



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments Information Booklet

NORTHERN IRELAND BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE (NIBTS 1/21)

3 NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS (2 X LAY & 1 X FINANCE)

Information booklet 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 27 October 2021.

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

Tel: 02890 765606 or 02890 522528 (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 Tuesday 9 November 2021
Sift	w/c 15 November 2021*
Interviews	w/c 6 December 2021*
Planned date of appointment	Expected from Jan/Feb 2022*

* 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 Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-unit-privacy-notice>

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Health (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. We 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. Further information on the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) is available at **Section 2**.
- 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 by delegating the exercise of its statutory functions to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) 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 Department's vision for the integrated HSC system is to drive up the quality of HSC for patients, clients and carers, to improve outcomes, to safeguard the vulnerable, and to ensure that patients, clients and carers have the best possible experience in every aspect of their treatment, care and support. Each year, the Minister's strategic priorities, targets and standards are communicated to the HSC Service through an annual Commissioning Plan Direction.

- 1.5 Applications are invited to fill the following posts:
- 2 Non-Executive (Lay) Members
 - 1 Non-Executive (Finance) Member
- 1.6 It is expected that the successful applicants will take up appointment no later than Jan/Feb 2022.
- 1.7 Information on disqualifications can be accessed at **Annex A**.
- 1.8 These appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI) and the competition may be examined by CPANI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

Section 2 – Background Information on NIBTS

- 2.1 NIBTS is a special body, established as an Arm's-Length Body of the Department. Its statutory brief sets out that it has the ability to perform any functions which the Department may require under Article 4(1) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Special Agencies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990.
- 2.2 NIBTS exists to supply the needs of all hospitals and clinical units in the province with safe and effective blood and blood products and other related services. The discharge of this function includes a commitment to the care and welfare of voluntary donors.
- 2.3 NIBTS is an independent Special Agency of the Department and is responsible for the collection, testing and distribution of over 55,000 blood donations each year. It operates three mobile units at nearly 180 locations throughout the province. Including headquarters, located on the site of the Belfast City Hospital, a total of almost 800 donation sessions are held each year.
- 2.4 NIBTS is the sole supplier of blood components and products to HSC bodies in Northern Ireland. All blood components prepared from donations are provided by voluntary, non-remunerated donors. NIBTS holds a blood establishment authorisation licence from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which licences the collection, processing, storage, testing and distribution of blood components. NIBTS also retains a wholesale distributor's licence for plasma products. The Blood Safety and Quality Regulations (BSQR) 2005 (as amended) require adherence to good practice principles which are supported by a quality management system. NIBTS also provides the regional antenatal testing programme and specialist immunohaematology support to hospital blood banks which are UKAS accredited to ISO 15189 standards.
- 2.5 Further information is available on the NIBTS website: <https://nibts.hscni.net>

Role of NIBTS Board

- 2.6 NIBTS was established with effect from 1 June 1994 under Article 2 of the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (Special Agency) (Establishment and Constitution) Order 1994. The Board of NIBTS comprises a Non-Executive Chair and 3 Non-Executive Members, (2 x Lay and 1 x Finance Member) appointed by the Minister, in accordance with the Code of Practice of the CPANI.
- 2.7 The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that NIBTS fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by NIBTS
- 2.8 The 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 for Health 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.
- 2.9 The Board shall
- establish the overall strategic direction of NIBTS within the policy and resources framework determined by the Department;
 - ensure that NIBTS'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 NIBTS 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 NIBTS; is informed in a timely manner about any

concerns about the activities of NIBTS; and provides positive assurance to the Department that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;

- constructively challenge NIBTS'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 NIBTS.
- 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.

Section 3 – NIBTS Non-Executive Member Role Profile

Accountable to:

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

Role

3.2 Non-Executive Members of the NIBTS Board are expected to oversee the efficient and effective performance of its functions.

3.3 It is the Non-Executive Member role to:

- promote a positive culture which includes upholding and promoting the values of the HSCNI;
- be an ambassador of NIBTS, representing it honestly and positively, engaging with a wide range of organisations;
- leading by example, including behaviour at Board meetings;
- be visible to staff and patients and demonstrate a commitment to openness, transparency and candour;
- familiarise themselves with the work of the NIBTS Board;
- play a full part in representing the activities of NIBTS and in attendance at meetings;
- promote and influence the strategic development of NIBTS, sharing in corporate responsibility for strategic decision making;
- contribute to the committees and sub-committees established to process the work of NIBTS; e.g. Audit Committee; Remuneration Committee, Governance and Risk Management Committee and various ad-hoc groups;
- participate in NIBTS induction, training and annual performance appraisal programme;
- participate in the monitoring of the full range of statutory and, regulatory and licensing requirements;
- contribute to the development of NIBTS's policies and procedures;
- assist in ensuring that NIBTS's policies and activities are based on the principles of equal opportunity and diversity;
- assist in the development of the corporate strategy and Business Plan;
- represent NIBTS at official or social occasions relevant to its business;

- assist in the development and maintenance of effective links with appropriate agencies, regulatory and quality assurance bodies; and
- assist in establishing and maintaining appropriate partnership and links with other key stakeholders, including service users, public and private sector organisations, and educational establishments.

Training

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

Time Commitment & Remuneration

- 3.5 Non-Executive Members will be expected to devote **20 days per annum** to the appointment. This may involve commitment both inside and outside normal working hours.
- 3.6 The annual rate of remuneration for the Non-Executive Members of the NIBTS Board is **£3,170**.

Expenses

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

Period of Appointment

- 3.8 Non-Executive Members will be appointed for a period not longer than four years.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 The Chair will conduct an annual appraisal of each Non-Executive Member's performance throughout the period of appointment.

- 3.11 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 Non-Executive 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 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

- 3.12 To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the HSC system, the Non-Executive Members are 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 [here](#).

Section 4 - Person Specification Non-Executive Members

- 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. The Department would particularly welcome applications from those who have not previously held a public appointment and 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.
- 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. A criteria-based selection procedure will be used as part of this process.
- 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 The following are specific requirements for the NIBTS Non-Executive Member posts:

Lay Member - there are no specific eligibility requirements for this post.

Finance Member - must have experience of Financial Management in an organisation with a significant financial budget.

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

Note: the term ‘regulated environment’ which is used in Criterion 2 can be defined as an organisation which is regulated by a regulatory body and is required to comply with quality and legislative and/or licensing requirements and is subject to regulatory inspection and /or audit against standards.

The term “organisation” can be defined as a body operating in the public, community, voluntary or private sector.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 4.8 All applicants must show on their application form, and if invited for interview, how they meet the following three essential criteria.

Criterion 1: Strategic Thinking – by way of practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates your ability to see the big picture and oversee and maintain strategic direction during a period of change.

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

- Ability to identify key strategic issues;
- Ability to take account of wider impacts in the development of strategy;
- Anticipates future consequences and trends;
- Sets a clear direction and articulates the vision;
- Ability to exercise sound judgement; and
- Delivery of results.

Criterion 2: Corporate Governance – by way of practical examples, provide examples that demonstrate your knowledge and experience of corporate governance, demonstrating personal awareness of the importance of effective governance.

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:**

- Can demonstrate experience and understanding of corporate governance in, for example, a regulated environment;
- Can distinguish between Executive and Non-Executive roles and responsibilities;
- Can work effectively as part of a team;
- Can tackle difficult issues;
- Behaves with integrity; and
- Understands principles of accountability.

Criterion 3: Collaborative Working - by way of practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates how you proactively create, maintain and promote a strong network of collaborative relationships within and outside an organisation or in partnership between organisations to produce a desired result.

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:**

- Communicating effectively;
- Building effective working relationships and working effectively across boundaries;
- Confidently engaging with stakeholders and colleagues;
- Partnership working;
- Creating an inclusive environment; and
- Promoting collaboration.

4.9 **Applicants for the Finance position** must also show on their application form, and if invited for interview, how they meet the following essential criterion:

Criterion 4: Financial Management - by way of practical examples, provide examples of how you have applied financial management principles in an organisational setting with a significant financial budget.

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

- experience in financial management and forecasting;
- ability to manage risks associated with financial activities;
- an understanding of both Internal and External Audit functions;
- ability to address audit findings and recommendations; and
- ability to interpret the appropriateness of financial policies and procedures.

Section 5 - Application, Access NI and Selection Process

How to Apply

- 5.1 Application Forms or further information about the process can be obtained by e-mailing: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk or, by contacting the Public Appointments Unit (PAU) on 02890 765606 or 02890 522528 (Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm). Alternatively, you can download the information pack at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publicappointments>
- 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
- 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 clear as possible using black ink 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 300 word count per essential criterion. Text beyond the allotted word count will be redacted by PAU and will not be 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 (see 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 PAU by **12 Noon GMT on Tuesday 9 November 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 on 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 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 shortlisting and 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 '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/daodof0319attv2.pdf>

ACCESS Northern Ireland (Access NI)

- 5.18 It is the Department's policy to carry out an "Enhanced Disclosure Check" for the appointment of the NIBTS Non-Executive Members.
- 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 (or nominated by the Department) and one CPANI Independent Assessor - or an appointed Sift Panel (paragraph 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 3 or above in each. Applications which do not meet the minimum standard will be sifted out.
- 5.26 If the Department receives a high number of applications and that follows through to a high number of applicants passing the initial sift then the Panel reserves the right to apply a further stage to shortlist for interview. This will be based on the quality of evidence provided in the application form and the aggregated scores with the top scoring applicants across the total of the essential criteria being invited to interview stage.
- 5.27 With the agreement of the Commissioner, the Department reserves the right to employ a Sift Panel comprising three CPANI Independent Assessors to conduct the sift stage of written applications. If the Department opts to use a Sift Panel, the Independent Assessor allocated by CPANI to sit on the Interview Panel will be appointed to the role of Lead Independent Assessor on the Sift Panel.
- 5.28 Application Forms provided to the Panel responsible for the purposes of the sift exercise will be anonymised, which means that it will not include your name or personal details.
- 5.29 Candidates invited for interview should note that, in the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be possible to conduct interviews on a face-to-face basis. Interviews may be conducted remotely using ZOOM software

technology. Candidates will be provided with a link to engage in the interview by e-mail. If any candidate requires assistance or advice in using this technology, they should contact Mr Paul Bradley, PAU (see contact details on cover sheet) who will seek to provide all reasonable support. If you cannot make the interview time offered, we will try our best to reschedule your appointment.

- 5.30 At interview, all applicants must satisfy the Panel that they adequately meet all of the relevant essential criteria. The Minister of Health will take the final decision on who to appoint. The Selection Panel will score applicants at interview against an agreed pass mark and those found to be above the line will be recommended as suitable for appointment. The Minister will be provided with an unranked list (alphabetical list) of candidates found suitable by the Selection Panel. An applicant summary, provided by the Selection Panel, will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each applicant during the appointment process and the Selection 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 will be advised of this by letter following interview.

- 5.34 An Access NI check is requested for the applicants the Minister 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 may decide to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancies that arise within 12 months following the initial appointments.

Section 6 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest

- 6.1 The Department must ensure that any individuals appointed are 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 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. As a result, applicants who already work in the public sector may not be entitled to claim remuneration for this position. Each case will be examined on its own merits, however, the guiding principle is to avoid “double-paying” and the Department reserves the right to contact an employer regarding an individual’s candidature.

Publicising Appointments

- 6.9 A Press Release will be published to announce the appointment. The CPANI 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 equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit. The Department believes that the best boards are those that reflect the communities they serve.
- 7.3 The Department is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants.

Complaints Procedure

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

7.5 Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

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

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

Telephone: 028 90 522528

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

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Telephone: 028 9052 4820

DISQUALIFICATIONS

HOUSE OF COMMONS AND NI ASSEMBLY DISQUALIFICATIONS

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualifications Act 1975¹ and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975², 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

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1975/24/contents>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1975/25/contents>

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

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

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.