

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE NORTHERN IRELAND (HSENI)

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS - INFORMATION PACK

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The Department for Economy (DfE) is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

Currently young people, people with a disability, those from minority ethnic communities and people from an agricultural background are currently under-represented on the Board and applications from members of these groups would be particularly welcome. We are operating the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for applicants with a disability.

An e-version of the application pack is available from pau@economy-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/candidates with a disability.

FOREWORD BY HSENI CHAIR, CATHERINE IRWIN

Foreword

It is my privilege as HSENI Board Chair to provide the foreword to this candidate information pack. Before being appointed as Chair in June 2024, I served as a Board member for 3 years, a position that I have enjoyed immensely and one in which I have learned a lot.

HSENI plays an important role in supporting business to comply with, and improve, standards of health and safety at work in Northern Ireland. A large proportion of this support comes in the form of education and awareness through various interactions, events and communication media.

In the areas under the responsibility of HSENI, we have seen an increase in fatalities in the past reporting period, with almost half of those coming from Agriculture. Whilst the HSENI will continue with the Farm Safety partnership work moving forward to help improve this, we would welcome representative from this community on our current Board.

The HSENI also has an enforcement role which is achieved by the serving of improvement or prohibition notices through to prosecution for breaches of health and safety at work legislation.

Recent years have brought significant additional challenges which HSENI had to deal with. The organisation has dealt with the Covid pandemic and the subsequent learning has enabled the organisation to adopt new working practices.

In 2023 HSENI launched a new Corporate Plan setting out the strategic direction for the next 5 years. This period will likely coincide with a period of considerable continued pressure on public sector budgets, and therefore on staffing. The Board of HSENI will have an important role to play in providing continued strategic direction for the organisation, whilst supporting the Senior Management Team to ensure the continued delivery of its public services and statutory duties to the high standards which our stakeholders have come to expect.

As well as attending Board (and committee) meetings, Board members will have the opportunity to learn more about the HSENI organisation through participation in various events as well as spending "a day in the life of an inspector".

The current Board members have completed one full term and have just started their second term in office. We now have the important task of appointing and

welcoming up to four new board members to this essential, enjoyable and challenging role, and I encourage you to apply.

It is important that the Board of HSENI broadly reflects society in Northern Ireland and we invite applications from a wide range of backgrounds. The organisation has a broad remit and serves to make a difference through the promotion of, and compliance with health and safety legislation in the workplace. As a board member you would have an opportunity to be part of this exciting strategic challenge.

I would urge anyone who is interested in helping to lead HSENI through the exciting challenges of the next few years, to apply: I certainly am glad that I took up this opportunity, and I am sure that you would find it both interesting and rewarding.

If you are successful, I look forward to welcoming you as a new member of the HSENI Board, in May 2024.



Catherine Irwin
HSENI Board Chair

Section 1

Introduction and Background

1. The Board of HSENI is appointed by the Department of the Economy and is responsible to the Minister for establishing the overall strategic direction of HSENI. The Board is also responsible for providing oversight of the corporate governance and financial and risk management of the body.
2. The focus is to help ensure that everyone stays safe and well at work. HSENI is the regulatory body for health and safety in a range of work situations including manufacturing; schools and universities; chemical plants; hospitals and nursing homes; construction; disciplined services; transport; district councils; gas supply and distribution; government departments; agriculture; fairgrounds; mines and quarries.
3. Details of HSENI's Corporate Strategy (Corporate Plan 2024-2028) can be found at <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/news/hseni-has-produced-its-new-corporate-plan-2023-2028-period> and performance (Annual Report 2022-2023) at <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/hseni-annual-reports>
4. DfE wishes to appoint up to 4 members (3 employee members and 1 employer member) to the Board of the Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI).
5. A public appointment to a Board gives individuals from different backgrounds and with specific skills and expertise a chance to help make decisions that affect all our lives. Board appointments are a great opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst developing your own skills.
6. Appointment will be made on merit from those individuals who best satisfy the selection criteria. It is important to note that Board members are not there to represent any particular sector but must exhibit corporate responsibility and remember they have a wide and unified role to play.
7. The appointments will be effective from 1st May 2025. To help maintain continuity of skills and experience on the Board, members will be appointed for four years. Reappointment for a second term may also be an option.
8. These appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland (CPANI) and the competition may be examined for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.
9. The Board currently consists of a Chair and 5 Members (3 male and 3 females in total). There are 4 vacancies.

Section 2

Role Profile

10. Members of the Board have corporate responsibility for ensuring that HSENI fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department and approved by the Minister, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by HSENI. The Board oversees performance and strategic direction and is also responsible for ensuring the highest standards of corporate governance, efficiency and propriety in the use of public funds. HSENI is a crown body, staffed by civil servants, and the Board is responsible for appointing its Chief Executive.
11. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of HSENI, the high standards of corporate and personal conduct required of HSENI Board Members are set out in a Code of Conduct. The current Cabinet Office model Code of Practice for Board members of public bodies can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies>
12. Members of the Board will contribute to the setting of strategic objectives, standards and values for the organisation and take corporate strategic decisions, within a policy framework set by Government. They will consider, amongst other things, the Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan, and the performance targets contained therein.
13. A Member of the Board of HSENI will:-
 - contribute to the setting of strategic objectives, standards and values for the organisation and take corporate strategic decisions, within a policy framework set by Government;
 - contribute to the three-year Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan and the performance targets contained therein;
 - be responsible for the efficient, effective and economic implementation of the statutory functions set out in the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 (as amended) and act in a way that promotes high standards of public finance, including the promotion of regularity, propriety and value for money;
 - ensure that financial information is regularly received and reviewed;
 - engage with the Minister from time to time on the formulation and implementation of health and safety policy;
 - act from time to time as a channel of communication between the Department, industry, local government, academia and HSENI;

- demonstrate high standards of corporate governance in all areas of HSENI business and monitor the performance of the organisation through the governance structures;
- act in accordance with collective Board decisions even if he/she has personally objected to a decision;
- contribute from a personal perspective or area of interest but be fully involved in all Board matters and serve the community as a whole;
- exercise a challenging role to ensure that HSENI is performing appropriately and effectively;
- serve on committees of HSENI as nominated; and
- act as a responsible employer.

Other important Board member responsibilities include: -

- ensuring that HSENI operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the Department, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds;
- ensuring that, in reaching decisions, the Board has taken into account any guidance issued by the Department;
- establishing such committees as it considers appropriate to conduct its business;
- constructively challenging the HSENI's executive team in their planning, target setting and delivery of performance; and
- when required, acting as a source of advice to the Minister on major issues of business development, strategy and policy.

Time Commitment and Remuneration

14. The time commitment is approximately 1½ days per month or equivalent. By applying for the post, it is assumed that you can meet this time commitment. The topic is further discussed at interview.

15. Remuneration is £4,195 per annum. Travel and subsistence expenses are payable at Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) rates. All remuneration and some expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.

16. Terms of appointment of four years will be offered. A second term may be offered, subject to satisfactory performance, continued adherence to the

principles of public life and the needs of the Board. Appointments for the same position are restricted to two terms.

17. Members will be based at HSENI's HQ, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, although Board meetings may occasionally be held at various venues throughout Northern Ireland.

Double Paying

18. 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 not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and condition of employment).
19. In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

Training

20. Induction training (and corporate governance training where necessary) will be provided to the new appointees. All members of the Board are supported with additional development needs or training as necessary.

Criteria-based selection

21. The selection criteria describe the competences required, i.e. what an appointee must be able to do in order to be effective in the role being filled. A criteria-based selection process is employed. This process requires you to provide tangible evidence which demonstrates that you can meet the requirements. For that reason, CVs will not be accepted. **No specific academic or other qualifications are required for these appointments.**
22. You are expected to demonstrate your ability to meet the criteria by way of practical examples. The Selection Panel will reach a decision on whether or not you meet the criteria on the basis of the evidence you supply. **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities. The Panel will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.** The onus is on you to provide sufficiently detailed examples to demonstrate that you have the experience of putting into use the competences that are needed for the post.
23. The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career patterns and experiences such as community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time

activities or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.

24. Make sure you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you feel you are suitable for this appointment. **It is strongly recommended that you read the enclosed Public Appointment Guide which contains guidance on the completion of criteria-based application forms.**

Selection criteria

25. You can only apply for one post i.e. an Employer Member or Employee Member. Please note the following definitions: -

Employee Member will be defined as an individual with experience of working within a company/business or a trade union or having significant influence within a representative body in a relevant sector. Employee members would generally not be considered to include individuals who are or have been directors, sole traders, Chief Executives or principals. An existing employee must also have the support of their employer to take on this role.

Employer Member will be defined as an individual with experience as a corporate officer, shareholder owner, accountable person and the embodiment of the organisation when acting in its business. They will have experience of acting autonomously, for example, in areas of recruitment and the provision of providing strategic direction, management and decision making for an organisation which employs staff.

26. HSENI is looking for a range of applicants to reflect the diversity of our community and business base, such as gender, regional representation, business sector and scale. It is hoped to achieve the range of skills as reflected in the criteria below.

27. Applicants applying for either post need to complete a total of four criteria, i.e. A, B, C and a choice of one from D, E or F on the application form. If more than one criterion is completed from D, E or F, the panel will only mark the first criteria completed by the applicant.

	Selection Criteria
	28. Mandatory criteria
A	Communication – the ability to use communication, influencing and negotiating skills to provide effective challenge.
B	Corporate Governance, Accountability and Risk Management - experience of applying the principles of corporate governance, including risk management and

	financial management to ensure the proper accountability of an organisation.
C	Strategic Thinking – the ability to understand strategic issues and to think and act strategically and formulate workable solutions.
	Choose any 1 from the following 3 options
D	Change Management – The ability to manage change successfully in an organisation specifically where there are elements of uncertainty.
E	Workplace Safety, Health or Wellbeing – using leadership skills to build and sustain workplace safety, health or wellbeing initiatives in the workplace.
F	Organisational Development - experience of organisational development and people issues in organisations from either an employer or employee perspective e.g. recruitment and retention, sickness, mental health, industrial relations.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are listed below each criterion. You do not need to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points.

A Communication – the ability to use communication, influencing and negotiating skills to provide effective challenge.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- challenging the views of others in a constructive way
- questioning proposals and debating issues
- putting forward your views in an objective way so as to influence the debate and achieve outcomes
- helping others to consider their own position in a non-confrontational way

B Corporate Governance, Accountability and Risk Management - experience of applying the principles of corporate governance, including risk management and financial management to ensure the proper accountability of an organisation.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- identifying, evaluating and managing risks to an organisation's performance and reputation
- setting and managing budgets
- improving efficiency in the use of resources and assets
- the operation of good governance, including the exercise of a challenge function to achieve the best outcomes for the organisation
- successfully managing, scrutinising and improving the performance of an organisation

C Strategic Thinking – the ability to understand strategic issues and to think and act strategically to formulate workable solutions.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- anticipating future consequences and trends accurately
- assimilating and making sense of complex or conflicting data and different perspectives
- using sound principles, past experience and basic rules to identify key underlying issues
- sensitivity to wider political and organisational priorities
- setting of strategic direction for an organisation on future objectives and current trends

D Change Management – the ability to manage change successfully in an organisation where there are elements of uncertainty.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- determining opportunities/mitigating risks
- developing and implementing plans for organisational change and recovery
- empowering individuals/teams to effect change
- monitoring progress and adapting plans to deal with changing circumstances
- dealing with resistance and influencing direction

E Workplace Safety, Health or Wellbeing – using leadership skills to build and sustain workplace safety, health or wellbeing initiatives in the workplace.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- leading initiatives to reduce workplace accidents and/or work-related health
- leading in people engagement, motivation and/or drive to reduce absenteeism
- leading in the occupational health arena
- leading in the management of stress or any other mental health issue
- leading in building resilience

F Organisational Development - experience of organisational development and people issues in organisations from either an employer or employee perspective e.g. recruitment and retention strategies, sickness, mental health, industrial relations.

The panel will be looking for evidence of substantial involvement in, for example:-

- understanding of organisation culture and people strategies and their alignment with Corporate Strategy
- managing the relationship between employers and employees
- understanding of fair employment, equality and diversity considerations in the recruitment, appointment and management of staff

- agreeing objectives, including personal development objectives, for senior staff to ensure that organisational goals are met

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

28. The aim of the GIS is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage. If you have a disability and meet or exceed the pass-mark set for each criterion at the sift stage, you will automatically be offered an interview. Your application will not be subjected to short-listing.

Integrity & Conflicts of Interest

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

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

Disqualification including Statutory Disqualification

31. Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs and MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up appointment as an HSENI Board Member.

32. If after appointment, an individual decides to stand for election as an MP or MLA, they must immediately notify the Department of their intention to stand for election and resign. If they have not resigned their public appointment before submitting their nomination as a candidate and are subsequently elected as an MP or MLA, their election will be void.

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

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

Applications from Civil Servants/former Civil Servants

35. It is possible that conflicts of interest could arise in relation to government policy, strategy, or the fair administration of public services and justice during the course of HSENI. Civil servants, or former civil servants, are welcome to apply for the post of Member. However, they should be aware that a judgement will be made by the interviewing panel, taking account of the Cabinet Office guidance on Making and Managing Public Appointments, as to whether the nature of his/her employment could lead to a perceived or real split of loyalties of a sufficiently serious nature to render appointment as Member an unmanageable conflict of interest. A copy of this guidance is available at: [About appointments](#)

36. 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. You can contact HRConnect using the contact details below:

37. Email: NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net or External Dial: **0800 1 300 400**

38. Candidates who are current employees of the Northern Ireland Civil Service are advised, should you be offered an appointment, you will be asked to confirm that you have obtained the necessary approval to undertake private work with another public sector body (including another Government Department) from NICS HR Employee Relations. Further information on this can be found in the **NICS HR Handbook, Section 6.01: Standards of Conduct, Sub Section 6: Private Occupations.**

39. Current and Former Civil Servants are advised to seek the required authorisation at the start of their application process.

Nationality

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

41. Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.

42. Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.
43. There is an onus on non-UK and non-Rol citizens to provide proof of their right to work in the UK and an onus on the appointer to check that.
44. 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.

Section 3

How to Apply and Contact Details

Application Form

45. The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements. You will be assessed against the criteria detailed in paragraph 26. You can use examples from your working life, including any voluntary or community work you are, or have been, engaged in or, if preferred, you can use examples from your personal life.²⁸ To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- a. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;
- b. applicants should complete the application form in a legible format (e.g. font size 12) or legible block capitals using black ink;
- c. applicants should not use more than 400 words per criterion. Any information over and above the word count will be redacted by the administration team and not seen by the selection panel; and
- d. applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.

46. Braille, large print, and audio formats are available on request.

47. You can complete an online application using the following link:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfe/hseni-members-application>

48. Alternatively, you can request a hardcopy pack from the DfE Public Appointments Unit at: pau@economy-ni.gov.uk or by telephoning Janet McCrum on 028 9052 9492 (Textrelay: 18001 028 9052 9492).

49. Written applications should be posted to:-

Department for the Economy

Public Appointments Unit

Adelaide House

39-49 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8FD

50. The closing date for the receipt of all applications is Noon (GMT) on Friday 10th January 2025. Applications will be receipted, and the time of receipt formally recorded. It is the responsibility of the applicant, taking into account their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with the Department on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted (except in exceptional circumstances).** Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline.

Data Protection

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

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

Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Purpose

52. You are asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information section of the application form. The information is not made available to the Panel members and does not play a role in the decision-making process. It will be detached from your application form by the admin Administration Team and sent to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for analysis and will be treated in strict confidence.

53. The Department is required to monitor the gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective. Moreover, the Department encourages applicants to complete the monitoring form as this enables us to understand if we are effective in our efforts to reach all areas of the community with opportunities, to identify where the gaps are and to improve our outreach in recruitment processes.

54. In relation to disability, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person with a disability as someone who has, or has had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, people who have had a disability in the past even though they are no longer disabled, people whose disability is likely to last for twelve months or the rest of their life, and people whose condition is likely to progress or recur. Severe disfigurement is also acknowledged as a disability.
55. It would be preferable if completed monitoring forms could be submitted in the same method as your application form.

Enquiries and Feedback

56. Enquiries and feedback can be directed to the above addresses or alternatively via telephone or text relay as follows:
- a. further details about the appointment process in general or advice on the progress of an application:
 - b. Tel: 028 9052 9492 (Janet McCrum)
 - c. TextRelay: 18001 028 9052 9492
 - d. Information on the expectations of the role or if you require any clarification on a particular aspect of the role or the criteria being assessed. Email: Gerry.marley@economy-ni.gov.uk

Sift and Short-listing process

57. An anonymised sift and short-listing process will be employed. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, panel members will use a Marking Frame to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience meets each of the criteria. Applicants will be awarded a score out of 5 for each criterion. Applicants must achieve the agreed pass mark of 3 or above. Applications which do not meet all of the selection criteria will be sifted out.
58. If shortlisting is required, the selection panel has agreed that the initial pass mark to be invited for interview will be an overall score of 16 out of a possible score of 20. The panel may consider reducing the required overall pass mark by one mark each time until a sufficient pool of candidates eligible for interview is in place.
59. All those sifted out or not short-listed will be provided with feedback on request based on the agreed Panel's assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest the decision of the Panel, they should do so within five

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

Interviews

60. The interview will be competency based on criteria A to C and your chosen criteria from D to F (detailed in paragraph 27).

61. Candidates will also be required to answer questions on the standards of behaviour required of public appointees and any real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest between their circumstances and the appointment applied for. **See Annex A.**

62. To be deemed suitable for selection candidates must achieve a pass mark of 3 or above for all four criteria.

63. It is anticipated that interviews will take place on 4, 5, 7 & 12 March 25.

Interviews will take place in DfE Headquarters, Adelaide House, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FD. Candidates invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and the Republic of Ireland only.

Competence-Based Interviews

64. Competence-based interviewing tests candidates against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These, in turn, provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you, and a deeper understanding of your abilities.

- The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare for the interview by:
- reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
- reminding yourself of the examples you used in your application form and being prepared to expand on these at interview, if asked;
- rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel, emphasising your own role and responsibilities; and
- not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.

Pre-appointment checks

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

Presentation of Results

66. Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables Minister(s) to indicate if they wish to have the names of candidates suitable for appointment presented in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list. Minister Murphy has made it known that his preference in all cases is an unranked list.

Publicising Appointments

67. A press release will be published to announce the appointment.

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

68. Complaints Procedure

69. If at any stage, you feel you have reason to complain you should refer to the Public Appointments Unit complaints procedure which is set out at:

[Department for the Economy - Public Appointments](#)

Annex A

INTEGRITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES

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

1. In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness: Members should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity: Members 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: Members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

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

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

Honesty: Members should be truthful.

Leadership: Members 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.

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

What is a conflict of interest?

3. Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be

material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared. There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

4. No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

5. The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the Board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a Board member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?

6. You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give the Selection Panel as much information as possible.

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

7. No - each case is considered individually. If you are shortlisted for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment, they can withdraw your application from the competition.
8. The report on the outcome of the interview process which is put to the Minister will include clear written reference to any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or integrity issues connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for

appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Minister is fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?

9. Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

10. This situation may arise where the candidate is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

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

11. This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the Board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.
12. In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive 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.
13. It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the Board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such, cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.