority;
- Ensuring effective relationships so that the Authority works collaboratively through free and frank discussion to reach robust, evidence-based consensus on decisions;
- Representing the Authority and the RQIA in liaison with Ministers, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the public;
- Obtaining professional advice for the Authority when needed, in particular when the Authority is taking a decision on matters that pose a significant operational or reputational risk; and
- Ensuring effective communication with RQIA staff, service users, health and social care service providers, professional and service regulators, the media and public.

3.3 To achieve this, he or she should ensure that:

- The Minister is advised when Authority Member vacancies arise and that the RQIA advises and supports the relevant skills audit when required;
- Authority Members are fully briefed on terms of appointment, duties, rights and responsibilities;
- Authority Members receive and maintain appropriate training;
- There is an Authority operating framework (Standing Orders) in place setting out a clear and comprehensive set of operational rules to govern the operation of the RQIA, in line with relevant guidance;

- There is a code of practice for Authority Members in place, consistent with relevant guidance;
- There is an effective working relationship between the Authority Chair and the Chief Executive that is both collaborative and challenging. It is important that the Authority Chair and Chief Executive act in accordance with their distinct roles and responsibilities as laid out in Managing Public Money and their appointment letters; and
- The Authority Chair has a presence in the organisation and cultivates external relationships which provide useful links for the organisation while being mindful of overstepping boundaries and becoming too involved in day-to-day operations or executive activities.

Training

3.4 Appropriate induction training will be provided by the Authority to the new appointee.

Time Commitment & Remuneration

3.5 The Authority Chair will normally be expected to devote approximately **2-3 days per week** to their appointment. This may involve commitment outside normal working hours. The current annual rate of remuneration is **£ 21,257 per annum**.

Expenses

3.6 The Authority Chair is also eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on RQIA business.

Period of Appointment

3.7 The Authority Chair will be appointed for a period not longer than four years.

3.8 It should be noted that the Department may give notice to terminate the appointment at any time. If the successful applicant decides to end their appointment early, a minimum of 30 days' notice will be required in writing to the Department.

- 3.9 An annual assessment of the performance of the Authority Chair will be required throughout the period of appointment.
- 3.10 The Department is committed to improving the diversity of the Boards to which it makes appointments. In view of this, it is the Department's policy to not automatically re-appoint to the Authority for a second term unless there are essential business reasons, such as maintaining business continuity. However, a sitting Authority Chair may re-apply through open public competition and may be considered to serve a second term subject to: the outcome of the competition recruitment process, evidence of an appropriate standard of performance having been achieved during the initial period in office and evidence of the continued adherence to the seven principles of public life.

Codes of Conduct and Accountability

- 3.11 To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the HSC system, the Authority Chair is required, on appointment, to subscribe to the Codes of Conduct and Accountability. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required of Chairs are described more fully in the Codes. Please see link to the [DoH Code of Conduct & Code of Accountability for Board Members of Health and Social Care Bodies](#).

Section 4: Person Specification – Authority Chair

- 4.1 The Department encourages all individuals who wish to participate in public service and make a difference to the safety and quality of health and social care services (both independent and public sector) in Northern Ireland to submit an application form.
- 4.2 To generate the widest possible pool of talent for this appointment, the Department recognises the value of less traditional career patterns and experiences, such as, community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Applicants can use examples from their working life or personal life including any private, voluntary or community work you are, or have been, involved in.
- 4.3 The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competencies sought. Criteria-based selection will be used as part of this process (**Annex B**).

CPANI runs free workshops aimed at explaining the nature of the public appointment process and how best to complete an application. If you would be interested in attending, details can be found [here](#).

- 4.4 The application form is an essential element of the process and is designed to require applicants to give specific examples of past performance to demonstrate their ability or competence.
- 4.5 You are advised to make sure that you take the opportunity to provide practical evidence and examples of why you believe you are suitable for this Public Appointment. **Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**

Eligibility Requirements

- 4.6 There are no specific educational or professional requirements for the Authority Chair position.

4.7 **Applicants are asked to note the disqualifications for appointment set out at Annex A which include any person currently employed or self-employed as a health care professional or an employee of health care professionals.** These are defined in regulation 4 (8) of the [Regulation and Improvement Authority \(Appointments and Procedure\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#) and include:

- a medical practitioner or dental practitioner;
- a nurse, midwife or health visitor registered in accordance with the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001;
- a registered pharmacist;
- an ophthalmic optician, other than a body corporate enrolled in the list kept under section 9 of the Opticians Act 1989;
- a person who is registered as a member of a profession to which the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960 extends;
- a fully registered osteopath as defined by section 41 of the Osteopaths Act 1993;
- a fully registered chiropractor as defined by section 43 of the Chiropractors Act 1994; and
- social workers who are an employee of a health service body or health and social services body are disqualified under 4 (1) (f) of the same Regulations. Those working in the voluntary or private sector are not disqualified.

Note: The terms 'health service body' and 'health and social services body' are defined in Regulation 1(2) of the [Regulation and Improvement Authority \(Appointments and Procedure\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#)

The term 'organisation' which is used in the criteria can be defined as a body operating in the public, community, voluntary or private sector.

The term 'corporate governance' which is used in Criterion 3 is defined as the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders, and the wider community,

within which organisations take decisions and lead and control their functions to achieve their objectives.

The term 'clinical governance' is defined as a system through which organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellent care will flourish.

The term 'financial governance' is defined as the process of collection, management, monitoring and control of financial information.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

4.8 Applicants must demonstrate in their Application Form, and if invited for interview, how they meet the following essential criteria.

Criterion 1: Leadership – by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates how you provided leadership and delivered on the strategic goals of an organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below. **You do not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Knowledge and understanding of the strategic regulation, quality and improvement agenda in health and social care;
- An ability to act and think strategically, with experience of successfully leading the formulation of strategy and planning, and maintaining strategic direction during a period of financial constraint or reform;
- Experience of leading or working in an organisation which deals with controversial and complex subject matters;
- Setting clear realistic objectives, responding effectively to changing and future requirements;
- An ability to build and sustain effective collaborative relationships with a wide range of internal and external partners to build consensus and to secure successful shared outcomes;
- A strong networker with an ability to confidently inspire, model, motivate and influence in support of the standards for public services set out in [Managing Public Money Northern Ireland](#); the [HSC Values](#) and organisational culture; and to maintain an open and transparent culture;
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, including an ability to lead from the front as a key representative of an organisation, presenting the organisation's aims and policies to the outside world, and building a strong and inclusive working environment for all.

Criterion 2: Change Management - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates your experience of effectively and successfully leading or managing an organisational change programme or project.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below. **You do not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Experience of and ability to effectively manage the impact of implementing change on the Board and organisational teams, culture, structure, service and morale within an organisation;
- Developing and implementing plans to deliver organisational, policy and legislative change and modernisation;
- Building flexibility and responsiveness in the Board and enabling same across the organisation;
- Challenging the status quo to achieve value-adding improvements;
- Making sound decisions, including the ability to think and act pragmatically and decisively within organisational constraints (for example, legislative, financial, practical, etc).

Criterion 3. Corporate Governance and Accountability - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates your knowledge, understanding and/or experience of corporate governance and its importance within an organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below. **You do not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Understands corporate governance principles and policies;
- Understands the principles of accountability;

- Involvement in improving, securing and maintaining effective corporate, financial and clinical governance and accountability in a complex operating environment;
- Ability to actively build a trusted relationship between the Chair and Chief Executive, to ensure a collective and inclusive approach and visible cohesion;
- Experience of safeguarding public sector values and the organisation's reputation;
- Ability to balance appropriate support for an executive team with the need for constructive challenge when required across all areas of responsibility.

Criterion 4: Performance Management - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates your ability to maintain and improve the performance of an organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below. **You do not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Ability to build and sustain consistent and effective performance management in a context where both support and challenge are required;
- Building an effective performance culture, to deliver desired outcomes - motivate teams towards substantial and sustainable improvements in organisational performance and productivity;
- Experience of the formal identification, evaluation and management of risk;
- Ability to effectively manage, motivate and hold others to account, addressing performance issues resolutely, fairly and promptly, and appropriately challenging others where necessary;
- Ability to maintain and improve the performance of an organisation including innovation, collaboration, consensus and sharing good practice.

Section 5 - Application, Access NI and Selection Process

How to apply

- 5.1 Application forms or further information about the process can be obtained from Public Appointments Unit at the address on the cover of this document, by e-mailing a request to: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk or by telephone on 02890 523386 or 02890 520038. Alternatively, you can download the information pack at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/public-appointments-current-vacancies>
- 5.2 Hard copy or electronic versions of the application form are acceptable. You must not reformat the electronic application form. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted.
- 5.3 **You are encouraged to return your application via e-mail to:**

Email: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk

If you are unable to e-mail your application, and wish to post or hand-deliver it, the office address is provided in the cover page above.

- 5.4 Applications must be fully completed and legible, whether they are completed electronically or handwritten. Please complete your application form in **black ink** in either typescript Arial font size 12, single-line spacing or, if handwritten, preferably in block capitals. Applications not fully completed and those where the format has been altered will not be accepted.
- 5.5 Your application is very important. You must demonstrate clearly on your application form how and to what extent your experience is relevant to the published essential criteria for the post (including dates where appropriate e.g. dates from/to). There may be several aspects to a criterion, so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all aspects. It is not enough simply to list the various posts that you have held. The Department will not make

assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills or experience gained. Guidance on the Criteria Based Selection Process can be found at **Annex B**.

- 5.6 **You must NOT exceed the maximum 350-word count per essential criterion. Text beyond the allotted word count will be redacted by PAU and not considered by the Panel carrying out the sift stage of the appointment process.**
- 5.7 The Information Booklet and Application Form can be provided in alternative formats. Any applicants who require assistance should contact PAU (contact details on cover sheet).
- 5.8 All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability. Further information on the Guaranteed Interview Scheme can be found at paragraph 5.30.

Timeframe for process

- 5.9 Application forms should be submitted by post, email or in person to arrive with Public Appointments Unit by **5pm BST on 25 May 2026** (see contact details on cover sheet). The date and time of receipt will be formally recorded on all applications. It is the responsibility of the applicant, taking into account their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with the Department on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted.** Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline. The Department does not accept any application where they have been asked to pay any shortfall in postage. All applications will be acknowledged on receipt.
- 5.10 Please check your application form before submitting it as **the Department will not examine applications until after the closing date** and failure to fulfil the application requirements will result in your application form being excluded from

the process. Applicants whose application is excluded will be notified within 5 working days of the closing date.

- 5.11 Applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful at the application sift stage and/or at interview, will normally be informed within 5 working days following the sift of applications forms or within 5 working days of the date of the last interview.
- 5.12 Applicants who are unsuccessful at sift/shortlisting stage will be advised in writing of the outcome which will include the scores against each criterion. Further feedback on the Panel's agreed assessment of their application can be provided on request. Where an applicant feels they have been unfairly excluded after sift they may request that their application be reviewed by the Panel. All requests to review applications will be considered up to 10 working days following the date on which the "regret" letter was issued.
- 5.13 Those applicants who are unsuccessful at interview stage will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview which will include feedback on their performance.

Recommended reading

- 5.14 The Department recommends that applicants read the ['Public Appointments Guide' published by the Executive Office](#). The guide provides an overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and includes helpful information for those wishing to apply.
- 5.15 Applicants may also wish to read 'Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies: [NI Code of Good Practice](#) published by the Department of Finance in March 2019. This publication aims to set out principles of good practice which can be applied to derive greater value from, and bring consistency to, relationships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies.

ACCESS Northern Ireland (Access NI)

5.16 Access NI enables organisations in Northern Ireland to make more informed recruitment decisions by providing criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in certain defined areas, such as working with children or vulnerable adults. The Department adheres to the [Access NI Code of Practice](#).

5.17 The Department will carry out an “Enhanced Disclosure Check with barred lists” for the appointment of the Authority Chair to the RQIA Board. Guidance documents to relevant definitions of Regulated Activity with children and/or adults are provided in the links below, these are relevant to the question being asked at Section 7.1 of the Application Form: -

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/regulated-activity-relation-children>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/regulated-activity-relation-adults>

The link below provides statutory guidance on activity which when unsupervised is regulated activity:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/regulated-activity-children-supervision-activity-children-which-regulated-activity-when>

5.18 The criminal record check will be undertaken by Access NI, which is the responsibility of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997. It should be noted that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining this position (the Department has a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which can be provided on request).

5.19 The Department has a policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure information which can be provided on request.

Selection Process

- 5.20 Criteria based selection tests applicants against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These examples provide the Panel with information and evidence about you, and a deeper understanding of your ability.
- 5.21 The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare by:
- reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
 - reminding yourself of the examples you used in your application form and being prepared to expand on these at interview, if asked;
 - rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the Interview Panel, emphasising your own role and responsibilities; and
 - not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.
- 5.22 Further general guidance on the Criteria Based Selection Process can be found at **Annex B**.
- 5.23 The Interview Panel comprising three members – two Senior Officers from the Department and a CPANI Independent Assessor - or an appointed Sift Panel (para 5.26 refers) will carry out a sift of all of the application forms received to assess each applicant against the selection criteria.
- 5.24 When assessing each application against the selection criteria, the Panel will use a marking framework to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience meet each of the criteria. Applicants will be awarded a score out of five for each criterion and must meet a minimum standard of three or above in each criterion in order to be invited for interview. All criteria will be weighted equally. Applications which do not meet the minimum standard will be sifted out at this stage.

- 5.25 In order to encourage diversity, the Department is committed to interviewing as many eligible applicants as practicable without further short-listing being applied. However, in the case of a high volume of applications the Panel may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview. If this happens, the Panel will consider the aggregated scores, identify the top scoring applicants across the total of the essential criteria and agree a cut-off mark. If necessary, the Panel will drop the cut-off mark by one mark each time until a sufficient pool of candidates eligible for interview is in place.
- 5.26 With the agreement of the Commissioner, the Department reserves the right to employ a Sift Panel comprising three CPANI Independent Assessors to conduct the sift stage of written applications. If the Department opts to use a Sift Panel, the Independent Assessor allocated by CPANI to sit on the Interview Panel will be appointed to the role of Lead Independent Assessor on the Sift Panel.
- 5.27 Application forms provided to the Panel responsible for conducting the sift exercise will be anonymised, which means that it will not include your name or personal details.
- 5.28 The interviews will be conducted on a face-to-face basis. Applicants invited for interview will be eligible to claim reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and Republic of Ireland in attending for interview. **Any travel plans from outside Northern Ireland, including accommodation requirements, MUST be approved in advance of booking by the Department's Public Appointments Unit.** If you cannot make the interview time offered, we will try our best to reschedule your appointment. An expenses claim form will be issued with your invitation to interview letter.
- 5.29 At interview, all applicants must satisfy the Panel that they adequately meet the relevant criteria. The Minister of Health will take the final decision on who to appoint. The Selection Panel will score applicants at interview against an agreed pass mark and those found to be above the line will be recommended as suitable for appointment. The Minister will be provided with an unranked list

of candidates found suitable by the Selection Panel. An applicant summary, provided by the Panel, will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each applicant during the appointment process and the Panel's assessment of that applicant.

- 5.30 The Department will operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for this appointment. The GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with long term impairment or a health condition that is expected to last for at least 12 months. In these instances, provided that the applicant has demonstrated in their application form that they have met the essential criteria for the post, the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview. **Should you wish to be considered under the GIS scheme please complete the separate GIS Application document.**
- 5.31 Applicants whom the Panel assess as not suitable for appointment will be advised by letter following interview.
- 5.32 Applicants whom the Panel assess as suitable for appointment and whose names are being presented to the Minister will be advised of this by letter following interview.
- 5.33 An Access NI check is requested for the applicants the Minister has selected for appointment. All documentation relating to Access NI will be destroyed in accordance with the Department's policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure information (paragraph 5.19 refers).
- 5.34 Once the Access NI check has completed you will be invited, by telephone, to accept the appointment. The appointment will then be formally confirmed in writing, and you are required to confirm acceptance of the post and the associated Terms & Conditions of the Appointment.
- 5.35 All other interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview once the selection has been made.

5.36 The Minister may decide to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancy that may arise within 12 months following the initial appointment.

Section 6 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest

- 6.1 The Department must ensure that any individual appointed is committed to the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and values of public service. These (Nolan) principles are: **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership**. The successful applicant will be asked as part of their appointment to sign a declaration committing to the seven principles.
- 6.2 Attached for your information at **Annex C** is a copy of “Probity & Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Applicants”. Within this Guidance is a link to the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) Leaflet on “Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and How to Raise a Complaint”. These provide information on these issues including some examples to help applicants evaluate whether or not they have a real, perceived or potential conflict.
- 6.3 The Department must take account of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants in their application form must disclose information or personal connections, which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Failure to do so could lead to the appointment being terminated.
- 6.4 It is very important that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be construed as being in conflict with the appointment for which they have applied. **All applicants will be asked if there are any real, perceived or potential conflicts of interests at interview**. If it appears, from the information provided on the form, that a possible conflict might exist, or arise in the future, this will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether it is sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Panel will do this at interview stage.

Insolvency Checks

6.5 The Department may also contact the Insolvency Service to check if applicants are recorded on the Disqualification of Directors or Bankruptcy registers. An applicant who has been judged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his creditors is disqualified for appointment under this competition (**Annex A** refers).

Other Public Appointments

6.6 Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to the Boards of public bodies will carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. This Department may therefore check with other Departments if there are any probity or performance issues associated with applicants who hold public appointments. Similar information will be provided by this Department on request about all associated Board members.

The Two Terms Rule

6.7 According to the CPANI Code of Practice those who have served two terms in the same position on the same Board cannot apply through open competition for a third term. If any applicant has served two terms in this position their application will be discounted at the sift stage.

Double Paying

6.8 Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that no one should be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. If appointed, they will be asked to obtain confirmation from their employer that any remuneration due, and time worked for this position, are truly additional to their existing job role and is not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment). In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

Applications from Civil Servants/Former Civil Servants

6.9 All serving and former Northern Ireland Civil Servants are asked to consult Section 8 (*Rules on the Acceptance of Outside Business Appointments, Employments or Self-Employed by Civil Servants after leaving the NI Civil Service*) of the [NICS Standards of Conduct](#), to consider if an application under the rules is required and approach NICSHR Employee Relations as soon as possible.

Nationality Requirements

6.10 The Department has no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only. However, there is a mandatory requirement to ensure that those appointed do not contravene immigration legislation:

- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
- Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.
- There is an onus on non-UK and non-RoI citizens to provide proof of their right to work in the UK and an onus on the appointer to check that.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence that confirms they can legally work in the UK if being offered a post. The Department will check the individual's passport, share code or other documents, if necessary, to confirm they have the appropriate permission.

Publicising Appointments

6.11 A Press Release will be published to announce the appointment. The Commissioner for Public Appointments also requires that the announcement about the successful applicant should contain details of their recent political activity. Consequently, should you be appointed, you will be required to complete a political activity form. Details of any political activity, together with some of the information that you have provided in your application form will be made public in the press announcement. This applies particularly to any other

public appointments you may hold, and to any significant political activity recently undertaken by you. The Press Release will include:

- Your name;
- A short description of the body to which you have been appointed;
- A brief summary of the skills and knowledge you bring to the role;
- The period of appointment;
- Any remuneration associated with the appointment;
- Details of all other current public appointments held and any related remuneration received; and
- Details of any political activity declared in the last five years.

Section 7 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

7.1 The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity. The Department monitors the gender, ethnic group, community background and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective in its appointments processes. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form issued separately. The information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is **not** made available to the Panel and does **not** play a role in the decision-making process.

Diversity in Public Appointments

7.2 The Department values and promotes diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit. The Department believes that the best Boards are those that reflect the community they serve.

7.3 The Department is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic group, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants.

Complaints Procedure

7.4 The Department is committed to getting this appointment process right first time. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter. Our aim is to resolve any complaint quickly and you are invited initially to bring any concerns you may have to Public Appointments Unit. However, if you still feel dissatisfied after this approach, you may initiate a formal complaint in writing.

7.5 Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

DoH Public Appointments Unit
Department of Health
Room 16, Annexe 1

Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Email: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 90 523386

- 7.6 If, after the Department's Complaints procedure has been completed, you remain dissatisfied, you may also direct your concerns to:

The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)
Room E5:08
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Telephone: 028 9052 4820

DISQUALIFICATIONS

HOUSE OF COMMONS AND NI ASSEMBLY DISQUALIFICATIONS

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualifications Act 1975 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs and MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up an appointment to a public body listed in the aforementioned legislation.

If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MP or MLA, it is their responsibility to check whether the public body to which they belong or the office that they hold is listed in the appropriate Disqualification Act.

If the public body to which an individual belongs or the office that they hold is listed in the Disqualification Act they must immediately notify the Department of their intention to stand for election. To avoid any disqualification issues from arising later they should resign their appointment before submitting their nomination as candidate in an election. If they have not resigned their public appointment before submitting their nomination as a candidate and are subsequently elected as an MP or MLA their election will be void.

OTHER HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE BODY/ARM'S LENGTH BODY DISQUALIFICATIONS

If you are currently serving as a Member of a Health and Social Care Body or any other Arm's Length Body, there is an onus of responsibility on applicants to not only examine the disqualifications of the organisation to which they are applying, but also to be aware of any disqualifications which exist on the body to which they currently serve.

In some cases, it is not possible to hold two concurrent appointments, however you should note that disqualification is from appointment to a post, not application. In the

event of a relevant disqualification you may be required to resign from a current position in order to accept this post.

DISQUALIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE RQIA

As set out in [The Regulation and Improvement Authority \(Appointments and Procedure\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#) (as amended by S.R. 2011 No.165), the following persons are disqualified for appointment as an Authority Chair.

Disqualification for appointment

4.—(1) The following persons are disqualified for appointment as chairman or as a member of the Authority –

(a) a person who within 5 years of the day his appointment would otherwise have taken effect has been convicted whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere of any offence and has had passed on him a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months without the option of a fine;

(b) a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his creditors;

(c) a person who has been dismissed, otherwise than by reason of redundancy, from any paid employment with a health service body or a health and social services body;

(d) a person whose tenure of office as chairman or as a member of a committee or sub-committee or a director of any public body, health service body or health and social services body has been terminated on the ground that –

(i) it was not in the interests of, or conducive to the good management of, that body, that he should continue to hold office;

(ii) it was not in the interests of the Health Service or the Health and Personal Social Services that he should continue to hold office;

(iii) the person failed without the consent of that body to attend its meetings for a continuous period of 3 months;

(iv) the person failed to declare a pecuniary interest or withdraw from consideration of any matter in respect of which he had a pecuniary interest;

(e) a person who is employed by the Authority, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council or any body exercising functions similar to those of the aforementioned bodies under legislation in force in the United Kingdom;

(f) a person who is a chairman, member, director or employee of a health service body or a health and social services body;

(g) a person whose application for registration under Part III of the Order, Parts II and III of the Registered Homes (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, Part VIII of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, Part I of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, Part IV of the Care Standards Act 2000 or Part I of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, has been refused, or

- (i) whose registration has been suspended and the suspension has not been terminated; or
- (ii) whose name has been removed from the register and not restored.

(h) a person included in a list kept by the Secretary of State under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (list of individuals considered unsuitable to work with children), section 81 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (list of individuals considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults), Article 1 of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 or a list kept by the Department under Article 3 or 35 of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003;

(i) any employed or self-employed health care professional or employees of health care professionals;

(j) a person whose registration as a health care professional has been withdrawn or suspended;

(k) removed – see footnote below¹

(l) any person who has financial or related interests which prejudice the exercise of his duties.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(a) –

(a) the date of conviction shall be deemed to be the date on which the ordinary period allowed for making an appeal or application with respect to the conviction expires or, if such an appeal or application is made, the date on which the appeal or application is finally disposed of or abandoned or fails by reason of its not being prosecuted; and

(b) there shall be disregarded –

(i) any conviction by or before a court outside the United Kingdom for an offence in respect of conduct which, if it had taken place in any part of the United Kingdom, would not have constituted an offence under the law in force in that part of the United Kingdom;

(ii) any sentence of imprisonment passed by such a court on a person who at the time the sentence was passed was under 21 years of age.

(3) Where a person is disqualified because he has been adjudged bankrupt, the disqualification shall cease –

(a) unless the bankruptcy order made against that person is previously annulled, on his discharge from bankruptcy; and

¹ Sub-paragraph (k) was omitted by Statutory Rule No 165 – Health and Social Care – The Regulation and Improvement Authority (Appointments and Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011

(b) if the bankruptcy order is so annulled, on the date of the order of annulment.

(4) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) “dismissal” excludes dismissal which is established to have been unfair in industrial tribunal proceedings.

(5) Where a person is disqualified because he made a composition or arrangement with his creditors, his disqualification shall cease –

(a) except where sub-paragraph (b) applies, on the expiration of 3 years from the date on which the terms of the deed of composition or arrangement are fulfilled; or

(b) where he pays his debts in full, on the day on which payment is completed.

(6) Subject to paragraph (7), a person who is disqualified under paragraph (1)(c) may, after the expiry of 2 years beginning on the date on which he was dismissed, apply in writing to the Department to remove that disqualification, and the Department may direct that that disqualification shall cease.

(7) Where the Department refuses an application to remove a disqualification, no further application may be made by that person until the expiry of the period of 2 years beginning with the date of the application and this paragraph shall apply to any subsequent application.

(8) In paragraph (1)(i), a “health care professional” means –

(a) a medical practitioner or dental practitioner;

(b) a nurse, midwife or health visitor registered in accordance with the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001;

(c) a registered pharmacist;

(d) an ophthalmic optician, other than a body corporate enrolled in the list kept under section 9 of the Opticians Act 1989;

(e) a person who is registered as a member of a profession to which the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960 extends;

(f) a fully registered osteopath as defined by section 41 of the Osteopaths Act 1993; or

(g) a fully registered chiropractor as defined by section 43 of the Chiropractors Act 1994.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Criteria Based Selection Process

Criteria based selection is currently the most common method of making public appointments in Northern Ireland. What this means is that the onus is on you to provide evidence of workplace or personal performance which demonstrates that you can perform to the specified standard.

Under each of the criteria headings in the application form, you are required to provide specific and relevant examples of past behaviour which illustrate how you match the competences being sought. It is not just **what** you have done – but also **how** you did it.

You can use examples from your working life or personal life including any private, voluntary or community work you are, or have been, involved in.

It is not appropriate to simply list the various posts that you have held. Assumptions will not be made from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the experience, qualities and skills gained.

You should structure your responses by setting a context for your examples, explain what you were trying to achieve, describe what you actually did and why, indicating your own individual contribution and outline the outcome or results.

Criteria Based Interview

If this is your first experience of a criteria based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or

- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the criterion the question is designed to test.

A criteria-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the criteria required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required criterion.

In preparation for the interview, you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation:** Briefly outline the situation
- Task:** What was your objective?
What were you trying to achieve?
- Action:** What did you actually do?
What was your unique contribution?
- Result:** What happened?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?

The Interview Panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the criteria. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which illustrate your skills and abilities in each criterion area. You may draw examples from any area of your work/life experiences.

You are strongly advised to read the [‘Public Appointments Guide’](#) when preparing for interview.

PROBITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet CPANI [“Guidance Leaflet on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and how to raise a complaint”](#) which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests and the [NIAO Conflicts of Interest: Good Practice Guide](#).

Standards of behaviour

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve on the Boards of public bodies will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

As part of the selection process you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore,

that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the Board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a Board Member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give the Panel as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

No - each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process, which is put to the Ministers, will include clear written reference to any probity issues or perceived or actual conflicts of interest connected to any applicant put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Ministers are fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?

Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

This situation may arise where the applicant is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the applicant in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the applicant.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the Board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive of the body concerned, in consultation with the Sponsoring Department, to decide whether or not the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the Board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.