



DfC

Department
for Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Appointment of Chief Commissioner to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed applications must be returned to DfC Public Appointments
no later than 12 noon on 8 April 2019



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The Department for Communities (DfC) is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

An e-version application pack is available from publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk. This material will also be made available on request in other formats such as Braille, large print, audio etc.

All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability.

Privacy Notice

DfC will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting members to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland in line with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/supplementary-privacy-notices-dfc-business-areas.

If you require further information about the appointment process or progress of your application, please contact the Department as below:

Tel: 028 9051 5464

publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments, Governance Unit, Level 8, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EG

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Dear Applicant

Charity Commission NI (CCNI) - Appointment of Chief Commissioner

Thank you for your interest in becoming involved with CCNI. You may already have some idea about the work of the Commission but the following pages will provide you with more information about the role it plays.

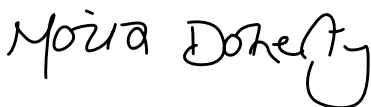
The charity sector plays a crucial and important role, with charities ranging from small local groups, to those that operate nationally and internationally. By meeting the needs within society, and by being open and accountable, they are of real benefit to all of us.

As the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, the main purpose of the Commission is to register, regulate and report on the charity sector here. CCNI assists charities, enabling them to meet their legal and regulatory obligations and modern expectations, thereby helping to ensure they retain public confidence.

As Chief Commissioner you will have a key role in leading the development of the charitable sector, ensuring that the sector and the Commission are well governed, and helping shape the future regulatory framework for charities.

I would encourage anyone with the required knowledge, skills and experience, from any background, to consider applying. I hope the information enclosed in this pack is of value and encourages you to apply. Please remember to complete the documentation fully and return it by the required closing date.

Kind regards



Moira Doherty

Deputy Secretary – Engaged Communities, DfC

Section 1: Background Information

Background Information

1. The Department for Communities (DfC) wishes to invite applications for the appointment of a Chief Commissioner (Chair to the Board) of CCNI. CCNI is a body regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (CPA NI).

Information on CCNI

2. CCNI is a non-departmental statutory public body, established in March 2009, to deliver the legislative requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. Its vision is to have a dynamic and well governed charities sector in which the public has confidence. This is underpinned by effective delivery of its regulatory role.
3. The Commission's objectives as detailed in the above Act are:
 - The public confidence objective is to increase the public trust and confidence in charities
 - The public benefit objective is to promote awareness and understanding of the operation of the public benefit requirement
 - The compliance objective is to promote compliance by the charity

trustees with their legal obligations in exercising control and management of the administration of their charities

- The charitable resources objective is to promote the effective use of charitable status
- The accountability objective is to enhance the accountability of charities to donors, beneficiaries and the general public

4. CCNI is sponsored by DfC and has a number of legal functions where it uses powers similar to those of the High Court. As the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, CCNI has a crucial role to play in the development of charities, enabling them to meet statutory obligations and modern expectations. It is essential that CCNI enables charities to operate in a climate of trust and respect by providing statutory regulation in which the public can have confidence. CCNI therefore aims to develop a regulatory framework which is not only about intervention and strong governance, but which also establishes standards and promotes good practice across the sector.

5. CCNI is required to keep a publicly accessible register of all charities in Northern Ireland, which is available via its website:
www.charitycommissionni.org.uk.
The website also contains its annual and corporate plans, as well as useful information relating to the charity sector.
6. The Commission commenced charity registration in Northern Ireland for the first time in December 2013, beginning the process of registering the thousands of charitable organisations operating in Northern Ireland. It is estimated that there are in excess of 12,000 charities operating in Northern Ireland. Registration is a managed process subject to available resources.
7. The Board of CCNI consists of a Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner and 5 Commissioners. Further information on the Board, and its work, can be found on the CCNI website.

Public Appointments Information

8. The NI Executive has introduced targets for the equal representation of men and women on public body boards, an approach taken to ensure

that the issue of diversity is at the fore during all appointment processes, and which has been welcomed by CPA NI. Applications are welcomed from individuals from all types of backgrounds to help the Commission achieve its vision and aims.

9. The timescales for achieving gender equality in aggregated public appointments is as follows:
 - From 2017/18 for appointments made in-year
 - By end-year 2020/21 for all appointees in post, with equality reflected both in board membership and at chair level

Further information about public appointments can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/public-appointments

10. CPA NI hosts a series of free, half-day workshops that aim to explain the public appointments process. Further information on these workshops, including upcoming dates, can be found at:
www.publicappointmentsni.org/workshops

Section 2: Role Profile

Role and Responsibilities of the Board of Commissioners

11. Charity Commissioners are appointed to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy and performance against agreed aims and objectives. They bring wide experience and critical detachment to the work of the Board.
12. The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission fulfils the aims and objectives set by DfC, which are approved by the Minister, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources.
13. Further detail on the specific corporate responsibilities of the Commission can be found within its Management Statement and Financial Memorandum: www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/about-the-charity-commission/our-governance/management-statement-and-financial-memorandum/

Role and Responsibilities of the Chief Commissioner

14. Although the Chief Commissioner is ultimately responsible to the DfC Minister, he/she must also ensure

independence relating to decisions reached by CCNI. He/she shall ensure that CCNI's policies and actions support the wider strategic policies of the Minister and that CCNI's affairs are conducted with probity. The Chief Commissioner shares with other Commissioners the relevant corporate responsibilities, and in particular for ensuring that CCNI fulfils the aims and objectives set by DfC and approved by the Minister in line with the Charities Act. In the absence of a DfC Minister, the DfC Permanent Secretary has assumed responsibility for considering and approving CCNI Business Plans'.

15. The Chief Commissioner has a particular leadership responsibility on the following matters:
 - formulating the Board's strategy
 - ensuring that the Board, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of guidance provided by Ministers or DfC
 - promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources
 - encouraging and delivering high standards of regularity and propriety

- representing the views of the Board to the general public
- ensuring that the CCNI Board meets at regular intervals throughout the year and that the minutes of meetings accurately record the decisions taken and where appropriate, the views of individual Board Members
- forming an effective and positive working relationship with the CCNI CEO, helping to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, as well as recruiting the CEO and conducting the CEO annual appraisal
- assess the performance and attendance of individual Board Members. The Chief Commissioner will also be appraised on an annual basis by the relevant Deputy Secretary acting on behalf of the Departmental Accounting Officer
- not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations; and to declare publicly and to the Board any private interests that may be perceived to conflict with their public duties
- act in good faith and in the best interests of CCNI

16. The Chief Commissioner shall also:

- ensure that all members of the Board, when taking up office, are fully briefed on the terms of their appointment and on their duties, rights and responsibilities, and receive appropriate induction training, including accountability training and the financial management and reporting requirements of public sector bodies as well as any differences which may exist between private and public sector practice
- advise the Department of the needs of CCNI when Board vacancies arise, with a view to ensuring a proper balance of professional and financial expertise

Codes of Conduct and Accountability

17. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of CCNI, all Commissioners are required, on appointment, to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for CCNI. The Code shall commit the Chief Commissioner and other Commissioners to the Nolan “Seven Principles of Public Life” (**Annex A**), and shall include a requirement for a comprehensive and publicly available register of Commissioners’ interests as well as a register of gifts, hospitality and awards

18. In line with this code, Charity Commissioners may be trustees/ management committee members, but not office bearers, of charities in Northern Ireland. If, on appointment, an individual is already involved as an office bearer of a charity, they must declare this interest and a reasonable period may be agreed with DfC and Chief Executive for withdrawing from the office-bearer position and allowing the charity to make alternative arrangements.
19. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required of a CCNI board member are described more fully in the Code which can be found at the following webpage address: www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/about-the-charity-commission/our-governance/code-of-conduct/
20. The Commission encourages good practice and provides guidance for charities about how to meet their statutory responsibilities. Most charities in Northern Ireland work hard to achieve their charitable purposes. The Commission has however a statutory duty to identify and investigate misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of charities. In doing so, the Commission's objective is to stop any abuse or damage and, where something has gone wrong, to take remedial or protective action to put the charity back on a proper footing, protecting the charity, its assets, its beneficiaries, and its reputation.
21. Charities which refuse to cooperate with the Charity Commission in such circumstances can expect robust action and the use of the Commissions powers restricting the transactions that a charity may enter into, appointing additional trustees; 'freezing' a charity's bank account, suspending or removing a trustee and appointing an interim manager.

Remuneration and Time Commitment

22. The Chief Commissioner receives remuneration of £5,750 per annum and is eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on CCNI business. The time commitment is approximately 2 days per month. This may involve a commitment both inside and outside normal working hours. Involvement with the media and public speaking will also be required.

23. The Board meets on a monthly basis. Board meetings are normally held at CCNI Headquarters, 257 Lough Rd, Lurgan, Co. Armagh.

Term of Appointment

24. The appointment is expected to begin on 1 June 2019 for a term of 5 years, with candidates expected to be available to take up the position from this date. This may be renewed for a second term of another 5 years.



Section 3: Person Specification

Person Specification

25. Applications are welcome from a wide range of individuals who have an interest in public service. The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career paths and experiences such as community involvement or charitable and voluntary work, as well as those experiences found from within the business community. The individual appointed will be expected to be committed to the objectives of CCNI.

Selection Criteria

26. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate in their application form and - if shortlisted - at interview specific examples that show they are able to satisfy the essential criteria and have the skills, experience and knowledge required.

Note: The term ‘organisation’ can be defined as a body operating in the public, community, voluntary or private sectors.

Essential Criteria

1. Leadership

Experience of successfully leading an organisation or sectoral group and delivering or overseeing improved organisational performance.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below:

- Implementing and monitoring strategic plans including setting a vision and direction
- Has a clear view of what constitutes a successful outcome
- Demonstrates key listening skills whilst fostering and encouraging open dialogue
- Behaving with integrity, whilst being open, objective and accountable
- Motivates team members to improve their performance, and that of the organisation or group
- Ability to manage change and/or conflict, and resolve difficult situations
- Building relationships with others to achieve set objectives and standing by decisions reached
- Ability to constructively challenge decisions, policies or procedures

2. Governance, Finance and Public Accountability

Experience of overseeing and directing arrangements for good governance and good financial management, as well as a thorough understanding of public accountability.

NB Governance refers to the way in which an organisation is directed and controlled. This includes how objectives are set, how resources are used, and how performance and risks are monitored and assessed.

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

- Developing / implementing key finance and governance documents and/or policies
- Ability to understand financial statements, business plans, corporate plans and budgets
- Ability to identify key financial issues and achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources
- Ensuring effective controls and use of resources in an organisation
- Developing and using risk management systems / audit functions to identify and manage risk

- Understanding your individual role and collective responsibilities in the promotion of governance
- Understanding best practice and principles around control and accountability in the management of assets, major projects and project management
- Understanding the role of a board member within a public sector body and the relationship with government

3. Analytical ability and decision making skills

Ability to analyse complex information from a variety of sources and make a timely decision based on that analysis.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below:

- Exercising judgement and thinking critically about the information required
- Being able to analyse and interpret complex information, and offer a constructive challenge before an informed decision is reached
- Identifying appropriate and relevant sources of information
- Ability to make decisions in a timely manner, under tight deadlines, with ability to explain

- thought and reasoning behind decisions reached
- Using information to develop effective solutions for difficult problems
- Making decisions on the basis of analysis, experience and judgement
- Ability to identify current trends, using current and relevant information, and plan for the future

4. Personal Effectiveness and Resilience'

Effective personal resilience.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below:

- Experience of working constructively with a complex range of stakeholders
- Being of independent thought and being able to confidently express own opinion
- Clear sense of purpose and clear understanding of values to achieve goals and objectives
- Ability to deal with difficult circumstances or conversations through to successful resolution
- Ability to listen effectively to all

- points of views
- Applying reasonableness and good judgement to come to a conclusion
- Seeking opportunities to learn and develop new skills, and gain understanding of different perspectives

Desirable Criterion (for shortlisting purposes)

5. Knowledge of the charity sector

An understanding of and interest in the charity sector, including an awareness of the challenges it faces resulting from changing social and economic circumstances.

Examples of the type of evidence which the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below:

- Ability to set out the main current issues facing the local charity sector
- Identifying potential actions which might be taken to enhance public trust of the charity sector
- Suggestions for developing the regulatory framework to help achieve the Commission's objectives
- An awareness of safeguarding funds

Section 4: Application, Selection and Assessment

How to Apply and Contact Details

27. All applications must be made on the form provided. Hard copy or electronic versions are acceptable. Completed application forms can be delivered by e-mail, hand or post to:

Email: publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk

Public Appointments

Governance Unit
Department for Communities
Level 8
Causeway Exchange
1 – 7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG
Telephone: **028 9051 5464**
Text Relay: **18001 02890 515464**

If you have any queries regarding the appointment process or any other aspect of this competition, please contact Ruth McNeill via the above contact details.

28. You may use examples in your application form from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time or leisure activities, including any voluntary

or community work you are or have been involved in. Make sure you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you consider you meet the requirements for this appointment. Further advice and guidance can be found in the application form.

29. To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:
- only completed application forms will be accepted
 - applicants must ensure their completed application form is legible, whether this is completed electronically or handwritten
 - applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline
 - application forms will be anonymised for sift purposes
30. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application form is complete.**

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

31. The Department is required to monitor a number of areas including gender, ethnic origin, community background

and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form included in the application pack. The information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is not made available to the selection panel and does not play any part in the decision-making process.

Timeframe for Process

32. **The deadline for receipt of all applications is 12 noon (GMT) on Monday 8 April 2019** with delivery instructions contained in paragraph 27. Applications 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 the Department, on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted.**
33. 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.
34. Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt. The date and time at which the electronic application was received as recorded by the Department's IT system will be used

to determine whether an application sent electronically is received before or after the closing date/time.

Sifting and Shortlisting of Applications

35. Once your application has been received, it will be acknowledged within 3 working days. The selection panel will meet to consider applications and will carry out a sift exercise, against a rating scale, to assess how the skills, knowledge, experience and other qualities presented in your application meet the selection criteria in paragraph 26. Applications provided to the selection panel will be anonymised, which means that it will not include your name or personal details.
36. Only those applications that meet all the essential criteria, based on the evidence contained within the application form will be considered for interview. If a high number of applications are received, the desirable criterion will be assessed and used to shortlist applicants for interview. All candidates sifted out will be provided with feedback based on the selection panel's agreed assessment of their application, if requested, as well as having the option of asking for a review of the selection panel's decision.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

37. The aim of the GIS is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their

abilities beyond the initial application stage. Applicants with a disability who meet all of the essential 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. Further information on this scheme can be found at Section 6 of the application form.

Interviews

38. Interviews are expected to take place on 13 & 14 May 2019 at Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Belfast. Due to panel member availability, no further dates can be accommodated.

The selection panel members are:

- Moira Doherty, Deputy Secretary – Engaged Communities, DfC (Panel Chair)
- Arthur Scott, Director of Voluntary and Community Division, DfC (Panel Member)
- Sam Younger, Charity Sector Representative / former CEO of the Charity Commission in England and Wales (Panel Member)
- Bill Halliday, Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Independent Assessor, (Independent Panel Member)

39. Those invited to attend an interview will be asked to deliver a presentation, lasting 7 minutes, on a topic linked to one of the selection criteria.

Further detail on the presentation element will be provided to those invited to interview, including the topic which will be discussed. The remaining criteria will be assessed by an interview process with the panel. The interview will be criteria based which means that all the questions asked by the selection panel will be linked to the criteria. You will be asked to provide specific examples and the selection panel will evaluate your answers. Candidates invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and Ireland only, and will be afforded the opportunity to discuss the position with the CCNI CEO.

Candidates are asked to advise DfC Public Appointments if they anticipate difficulties attending on the dates specified.

Interview Outcome

40. The selection panel will evaluate all candidates at interview against an agreed pass mark. Those found to have achieved the pass mark will be recommended for appointment. The Permanent Secretary, with whom the final decision on appointment will rest, has determined that she should be presented with the top three scoring candidates in a ranked (merit-based) order, each of whom she will meet prior to making a final decision. This has been agreed with CPA NI.

41. A 'candidate summary' for each candidate will be agreed by the panel. This will provide the Permanent Secretary with an objective analysis of each candidate's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each candidate during the appointment process and the panel's assessment of that candidate, and inform the final appointment decision.
42. Those candidates who are unsuccessful at interview will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview which will include detail on how to request feedback on their performance. Candidates who are successful at interview, and who will be considered for appointment will be advised in writing.
43. A reserve list to fill any unforeseen Chief Commissioner vacancies may be created that arise within 12 months from when the appointment is made.
44. Upon appointment to the CCNI, the candidate will receive an appropriate induction programme.
45. Successful applicants will be subject to a National Security Vetting Clearance at Security Check level before any appointment is confirmed.

Appointment and National Security Vetting Clearance

43. Those candidates whose application is successful, and who are subsequently appointed, will have their appointment confirmed formally in writing. Those candidates not selected for appointment, will also be advised in writing of the outcome.
44. Before appointment, a check will be carried out on the probity and performance of candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles A bankruptcy check may also be conducted.
48. A press release will be published to announce the appointment made. Consequently should a candidate be appointed, they will be required to complete a political activity form and approve a short biography for publication. The biography will be based on information provided by the candidate throughout the competition process.
49. The press release will include:
 - The candidates' name
 - A short description of the body to which they have been appointed
 - A brief summary of the skills and knowledge brought to the role, by way of a short biography
 - The length of the appointment term
 - Details of all other ministerial public appointments held and any related remuneration received

- Details of the candidate's response to the political activity question

Diversity in Public Appointments

50. The Department is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. We would particularly welcome applications from women, people with a disability, young people and people from minority ethnic groups.

51. All public appointments must be made on the basis of merit. Only those individuals judged to best meet the requirement of the post will be recommended for appointment.

Other

52. You may be expected to attend appropriate induction and training courses, as a condition of your appointment. Further information will be provided upon appointment. Performance of all those appointed will be formally assessed annually.

53. **Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support is needed to help appointees carry out their duties.**

54. As this appointment is CPA NI regulated, the competition may be examined by CPA NI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

55. If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this appointments process, you should in the first instance contact DfC's Head of Governance and Public Appointments Unit who will manage your complaint.

56. Please address any enquiries in relation to this appointments process to:

FAO Head of Governance and Public Appointments

Department for Communities

Level 8

Causeway Exchange

1 - 7 Bedford Street

BELFAST BT2 7EG

Email: corporate@communities-ni.gov.uk

Telephone: **028 90823386**

Section 5:

Integrity & Conflicts of Interest

57. The Department must 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** and are described more fully at **Annex A**. Any private or personal interests that a potential appointee may have and that may be relevant to the work of the public body concerned must be declared.
58. The Department must take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of

interest. Therefore, applicants must disclose in their application form information or personal circumstances which, if they 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 Selection 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 **Annex B** for further information on this subject.



Double Paying

59. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:
- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in the Department's view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments
 - they will be asked to confirm that they have permission from their employer to take up an appointment if one is offered and departments will confirm this
 - there is a general guiding principle that an individual

should not 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 including expenses for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which they are already paid by the public sector. If in doubt contact your employer for advice

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

ANNEX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Public appointees are expected to uphold the seven principles of public life as set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 doing so.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

ANNEX B

Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet “Guidance on Conflicts 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.

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?

1. 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.

2. 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?

3. 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?

4. 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 Selection Panel as much information as possible.

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

5. 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.

6. The report on the outcome of the interview process which is put to the Minister and/or Department 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 and/or Department 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?

7. 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?

8. 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?

9. 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.

10. In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Audit Committee 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.
11. 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 board.

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