Department of Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Männystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments Information Booklet

CHILDREN'S COURT GUARDIAN AGENCY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (CCGANI 1/26)

1 NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER (FINANCE)

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 Wednesday 18 November 2026 to:

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

Tel: 028 90 765789 or 028 90 528355 (Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

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

CPANI
The Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland
REGULATED

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KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	**Timescale***
Closing Date for applications	12 noon GMT 2 December 2026
Sift	5 January 2027
Interviews	26 / 27 January 2027
Planned date of appointment	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 Non-Executive Members to the Board of the Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland 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

Welcome from the Chair of the Children's Court Guardian Agency Northern Ireland

Dear Applicant

Thank you for considering applying for appointment as a Non-Executive Member (Finance) of the Board of the Children's Court Guardian Agency.

I hope that you will find this Information Booklet helpful as one source of knowledge about the work of the Agency in promoting the best interests of, and in representing the voice of, children and young people in family law court proceedings.

The ever-increasing demand for our work can be seen from the evidence in the Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2025–26. They report that, as at 31 March 2026, a total of 4,287 children and young people were looked after in Northern Ireland. This represents the highest number recorded since the introduction of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The number of children in care at 31 March 2026 was 2.4% higher than at the same point in the previous year (4,188).

Our staff and our Board are part of a network of dynamic and dedicated people, including the Minister of Health and the staff in his Department, those working in Health and Social Care Trusts and the judiciary and court staff, who serve these vulnerable children and young people and their families.

The core work of the Agency is delivered by guardians, who are qualified and experienced social workers, supported by a team comprising Guardian Services Managers, administrative and corporate staff, and led by a Senior Leadership Team. The Board, which is ultimately responsible to the Department of Health and to the Minister of Health provides strategic leadership, oversight of governance and accountability.

The Board of the Agency comprises our Chief Executive and five Non-Executive Members from a range of backgrounds, including social work, finance, corporate governance and law.

I am very proud of the dedication, the courage and the professionalism of all our staff as they seek to meet the challenge of promoting the well-being of children and young people in need. And our staff know that they are fully supported in their work by a Board comprising people of the highest calibre who are committed to serving vulnerable children and young people in our society.

If you share that commitment, please apply to join us. I am confident that you will find our work interesting and fulfilling. We have prepared a comprehensive induction programme for our new Board Member in order to support him or her in ensuring that only the best is good enough for the children and young people who are supported through the family court system by the Agency.

Gemma Loughran
Board Chair

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 The Department of Health (hereafter referred to as 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. For this competition, we would particularly welcome applications from young people, people from minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities who are under-represented on the Board of the Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as the Agency). 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 care. HSC provides an integrated system of health and personal social services to promote the health and social wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland. This includes the provision of social care to children and families, including family support, child protection services and support for children in and after state care.

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 The Neighbourhood Model of Health and Wellbeing is a new approach to delivering health and social care services in Northern Ireland. It aims to improve health outcomes by bringing services together around local communities, focusing on prevention, early intervention and delivering more care closer to home. It is being

supported by the establishment of 17 new Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, bringing together a range of professionals, including social workers, healthcare staff, community practitioners, and specialist services to focus on early intervention, prevention, and person-centred care.

1.5 In addition, the Department is also leading on a programme of strategic reform within Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland. The reform programme is seeking to address a range of known service challenges, some of which were identified in the report of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland (2003). The Agency will have an important role to play to deliver reform, working in partnership with other agencies and services in Northern Ireland.

1.6 Applications are invited to fill the following position within the Agency:

- 1 x Non-Executive Member (Finance)

1.7 The essential criteria for this competition are set out at paragraph 4.6. However, in addition to those, the Department would particularly welcome applications from individuals who have:

- lived experience of the care or adoption system, either as children or young people or as foster or adoptive parents
- an understanding of children's health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

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

The position is based at James House, Belfast with an expectation of attendance at meetings in person. Meetings may also be held in other locations including Armagh, Derry/Londonderry where the Agency has offices.

1.8 Applicants will be expected to bring their knowledge, experience and understanding to the role of Non-Executive Member of the Board of the Agency for the benefit of the Agency and those it serves.

1.9 It is anticipated that the successful applicant will take up appointment in April 2027.

1.10 Information on conflicts of interest is available at **paragraphs 6.2 – 6.5**.

1.11 Information on disqualifications is included at **Annex A**.

1.12 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 Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland

2.1 The Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland ("the Agency") came into effect on 6 March 2023, with the Agency being originally established in 1995 as the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA). The Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland (Establishment and Constitution) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023, makes provision for the constitution of the Agency and the tenure of office of Agency members.

2.2 The Agency's Board comprises a Non-Executive Chair, four Non-Executive Members and the Chief Executive.

2.3 Further information on the role of the Agency is available here.

Role of the Agency's Board

2.4 The Agency is an Arm's Length Body of the Department of Health. Its primary function is to allocate children's court guardians who are appointed by the court to represent children and young people in family law proceedings, including care and adoption proceedings. Article 60 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and Article 66 of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 provide for the appointment of children's court guardians.

2.5 The Agency's Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Agency fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department and approved by the Minister and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources. To this end, and in pursuit of its wider corporate responsibilities, the Board must:

- provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the Agency within the policy and resource framework determined by the Minister and Department;
- ensure that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place and an internal control framework which allow risks to be effectively identified and managed. It is the responsibility of the Board to set

the culture and values of the organisation and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers;

- ensure that when acting in their role as Board Members, Board Members act solely in the interests of the Agency;
- ensure communication and relationships within the Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect;
- decide what information it needs and in what format, for its meetings/effective operation;
- constructively challenge the Agency's Executive Team in their planning, target setting, performance and delivery of outcomes for children, young people and their families;
- ensure that the Department is kept informed of any changes which are likely to have an impact on the strategic direction of the Agency, the attainability of its targets, or delivery of outcomes and determine the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- ensure compliance with any statutory or administrative requirements or any other conditions set in relation to the use of public funds;
- ensure the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the Department, and that, in reaching decisions, the Board takes into account all relevant guidance issued by the Department and Department of Finance;
- receive and review regular financial information concerning the management of the Agency; ensure that it is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the Agency's activities; and provide positive assurance to the Department that appropriate action has been taken in response to such concerns; and
- appoint a Chief Executive to the Agency and, in consultation with the Department, set performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives for the Chief Executive, which give due weight to the proper management and use of public funds.

2.6 The Chair and Non-Executive Members are 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 – Non-Executive Member Role Profile

Accountable to

3.1 The Minister, through the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health.

Responsibilities of the role

3.2 Non-Executive Board Members are appointed to provide independent / critical thinking and analysis, at a strategic, organisational level. They bring the benefit of wider experience, knowledge and skills to work of the Board, in overseeing and leading the Agency.

3.3 To support effective operation of the Board in carrying out its role, the Member appointed will carry out a range of key roles including:

- sharing corporate responsibility for the work of the Agency;
- participating in the Agency's induction, training and annual performance appraisal programme;
- participating in meetings of the Agency;
- sitting on or attending committees/working groups of the Agency;
- assisting in determining the standing orders of the Agency and the schedule of delegated authorities and standing financial instructions;
- participating in professional conduct and competency enquiries as well as staff disciplinary appeals;
- assisting in appointing and monitoring the performance of senior managers;
- engage in decision making on major procurement issues;
- overseeing the handling of complaints against the Agency;
- positively representing the Agency at outside groups, bodies, functions or other events connected with its work, and promote the role of the Agency with the public, media, children and young people and other relevant bodies;
- leading the Board on matters relating to financial oversight, risk management, audit and assurance; and
- adhering to the values of accountability, integrity, impartiality, confidentiality, probity and openness in connection with the work of the Agency.

Training

3.4 The Agency will provide appropriate induction training to the new appointee.

Time Commitment & Remuneration

3.5 The Non-Executive Member will be expected to be available **30 days per year**. This may involve commitment both inside and outside normal working hours. The annual rate of remuneration for the Non-Executive Member is **£4,383**.

3.6 Non-Executive Members are eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on Agency business.

Period of Appointment

3.7 The Non-Executive Member 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 3 months' notice will be required in writing to the Department.

3.9 The Chair will conduct an annual appraisal of the Member's performance 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 Board for a second term unless there are essential business reasons, such as maintaining business continuity, which necessitate the Department offering a second period of appointment to existing Members on completion of their first term. 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.

Codes of Conduct and Accountability

3.11 To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the HSC system, the Non-Executive Chair and Non-Executive Members 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 Non-Executive Member (Finance)

Eligibility

4.1 The Department is seeking applications from individuals with experience of financial management.

4.2 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

4.3 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. Applicants can use examples from their professional or personal life, or from other activities such as involvement in public bodies or charitable institutions, to demonstrate how they meet the selection criteria for the role.

4.4 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**.

4.5 All applicants must demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience required. They will need to show, both on the application form and/or at interview, how they meet all the essential criteria.

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.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

4.6 Applicants must show on their application form, and if invited, at interview, how they meet the following essential criteria.

Criterion 1: Financial Management - by way of one or more practical examples, provide evidence of how you have demonstrated financial oversight in an organisation.

A key responsibility of the Board of any Government Arm's Length Body is to ensure the effective stewardship of public funds, maintaining financial sustainability and securing value for money while delivering the organisation's objectives.

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 one of these bullet points**:

- Experience in the financial management of an organisational annual budget;
- Experience of identifying, evaluating and managing risk;
- Ability to interpret financial statements, internal audit and fraud reports, guidance and rules, business plans, corporate plans, budgets and financial performance reporting and then to challenge, inform or endorse decisions as appropriate;
- An understanding of both internal and external audit functions;
- Experience of ensuring appropriate action is taken on audit findings and recommendations, to ensure financial resources are being used effectively.

Criterion 2: Collaborative Working - by way of one or more practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates how you have established, maintained and nurtured effective relationships within or outside an organisation or in partnership with other organisations to produce a desired result.

Collaborative working means two or more people working together to complete a specific task or achieve a shared goal. This can include collaboration with colleagues or might involve working with other stakeholders. The aim of collaborative working is to share experiences and knowledge to solve issues and accomplish objectives.

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**:

- Experience of actively building mutually beneficial and effective working relationships and working effectively within and across organisational boundaries;
- Experience of actively promoting collaboration and partnership working;
- Experience of confidence when engaging with stakeholders and colleagues;
- An ability to think independently and support others positively;
- An ability to communicate effectively, constructively influence and build consensus;
- The ability to chair meetings effectively, facilitate robust discussion and ensure appropriate challenge while maintaining positive working relationships;
- Experience of creating an inclusive environment where diverse views and values are recognised.

Criterion 3: Governance & Accountability - by way of one or more practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates your knowledge, understanding and/or experience of effective governance and its importance within an organisation.

Governance, in a Board context, refers to the way in which an organisation is directed, controlled and led. It defines relationships, roles and responsibilities; determines the rules and procedures through which the organisation's objectives are set; and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. Good governance is fundamental and is the hallmark of an effective, well-managed, 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**:

- A knowledge, understanding and/or experience of effective governance, accountability and assurance within an organisation;

- Evidence of how you have contributed to improving and securing effective governance at an organisational level;
- An ability to distinguish between executive and non-executive roles and responsibilities;
- An ability to secure and use information from a range of sources to inform decision making;
- An ability to think and to act strategically and, where necessary, to issue critical challenge constructively;
- An ability to identify and mitigate against risk;
- An ability to tackle difficult issues; and to behave with integrity.

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 028 90765789 or 028 90528355. Alternatively, you can download the information pack at: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/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 a number of elements to a criterion, so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all elements. It is not enough simply to list the various posts that you have held. The Selection Panel 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 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 Public Appointments Unit by **12 Noon GMT** on **2 December 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 will not accept any application where there is a shortfall in the cost of postage. All applications will be acknowledged on receipt by email. Please contact PAU if you do not receive a receipt within 5 working days of submitting your application form.

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.
https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf

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:
https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/daodof0319attv3_feb22.pdf

Access NI Checks

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 Non-Executive Member position.

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 interviewing 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 your knowledge, skills and experience.

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 knowledge, skills 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 - one senior officer from the Department, the Chair of the Agency, and one 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 all criteria in order to be invited for interview. All criteria will be weighted equally. Applications which do not meet the minimum standard against all criteria 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 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 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 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 meet all of 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 Department/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 knowledge, 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 applicant 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 successfully 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 Terms and Conditions of 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 vacancy for a CCGANI Non-Executive Member (Finance) that may arise within the 12 months following the completion of the competition.

<u>Section 6</u> - 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". Separately attached is a leaflet from the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI), about "Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and Making 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, perceived or potential 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 For this competition, the Department may consider it to be a conflict of interest for any of the following to be a Non-Executive Member of the Agency's Board:

- a representative of any Children's Court Guardian in court proceedings;
- a Social Worker in an HSC Trust;
- an employee or member of a Management Committee of an Adoption Agency, including a voluntary adoption agency;
- an employee or member of a Management Committee of an independent fostering agency.

6.5 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 interest 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

6.6 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. Section 7 of the Application Form refers.

Other Public Appointments

6.7 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

6.8 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

6.9 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 there is no 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

6.10 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

6.11 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

6.12 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 making appointments based 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 90765789 or 028 90 528355

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)
Stormont Castle
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Telephone: 028 9052 4820

Annex A

HOUSE OF COMMONS AND NI ASSEMBLY DISQUALIFICATIONS

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualifications Act 1975[1] and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975[2], 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 you to not only examine the disqualifications of the organisation to which you are applying, but also to be aware of any disqualifications which exist relating to the body on which you 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.

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[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1975/24/contents

[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1975/25/contents

Annex B

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 - https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf

Annex C

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.