



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnistrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments Information Booklet

**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE
& EDUCATION COUNCIL
FOR NURSING & MIDWIFERY
(NIPEC 1/21)**

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIR

Information packs and application forms can be provided in alternative formats, such as, Braille, large print, audio, etc. and applicants who require assistance will be facilitated on request, provided this is made prior to 26 July 2021 to:

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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale
Closing Date for applications	Friday 6 August 2021 at 12 noon BST
Sift	16 August 2021*
Interviews	w/c 6 or 13 Sept 2021*
Planned date of appointment	October / November 2021*

* These dates may be subject to change

Privacy Notice

DoH will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting a Non-Executive Chair to the Council of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-unit-privacy-notice>

NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY: NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIR

Carol Curran is the outgoing Chair of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC). Below she gives an insight into her role:

As the outgoing Chair of NIPEC I have much pleasure in recommending this role to you. I believe NIPEC is an established and highly credible organisation with a reputation for delivery of timely and effective programmes of work, operating within its statutory functions to support nurses and midwives by promoting high standards of practice, education and professional development. A key strength and role of NIPEC is its ability to work in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders across Northern Ireland and beyond to develop high quality innovative solutions which support employers, nurses and midwives enhance professional practice and, in turn, facilitate the delivery of safe, high quality, effective and person-centred care.

The organisation is quite unique, where the day-to-day work has stakeholder engagement at its core with an increasingly significant role within the HSC providing a high volume of work with tangible outcomes and products articulated through work taken forward directly in response to regulatory, professional, policy, strategic and clinical priorities.

The organisation offers value for money as it brokers solutions that can be enacted on a regional basis, by leading on important pieces of work that impact across the HSC. The structure of the organisation brings the necessary governance with a Council comprised of both nurse and lay non-executive directors. Council members have the opportunity to join workstreams and have added value to the outcomes that have been achieved, where that mix of registrant and lay experiences has been beneficial.

Good governance is key to the organisation's success and the Chair with Council members are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council, taking cognisance of guidance provided by our sponsor branch. With accountability to the Minister through the Department of Health, the Chair has the opportunity to work at that very strategic level and to provide that assurance that good governance has been enacted, delivering high standards of regularity and propriety.

The last year has shown the amazing, and often selfless contribution that nurses and midwives continue to make to society and I believe that NIPEC has played an important role in this. It will be a privilege for the incoming Chair to build upon this legacy in the pursuit of promoting high standards of practice, education and professional development.

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. We would also welcome applications from men who are currently under-represented on the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC). Further information on NIPEC 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 post:

- 1 x Non-Executive Chair of NIPEC

1.6 It is expected that the successful applicant will take up appointment during October / November 2021.

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 NIPEC

- 2.1 NIPEC was established by the Northern Ireland Assembly under the Health and Personal social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 as a Non Departmental Public Body to support the development of nurses and midwives by promoting high standards of practice, education and professional development. NIPEC provides advice and guidance on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery.
- 2.2 The Department determines NIPEC's performance framework in light of the Programme for Government (PfG), the Department's wider strategic aims, and current PfG objectives and targets. The key targets, standards and actions to be delivered by NIPEC are set out in NIPEC's Annual Business Plan supported by their 5 year strategic plan
- 2.3 Further information is available on the NIPEC website: <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

Role of NIPEC Council

- 2.4 NIPEC is directly managed by a Council comprising a Non-Executive Chair, a Chief Executive and not more than 14 Non-Executive Members appointed by the Department (60% registered nurses/midwives and 40% not registered). The Department's Chief Nursing Officer is an ex officio member.
- 2.5 The Council has corporate responsibility for ensuring that NIPEC fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department and approved by the Minister, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by NIPEC. To this end, and in pursuit of its wider corporate responsibilities, the Council shall:
- establish the overall strategic direction of NIPEC within the policy and resources framework determined by the sponsor branch, Minister and Department;
 - constructively challenge NIPEC's executive team in their planning, target setting and delivery of performance;
 - ensure that the Department is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of NIPEC 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 Council operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the Department, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds; and that, in reaching decisions, the Council takes into account all relevant guidance issued by the Department and the Department of Finance;
- ensure that the Council receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of NIPEC; is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the activities of NIPEC; and provides positive assurance to the Department that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;
- demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times including using the independent audit committee, set up by NIPEC as a committee of its Council in accordance with current Cabinet Office Guidance and in line with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook to help the Council to address the key financial and other risks facing NIPEC; and
- appoint, on the Minister's approval, a Chief Executive to NIPEC and, in consultation with the Department, set performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives for the Chief Executive, which give due weight to the proper management and use of public monies.

2.6 The Chair and Non-Executive Members are appointed with the approval of the Minister in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

Section 3 – NIPEC Non-Executive Chair Role Profile

Accountable to

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

3.2 The Non-Executive Chair is responsible for providing strategic leadership and direction for NIPEC to ensure the policies and actions of same support the wider strategic policies of the Minister; and that their affairs are conducted with probity.

3.3 It is the role of the Non-Executive Chair to:

- formulate the Council's strategy;
- ensure that the Council, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of guidance provided by the Minister or the Department;
- promote the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources;
- encourage and deliver high standards of regularity and propriety;
- represent the views of the Council to the general public;
- ensure that the Council 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 Council Members;
- ensure that all members of the Council, 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 NIPEC when Council vacancies arise, with a view to ensuring a proper balance of professional and other expertise;
- assess the performance of individual Council Members.
- ensure the completion of the Council Governance Self-Assessment Tool on an annual basis. Assurance will be provided through the mid-year assurance statement, that the tool is being completed, actions are being addressed and that any exception issues will be raised with the Department.

Training

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

Time Commitment & Remuneration

3.5 The Non-Executive Chair will be expected to devote **45 days per year** 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 Chair of NIPEC is **£11,534**.

Expenses

3.7 The Non-Executive Chair is also eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on NIPEC business.

Period of Appointment

3.8 The Non-Executive Chair 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 30 days' notice will be required in writing to the Department.

3.10 An annual assessment of the performance of a Non-Executive Chair will be required throughout the period of appointment.

3.11 The Department is committed to improving the diversity of the Boards/Councils to which they make appointments. In view of this, it is the Department's policy to not automatically re-appoint to the Board/Council 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

3.12 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 [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. The Department would also welcome applications from those who have not previously held a public appointment.
- 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 There are no specific educational or professional requirements for the NIPEC Non-Executive Chair position.
- 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.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

4.8 Applicants must show on their application form, and if invited for 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:

- Knowledge and understanding of the strategic professional nursing and midwifery agenda;
- Experience of leading or working in an organisation going through transformation
- Effectively contributing to the setting and implementation of an organisation's strategic direction
- Taking into consideration current and future factors and wider challenges and opportunities when planning for the future of the organisation;
- Set clear realistic objectives, responding effectively to changing requirements; and
- Ability to act as an organisation's leading representative, presenting the organisation's aims and policies to the outside world.

Criterion 2: Change Management - by way of practical examples, please demonstrate your experience of effectively and successfully leading or managing a significant organisational change programme or project.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are:

- Developing and implementing plans to deliver organisational change;
- Being open to change;
- Building flexibility and responsiveness;
- Challenge the status quo to achieve value-adding improvements and change;
- Making sound decisions; and
- Understand and manage the impact of organisational change.

Criterion 3: Corporate Governance and Accountability - by way of practical examples, provide evidence that demonstrates your experience of working at or close to Board level within a framework of corporate governance.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are:

- Understands corporate governance;
- Evidence of your involvement in improving and securing effective corporate governance;
- Ability to distinguish between Executive and Non-Executive roles and responsibilities;
- Understands principles of accountability;
- Experience in financial management; and
- Exercises a constructive challenge function.

Criterion 4: 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:

- A clear understanding of performance management within a transformational organisation;
- Building an effective performance culture; to deliver desired outcomes
- Holding others to account;
- Identifying, evaluating and managing risk; and
- Managing the performance of others.

Criterion 5: Collaborative Working - by way of practical examples, provide evidence which demonstrates how you proactively create, maintain and promote a strong network of collaborative relationships within and outside organisations or in partnership between organisations to produce a positive result.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for are:

- Leading from the front and communicating effectively;

- Strong professional networks and an ability to build effective working relationships;
- Confidently engaging with stakeholders and colleagues;
- Partnership working;
- Creating an inclusive environment; and
- Promoting collaboration

Section 5 - Application, Access NI and Selection Process

How to apply

- 5.1 Application forms or further information about the process can be obtained from Public Appointments Unit at the address on the cover of this document, by e-mailing a request to: public.appointments@health-ni.gov.uk or by telephone on 02890 765606 or 02890 522528. 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 clearly 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.

- 5.6 It is important that all sections of the application form are fully completed. **Failure to complete all relevant sections will 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 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 BST on 6 August 2021** (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/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 '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 NIPEC Non-Executive Chair.
- 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 interviewing tests applicants against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These examples provide the Panel with information and evidence about you, and 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 Selection Based 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 (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 The Panel will meet to consider applications and will carry out a sift exercise, against a 1 - 5 marking framework, to assess how the skills, knowledge, experience and other qualities presented in your application meet the selection criteria. All criteria will be weighted equally. In order to be invited for interview applicants must meet a minimum standard of 4 against each criterion.
- 5.26 Following the sift, if the Panel considers that an insufficient number of applicants have met the minimum standard the pass mark will be lowered to 3 in one criterion. If required this process will be repeated for additional criteria. The reduced minimum standard will be applied to the criteria in the following order.
1. Leadership
 2. Change Management
 3. Corporate Governance & Accountability
 4. Performance Management
 5. Collaborative Working
- 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 conducting 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 Video Conferencing technology. Candidates will be provided with a link to engage in the interview by email. 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 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 Panel, will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each applicant during the appointment process and the Panel's assessment of that applicant.
- 5.31 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 and whose names are **not** being presented to the Minister 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 individual appointed is committed to the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and values of public service. These (Nolan) principles are: **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership**. The successful applicant will be asked as part of their appointment to sign a declaration committing to the seven principles.
- 6.2 Attached for your information at **Annex C** is a copy of “Probity & Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Applicants”. Separately attached is a leaflet from the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI), about “Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and Making a Complaint”. These provide information on these issues including some examples to help applicants evaluate whether or not they have a real, perceived or potential conflict.
- 6.3 The Department must take account of any actual 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. 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 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 are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit. The Department believes that the best Boards are those that reflect the community the 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.

7.3 For this competition, we would particularly welcome applications from men who are currently under-represented on the NIPEC Council.

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 765606

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 <https://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.

DISQUALIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO NIPEC

As set out in The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (Appointments and Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 the following persons are disqualified for appointment as a Non-Executive Members of NIPEC.

Disqualification for appointment

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

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

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

(c) a person who has been fairly dismissed, other than by reasons of redundancy from any paid employment with a public body;

(d) a person whose appointment as the Chairman or Member or Director of any public body which employs nurses or midwives has been terminated on the grounds that:

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

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

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

(e) a person who is an employee of the Council, other than the chief executive of the Council;

(f) a person who has financial or related interests which prejudice the exercise of his duties;

(g) a person whose name has been removed from the register maintained under section 5 of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2002, or the register previously maintained under

section 7 of the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1997, or is currently suspended;

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

(i) any person included in a list kept by the Secretary of State under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(1) (list of individuals considered unsuitable to work with children) or section 81 of the Care Standards Act 2000(2) (list of individuals considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults).

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

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

(b) there shall be disregarded–

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Where a person is disqualified under paragraph 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, but the Department may on application being made to it by that person, reduce the period of disqualification.

(8) In paragraph 1(h) a “health care professional” means—

(a) a medical practitioner or dental practitioner;

(b) a registered pharmacist;

(c) an ophthalmic optician, other than a body corporate enrolled in the list kept under section 9 of the Opticians Act 1989(3);

(d) a person who is registered as a member of a profession to which the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960 extends(4);

(e) a registered osteopath as defined by section 41 of the Osteopaths Act 1993(5);

(f) a registered chiropractor as defined by section 43 of the Chiropractors Act 1994(6);

(g) a person registered under Part I of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001(7).”

(1)1999 c. 14

(2)2000 c. 14

(3)1989 c. 44

(4)1960 c. 66

(5)1993 c. 21

(6)1994 c. 17

(7)2001 c. 3 (N.I.)

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.