



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

# Public Appointments Information Booklet

**5 x NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRS  
(5 X HSC TRUST CHAIRS 1/22)**

**(BELFAST HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST,  
NORTHERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST,  
NI AMBULANCE SERVICE TRUST,  
SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST  
& WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST)**

**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 25 November 2022.**

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

Tel: 02890 522528 or 02890 378793 (Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

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## KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale
Closing Date for Applications	<b>12 noon GMT Friday 9 December 2022</b>
Sift	<b>Wednesday 11 January 2023*</b>
Interviews	<b>1,8,10,15,17, and 24 February 2023*</b>
Planned Date of Appointments	<b>April 2023*</b>

\* 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 Chairs to the Boards of the Belfast HSC Trust, Northern HSC Trust, NI Ambulance Service Trust, South Eastern HSC Trust and Western HSC Trust, and the in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://www.healthni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-unit-privacy-notice>

## **Welcome from Peter May, Permanent Secretary Department of Health**

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Non-Executive Chair of one of our Health and Social Care Trusts.

You may already have some knowledge or experience of the health and social care sector and this Information Booklet will provide you with more information about the organisations, and the role of Non-Executive Chairs, which I hope you find helpful.

We are looking for four new Chairs who will lead a dynamic and committed board in providing effective governance of each HSC Trust. Trust Chairs will be supported by this Department which is committed to developing constructive and effective partnerships with all our Arms' Length Bodies. The Chair will have a particular leadership role to champion and oversee the work of the Board. There are many challenges ahead not least as we move to rebuild services and manage public expectations and confidence following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic but also in developing a new Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland.

To meet these challenges, the Department is seeking individuals with wide ranging skills, in particular, those with outstanding leadership, performance management and change management capabilities. I would strongly encourage anyone with the required knowledge, skills, experience and talent to consider applying for what are extremely challenging but ultimately rewarding roles. The Department recognises the importance of a diverse Board, reflecting the society it serves and applications are sought from capable individuals from all sections of society.

Peter May

Permanent Secretary

## **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 origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. 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 our Boards. Applications from those who have not previously held a public appointment are also encouraged to apply.
- 1.2 The Department administers Health and Social Care (HSC), which includes policy and legislation for hospitals, family practitioner services, community health and personal social services. HSC provides an integrated system of health and personal social services to promote the health and social wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 In terms of service commissioning and provision, the Department discharges this duty primarily through its Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) and by delegating the exercise of its statutory functions to the Public Health Agency (PHA) and to a number of other HSC bodies created to exercise specific functions on its behalf. All these HSC bodies are accountable to the Department which in turn is accountable, through the Minister of Health, to the Assembly for the manner in which this duty is performed.
- 1.4 Moving forward, the Department is developing a new commissioning model. This will see an Integrated Care System model implemented in NI, underpinned by a population health approach, with the objective of improving health and wellbeing outcomes and reduction of health inequalities through collaboration and partnership in the design, delivery and management of health, social and community services. The strategic direction to the system will be set through a

Strategic Outcomes Framework conveying the identified health and wellbeing needs of the population, as well as the Ministerial and Departmental priorities.

1.5 Applications are invited to fill the following positions:

- Non-Executive Chair Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)
- Non-Executive Chair Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT)
- Non-Executive Chair NI Ambulance Service Trust (NIAST)
- Non-Executive Chair South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT)
- Non-Executive Chair Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)

**The positions are based at Trust HQ with an expectation of attendance in person and travel to other Trust sites for board, committee and other meetings.**

1.6 Applicants must indicate on the application form which HSC Trust Chair position(s) they are applying for. Applicants can apply for any number of the 5 HSC Trust Chair positions included in this competition, but cannot specify a preference. Applicants should note that, if successful, they may be allocated to any of their chosen HSC Trust Chair positions.

1.7 It is expected that successful candidates will take up appointment in **April 2023**.

1.8 Information on disqualifications can be accessed at **Annex A**.

1.9 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.

Please note Eileen Mullan, Chair Southern HSC Trust is available should you wish to discuss with someone the role and function of a Chair within the health and social care sector. If you wish to avail of this opportunity, please contact DOH Public Appointments Unit (details on the front page) and we will make the necessary arrangements on your behalf.

## **Section 2 – Background Information on the 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 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. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service provides high quality urgent and emergency care and treatment as well as scheduled, non-emergency patient transport services for all the population of Northern Ireland.
- 2.3 There are six HSC Trusts each established to provide goods and services for the purposes of health and social care and, with the exception of the Ambulance Trust, are also responsible for exercising on behalf of the Department certain statutory functions which are delegated to them by virtue of authorisations made under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1994. Each HSC Trust also has a statutory obligation 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 (Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (NI) Order 2003).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The Board is the governing body of the Trusts and for BHSCT, SEHSCT, NHSCT and WHSCT comprises a Non-Executive Chair and seven Non-Executive Directors along with five Executive Directors including the Chief Executive. The NIAST Board comprises a Non-Executive Chair, five Non-Executive Directors and five Executive Directors.

2.6 The Boards of these Trusts have corporate responsibility for ensuring that they fulfil the aims and objectives set by the sponsor Department and approved by the Minister/Department in the light of the Department's wider strategic aims, current PfG objectives and targets and the CPD, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by the Trust.

2.7 Partnership Agreements, between the Department and the Trusts, will 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 5.17).

2.8 Further information is available at:

BHSCT - [Belfast Health and Social Care Trust](#)

NHSCT - [Northern Health and Social Care Trust](#)

NIASST - [Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust](#)

SEHSCT - [South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust](#)

WHSCT - [Western Health and Social Care Trust](#)

### **Role of HSC Trust Boards**

2.9 The Trust Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Trust fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by the Trust.

2.10 The Trust Board is required to provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation and to ensure that the policies and priorities set by the Minister/Department are implemented. It is also responsible for ensuring 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. The role of the Board includes:

- establish the overall strategic direction of the Trust within the policy and resources 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 delivery of performance;
- demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times, including using the independent audit committee to help the board address the key financial and other risks facing the Trust.
- ensure the proper exercise of regulatory and law enforcement duties;
- maintain good relationships with all stakeholders, the public and other professions;
- ensure high standards of corporate governance, including financial performance, and personal behaviour.

2.11 Non-Executive Chairs are appointed in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

## **Section 3 – HSC Trusts Non-Executive Chair Role Profile**

### **Accountable to**

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

3.2 In undertaking the duties of the role, the 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 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;
- promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources;
- 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; and
- 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.

3.3 The Chair shall also:

- ensure that all members of the Trust Board, when taking up office, are fully briefed on the terms of their appointment and on their duties, rights and responsibilities, 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; and

- assess the performance of individual Trust Board Members;
- ensure the completion of the Board Governance Self-Assessment Tool on an annual basis;
- ensure that Trust Board Members are made aware of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of HSC Bodies (2012) which reflects the Cabinet Office's Code of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies, (FD (DFP) 03/06), 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.

## **Training**

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

## **Time Commitment & Remuneration**

3.5 The BHSCT 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 of the BHSCT is **£38,397**.

3.6 The NHSCT 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 of the NHSCT is **£32,579**.

3.7 The NIAST Non-Executive Chair will normally have to devote 2-3 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 of the NIAST is **£25,210**.

- 3.8 The SEHSCT 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 of the SEHSCT is **£32,579**.
- 3.9 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 of the WHSCT is **£32,579**.

### **Expenses**

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

### **Period of Appointment**

- 3.11 The Non-Executive Chair will be appointed for a period not longer than four years.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 An annual assessment of the performance of a Non-Executive Chair will be required throughout the period of appointment.
- 3.14 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, 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**

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

## **Section 4 - Person Specification Non-Executive Chair**

- 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.
- 4.3 The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competencies sought. Criteria-based selection will be used as part of this process (Annex B).

CPANI 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, details can be found [here](#).

- 4.4 The application form is an essential element of the process and is designed to require applicants to give specific examples of past performance to demonstrate their ability or competence.
- 4.5 You are advised to make sure that you take the opportunity to provide practical evidence and examples of why you believe you are suitable for this Public Appointment. **Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**
- 4.6 There are no specific educational or professional requirements for the Non-Executive Chair positions.
- 4.7 **Applicants can apply for one or more positions (using the same application form) and will be asked, in the Application Form, to indicate which position(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 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.

## 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** - by way of practical examples, demonstrate evidence of providing leadership and of delivering on the long-term goals of an organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below.

**You must describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Knowledge and understanding of the structures and operation of health and social care and an awareness of the challenges facing the service in Northern Ireland;
- Experience of leading a complex organisation which deals with uncertainty and wide ranging subject matters;
- An ability to act and think strategically with experience of successfully leading the formulation of strategy and maintaining strategic direction during a period of reform;
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills and an ability to represent the organisation, presenting its aims and policies to the outside world including dealing with and responding to the media; and
- An ability to build and sustain effective collaborative relationships with key professional leaders, organisations and a broad range of partners to secure successful outcomes.

**Criterion 2: Corporate Governance and Accountability** - by way of practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates your experience of working within a framework of corporate governance.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below.

**You must describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Experience of involvement in improving, securing and maintaining effective corporate governance and accountability in a complex and transformational environment;
- Experience in the identification and management of risk in an organisation, safeguarding its values and reputation; and being accountable for the organisation's actions and decisions;
- Experience of providing sound advice on the control, accountability and management of a range of governance issues including assets, programmes and projects; and
- Ability to exercise a constructive challenge function to achieve the best outcomes for the organisation.

**Criterion 3: Performance Management** - by way of practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates your effective contribution to monitoring, reporting and improving organisational performance.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below.

**You must describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Ability to maintain a strong focus on building delivery capacity, performance and priorities, providing support and encouragement during challenging and changing times;
- Ability to lead substantial and sustainable improvements in organisational performance, including fostering innovation and sharing good practice;
- Ability to effectively manage and motivate others, addressing performance issues resolutely; fairly and promptly; and
- Ability to analyse and interpret data from a range of sources to inform decision making.

**Criterion 4: Change Management** - by way of practical examples, please demonstrate your experience of effectively and successfully leading or managing an organisational change programme or project.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are outlined below. **You must describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:**

- Experience of leading organisational transformation in a rapidly changing environment;
- Ability to be a strong advocate for organisational policy and legislative change and improvement;
- Ability to make sound decisions, including the ability to think and act pragmatically and decisively within organisational constraints such as legislative, financial, or practical; and
- Understands the impact of organisational change and experience of managing the impact of change on an organisation's corporate and/or operational structures.

## **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](mailto:public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk) or by telephone on 02890 522528 or 02890 378793. 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 **Due to the current situation, the office is not currently staffed at all times, so you are encouraged to return your application via e-mail to:**
- Email: [public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto: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 as clearly as possible using **black ink and block capitals** or typescript **minimum font size of Arial 12, single-line spacing**.
- 5.5 Your application is very important. You must demonstrate clearly on your application form how and to what extent your experience is relevant to the published essential criteria for the post (including dates where appropriate e.g. dates from/to). There may be several aspects to a criterion, so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all aspects. It is not enough simply to list the various posts that you have held. The Department will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills or experience

gained. Guidance on the Criteria Based Selection Process can be found at **Annex B**.

- 5.6 It is important that all sections of the application form are fully completed. **Failure to complete all relevant sections may result in your application being EXCLUDED.**
- 5.7 In addition, **if the layout of the application form is changed or altered in any way your application WILL BE EXCLUDED.**
- 5.8 **You must NOT exceed the maximum 400 word count per essential criterion. Text beyond the allotted word count will be redacted by PAU and not considered by the Panel carrying out the sift stage of the appointment process.**
- 5.9 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).
- 5.10 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 5.31.

### **Timeframe for process**

- 5.11 Application forms should be submitted by post, email or in person to arrive with Public Appointments Unit by **12 noon GMT Friday 9 December 2022** (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 upon receipt by email.

- 5.12 Please check your application form before submitting it as **the Department will not examine applications until after the closing date** and failure to fulfil the application requirements will result in your application form being excluded from the process. Applicants whose application is excluded will be notified within 5 working days of the closing date.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 Applicants who are unsuccessful at sift/shortlisting stage will be advised in writing of the panel's agreed assessment of their application. 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.
- 5.15 Feedback will be provided to applicants at all stages in the process. 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**

- 5.16 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>
- 5.17 Applicants may also wish to read the following:
- "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](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/daodof0319attv3_feb22.pdf)

- “HSC Board Member Handbook: A resource to support the delivery of safe and effective care” published by the Department in May 2021. Developed as a resource to assist Boards to scrutinise the safety and quality of services. This handbook has been produced for, and by, Non-Executive Directors to prepare and support them in their important leadership role with a strong focus on quality improvement, learning from error and ensuring that service users and staff have a voice: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-board-member-handbook>
- “Board Effectiveness – A Good Practice Guide” published by the Northern Ireland Audit Office in June 2022. This publication aims to provide a quick and easy way to access clear and concise advice to maximise board effectiveness by building upon the best practice, research and suggestions. [Board Effectiveness - A Good Practice Guide \(June 2022\) | Northern Ireland Audit Office \(niauditoffice.gov.uk\)](#)
- “Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together” a 10 year approach to transforming health and social which was launched in October 2016 and “Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together” was the response to the report produced by an Expert Panel led by Professor Bengoa tasked with considering the best configuration of Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland. <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/transformation-programme>  
[Transformation Programme | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

## **ACCESS Northern Ireland (Access NI)**

- 5.18 It is the Department's policy to carry out an "Access NI Check" for the appointment of the 5 x HSC Trust Chairs.
- 5.19 The criminal record check will be undertaken by Access NI, which is the responsibility of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997. It should be noted that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining this position (the Department has a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which can be provided on request).
- 5.20 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.

## **Selection Process**

- 5.21 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.
- 5.22 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.

- 5.23 Further general guidance on the Criteria Based Selection Process can be found at **Annex B**.
- 5.24 The Interview Panel comprising three members - two senior officers from the Department and one CPANI Independent Assessor - or an appointed Sift Panel (para 5.27 refers) will carry out a sift of all of the application forms received to assess each applicant against the selection criteria.
- 5.25 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 meets 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 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.
- 5.26 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.
- 5.27 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.
- 5.28 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.

- 5.29 It is anticipated that 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. 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.
- 5.30 At interview, all applicants must satisfy the Panel that they adequately meet all of the relevant criteria. The Minister/Department will take the final decision on who to appoint. The Selection Panel will score applicants at interview against an agreed pass mark and those found to be above the line will be recommended as suitable for appointment. The Minister/Department will be provided with a list of candidates found suitable by the Selection Panel. An applicant summary, provided by the Panel, will provide the Minister/Department 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.
- 5.31 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. You do not have to have a registered disability to apply and have your application considered under GIS. **Should you wish to be considered under the GIS scheme please complete the separate GIS Application document.**
- 5.32 Applicants whom the Panel assess as not suitable for appointment will be advised by letter following interview.
- 5.33 Applicants whom the Panel assess as suitable for appointment and whose names are being presented to the Minister/Department will be advised of this by letter following interview.

- 5.34 An Access NI check is requested for the applicant the Minister/Department has selected for appointment. All documentation relating to Access NI will be destroyed by the Department once the appointment process has been completed.
- 5.35 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 Terms of Appointment.
- 5.36 All other interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview once the selection has been made.
- 5.37 The Minister/Department may decide to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancies that arise within 12 months following the initial appointment.

## **Section 6 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest**

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

### **Insolvency Checks**

- 6.5 The Department may also contact the Insolvency Service to check if applicants are recorded on the Disqualification of Directors or Bankruptcy registers. An applicant who has been judged bankrupt or has made a composition or

arrangement with his creditors is disqualified for appointment under this competition (**Annex A** refers).

### **Other Public Appointments**

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

### **The Two Terms Rule**

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

### **Double Paying**

6.8 Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that no one should be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. If appointed, they will be asked to obtain confirmation from their employer that any remuneration due, and time worked for this position, are truly additional to their existing job role and is not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment). In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature. The rules relating to double paying have been relaxed for Civil Servants (see NICS Handbook, Standards of Conduct, Annex 10) and now allows double paying in certain circumstances.

### **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.

## **Publicising Appointments**

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

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

## **Section 7 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure**

### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

- 7.1 The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity. The Department monitors the gender, ethnic origin, 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 sift of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit. The Department believes that the best Boards are those that reflect the community they serve.
- 7.3 The Department is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants.
- 7.4 Women are currently under-represented on the NHSCT, NIAST and WHSCT Boards and applications are particularly welcome from women for these positions.

### **Complaints Procedure**

- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 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](mailto:public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 028 90 522528 or 028 90 378793

- 7.7 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)  
Annexe B  
Dundonald House  
Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

Email: [info@publicappointmentsni.org](mailto: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 HSC TRUSTS**

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

### *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 HSS 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 has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his creditors; 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 services body; or

(d) he is a person whose tenure of office as the chairman, member or director of a health and social services body has been terminated because his appointment is not in the interests of the health and personal social services, 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 services body; or

(f) he is a general medical practitioner or general dental practitioner or an employee of either of those; 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.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(a) the date of the 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 services body.

### *Cessation of disqualification*

**12.**-(1) Where a person is disqualified under regulation 11(1)(b) by reason of having been adjudged bankrupt-

(a) if the bankruptcy is annulled on the ground that he ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or on the ground that his debts have been paid in full, the disqualification shall cease on the date of the annulment;

(b) if he is discharged the disqualification shall cease on the date of his discharge.

(2) Where a person is disqualified under regulation 11(1)(b) by reason of his having made a composition or arrangement with his creditors, if he pays his debts in full the disqualification shall cease on the date on which the payment is completed and in any other case it shall cease on the expiry of five years from the date on which the terms of the deed of composition or arrangement are fulfilled.

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

## 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**

Minister/ Department 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 Minister/Department, 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/Department 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.