

Public Appointments Information Booklet

**WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
TRUST & NORTHERN HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE TRUST
(WHSCT & NHSCT 1/26)**

**NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIR,
3 NON-EXECUTIVE (LAY) DIRECTORS
& 1 NON-EXECUTIVE (FINANCE)
DIRECTOR**

Information packs and application forms can be provided in alternative formats, such as, Braille, large print and audio. Applicants who require assistance will be facilitated on request, provided this is made prior to 12 October 2026.

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

Tel: 02890 528355 or 02890 520038 (Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

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

CONTENTS OF THIS BOOKLET

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Background Information about the Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHSCT) & Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT)
Section 3	Role Profile for Non-Executive Chair & Non-Executive Directors
Section 4	Person Specification & Essential Criteria
Section 5	Application, Access NI & Selection Process
Section 6	Probity and Conflicts of Interest
Section 7	Equal Opportunities and Complaints
Annex A	Disqualifications
Annex B	General Guidance on the Criteria Based Selection Process
Annex C	Guidance for Applicants on Probity & Conflicts of Interest

This booklet explains the roles available, the qualities and experience sought, how to apply, and how the selection process will be managed. Applicants are encouraged to read Sections 1 to 5 carefully before completing the application form, and to use Annex B when preparing evidence against the essential criteria.

KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale*
Closing Date for Applications	12 Noon BST 26 October 2026
Sift	16 November 2026
Interviews	7, 11, 12, 13, 15, 21 and 22 January 2027
Planned Date of Appointment	WHSCT Chair - February 2027 WHSCT & NHSCT Non-Executive Directors – March/April 2027

* These dates may be subject to change.

Privacy Notice

DoH will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting a Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Directors to the Boards of the Western HSC Trust & Northern HSC Trust 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>

Welcome from the Chair of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the Non-Executive Director roles across our Health and Social Care Trusts. This public appointments process is seeking to fill 5 upcoming vacancies.

Non-Executive Directors play a vital leadership role, bringing their skills, expertise and lived experience to the discussions and decisions of the Board, working alongside the Chair and fellow Board members.

As a Health and Social Care Trust Non-Executive Director, you will share responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is well governed, operates effectively and efficiently, and delivers high-quality health and social care services. In fulfilling the Board's responsibilities, you will provide informed, independent and objective challenge within a culture of trust, openness and mutual respect.

One of the greatest privileges of these roles is the opportunity to work alongside the dedicated and highly skilled people who deliver health and social care services every day. As part of a collaborative Board team of Executive and Non-Executive Directors, you will contribute to decisions that shape the future of services and improve outcomes for patients, service users and families. You will also work with a wide range of partners across the wider health and social care system, government, the voluntary and community sector, and industry, reflecting the shared endeavour required to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

These are rewarding and challenging roles that offer the chance to make a real difference to the lives of people and communities across Northern Ireland. If you have skills and experience to contribute, and are motivated by the opportunity to support and improve health and social care services, I encourage you to apply.

Yours sincerely

Professor Stuart Elborn

Chair, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Health (hereafter referred to as ‘the Department’) is committed to public appointments based on merit, independent assessment, openness and transparency. 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 applicants have dependants. For this competition, the Department would particularly welcome applications from women, young people, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority communities who are currently under-represented in non-executive roles across Health and Social Care (HSC). Applications from those who have not previously held a public appointment are also encouraged.
- 1.2 The Department administers 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 these functions are performed.
- 1.4 Applications are invited for the following positions:
- Non-Executive Chair to WHSCT
 - 2 x Non-Executive (Lay) Directors to WHSCT
 - 2 x Non-Executive (Lay & Finance) Directors to NHSCT
- 1.5 The essential criteria for this competition are set out at paragraph 4.9; however, the Department particularly welcomes applications:
- for the NHSCT Non-Executive (Lay) Director position from individuals with:
 - Experience of clinical or social care governance; and/or

- Experience of health and social care issues.
- for the WHSCT Non-Executive Chair position the Department particularly welcomes applications from individuals with:
- Experience in governance around workforce and/or service user safety and welfare and/or patient and client safety.
- for the WHSCT Non-Executive (Lay) Director positions the Department particularly welcomes applications from individuals with:
- Experience of delivery of a human resource service including Management Development and Organisational Development; and/or
 - Experience of working in complex, highly regulated clinical and caring environments.

These are NOT essential criteria and should not deter you from applying.

WHSCT positions are based at Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Glenshane Road, Londonderry/ Derry BT47 6SB and NHSCT positions are based at Antrim Area Hospital, Bush Road, Antrim BT41 2RL, with an expectation of attendance in person and travel as necessary to off-site meetings. HSC Trusts continue to adopt a hybrid approach to meetings.

- 1.6 The Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Directors must champion the HSC values and standards of public life – by upholding the highest standards of conduct and displaying the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 1.7 Applicants must indicate on the application form which position(s) and which HSC Trust(s) they are applying for. Applicants can apply for one or more positions (using the same application form) provided they meet the eligibility requirements but cannot specify a preference. Applicants should note that, if successful, they may be allocated to any of their chosen positions.

Candidates found suitable for appointment at interview but not appointed may be allocated to a reserve list which will be used to fill vacancies that have

arisen during the course of this competition or that will arise within the 12 months following the completion of the competition.

- 1.8 It is expected that the successful candidate for the WHSCT Non-Executive Chair position will take up appointment no later than **February 2027**. Appointments to the WHSCT & NHSCT Non-Executive Director roles are expected in **March/April 2027**.
- 1.9 Information on disqualifications can be accessed at **Annex A**.
- 1.10 These appointments are 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 HSC Trusts

- 2.1 Each Trust is established by means of an Establishment Order made under Article 10 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (the 1991 Order). For policy/administrative purposes each of the organisations are classified as a health and social care body (akin to an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body).
- 2.2 Both the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) and Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) are two of the five geographic HSC Trusts established in 2007. These are legal entities in their own right, responsible for the delivery of responsive and effective health and care services, for the ownership and management of hospitals and other establishments and facilities and have a range of detailed statutory functions and powers, particularly in respect of social care and children. For example, both Boards are established to provide goods and services for the purposes of health and social care.
- 2.3 The approved overall aim for the Trusts is to improve health and social well-being outcomes, through a reduction in preventable disease and ill-health, by providing effective, high quality, equitable and efficient health and social care.
- 2.4 HSC Trusts have a range of duties. Some examples include: a duty on each Trust to exercise its functions with the aim of improving the health and social wellbeing of, and reducing the health inequalities between, those for whom it provides, or may provide, health and social care¹, a financial breakeven duty and a duty to execute Trust functions effectively, efficiently and economically², a duty of cooperation with certain public sector bodies³ and a duty to put and keep in place arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of health and social care which it provides to individuals and the environment in which it provides them.⁴
- 2.5 Section 21 of the Reform Act places a specific duty on each Trust to exercise its functions with the aim of improving the health and social wellbeing of, and reducing the health inequalities between, those for whom it provides, or may provide, health and social care.

¹ Section 21 of the [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#)

² S15 and Schedule 3 [The Health and Personal Social Services \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1991](#)

³ Article 67 of the [Health and Personal Social Services \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1972](#)

⁴ Article 34 [The Health and Personal Social Services \(Quality, Improvement and Regulation\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2003](#).

- 2.6 The Board is the governing body of the Trusts. Specific legislation covers the membership and procedural rules for Trust Boards. The Boards for WHSCT and NHSCT comprise a Non-Executive Chair, seven Non-Executive Directors and five Executive Directors including the Chief Executive, Finance Director and three professional Directors.⁵
- 2.7 Partnership Agreements, between the Department and the Trusts, set out the overall governance framework under which the Department and Trusts will operate including the framework through which necessary assurances are to be provided to the Department. Partnerships should be based on a mutual understanding of strategic aims and objectives; clear accountability; and a recognition of the distinct roles each party contributes. Underpinning the arrangements are the principles of Leadership, Purpose, Assurance, Value and Engagement. More information is available in the “Partnerships between Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies: NI Code of Good Practice” (link available at paragraph 5.15).
- 2.8 Further information is available on the HSC Trust websites:
[Western Health & Social Care Trust](#)
[Northern Health and Social Care Trust](#)

Role of HSC Trust Boards

- 2.9 The Trust Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that they fulfil the aims and objectives set by the sponsor Department and approved by the Minister in the light of the Department’s wider strategic aims, current PfG objectives and targets and the HSC objectives and targets set by the Minister, and for promoting the efficient, economic, and effective use of staff and other resources by the Trust.
- 2.10 The Trust Board should provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation and ensure that the Trust’s functions are exercised in line with policies and priorities set by the Minister. It is also responsible for ensuring that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place,

⁵ [The Western Health and Social Services Trust \(Establishment\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), [The Northern Health and Social Services Trust \(Establishment\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#) and [The Health and Social Services Trusts \(Membership and Procedure\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 1994](#) (as amended, see [Changes To Legislation](#)) Note that roles in other public bodies can differ - some public bodies have Non-Executive Directors whose role is to advise the Chief Executive.

especially financial governance - including an internal control framework which allows risk to be effectively identified and managed - and for holding the executive team to account.

2.11 It follows that the Board is expected through its scrutiny, challenge, engagement and decision making to:

- establish the overall strategic direction of the Trust within the policy and resource framework determined by the Department;
- ensure that the Trust's performance fully meets its aims and objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- ensure that the Department is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of the Trust or on the attainability of its targets, and determine the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- ensure that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; that the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority set by the Department;
- ensure that it receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of the Trust; is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the activities of the Trust; and provides positive assurance to the Department that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;
- constructively challenge the Trust's executive team in their planning, target setting and both how and whether they are delivering good performance;
- demonstrate high standards of corporate governance and risk management at all times, including using committees to help the board address the key financial, clinical workforce and other risks facing the Trust;
- demonstrate scrutiny, challenge and control of significant policies, initiatives and projects;
- demonstrate, support and encourage high standards of personal behaviour and organisational culture;
- ensure that the Trust operates as openly as is compatible with the requirements of Trust business;

- ensure the proper exercise of statutory duties;
- maintain good relationships with stakeholders, the public and other professions;
- decide on the effective organisation of Board committees and their business, to the extent permitted by legislation; and
- maintain standing orders, appoint certain senior executives (In committee) and other activities set out in the membership and procedure regulations.

Section 3 – Role Profiles

WHST - Non-Executive Chair Role Profile

Accountable to:

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

Role

- 3.2 In undertaking the duties of the role, the Non-Executive Chair is required to comply with the Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability for Board Members of Health and Social Care Bodies 2022 and the partnership agreement between the Trust and the Department and has a particular leadership responsibility on the following matters:

- formulating the Trust Board's strategy for discharging its duties;
- ensuring that the Trust Board, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of guidance provided by the Minister, the sponsor Department, or the PHA;
- ensuring that Board members comply with the Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability for Board Members of Health and Social Care Bodies 2022 and the Partnership Agreement;
- promoting the feasible, efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources and the standards for public service set out in Managing Public Money NI;
- promoting collaborative working within and outside the organisation;
- encouraging and delivering high standards of regularity and propriety;
- representing the views of the Trust Board to the general public;
- ensuring that risk management is considered regularly and formally at Board meetings;
- ensuring that the Trust Board meets at regular intervals throughout the year and that the minutes of meetings accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual Board Members;
- developing and motivating the Board and ensuring effective relationships, in order that the Board can work collaboratively to reach a consensus on decisions;

- ensuring that the Board successfully discharges its responsibilities for the organisation as a whole;
- the establishment of an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive that is simultaneously collaborative and challenging;
- maintaining the distinct roles and responsibilities from the Chief Executive set out in Managing Public Money NI and their appointment letters; and
- maintaining a presence in the organisation and cultivating external relationships which provide useful links for the organisation while being mindful of becoming too involved in day-to-day operations or executive activities.

The WHSCT Chair shall also:

- ensure that all members of the Trust Board, when taking up office, are fully briefed by the Trust on the terms of their appointment and on their duties, rights and responsibilities, including the statutory framework for Trust Boards, and receive appropriate induction training, including on the financial management and reporting requirements of public sector bodies and on any differences which may exist between private and public sector practice;
- advise the Department of the needs of the Trust when Board vacancies arise, with a view to ensuring a proper balance of professional, financial or other expertise;
- assess the performance of individual Trust Board Members;
- ensure the completion of the Board Governance Self-Assessment on an annual basis;
- ensure that Trust Board Members are made aware of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of HSC Bodies (2022) which reflects the Cabinet Office's Code of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies, 2019, including the Nolan "seven principles of public life";
- comply with the terms of appointment and with the Trust Standing Orders;
- work closely with the Chief Executive and ensure that key and appropriate issues are discussed by the Board in a timely manner with all the necessary information and advice being made available to the Board to inform the debate and ultimate resolutions; and

- ensure that the other Trust Board Members are kept informed on a timely basis of communications between the Board Chair, the Minister and the Department.

HSC Trusts' Non-Executive Director Role Profile

Accountable to:

- 3.3 Non-Executive Directors are accountable to the Minister of Health, through the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health.

Role

- 3.4 The role of a Non-Executive Director is to:
- participate in collective decision-making for, oversight and scrutiny of the Trust as part of the Board, ensuring the Board and Committees meet the expectations at 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11 above;
 - as a Committee Chair/Member, contribute to the committees and sub-committees established to process the work of the HSC Trust; e.g. Audit Committee; Remuneration Committee, Governance and Risk Management Committee and various ad-hoc groups and to Executive appointments;
 - promote a positive culture which includes upholding and promoting the values of the HSC in Northern Ireland;
 - be an ambassador of the HSC Trust, representing it honestly and positively, engaging with a wide range of organisations;
 - lead by example, including behaviour at Board meetings;
 - act in accordance with the principle of collective responsibility for decisions of the Board;
 - be visible to staff and patients and demonstrate a commitment to openness, transparency and candour;
 - familiarise themselves with the work of the HSC Trust Board;
 - play a full part in representing the activities of the HSC Trust and in attendance at meetings;
 - promote and influence the strategic development of the HSC Trust, sharing in corporate responsibility for strategic decision-making;

- participate in the HSC Trust induction, training, and annual performance appraisal programme;
- participate in the monitoring of the full range of statutory, regulatory and licensing requirements;
- contribute to the development of the HSC Trust's policies and procedures;
- assist in ensuring that the HSC Trust's policies and activities are based on the principles of equal opportunity and diversity;
- assist in the development of the corporate strategy and Business Plan;
- represent HSC Trust at official or social occasions relevant to its business;
- assist in the development and maintenance of effective links with appropriate agencies, regulatory and quality assurance bodies; and
- assist in establishing and maintaining appropriate partnership and links with other key stakeholders, including service users, public and private sector organisations, and educational establishments.

Training

- 3.5 Appropriate induction training will be provided by each HSC Trust to all new appointees.

Time Commitment & Remuneration

- 3.6 The WHSCT Non-Executive Chair will normally have to devote **3 days per week** to the appointment. This may involve commitment both inside and outside normal working hours. The annual rate of remuneration for the Non-Executive Chair is **£34,699**.
- 3.7 The WHSCT & NHSCT Non-Executive Directors will normally have to devote **1 day per week** to the appointment. This may involve commitment both inside and outside normal working hours. The annual rate of remuneration for the Non-Executive Directors is **£9,327**.

Expenses

- 3.8 The Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Directors are also eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence for costs necessarily incurred on HSC Trust business.

Period of Appointment

- 3.9 The term of appointment is four years following which, subject to satisfactory performance, a second term may be considered. Any decision to reappoint rests with the Minister (see paragraph 3.12 below).
- 3.10 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 3 months' notice will be required in writing to the Department.
- 3.11 An annual assessment of the performance of the Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Directors will be required throughout the period of appointment.
- 3.12 The Department is committed to improving the diversity of the Boards to which they make appointments. In view of this, it is the Department's policy to not automatically re-appoint to the Board for a second term unless there are essential business reasons, such as maintaining business continuity. However, a sitting member 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.

Code of Conduct and Accountability

- 3.13 To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the HSC system, the Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Directors are required, on appointment, to subscribe to the Code of Conduct and Accountability. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required of members are described more fully in the Code. Please see link to the DoH Code of Conduct & Code of Accountability for Board Members of Health and Social Care Bodies 2022 [here](#).

Section 4 - Person Specification

- 4.1 The Department encourages all individuals who wish to participate in public service and make a difference to the way in which health and social care services are delivered 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**).

The Executive Office (TEO) run 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, please email admin.cau@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

- 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 The following are the specific eligibility requirements for the following positions:

WHSCT Non-Executive Chair - there are no specific eligibility requirements for this post.

WHSCT & NHSCT Non-Executive (Lay) Directors – there are no specific eligibility requirements for these posts.

NHSCT Non-Executive (Finance) Director – must have experience of financial management.

- 4.7 **Applicants can apply for one or more positions (using the same application form) provided they meet the eligibility requirements and will be asked, in the Application Form, to indicate which position(s) and which HSC Trust(s) they are applying for.**
- 4.8 All applicants must demonstrate that they have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and qualities required. They need to show, both on the application form and at interview, how they meet all the essential criteria.

Candidates invited for interview for the Non-Executive Chair position will be required to do a short presentation the subject of which will be notified within your invitation to interview letter.

Note: 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 2 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 ‘social care governance’ is defined as the process by which organisations ensure good service delivery and promote good outcomes for service users.

The term ‘financial governance’ is defined as the process of collection,

management, monitoring and control of financial information.

Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI) Public Service Standards: Honesty, impartiality, openness, accountability, accuracy, fairness, integrity, transparency, objectivity, reliability. Carried out in the spirit of, as well as to the letter of, the law; in the public interest; to high ethical standards; and achieving value for money.

HSC Values: Excellence, Working together, Openness and Honesty and Compassion.

More information is available in the HSC Board Members Handbook: [HSC Board Member Handbook | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 4.9 Applicants must show on their application form and if invited to interview how they meet the following essential criteria.

Criterion 1: Leadership (for WHSCT Chair position only) – by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates how you provided leadership and delivered on the long-term goals of an organisation or sector.

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 one of these bullet points:**

- Experience of leading or working strategically in a complex organisation delivering a range of services in a changing and/or complex context;
- An ability to inspire, model, motivate and influence in support of the standards for public services set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland; Nolan principles, the HSC Values, and an “open and learning” culture at all levels;
- Effective and resilient interpersonal and communication skills and an ability to represent the organisation effectively to a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including dealing with and responding to the media;
- An ability to act and think strategically, with experience of successfully leading the formulation of strategy and/or maintaining strategic organisational or cross organisational direction while delivering more immediate requirements;
- Experience, or an understanding of how to manage the impacts of, or secure the benefits of, organisational change and transformation;
- An ability to build and sustain effective collaborative relationships and collective accountability within a senior team, including addressing individual or collective performance effectively; and
- An understanding of the diverse stakeholders of, structures of, operational framework for and/or challenges facing health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Criterion 2: Working Together to Deliver Positive Change - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates how you proactively create, maintain and nurture a strong network of collaborative relationships to produce positive results.

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 one of these bullet points:**

- Experience of engaging effectively, including listening actively, communicating clearly, and building rapport with a wide range of stakeholders, staff, teams, service users, carers, and others in diverse ways and contexts;
- The ability to provide or foster constructive, clear, positive and respectful challenge, scrutiny and support, recognising the respective roles and responsibilities of different team members, including between executive and non-executive roles;
- The ability to promote an open and learning culture, whole system thinking, collaboration and common purpose in the delivery of results;
- Ability to build and sustain effective relationships to improve outcomes in environments where both support and challenge are required, fostering collaboration, consensus, trust and collective accountability;
- Ability to promote and influence substantial, evidence-based and sustainable improvements in organisational and/or regional performance, quality, safety and/or governance through collaboration, innovation, shared learning and constructive challenge; and
- Expertise, experience or knowledge of potential equality, diversity and identity considerations in the context of outward service design, delivery and/or oversight and/or internal organisational working.

Criterion 3: Governance and Risk Management - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates your knowledge, understanding and/or experience of good governance in a complex organisation including risk management.

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 one of these bullet points:**

- Experience, knowledge or understanding of effective governance (corporate or financial or clinical or social care (see definitions above));
- The ability to contribute to improving effective governance, e.g. a knowledge of internal and/or external audit and/or of risk management and mitigation;
- Experience, knowledge or an understanding of regulatory frameworks and/or working with regulators;
- The ability to identify, evaluate and manage risk to an organisation's performance and/or reputation; and
- An understanding or experience of the importance of openness, organisational learning, stakeholder feedback and perspectives, service user safety and/or continuous improvement in good governance.

Criterion 4: Using Information to Improve Organisational Outcomes - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence that demonstrates how you have used information to improve organisational outcomes and/or deliver transformation in an organisation, or across a group of organisations.

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 one of these bullet points:**

- Experience, knowledge or understanding of corporate level financial, human resources, organisational development, performance, procurement, business case, project management and/or health and social care issues (e.g. in relation to quality and safety) and reporting.
- Ability to analyse and compare a range of sources of information or knowledge effectively to improve outcomes for the organisation, e.g. via the identification of critical gaps, vagueness and/or inconsistency;
- Ability to motivate others to deliver appropriate remedies to address critical gaps, vagueness or inconsistency in the suite of management information, training and advice available;
- Ability to interpret management information and/or use other information or knowledge effectively to help test, change or endorse assertions, assumptions and solutions in relation to challenges faced by an organisation;

- Ability to mobilise information, knowledge and skills to contribute to the formation of wider strategic thinking, strategy development in an organisation, or across a group of organisations; and
- Ability to identify, secure and utilise appropriate information, intelligence and assurance to support effective governance, scrutiny and decision-making, including the ability to challenge constructively and test evidence.

Criterion 5: Financial Management (for NHSCT Finance position only) - by way of a practical example(s), provide evidence of how you have demonstrated financial oversight in an organisational setting with an annual financial budget.

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 one of these bullet points:**

- An understanding of both internal and external audit functions;
- Experience of ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken on audit findings and recommendations;
- Experience of identifying, evaluating and managing risk;
- Experience in the management and control of an annual financial budget;
- Ability to interpret financial statements, internal audit and fraud reports, guidance and rules, business or corporate plans, budgets, spending proposals and/or financial performance reporting and then to effectively challenge, inform or agree decisions as appropriate; and
- Experience of motivating a wider organisational team to deliver financial control in the context of a range of organisational constraints, rules (e.g. budgetary, legal, probity), risks and objectives (externally and/or internally set), in relation to budgets and spending.

Applicants for the WHSCT Chair position must complete Criterion 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Applicants for the WHSCT & NHSCT Lay positions must complete Criterion 2, 3 & 4.

Applicants for the NHSCT Finance position must complete Criterion 2, 3, 4 & 5.

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 528355 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 your job title or the nature of

the organisation as to the skills or experience you 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 Public Appointments Unit (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 PAU by **12 noon BST on 26 October 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.** Applications not fully completed and those where the format has been altered will not be accepted. Applicants whose application has not been accepted 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 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 Access NI Check without barred lists” for the appointment of the Trust Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Director positions.
- 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.
- 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 Panel comprising three members – a senior officer from the Department, an HSC Trust Chair and a CPANI Independent Assessor - or an appointed Sift Panel (para 5.26 refers) will carry out a sift of all 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 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. This further shortlisting stage will only be applied where required i.e. where the selection panel deem the number of applicants for either post to be too high. You should be aware, therefore, that if you have applied for more than one position you may be invited for interview for one position and not the other depending on the numbers received.
- 5.26 With the agreement of the CPANI 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 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 they will not include your name or personal details.
- 5.28 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 Appointment 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 all of the relevant criteria. The Minister will take the final decision on who to appoint. The 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 selections have been made.
- 5.36 The Minister may decide to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancies that may arise within 12 months following the completion of the competition.

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, Bankruptcy or Debt Relief Order registers. You will be asked in the Application Form if any of the disqualifications

listed in The Health and Social Services Trusts (Membership and Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994 apply. These include an applicant who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or of a debt relief restrictions order (**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 NICS HR 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 is required to monitor 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 strongest Boards are those that bring together different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives and 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

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 Non-Executive 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 WHSCT & NHSCT

As set out in The Health and Social Services Trusts (Membership and Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994 (as amended), the following persons are disqualified for appointment as a Non-Executive Chair or Non-Executive Director.

Disqualification for appointment of Chairman and Non-Executive Directors

11. —(1) Subject to regulation 12 a person shall be disqualified for appointment as the chairman or non-executive director of an HSC trust if -

(a) he has within the preceding five years been convicted in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man of any offence and has had passed on him a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine; or

(b) he is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; or

(ba) he is the subject of a debt relief restrictions order; or

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

(d) he is a person whose tenure of office as the chairman, member or director of a health and social care body has been terminated because his appointment is not in the interests of the health and social care, for non-attendance at meetings or for non-disclosure of a pecuniary interest;

(e) he is a chairman, member, director or employee of a health and social care body; or

(f) he -

(i) performs or provides primary medical services under Part VI of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972,

(ii) is a partner in a partnership that, or is the legal and beneficial owner of shares in a company that, provides primary medical services under Part VI of that Order, or

(iii) is an employee of any of those, or

(iv) is a general dental practitioner or an employee of one; or

(g) he has had his name removed, by a direction under Schedule 11 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, from any list prepared under Part VI of that Order and has not subsequently had his name included in such a list or a list prepared pursuant to Article 57G of that Order; or

(i) he has applied for his name to be included in a list of a Health and Social Care Board, and a direction that his name should not be included in the relevant list has been given by the Tribunal under paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 to the Health Services (Primary Care) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, and such disqualification has not

been removed following an application to the Tribunal under regulation 12 of the Tribunal Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(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 it not being prosecuted.

(3) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) a person shall not be treated as having been in paid employment by reason only of his chairmanship, membership or directorship of a health service body or a health and social care body.

(4) A person shall not be disqualified by paragraph (1)(e) from being the non-executive director of an HSC trust referred to in paragraph 3(1)(d) of Schedule 3 to the Order by reason of his employment with a health and social care body.

Cessation of disqualification

12. Cessation of disqualification (1)-(2) [repealed]

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), where a person is disqualified under regulation 11(1)(c) (dismissed employees) he may, after the expiry of a period of not less than two years, apply in writing to the Department to remove the disqualification and the Department may direct that the disqualification shall cease.

(4) Where the Department refuses an application to remove a disqualification no further application may be made by that person until the expiration of two years from the date of the application.

(5) Where a person is disqualified under regulation 11(1)(d) (certain chairmen and directors whose appointments have been terminated), the disqualification shall cease on the expiry of a period of two years or such longer period as the Department specifies when terminating his period of office but the Department may on application being made to it by that person, reduce the period of disqualification.

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 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

Minister expects that the conduct of those he appoints 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 Minister, 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 Minister 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.