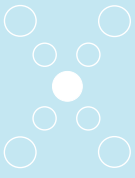




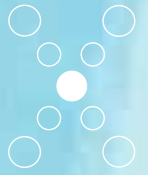
**A GUIDE TO PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**make your mark**



**agriculture** arts **building regulations** charities **children & young people** community relations **consumer protection** culture **drainage** economic development **education** employment **environment** fishing **harbours** health **health & safety** higher education **historic buildings & monuments** hospitals **housing** infrastructure investment **labour relations** law reform **leisure** libraries **livestock** local government **medicine** museums & galleries **nature conservation** public safety **regeneration** regional development **roads** rural development **schools & colleges** social services **sport** tourism **training** transport **waste management** water

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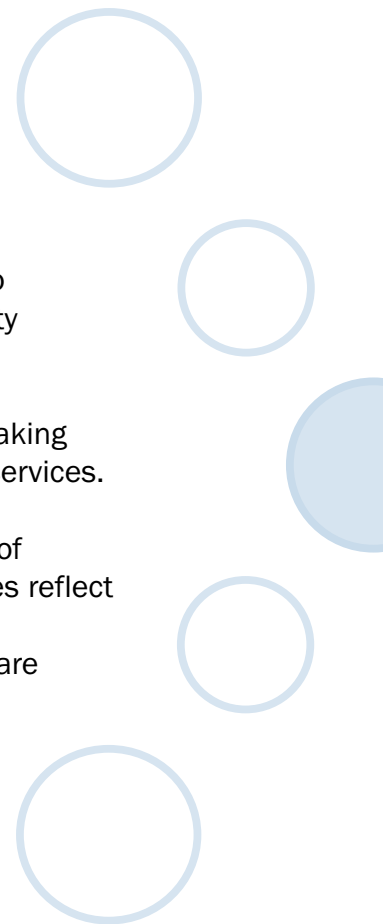
## INTRODUCTION

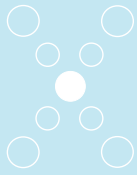
The purpose of this Guide is to raise awareness of public bodies and the public appointments process in Northern Ireland. It has been designed to provide much of the information needed to understand what it means to be a member of the board of a public body. It also seeks to explain the type of bodies currently in existence and how the process of appointing people to these bodies works in practice.

Public bodies are involved in many aspects of our daily lives, from the arts to agriculture, from education to the environment, from planning to public safety and from transport to tribunals.

If you decide to take up a public appointment you will become involved in making decisions that help develop, shape or deliver government policy and public services.

The Government believes that it is important that people from a wide range of backgrounds take up public appointments so that the boards of public bodies reflect the rich diversity of our society and better understand the needs of the communities they serve. Appointments are made on merit and applications are welcome from all sections of society.

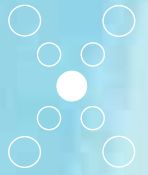




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This Guide can be made available in alternative formats upon request.



## PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED

### What is a public body?

Public bodies are organisations set up to provide advice or carry out functions on behalf of Government. To preserve their independence public bodies operate at arms length from Central Government, although Ministers are ultimately responsible for the activities of the public bodies sponsored by their Departments.

The term 'public body' includes **Nationalised Industries, Public Corporations, Health and Social Care Bodies** and **Non-Departmental Public Bodies**. Public bodies are also sometimes known as QUANGOS - Quasi Autonomous Non Government Organisations.

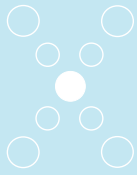
**Nationalised Industries and Public Corporations** These bodies are publicly owned and controlled but they have substantial freedom to conduct their own affairs. British Shipbuilders is a nationalised industry. The BBC, Channel Four, the Bank of England, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company are all examples of public corporations.

**Health and Social Care Bodies** These administer and deliver health and personal social services to the public. They include, for example, Health and Social Care Trusts, the Public Health Agency and the Patient Client Council.

**Non-Departmental Public Bodies** More commonly known as NDPBs these are the most common type of public body and there are four main types.

**Executive NDPBs** generally operate under a specific piece of legislation, employ their own staff and manage their own budgets. They carry out a service or function on behalf of Government. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Sport Northern Ireland are all examples of Executive NDPBs.

agriculture arts building regulations charities children & young people community relations consumer protection culture drainage economic development education employment environment



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

**Advisory NDPBs** advise Ministers and Departments on specific issues or services, sometimes in technical or specialist areas. The Historic Monuments Council, the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland and the Charities Advisory Committee are all examples of Advisory NDPBs.

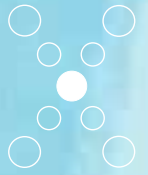
**Tribunal NDPBs** have jurisdiction to operate in a specialised field of the law but do so independently of Government. The Fair Employment Tribunal, the Care Tribunal and the Planning Appeals Commission are all examples of Tribunal NDPBs.

**Other NDPBs** include Boards of Visitors and Visiting Committees who provide independent oversight of prisons on behalf of Ministers and the general public.

Appointments are also made to a number of organisations that are not classed as public bodies per se, but because these appointments are made on behalf of Ministers they are deemed to be public appointments.

Within this Guide the terms 'public body' and 'public appointments' do not apply to the following:

- central Government Departments;
- executive agencies (although their advisory boards may be included);
- advisory bodies where the majority of members are drawn from the Civil Service;
- working groups made up of staff drawn from the wider public sector;
- the general criminal and civil court system;
- local authorities and the bodies controlled by them; and
- housing associations.



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

### **What is a public appointment?**

Public bodies are generally managed by a Board or Management Committee made up of a number of executive and independent non-executive directors. The executive directors are drawn from the body itself, for example, the Chief Executive or the Finance Director. The non-executive directors, including Chairpersons, are drawn from society and are classed as public appointments. Executive and non-executive directors are full and equal members of the Board.

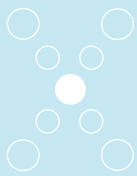
A public appointment allows individuals from different backgrounds to play a part in directing and managing the services that government provides. Public appointees bring independence, balance and a fresh, external perspective to the work of the Board and, where appropriate, bring specific skills, knowledge or expertise to bear.

The majority of public appointments are made by or on behalf of Ministers although many of the day-to-day aspects of the process are handled by either civil servants in Government Departments or, on occasions, by recruitment consultants.

Some appointments are held by people who have been nominated by organisations such as local councils, trade unions or the main churches. However, the majority of appointments are filled by members of the general public.

Public appointments are not like jobs. Most are part time and whilst some are paid, many are not, although travelling and other expenses (for example for childcare) may be claimed. A public appointment usually lasts from between one and five years and may be renewed for a second term (up to a maximum period of 10 years).

fishing **harbours** health **health & safety** higher education **historic buildings & monuments** hospitals **housing** infrastructure investment **labour relations** law reform **leisure** libraries **livestock**



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

### **Time off for public duties**

The time commitment required varies from appointment to appointment. Between one and two days a month (including perhaps some evening meetings and public events) would not be unusual although some appointments may require a greater or lesser commitment.

Employees who also hold certain public appointments may be eligible for reasonable time off from work to carry out their public duties. The provisions relating to time off for public duties are contained in Articles 78 and 79 of the Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996.

The duties for which an employer is required to give an employee reasonable time off include:

- attending meetings of the public body or any of its committees or sub committees; and/or
- performing duties approved by the public body, which need to be done to discharge its functions or those of its committees or sub committees.

Reasonable time off is not fully defined in the legislation and depends on the nature of the public body. An employer is under no obligation to pay an employee for time off for public duties.

Further information on time off for public duties can be obtained from:

The Department for Employment and Learning  
Employment Rights Branch  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
Belfast BT2 8FD

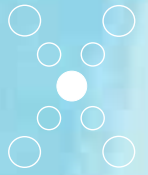
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-employment-rights/erbooklets/er7.htm>

### **The role of the Board of a public body**

The role of the Board of a public body is to provide leadership, vision, continuity of purpose and accountability to the general public.

Many public bodies are set up by legislation, which sets out the powers and duties of the body concerned. In addition to these responsibilities the main tasks of any Board are:





## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

- to set the organisation's aims and objectives;
- to oversee development of strategies, plans and policies;
- to ensure effective financial control;
- to monitor how the organisation is performing; and
- to promote the organisation's role in the community it serves.

### **Being a Board member**

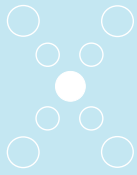
A board member's role will vary depending on the nature of the public body to which he or she has been appointed and the capacity in which they have been appointed. As a general rule board members are expected to:

- attend board meetings regularly and be well prepared by reading relevant papers in advance;
- attend subcommittee meetings in areas such as audit and finance;
- attend training events and keep up to date with issues relevant to the work of the organisation;
- contribute to board discussions and decision making and share responsibility for those decisions;
- when required, represent the board at events; and
- abide at all times by the Principles of Public Life and any relevant codes of conduct and accountability.

Every public appointee brings their own personal qualities, skills and experience to the board. These may have been gained through current or previous employment, through involvement in community or voluntary activities, other public appointments, relevant leisure activities, activities undertaken at school or college, in their personal life or simply as a service user or consumer.

A traditional career path is not a prerequisite to taking up a public appointment but for those already in employment being a board member can provide training and development opportunities that their employer may not be able to supply. Some people believe that you need to be politically active in order to hold a public appointment but this is not the case.

local government **medicine** museums & galleries **nature**  
**conservation** public safety **regeneration** regional development  
**roads** rural development **schools & colleges** social services **sport**



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

### **Standards of behaviour**

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve on the boards of public bodies will be above reproach.

Like others who serve the public, public appointees are expected to uphold the seven principles of public life set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the seven principles 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 their 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;



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

### **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; and

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

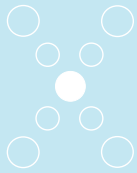
### **Conflicts of interest**

Public appointees must adhere to and must be seen to be adhering to the highest standards of personal integrity. Any private interests that a potential board member might have and that may be relevant to the work of the public body concerned must be declared.

A conflict of interest could arise in a number of ways and could be as a result of:

- financial or other interests relevant to the work of the public body;
- relationships with other people or organisations that could lead to divided loyalties, real or perceived;
- access to privileged information or trade secrets that could give an unfair personal advantage to people with allied business interests;
- the perception that an appointment is a reward for past contributions or favours; or
- membership of some societies or organisations.

tourism **training** transport **waste management** water **agriculture**  
arts **building regulations** charities **children & young people**  
community relations **consumer protection** culture **drainage**



## **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS EXPLAINED**

No board member should use, or give the appearance of using, their position on a public body to further their private interests or those of others. This is to avoid any danger of board members being influenced by their private interests when carrying out their public duties.

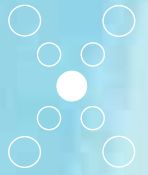
All board members are required to declare any personal or business interest, which may, or may be perceived to influence their independence. This is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

Declaring a conflict of interest will not automatically preclude an individual from being considered for appointment but candidates must be prepared for the issue to be explored further at interview.

### **Personal liability**

Board members do have some liability for the decisions taken by the board and for their conduct and actions as board members.

Any board member who acts honestly and in good faith will not have to meet any personal civil liability that may be incurred as a result of carrying out his or her responsibilities as a board member. However, this indemnity does not protect a board member who acts recklessly or in bad faith.



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

### How appointments are made

The aim of the public appointments process is to appoint the most suitable candidate available for the post, selected on merit, using fair, open, transparent and appropriate procedures.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland regulates Ministerial appointments to most public bodies and publishes a Code of Practice (available online at [www.publicappointmentsni.org](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org)), which provides Departments with guidance on the process to be followed when making public appointments.

The Code of Practice is underpinned by seven principles that govern how public appointments should be made. The seven principles are:

#### **Merit**

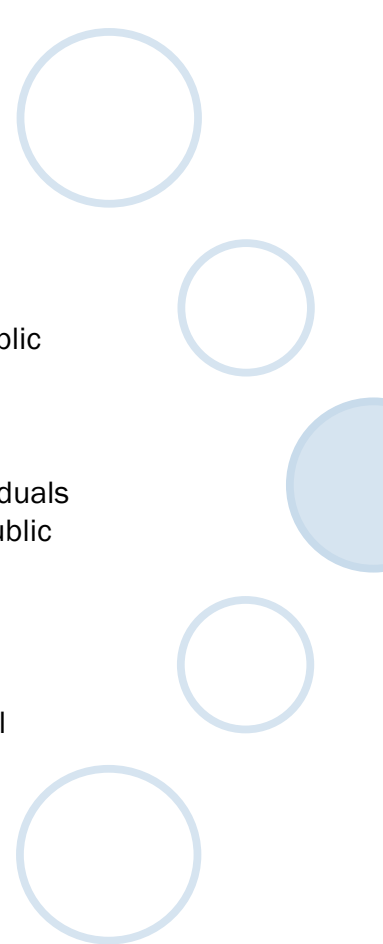
All public appointments will be made on the basis of merit. Only those individuals judged to best meet the requirements of the post will be appointed to our public bodies.

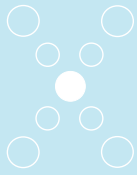
#### **Diversity**

The opportunity to appoint the best people is greatly increased when every potential applicant is attracted and encouraged to apply and when individual differences are truly valued.

#### **Equality**

The appointment process will ensure equality of opportunity and treatment of all applicants at every stage.





## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

### **Openness, Transparency and Independence**

The practices employed by Departments at every stage in an appointment round must be open, transparent and consistent with the recognised principles of open government. All public appointment competitions must include a demonstrable element of independent participation in the assessment of applicants.

### **Integrity**

Public appointees must be people who understand, apply and are committed to the principle of integrity and will perform their duties with moral rigour and honesty without personal or corporate gain.

### **Proportionality**

The procedures applied at each stage of an appointment should be proportionate to the size and purpose of the public body and to the posts to be filled. The proportionality principle must not be used to circumvent proper procedures or avoid good practice.

### **Respect**

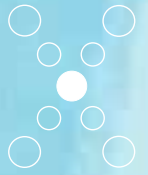
Everyone engaged in the public appointment process must show respect for all others involved in the process.

## **Independent advice**

The Commissioner's fourth principle includes **independence**, which in practice means the use of an Independent Assessor on the selection panel.

The role of the Independent Assessor is to assist Ministers and their Departments to make effective public appointments by providing an assurance that appointments have been made on merit.

Independent Assessors are external experts who play a full and active part in the appointments process, particularly with the identification and selection of candidates.



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

### Criteria for appointment

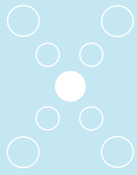
When a competition is being held to fill a vacant public appointment, an information pack will usually be sent to all those who apply. The information pack will contain details of the appointment including the criteria required to perform the role and an application form for the applicant to complete.

Selection criteria may vary from appointment to appointment depending on the position being filled but there are generally two types, essential criteria and desirable criteria. Essential criteria will be present in every case but desirable criteria may not always be stipulated for every appointment.

The essential criteria describe what an appointee needs to be able to do in order to be effective in the role being filled. Desirable criteria are what may be desirable or advantageous for an applicant to possess, for example a particular qualification or specific role related experience.

How Departments use selection criteria is described in more detail on page 21.

The application form contained in the information pack is an essential part of the process and is designed to allow applicants to use specific examples of past behaviour to show how they meet the criteria for appointment.



## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

### **Completing the application form**

Application or self nomination forms are the preferred choice because they offer the best opportunity for ensuring the consistent assessment of candidates.

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) may not always provide evidence of how a candidate meets the criteria for appointment. Applicants need to be assessed on a 'like for like' basis and only applications completed in a similar format will make this possible.

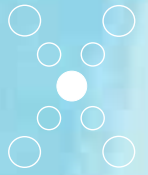
The application form will ask you to provide certain personal information about yourself and to describe how you meet the criteria for appointment. You may also be asked to supply the names of at least two individuals who would be willing to provide a reference on your behalf.

Depending on the nature of the public body you are applying to, it may also be necessary to carry out a security clearance or check for information or circumstances that would make an appointment inappropriate.

Many people are not used to writing about themselves or describing what they have achieved. Remember to follow any instructions carefully and bear in mind the following points when completing the application form:

- review the selection criteria before completing the form;
- provide at least one example for each of the criteria;
- the same example (provided it is relevant) can be used to demonstrate how you meet two or more selection criteria;
- never combine any of the selection criteria or address a criterion by referring the reader to other parts of the application form;
- there may be several aspects to a criterion so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all of it;
- use actual examples that show how you meet the criteria, describe what you personally did and the impact it had. Think in terms of outcomes and achievements;





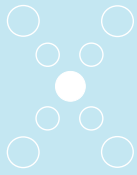
## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

- avoid personal attitudes and opinions or saying how you would do something;
- examples can be drawn from any aspect of your experience be it education, work, leisure, community or voluntary activity etc;
- do not assume that the reader has any prior knowledge;
- use simple and easy to understand language, avoid jargon; and
- make sure your completed application form is legible and that you keep a copy for yourself.

The key to a well-written application form is to give the reader specific information about how well you meet the criteria for appointment. Think about your knowledge, skills, experience and personal attributes and make sure you take full advantage of the space available to provide practical evidence that best demonstrates how you meet the selection criteria.

The following model may help you to structure your examples and express them in a logical manner:

- Challenge:** Describe a specific example that relates to the criteria.
- Context:** Explain the context or background to the example. Who else was involved? What were the particular circumstances etc?
- Action:** Outline the specific actions you took to meet the challenge.
- Result:** Describe the result or outcome of your actions. Consider if, with hindsight, your action was correct; what, if anything would you do differently now; and what have you learnt from this experience.



## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

Teamwork is a criterion often found in many public appointments. It may be expressed as ‘making an impact with others’ or ‘working as part of a team’. Many public appointments involve some element of teamwork although the type and size of the team may vary from board to board.

What the criterion is seeking however, is evidence of how you operate in a team environment. This could be based on a team you have previously been in or are currently in, it could be a work team or it could be a team from a community, voluntary or sporting capacity.

You should describe the type of team it is [challenge], what it does and who else is involved [context], your individual contribution to the team [action] and how your contribution may have assisted the team to meet its aims [result].

The following examples demonstrate two possible approaches to this criterion. Example A is incomplete and provides little substantive evidence of the applicant’s ability to work as part of a team. Example B is a more complete answer and provides direct evidence of how the applicant has made an impact in a team environment.

### **Example A**

#### **Making an Impact with Others – describe a team of which you are or have been a member, and the contribution you have made to the success of that team.**

“I have been a school Governor for the last two years and I also sit on several subcommittees. On a personal level I am committed to collective decision-making and responsibility.

I believe that effective working relationships with those around you are very important and that it is vital that decisions are made as a group. I have no difficulties in working with others.

I have excellent interpersonal skills and believe I am more than competent in negotiating, influencing and building consensus”.



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

### Example B

**Making an Impact with Others – describe a team of which you are or have been a member, and the contribution you have made to the success of that team.**

“I have been a member of the Board of Governors of my local school for the last two years and as well as being an ordinary Board member I also sit on the Finance Subcommittee.

In my role as a school governor I work as part of a team during our Board meetings. As a school governor I have been directly involved in negotiating, influencing others and building a consensus during Board meetings and in making decisions collectively as a group.

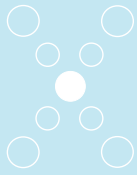
Recently the Chairperson on the Board rang me before a meeting to say he wouldn't be able to attend and asked if I would stand in for him and chair the meeting [**challenge**].

As this was my first experience of chairing the meeting, before it began I explained to the rest of the Board of Governors what had happened and checked that they were happy for me to carry on and chair the meeting [**context**]. I did this because some on the Board had been school governors longer than me and I felt that, in order for the meeting to go smoothly, it was important that everyone present was in agreement with what was being proposed.

I acted as Chair for the duration of the meeting and did my best to encourage everyone present to contribute to the board's discussions. I worked my way down through the agenda and made sure that each item was discussed in turn. I checked that whenever any decisions were taken that agreement had been reached on the basis of a consensus around the table. I also ensured that any decisions we made were fully recorded in the minutes of the meeting [**action**].

At the end of the Board meeting all agenda items had been discussed and a course of action agreed for each of them. A number of issues had been put on the agenda for the meeting because they needed to be decided and these were resolved satisfactorily thus helping the school to run more smoothly [**result**]”.

community relations **consumer protection** culture **drainage**  
economic development **education** employment **environment** fishing  
**harbours** health **health & safety** higher education



## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

The use of the words **challenge, context, action** and **result** in the example are for illustrative purposes only. Your completed application form must be submitted by the specified closing date and from the forms received the Department will decide who will go forward to the next stage of the process.

### **Monitoring**

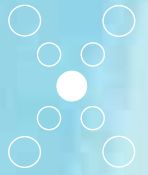
In the public interest and to ensure that equal opportunity measures are effective, Government Departments in Northern Ireland monitor the gender, ethnic origin, community background, and disability of all applicants for public appointments.

The monitoring information gathered by Departments is published anonymously each year in the Public Appointments Annual Report.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended that all candidates for public appointments be asked to declare any significant political activity (including office-holding, public speaking and standing for election) that they may have undertaken in the previous five years.

All appointees are asked to answer a standard question on political activity. The question only asks for information that is already in the public domain. It does not ask for personal or private information such as membership of a political party or voting preference.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life also recommended that an individual's declared political activity should be published when they are appointed and this is usually included in the press release (see page 24).



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Included in the information pack will be monitoring and political activity forms and candidates will be asked to supply the information set out on the previous page. This information is gathered, maintained and processed for public appointment purposes only and strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

**Information gathered for monitoring purposes is used for statistical purposes only, it is not shared with the sift or interview panel and forms no part of the selection process.**

### Returned application forms

The information pack will have stipulated the selection criteria for appointment and whether these are essential criteria or a mixture of essential and desirable criteria.

An initial sift of all returned application forms will be carried out to identify all those applicants who have demonstrated that they meet the essential selection criteria set out in the information pack.

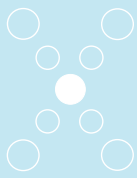
Any applicants who do not demonstrate that they meet the essential selection criteria will not proceed beyond this stage of the process.

If, following the initial sift, the number of candidates meeting the essential selection criteria is considerably greater than the number of vacancies and a Department feels there are too many people to call for interview, a shortlist may be drawn up.

When a shortlist is required, the application forms of the candidates who have met the essential criteria will also be assessed against any desirable criteria set out in the information pack.

The names of those candidates who meet both the essential and desirable selection criteria will make up a shortlist for interview. Any applicants who do not demonstrate that they meet the desirable selection criteria will not proceed beyond this stage of the process.

**historic buildings & monuments** hospitals **housing** infrastructure  
investment **labour relations** law reform **leisure** libraries **livestock**  
local government **medicine** museums & galleries



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Where, following the initial sift, there are only a few candidates who meet the essential selection criteria or where desirable criteria have not been stipulated, a shortlist will not be required. In these circumstances all those who meet the essential selection criteria will be called for interview.

Departments will not know whether they need to use both essential and desirable criteria until all applications have been received and processed.

### The interview

As a general rule no one should be appointed to the Board of a public body solely on the basis of the written evidence contained in their application form.

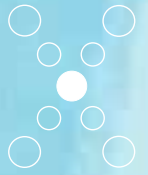
Criteria based interviewing is currently the most common method of conducting appointment interviews. It is a means of selecting the best candidate on the basis of their ability to perform the role of Board member. Candidates are required to provide evidence in the form of examples of past behaviour that demonstrate their ability. But it doesn't simply focus on what you may have done but also how you did it.

Criteria 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 selection criteria, these in turn provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you and gives a starting point for questions designed to obtain a deeper understanding of your abilities.

An interview panel should consist of at least three members, at least one of who should be an Independent Assessor (see page 14).

Don't underestimate the importance of the interview; it is a crucial part of the appointments 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 the interview;
- rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel emphasising your own role and contribution; and
- not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.



## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

During the interview:

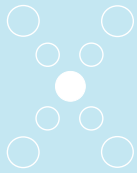
- listen carefully to the questions, if you don't understand a question ask for clarification;
- answer with good clear examples that provide evidence of your ability and which relate to the criteria the panel is looking for; and
- don't sell yourself short, be positive and show enthusiasm.

An interview panel can only speculate about how you would actually perform as a Board member. The best way to convince them that you could do well is to offer evidence of past behaviour.

If it appears from information on your application form that there might be a conflict of interest or that one might arise in the future, the interview panel will explore this with you to establish if it would prohibit you from holding the appointment (see page 11).

Interview panels should also ensure that candidates demonstrate that they have an understanding of and are committed to the seven principles of public service (see pages 10 and 11).

At the end of the interview you may have an opportunity to add anything you feel may be relevant. If you think you can improve on your previous answers or give additional relevant information do so at this point, but remember the panel will be working to a timetable so keep additional information as concise as possible.



## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

After the interview process is complete the panel will draw up a list of candidates judged suitable for appointment. The recommendations the panel makes will inform the Minister's ultimate decision on who should be appointed. The successful candidate or candidates (if there is more than one appointment) will, in due course, receive a letter of appointment.

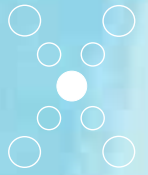
Once an appointee has confirmed acceptance of the appointment the Department is required to publicise it and usually does so by issuing a press release.

The press release will usually include information on the person being appointed, the length of the appointment and whether it is paid or unpaid, details of any other public appointments the person holds and any declared political activity (see page 20).

Candidates who are not recommended for appointment will be informed as soon as possible. Should you be unsuccessful at interview you may wish to contact the Department and ask for feedback on your performance.

Applicants invited for interview may be eligible for the reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses.





## THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

### The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

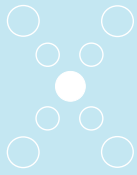
The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) regulates, monitors and reports on Ministerial appointments to most public bodies in Northern Ireland.

The Commissioner is required to prescribe and publish a Code of Practice and to audit Departmental appointment processes to establish whether the Code of Practice is being observed.

The Commissioner also investigates complaints about the handling of appointment processes. Complaints should, in the first instance, be referred to the Department making the appointment. If a complainant is dissatisfied by the Department's response, they may then ask the Commissioner to investigate the matter. However, the Commissioner does not investigate how a body is run or the actions of its members.



One of the requirements of the Commissioner's Code of Practice is that the 'CPA NI Regulated' Kitemark (see left) must appear on all publicity material for competitions to appoint members to the boards of public bodies that fall within the Commissioner's remit.



## **THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS**

The Commissioner is required to publish an Annual Report, available online at **[www.publicappointmentsni.org](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org)** or from the Commissioner's Office:

**The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland**

Annexe B  
Dundonald House  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

**Telephone:** 028 9052 4820

**Fax:** 028 9052 5534

**E-mail:** [info@publicappointmentsni.org](mailto:info@publicappointmentsni.org)



## Further information

The Central Appointments Unit (CAU) in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has central policy responsibility for public appointments in Northern Ireland.

The CAU produces an Annual Report on Public Appointments in Northern Ireland. The Annual Report sets out in detail the number of applications received and the number of appointments made by the eleven Government Departments. Appointments made by the Northern Ireland Office (a UK Government Department) are not included in the Annual Report.

CAU also publishes a six-monthly list of forthcoming public appointment vacancies. This list is compiled using information provided by the sponsoring Departments and includes telephone numbers for departmental contacts who can deal with queries about specific appointments.

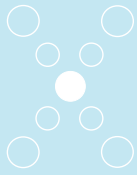
CAU maintains a Register of Interest, which contains the names of those people who have indicated that they are willing to serve on public bodies. Individuals on the Register receive a copy of the six-monthly list of forthcoming vacancies.

If you would like your name to be added to the CAU Register of Interest please contact:

The Central Appointments Unit  
Room A5.13  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast BT4 3SR  
Telephone: 028 9052 8192  
Facsimile: 028 9052 8125  
E-mail: [admin.cau@ofmdfmni.gov.uk](mailto:admin.cau@ofmdfmni.gov.uk)

Both the Annual Report on Public Appointments and the six-monthly list of forthcoming vacancies are available either from the Central Appointments Unit or on the Internet at **[www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments)**

**environment** fishing **harbours** health **health & safety** higher education **historic buildings & monuments** hospitals **housing** infrastructure investment **labour relations** law reform **leisure**



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Applicant:**

An individual who has applied for or has been nominated for a public appointment.

**Application form:**

The document used by individuals who wish to be considered for or who have been nominated for a public appointment.

**Board:**

A group of Directors responsible for managing a public body.

**Board member:**

An individual appointed to the board or management committee of a public body. Sometimes also known as a Non Executive Director.

**CAU:**

Central Appointments Unit in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

**Candidate:**

An applicant who has been selected (following a sift or short-listing) for consideration for appointment to a public body.

**Code of Practice:**

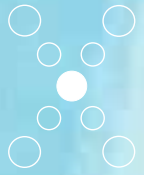
Guidance produced by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland which governs the process for making Ministerial appointments to public bodies.

**Committee on Standards in Public Life**

Set up in 1994, the Committee is a permanent standing body whose members are appointed for up to 3 years. The Committee's role is to consider standards of conduct in public life and report to the Prime Minister.

**Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland:**

An individual appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister to regulate, monitor and report on Ministerial appointments to public bodies



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Conflict of interest:**

An individual's private, voluntary, charitable or political interests relevant to the work of the public body to which he or she has been appointed.

**Criteria based interviewing:**

An evidence based selection technique that requires candidates to provide examples of past behaviour to demonstrate their ability.

**Desirable criteria:**

The skills, abilities and achievements that would be an added advantage when being considered for a public appointment.

**Essential criteria:**

The skills, abilities and achievements that a candidate must have in order to undertake a public appointment to a satisfactory standard.

**Independent Assessor:**

An individual, from outside of government, appointed to provide independent advice during the selection process.

**Information Pack:**

A collection of documents issued on request and in response to the publicising of a public appointment vacancy. It may include an application form, role and person specifications, background information on the appointment and the public body and a CPA NI leaflet on Complaints and Conflicts of Interest.

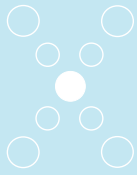
**NDPB:**

Non-Departmental Public Body

**Non Executive Director:**

A term used to describe individuals appointed to the Board or Management Committee of some public bodies.





**QUANGO (s):**

Quasi Autonomous Non Government Organisation – a term sometimes used to describe a public body, or in its plural form, all public bodies.

**CPA NI**

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

**Public appointment:**

A Ministerial appointment to the Board or Management Committee of a public body.

**Public body:**

An organisation set up by Government to provide independent advice or deliver a service to the public.

**Selection criteria:**

The skills, abilities and achievements that a candidate requires in order to undertake a public appointment to a satisfactory standard.

**Sift:**

An assessment of completed application forms to identify those candidates who meet the essential selection criteria for appointment.

**Shortlist:**

An assessment of those completed application forms that have met the essential selection criteria to identify candidates who also meet the desirable selection criteria.





The Central Appointments Unit  
Room A5.13  
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Stormont  
Belfast BT4 3SR  
Telephone: 028 9052 8192  
Facsimile: 028 9052 8125  
Email: [admin.cau@ofmdfmni.gov.uk](mailto:admin.cau@ofmdfmni.gov.uk)