

# The Consumer Council

## Competition to appoint new Board Members

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the function of The Consumer Council?**

The Consumer Council functions are to provide free, independent support and advice for all consumers and businesses in Northern Ireland. They also have powers to investigate complaints about energy, water, transport and postal services and undertake research to understand local consumer issues.

#### **How do I apply?**

Simply download an information pack and application form from the Department for the Economy (DfE) Public Appointments Unit (PAU) website under 'Current Vacancies' at [Department for the Economy - public appointments](#)

Alternatively, you can request a pack by email or in hardcopy from the DfE PAU at [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk) or by telephone:

Jean Mageean on 028 90529461 (Text Relay: 18001 028 90529461)

Neil Morrison on 028 90529212 (Text Relay: 18001 028 90529212).

Completed application forms can be posted PAU, DfE, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Adelaide House, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FD or returned via email to [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk)

#### **What is the closing date for applications?**

**The closing date is 12:00 Noon (GMT) on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 Late applications will not be accepted.**

#### **Do I need to complete all sections of the application form?**

Yes - all sections of the application form must be completed to the best of your ability.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate their **personal** ability to meet the criteria by way of practical examples. The Selection Panel will reach a decision on whether or not you meet each of the criteria on the basis of the evidence you supply.

It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities. 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, so the onus is on the applicant to provide sufficiently detailed examples to demonstrate that they have the experience of putting into use the competences that are needed for the post.

#### **Can I send you my CV?**

The public appointment process does not permit CVs as a form of application. You must complete the application form.

#### **Do you require any professional/academic qualifications?**

No specific academic qualifications are required for these appointments.

### **Am I too young/too old?**

There's no upper age limit - DfE public appointments are open to applicants on the basis of ability.

### **How can I find out more about the public appointment process?**

Please contact DfE PAU by email at [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk) or telephone Jean Mageean on 028 90529461 (Text Relay: 18001 028 90529461).

### **How can I find out more about the role?**

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 please contact DfE Consumer Affairs via email to Mary McKeown (email [mary.mckeown@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:mary.mckeown@economy-ni.gov.uk)) or telephone Mary on 028 9025 3949.

Further information on the Consumer Council can be found at [The Consumer Council](#)

### **I am already working in the public sector – can I still apply?**

Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that: if 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 is not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment). In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

### **As a former civil servant am I still eligible?**

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 NICS HR Employee Relations to allow them to accept it. You can contact HRConnect using the contact details below:

Email: [NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net) or External Dial: **0800 1 300 400**

### **Conflicts of Interest. Do they disqualify me from applying?**

The Department must take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest. Therefore applicants, in their application form, must disclose information or personal connections which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. 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 Consumer Council Board's independence and impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointee.

For further information please read the CPANI leaflet

- ['Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a complaint'](#) (English)
- [Irish Version](#)

and the Annex attached to the Information Pack for further information on this subject.

## **I am not a UK national, can I apply?**

DfE have no public appointments that 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.

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.

## **How does the interview process work? What is the selection process?**

The selection panel have decided upon an anonymised sift and short-listing process for this competition. When assessing each application against the essential criteria, panel members will use a Marking Frame to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge, experience and qualities meet the criteria. Applications which do not meet all of the essential criteria will be sifted out.

If the Department receives a high number of applications which meet the selection criteria, the Panel reserves the right to apply a scoring system to further short-list for interview, based on the quality of evidence provided. **No applicant names will be given.**

## **How long will the selection process take?**

The sift and short-listing process will take place on **29<sup>th</sup> February 2024** and interviews on **12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024**. It is anticipated that the outcome of the competition will be made known by the **1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**.

## **I am an applicant with a disability - how do I get reasonable adjustments for my interview?**

For this competition we are using the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS), whereby we guarantee to interview any disabled applicant whose application meets or exceeds the minimum requirement for the post. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place. The aim of the GIS is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage.

If called for interview and you have a disability requiring any reasonable adjustments or specific access needs please email DfE PAU at [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk) and we will be happy to discuss these with you.

## **If I am unsuccessful, can you give me feedback?**

All those sifted out or short-listed out will be provided with feedback based on the agreed Panel's assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest the decision not to short-list them for interview they should do so within 5 working days

of receipt of their feedback letter. Further details about the process will be provided in the letter.

### **Are there any checks I need to go through before being appointed?**

For the Department's consideration, applicants are asked to declare in the application form if they have been convicted of any offence (other than minor motoring offences) which are not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 or if any charges are outstanding.

Individuals who are disqualified from holding Company Directorship either through an Order or an Undertaking, who are bankrupt or who are the subject of a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order, are not eligible for consideration.

Before a decision is made on whom to appoint, 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.

### **Will I get training?**

Yes - The new Consumer Council Board will be required to attend induction training and relevant training courses, organised by the Department or other organisations.

### **How do I find out about other public appointment opportunities?**

Register with us at [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk) or telephone Jean Mageean on 028 90529461 (Text Relay: 18001 028 90529461) or Neil Morrison on 028 90529212 (Text Relay: 18001 028 90529212).

For a list of current vacancies/competitions throughout the Northern Ireland Civil Service please visit [Public appointment vacancies](#)