



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Candidate Information Booklet

TOURISM NORTHERN IRELAND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD

Application forms and this information pack can be made available in other formats – including Braille, Large Print, audio formats, etc.

Please email Public Appointments Unit (PAU) at: PAU@economy-ni.gov.uk or telephone:

028 9052 9282 (Yvonne Green)

We are committed to an accessible and inclusive appointments process. Reasonable adjustments are available on request – please contact us if you require support at any stage.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF TOURISM NORTHERN IRELAND

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The Department for the Economy (DfE) and Tourism NI are committed to the principles of public appointment based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

We are also committed to equality of opportunity and welcome application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependents.

Females, people with a disability, those from minority ethnic communities and young people are currently under-represented on Public Boards and applications from members of those groups would be particularly welcome.

A public appointment to a Board gives individuals from different backgrounds and with specific skills and experience a chance to help make decisions that affect all our lives. Board appointments are a great opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst developing your own skills.

We are operating a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) in this competition for applicants with a disability. Applicants with a disability who meet all of the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.

FOREWORD

FOREWORD BY TOURISM NORTHERN IRELAND CHAIR – ELLVENA GRAHAM OBE

I have been Chair of Tourism NI since July 2022 and in the course of those few years I have seen at first hand the real difference that tourism makes to livelihoods. Aside from the huge rewards it generates for the economy, it fosters true civic pride in our home and has transformed how Northern Ireland is perceived, both locally and internationally.

Today's global tourism marketplace is affected by many issues, including current geopolitical instability, the willingness of consumers to travel in such an environment and the affordability issues that impact not just on the spending power of our visitors, but on the ability of attractions, accommodation and hospitality providers to conduct business. While the heart of its mission remains the marketing of Northern Ireland to attract visitors, Tourism NI also must seek to address those issues, working with a range of partners across government and the industry.

With such a broad remit, Tourism NI requires a strong Board - one that can provide rigorous oversight of the organisation, ensure that its obligations on compliance and good governance are fulfilled and support the organisation in making the optimum use of resources allocated to it by the Department for Economy (DfE).

It is also critical that the Board has a deep and broad mix of industry knowledge, skills and experience to support Tourism NI's Executive Leadership Team by offering advice, expertise and most importantly, providing a robust challenge function where needed.

A number of membership positions are now available on the Tourism NI Board, and I would welcome applications from anyone interested in helping to grow our tourism industry and contribute to the prosperity of our visitor economy.

ELLVENA GRAHAM OBE
Chair

SECTION ONE

Introduction and background to Tourism NI

1. The Department for the Economy (DfE) wishes to appoint new Members to the Board of Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI). The appointments will be made on the basis for a term of **three** years and will be effective from **30 November 2026**.
2. Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) is the trading name of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). NITB is a statutory Non-Departmental Public Body originally established under the Development of Tourist Traffic Act (NI) 1948. Its constitution and continuation were affirmed in the Tourism (NI) Order 1992. TNI is funded by Department for the Economy (DfE) under Article 7 of the Order, from monies voted by the Northern Ireland Assembly.
3. TNI has responsibility for the development of tourism product and experience across Northern Ireland and is also responsible for the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination to visitors within Northern Ireland and from the Republic of Ireland.
4. The procedure for these appointments will adhere to the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. This means that they will be based on merit after a fair, open and transparent process that involves independent scrutiny, and with the Minister responsible for the Department for the Economy making the final decision on whom to appoint.
5. Further information on the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland can be found at [Public Appointments NI](#)
6. The Board consists of:-

Chairperson	1
Members	8

SECTION TWO

Role Profile

7. TNI Board Members are responsible for contributing to the work of the Board and for assisting to ensure that it successfully discharges its overall responsibility for the organisation as a whole. The role of TNI Board Members collectively in cooperation with other Board Members is to:

- assist TNI in fulfilling its statutory functions of development, promotion and marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination. In pursuit of its role, the Board will develop clear objectives communicating those objectives inside and outside TNI and working, through the management team, to ensure that those objectives are met.
- be responsible for the efficient, effective and economic implementation of the statutory functions set out in the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 and act in a way that promotes high standards of public finance, including the promotion of regularity, propriety and value for money.
- provide advice to the Minister on major issues of strategy and policy in respect of tourism.
- be responsible to the Minister for the definition and development of strategic direction and for the achievement of the Board's objectives and performance targets.
- consider the three-year Corporate Plan and annual Operating Plan, and the performance targets contained in them before submission to the Minister. These plans monitor performance against objectives and targets.
- act as the main channel of communication with the tourist industry in Northern Ireland to ensure the continuing relevance of TNI's strategy and policies to the needs of the industry.

8. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of TNI, on appointment, Members are required to subscribe to the Code of Practice for Board Members. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required of Board Members, and issues surrounding accountability, are set out in the Code. The current Cabinet Office model Code of Practice for Board members of public bodies can be accessed via the following link:

[Cabinet Office Code of Practice for Board Members](#)

9. Members of the Board of TNI will contribute to the setting of strategic objectives, standards and values for the organisation and take corporate strategic decisions, within a policy framework set by Government.

Time Commitment and Remuneration

10. Board Members are expected to attend Board meetings normally held at Tourism NI HQ and other events totalling at least 1 day per month, in addition the successful candidates will be expected to attend occasional evening engagements. Additional days expected for Chairs of the Sub-committees which will be remunerated accordingly. By applying for the post, it is assumed that you can meet this time commitment. The topic is explored at interview.
11. Remuneration amounts to £6,272 per annum. The appointment will not be pensionable. In line with best practice in the private sector, details of the remuneration of Board members should be disclosed in the Annual Report and Accounts.
12. TNI headquarters are at Linum Chambers, Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7ES. Members are eligible to claim allowances, at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on official business. All reasonable receipted dependent carer expenses will also be reimbursed where applicable.
13. All remuneration and expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.
14. All public appointments carry a maximum of 2 terms. A board Member will normally serve for a period of three years (one term) but may be considered for appointment for one further term. An annual assessment of the performance of board members is carried out throughout the period of appointment. Reappointment may be considered subject to satisfactory performance during the initial period of office and continued adherence to the principles of public life. Ultimately, the decision to re-appoint will rest with the Minister responsible for the Department for the Economy.

Double Paying

15. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that: appointed, they will be asked to obtain confirmation from their employer that any remuneration due and time worked for this position are truly additional to their existing job role and not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment).
16. In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature

Nationality

17. DfE have no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only. However, there is a mandatory requirement to ensure that those appointed do not contravene immigration legislation.

- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
- Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.
- There is an onus on non-UK and non-RoI citizens to provide proof of their right to work in the UK and an onus on the appointer to check that.

18. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual to provide evidence that they have the appropriate permission if being offered a post. The Department will check the individual's passport, share code or other documents to confirm if they can legally work in the UK.

Qualifications

19. No specific academic qualifications are required for these appointments.

Training

20. Members will be required to attend induction training and relevant training courses, organised by TNI and the Department. All members of the Board are supported with additional development needs or training as necessary.

Person Specification

21. The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competences sought. A criteria-based selection process is employed by DfE. This process requires you to provide tangible evidence which demonstrates that you can meet the requirements. For that reason, CVs will not be accepted. **No specific academic qualifications are required for these appointments.**

22. You are expected to demonstrate your ability to meet the criteria by way of practical examples. The Selection Panel will reach a decision on whether or not you meet the criteria on the basis of the evidence you supply. **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities. The mere mention of a skill or attribute is insufficient, and the Panel will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.** The onus is on you to provide sufficiently detailed examples to demonstrate that you have the experience of putting into use the competencies that are needed for the post.

23. The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career patterns and experiences such as community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time activities or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in. Though not time bound, examples must demonstrate the relevance of your experience and competence.

24. Make sure you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you feel you are suitable for this appointment. **It is**

strongly recommended that you read the enclosed Public Appointment Guide, which contains guidance on the completion of criteria-based application forms and can be found at:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-guide-overview-public-appointments-northern-ireland-and-helpful-information>

Selection Criteria

25. Applicants are required to submit evidence of competency against two essential criteria and a choice of any one of the three Specialist Skills criteria listed below. All criteria carry equal weight. If more than one criteria are completed for the Specialist Skills C, D and E, the panel will only mark the first Specialist Skill criteria completed by the applicant.
26. Candidates will need to provide evidence (by way of example) to meet the following essential criteria:

Criterion A: Corporate Governance

Demonstrate from your own personal experience how you have applied the principles of corporate governance and risk management to ensure the proper accountability of an organisation you have worked for, or with which you have been involved.

Types of evidence the panel will be looking for are: -

- Ensuring systems and controls are in place to support the achievement of policies, aims and objectives.
- Identifying, evaluating and managing risks which may have an adverse effect on the organisation's ability to achieve its key performance indicators.
- Monitoring, reporting and reviewing internal controls/risk management on an ongoing basis.

Criterion B: Thinking Strategically

Demonstrate from your own personal experience how you influenced the strategic direction of an organisation you have worked for, or with which you have been involved.

Types of evidence the panel will be looking for are:

- Prioritising interventions that will deliver the widest reach across economic, cultural and educational objectives.
- Anticipating future trends accurately.

- Seeing and acting on potential future scenarios that will impact on the organisation.

Specialist Skill Criteria

Candidates will need to provide evidence (by way of example) to meet ONE of the following three optional criteria:

Criterion C: Marketing Skills

Demonstrate from your own personal experience how you developed or contributed to a marketing strategy that successfully promoted a destination, organisation, product or service.

Types of evidence the panel will be looking for are: -

- Demonstrating understanding of strategic marketing principles.
- Using audience insight and market intelligence data to inform decisions.
- Utilising appropriate marketing channels and communications methods.
- Showing creativity and innovation in campaign design and delivery.
- Evaluating performance using measurable outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Demonstrating the ability to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders.

Criterion D: Tourism Industry Experience

Demonstrate from your own personal experience how you successfully brought together a range of stakeholders with different priorities to deliver a tourism project, initiative or event.

Types of evidence the panel will be looking for are: -

- Demonstrating experience of building and maintaining effective partnerships within the sector.
- Showing strong communication and influencing skills.
- Identifying and managing competing priorities or challenges.
- Working collaboratively with tourism stakeholders to achieve shared goals.
- Delivering against measurable outcomes and reflecting on lessons learned.

Criterion E: Financial Management and Commercial Experience

Demonstrate from your own personal experience how you have analysed highly complex financial/commercial/economic information in order to deliver successful outcomes.

Types of evidence the panel will be looking for are: -

- Sound working knowledge of public sector finance and accounts.
- Ability to analyse highly complex financial/commercial/economic information where critical/important decisions are being made or the ability to demonstrate an understanding of complex accounting procedures.
- An understanding of the wider strategic environment and takes account of this when making business decisions.
- An ability to influence the delivery of challenging financial targets of an organisation taking commercial or economic factors into account.

Integrity & Conflicts of Interest

27. The Department will ensure that the individuals appointed are committed to the principles and values of public service. These principles are **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership**.

28. The Department will take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest. Therefore, in your application form, you must disclose information or personal connections, which, if you were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Conflicts of interest may not be a barrier to appointment but both real and perceived conflicts must be discussed with all candidates by the Interview Panel. This is to ensure that the public can have confidence in the Board's independence and impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointees. Please refer to the attached Annex for further information on this subject.

Disqualification including Statutory Disqualification

29. Individuals who are disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, who are undischarged bankrupt or who are the subjects of a bankruptcy restrictions order are not eligible for consideration.

30. Individuals who have served two terms as a TNI Board Member are not eligible to apply for the same position; the terms do not have to be consecutively.

Applications from Civil Servants/former Civil Servants

31. It is possible that conflicts of interest could arise in relation to government policy, strategy or the fair administration of public services and justice during the course of TNI business. Civil servants, or former civil servants, are welcome to apply for the post of Member. However, they should be aware that a judgement will be made by the interviewing panel, taking account of the Cabinet Office guidance on Making and Managing Public Appointments, as to whether the nature of his/her employment could lead to a perceived or real split of loyalties of a sufficiently serious nature to render appointment as Member an unmanageable conflict of interest. A copy of this guidance is available at: [Governance Code on Public Appointments - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-code-on-public-appointments)
32. Former Civil Servants are subject to rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments, employment, or self-employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category, who wish to apply, should check their eligibility to do so with NICSHR Employee Relations. You can contact HRConnect as follows: Email: NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net or External Dial: **0800 1 300 400**
33. Candidates who are current employees of the Northern Ireland Civil Service are advised that, should you be offered an appointment, you will be asked to confirm that you have obtained the necessary approval to undertake private work with another public sector body (including another Government Department) from NICSHR Employee Relations. Further information on this can be found in the **NICS HR Handbook, Section 6.01: Standards of Conduct, Sub Section 6: Private Occupations.**
34. **Current and Former Civil Servants are advised to seek the required authorisation at the start of their application process.**

SECTION THREE

Application Form

35. The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements. You will be assessed against the criteria on pages 9 -11 of this document.
36. You can use examples from your working life, including any voluntary or community work you are, or have been, engaged in or, if preferred, you can use examples from your personal life. To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:
- i. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;
 - ii. applicants should complete the application form in a legible format (e.g. font size 12) or legible block capitals using black ink;
 - iii. applicants should not use more than 400 words per criterion. Any information over and above the word count will be redacted by the administration team and not seen by the selection panel; and
 - iv. applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.
37. Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn. Please see our candidate guidance [Public Appointments - Artificial intelligence and recruitment](#) and recruitment for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.
38. You can complete an online application using the following link:
<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfe/tni-members-application>
39. There is help provided on the website for alternative software at [Help viewing documents](#) . Apple recommends Collabora Office which is the iPad version of LibreOffice which is a free download from the Apple store and supports MS Word files: [Apple Store - Collabora Office](#)
40. We are committed to ensuring that our public appointments processes are fair, proportionate, and accessible to all. We welcome applications from people from all backgrounds and are committed to providing reasonable adjustments to support candidates throughout the process.

If you require any adjustments to enable you to participate fully in the application or assessment process, please let us know as early as possible. We will consider all requests on an individual basis and seek to put appropriate arrangements in place. Adjustments may include, for example, alternative formats of documentation or adjustments to interview arrangements.

41. Alternatively, you can request a hardcopy pack from the DfE Public Appointments Unit at: pau@economy-ni.gov.uk or by telephoning: 028 9052 9282 (Yvonne Green) TextRelay: 18001 028 9052 9282
42. Written applications should be posted to:-
Department for the Economy
Public Appointments Unit
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD
43. **The closing date for the receipt of all applications is 12:00 Noon (BST) on Friday 14 August 2026.** Applications will be receipted, and the time of receipt formally recorded. 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.

Data Protection

44. As much of the information involved in the appointment process will be of a personal nature, the provisions of Data Protection legislation will be followed. To ensure that you are aware of how and why your personal information is to be used, and with whom it may be shared, a DfE Public Appointments 'privacy notice' is available on the following link for your information and reference:

[Privacy Notice - Public Appointments | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://economy-ni.gov.uk/privacy-notice-public-appointments)

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

45. The Department is required to monitor the gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person with a disability as someone who has, or has had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, people who have had a disability in the past even though they are no longer disabled, people whose disability is likely to last for twelve months or the rest of their life, and people whose condition is likely to progress or recur. Severe disfigurement is also acknowledged as a disability.
46. You are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information section of the application form. The information is not made available to the panel members and does not play a role in the decision-

making process. It will be detached from your application form by the Administration Team and sent to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for analysis and will be treated in strict confidence.

47. It would be preferable if completed monitoring forms could be submitted in the same method as your application form.

Enquiries and Feedback

48. Enquiries and feedback can be directed to the above addresses or alternatively via telephone or text relay as follows:

- further details about the appointment process in general or advice on the progress of an application: Tel: 028 9052 9282 (Yvonne Green)
TextRelay: 18001 028 9052 9282
- Information on the expectations of the role or if you require any clarification on a particular aspect of the role or the criteria being assessed. Email: dan.cartland@economy-ni.gov.uk

Sift and Shortlisting Process

49. An anonymised sift and short-listing process will be employed. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, panel members will use a Marking Frame to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience meet each of the criteria. Applicants will be awarded a score out of **5** for each criterion. Applicants must achieve the agreed pass mark of **3** or above in all criteria. Applications which do not meet all of the selection criteria will be sifted out.

50. If shortlisting is required, the selection panel has agreed that the initial pass mark to be invited for interview will be an overall score of **12** out of a possible score of **15**. The panel may consider reducing the required overall pass mark by one mark each time until a sufficient pool of candidates eligible for interview is in place.

51. All those sifted out or not short-listed will be provided with feedback on request based on the agreed Panel's assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest the decision of the Panel, they should do so within five working days of receipt of their feedback letter. Further details about the process will be provided in the feedback letter.

52. The closing date for receipt of all applications is **12.00 Noon (BST) on Friday 14 August 2026**.

53. Applications received by post will be individually date-stamped and the time of receipt formally recorded. 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 DfE on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

54. Your application will be acknowledged immediately after submission if applying online, or within 2 working days if applying via an email or hardcopy application form. If you have not received an acknowledgement

within this timescale please contact the DfE Public Appointments Unit by phone to Yvonne Green on 028 9052 9282.

Interviews

55. Interviews will last approximately 35 minutes and will be competency based and on the criteria on pages 9-11 of this document.
56. Candidates will also be required to answer questions on the standards of behaviour required of public appointees and any real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest between their circumstances and the appointment applied for. **See Annex A.**
57. To be deemed suitable for selection candidates must achieve a pass mark of **3** or above for all three criteria at interview.
58. It is anticipated that interviews will take place on **14th, 19th, 20th, 26th and 27th October 2026**. Interviews will take place in **Tourism NI**, Linum Chambers, Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7ES.
59. Those candidates invited to interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and the ROI. All reasonable receipted dependant carer and/or childcare expenses will also be reimbursed where applicable.

Competence-Based Interviews

60. Competence-based interviewing tests candidates 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, in turn, provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you, and a deeper understanding of your abilities.
61. The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare for the interview 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.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

62. We are operating a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) in this competition for applicants with a disability. Applicants with a disability who meet all of the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.

Pre-appointment Checks

63. Before the names of suitable candidates are presented to the Minister a Company Director's disqualification check and a bankruptcy check will be carried out. In addition, a cross-departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of those candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles.

Presentation of Results

64. Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables Minister(s) to indicate if they wish to have the names of candidates suitable for appointment presented in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list. The DfE Minister has made it known that her preference on the presentation of results is an unranked list. The Minister will choose one candidate from each of the 3 Specialist Skills criteria plus one other candidate of her choice.

Publicising Appointments

65. A press release will be published to announce the appointments. Upon appointment, a candidate will be required to complete a political activity form and provide a short biography for publication. The press release will include, the candidate's name, a short description of the body to which they have been appointed, a brief summary of the skills and knowledge the candidate brings to the role, the length of the appointment term and details of the candidate's response to the political activity questionnaire.

Complaints Procedure

66. The Public Appointments Unit (PAU) within the DfE is committed to the principles of public appointments as set out in the CPANI Code of Practice. If at any stage you feel you have reason to complain, details of the Department's PAU Complaints Procedure can be found at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/public-appointments-unit-complaints-procedure>

Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet 'Guidance on Conflict of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a Complaint' produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland, which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.

1. 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 act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty: Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2. All candidates who put themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the principles and values of public service. One of the issues which might arise in relation to this is that of conflict of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

3. 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.
4. 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?

5. 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?

6. 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 selection panel members as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

7. 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.

8. The report on the outcome of the interview process which is put to the Minister will include clear written reference to any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or integrity issues connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Minister is 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?

9. 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?

10. This situation may arise where the candidate 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 candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

11. 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.
12. In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Partner 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.
13. 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.