



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa

IRC270558

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

**VICTIMS OF CRIME COMMISSIONER
DESIGNATE**

**Completed Application Forms must be
received by HRConnect no later than
12:00 noon**

on

Friday 5 November 2021.

You are advised to download a copy of this booklet for future reference as it will no longer be available online after the above date. The booklet can be requested in alternative formats by contacting HRConnect on **0800 1 300 330** or via email to recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net. Requests should be made at the earliest opportunity.

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in applying for the post of Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate.

This Candidate Information Booklet has been produced to guide you in providing the relevant information when completing the application form for the post of Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate. It sets out the details of the post, the selection criteria and how to complete the application form. It is recommended that you read this information carefully before completing the application form.

These documents are only a memorandum and should not be taken as constituting conditions of appointment.

We also recommend applicants to read the 'Public Appointments Guide' which provides an overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and helpful information for those wishing to apply.

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf>

Management of this Competition

This competition is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of the Department of Justice (DOJ). HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible should you provide your e-mail address as part of your application; you should therefore check your email account (including Junk folder) to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. However, it may be necessary to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to ensuring that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for public appointments on the basis of their ability and

aptitude for the role. Monitoring is carried out to help us ensure that our processes and procedures promote equality of opportunity as far as possible and therefore your help in completing and returning the monitoring form as part of your application would be appreciated. Please note the information you provide in the monitoring form will be detached from the information on the application form, held separately and will not be available to selection panels or to anyone else involved in the selection process. The information will be used for statistical purposes only and analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in the strictest confidence.

Privacy Notice

Your privacy is important to us and the Department of Justice will process your personal data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A Copy of the Department of Justice Privacy Notice is available on the Department of Justice's website [DoJ privacy notice | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](https://justice-ni.gov.uk).

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KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale
Closing Date for Applications	5 November 2021
Sift	15-17 November 2021
Interviews	6 – 15 December 2021

Section 1 – Introduction and Background

Department of Justice

- 1.1 The Department of Justice (DOJ) came into existence on 12 April 2010 following the devolution of policing and justice powers to the NI Assembly. It was established by the Department of Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 and is responsible for a range of devolved policing and justice functions, as set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.
- 1.2 The role of the Department is to support the Minister of Justice to help keep the people of Northern Ireland safe.
- 1.3 In addition to its statutory functions, the Department provides resources and a legislative framework for its agencies and arm's-length bodies (which together constitute most of the justice system in Northern Ireland). Together with these organisations the Department is responsible for ensuring there is a fair and effective justice system in Northern Ireland and for increasing public confidence in that system.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate for Northern Ireland

Background

- 1.4 The Minister of Justice has met with victims of crime and their representatives and listened to their experiences of the criminal justice system. Through these meetings the need for a Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland was raised.
- 1.5 In late 2020, the Minister of Justice established a Reference Group, made up of experts from the voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector who work directly with victims of crime, to provide her with advice and inform her thinking on the need for a Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland and the role and functions required for such a post. The Reference Group reported to the Minister in December 2020 and met with her in January 2021 to discuss their views.
- 1.6 After considering the evidence and the advice provided, the Minister concluded that a Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland would enhance the arrangements and provision that is already in place for victims of crime, and would be a positive step forward in providing a voice for all victims, promoting best practice and helping to drive improved outcomes and experiences for victims within the criminal justice system.
- 1.7 The Minister has since publicly consulted on proposals to establish a Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland. The Minister made clear that the role

of Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland must add value to the current representation and service provision available for victims of crime; avoid duplication of existing roles; and deliver value for money. The role has been developed and informed by these parameters.

Why a Commissioner Designate?

- 1.8 It is not possible to legislate to put a Victims of Crime Commissioner for Northern Ireland on a statutory footing in the current Northern Ireland Assembly mandate and therefore a non-statutory Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate is initially being appointed.
- 1.9 In addition, the information and experience gained by the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be valuable in helping to inform the development of the long term statutory role for the Commissioner, therefore, the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will assist the Department of Justice in informing the development of the statutory Victims of Crime Commissioner role and the Minister of Justice has confirmed that this will be a priority for the role. It is currently anticipated that legislation to establish a statutory Victims of Crime Commissioner will be brought forward in the next Northern Ireland Assembly period.

Role of the Commissioner Designate

- 1.10 The overarching purpose of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate is to represent the needs and interests of all victims of crime and help drive systemic improvements across the criminal justice system that will improve the experience of victims of crime of the criminal justice system. This will include helping to identify any areas where victims are not consistently being provided with their entitlements set out within the Victim Charter and ensuring that their issues and experiences are raised in the public arena, with Government, with criminal justice organisations and with organisations that support and represent victims of crime, in order to bring forward effective change.
- 1.11 As well as communicating and influencing at a strategic and senior level, the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate is also expected to have a person-centred approach in order to listen to victims of crime and their representatives and understand the challenges which victims of crime encounter in the criminal justice system. However, the role is to have a focus on where systemic changes are needed that will benefit all victims of crime and is not to become involved in individual cases. Therefore, the role should not advocate for individual victims nor investigate individual cases, although it is acknowledged that there may be individual cases which serve to exemplify systemic issues that need to be addressed.
- 1.12 Stakeholder engagement is an important aspect of the role, therefore the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be required to establish an Advisory Group comprising of suitably experienced individuals familiar with the functioning of the criminal justice system and how it interacts with victims of crime, as well as having an understanding of the issues affecting victims of crime. The Advisory Group is intended to advise and assist the Commissioner Designate in identifying priorities,

including key themes for consideration, research priorities and policy issues that are appropriate to deliver improvement across a wide range of victim issues and communities. It will also act as an expert forum for testing ideas and initiatives.

- 1.13 The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will represent all victims of crime. However, it is acknowledged that there are groups of particularly vulnerable victims who have specific needs. The Commissioner Designate is therefore asked to give particular attention to domestic and sexual abuse victims and to hate crime victims; we acknowledge that there may be other specific cohorts or types of victims to whom the Commissioner Designate may also wish to give particular focus.
- 1.14 The primary focus of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be on the criminal justice experience of victims of crime. However, it is recognised that the impact of crime and the experience of going through the criminal justice system can affect other aspects of a victim's life outside of the criminal justice system. Therefore, where there is a common victim interest (e.g., in relation to the wider societal experiences and needs of victims of crime) it is recognised that there may be benefit in the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate role working with other Commissioners on such issues.
- 1.15 It is important to note that the Commissioner Designate is not intended to duplicate the work of support services or other established commissioners or champions.
- 1.16 The scope of the post does not include victims of 'conflict related offences' as defined in Section 3 of the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order 2006, which falls under the remit of the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.
- 1.17 We anticipate that the Commissioner Designate may at times be asked by the Minister of Justice to undertake thematic reviews and provide advice on a particular victim priority, where that is considered necessary and in the interests of victims of crime.

Section 2 – Role Profile

2.1 The main responsibilities and duties of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be to:

- ***provide a voice for all victims of crime*** - this will require the Commissioner Designate to engage with victims and the organisations that represent them. The Commissioner Designate will be their voice in the public arena and will be able to highlight identified issues with Government and criminal justice organisations, in order to drive forward systemic improvements for all victims of crime or, where appropriate, for groups of cohorts of victims with particular vulnerabilities. The role will also include promoting and safeguarding the rights of victims as well as representing victims on Government groups and forums to raise awareness of victims' issues;
- ***identify, promote, encourage and issue guidance on good practice*** with a view to encouraging the criminal justice system to embrace and build on such practice;
- ***review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice*** – the Commissioner Designate will have a role in *influencing* the development of any new legislation or policy that impacts on victims of crime; *scrutinizing* current legislation to highlight areas that need to be addressed; and *reviewing* compliance with the law and practice;
- ***review the operation and delivery of Victim Charter entitlements*** to ensure compliance with, as well as ***promotion of, the Victim Charter***. This will enable the Commissioner Designate to *identify* any issues that need to be addressed; *raise* these issues with relevant bodies and *make recommendations* for improvement. *Raising* awareness of the Charter and the entitlements for victims of crime will also be a key element of the role;
- ***direct complaints and monitor outcomes*** – the Commissioner Designate will have a key role by helping to direct victim complaints to the relevant responsible bodies within the Victim Charter and monitoring the outcomes of these complaints. In so doing the Commissioner Designate will be able to have oversight of the full breadth of complaints being made by victims of crime in relation to their experiences within the criminal justice system, which will help them to identify any key systemic issues that need to be addressed at a strategic level. However, the Commissioner Designate will not be responsible for directly investigating or responding to individual complaints about victims' experiences of the criminal justice system - services already exist for this purpose and we

also believe it is important that agencies should be directly involved in responding to complaints in order to be able to identify emerging issues and also to promote continuous improvement.

- **advise and make recommendations** to the Minister of Justice and criminal justice organisations, on the basis of evidence gathered and research completed. The Commissioner Designate will have a role in providing advice that would help to shape victim policy; *highlight* and *challenge* in relation to systemic issues requiring attention; as well as *make recommendations* on how to improve the outcomes for victims of crime;
- **undertake or commission research** to gain an understanding and gather evidence/information on the issues impacting on the experience of victims of crime; and
- **ensure good governance** of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate office and resources.

Outcomes

- 2.2 The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be independent from government and have autonomy to set their own priorities. They will be required to publish a Strategic Plan that sets out their strategic priorities, objectives, programme of work and anticipated outcomes, informed by the evidence of victims' needs. They will also be required to provide an annual report to the Minister of Justice for publication, outlining how they have exercised their functions over the year and the extent to which objectives and outcomes have been met.
- 2.3 The role is also intended to contribute to the following overarching criminal justice outcomes for victims of crime:
 - Improved outcomes in how victims experience the criminal justice system;
 - Better informed and more effective policies, legislation and operational responses;
 - Increased awareness and understanding of the impact of both crime and of the criminal justice system on victims;
 - Policies and operational practices are informed by the identification and promotion of best practice; and
 - Increased confidence in the criminal justice system.

Support and Resources

- 2.4 The level of policy and administrative support and resources that will be provided to the Commissioner Designate will be subject to available funding through future Departmental budget allocations. As future year Departmental budgets are not yet set, funding for 2022-23 onwards would need to be considered as part of the future year budget process. In taking forward the appointment, the Minister has indicated that the Commissioner Designate's role in scoping out the role and powers for the statutory Office should be prioritised. In this context, it is anticipated that, as a minimum, the Commissioner Designate will have the support of three members of staff to manage the office and assist with scoping out the role for the statutory Commissioner, as well as provide other policy/research assistance in accordance with the Commissioner Designate's role and functions.

Accountability

- 2.5 The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate acts independently in the exercise of their functions. However, they will be accountable to the Minister of Justice, through the Department of Justice, for the operation of their office and, through the Director of Access to Justice for their personal performance.

Briefing/Training

- 2.6 Appropriate background and training will be provided to the new appointee.

Time Commitment

- 2.7 The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate post will be full-time (37 hours per week). The postholder will be entitled to 30 days annual leave in addition to public and privilege holidays, which is currently 12.

Performance Assessment

- 2.8 There will be regular accountability meetings with Department of Justice Officials throughout the period of appointment

Remuneration and Expenses

- 2.9 The post will be at a level equivalent to NICS Grade 5 and the postholder will receive remuneration equivalent to the entry point of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) Grade 5 scale (£74,912) which will be subject to review annually in line with the overall value of the annual SCS pay award on the basis of satisfactory performance - assessed through review meetings with the Director of Access to Justice, Department of Justice. The post is pensionable (part of the NICS pension scheme).
- 2.10 The Victims of Crime Commissioner is eligible to claim travel and subsistence allowances necessarily incurred on business. Travel and subsistence payments will be in line with Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policy.

Period of Appointment

- 2.11 This appointment to the post of Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate is for a period of 3 years with the potential for an extension of up to one year. If either party wish to terminate the arrangement, a minimum of 3 months' notice will be required.

Code of Conduct

- 2.12 Although not an employee of the Department and therefore not a Civil Servant, the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be expected to comply with the general principles of the [Civil Service Code](#). The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required are described more fully in the Code.

Location

- 2.13 While this has still to be confirmed, the location of the post is likely to be in the Belfast/greater Belfast area. It is anticipated that the role may involve travelling to other parts of Northern Ireland.

Security Vetting/Criminal Record Check

- 2.14 A security vetting process will be completed before appointment. Appointment will be dependent on the candidate satisfying the requirements of a Counter-Terrorist Check (CTC) and Access NI check.

Assistance for Individuals with disabilities

- 2.15 Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support the successful candidate needs to help them carry out their duties.

Section 3 – Selection Criteria

- 3.1 A criteria-based selection procedure will be used in this appointment process.
- 3.2 The application form is an essential element of the process and is designed to require applicants to give specific examples of past performance to demonstrate they can meet the requirements. The mere mention of a skill or attribute is insufficient. Neither can the selection panel make assumptions from the title of a post or the nature of an organisation as to the experience, qualities and skills gained.

Essential Criteria

- 3.3 Applications for the role of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate will be required to demonstrate five **Essential Criteria**. These are set out below.
- 3.4 Please take full advantage of the opportunity to provide practical evidence and examples of how and why you consider you are suitable for this appointment. These examples as provided will inform the selection process.
- 3.5 **Note that examples can be provided from your professional experience, voluntary and/or community sector experience or from within your personal life.**
- 3.6 **We recommend applicants to read the ‘Public Appointments Guide which provides an overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and helpful information for those wishing to apply.**

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf>

- **Criterion 1**

Experience of working with and understanding the needs and interests of victims of crime

You will have direct experience of working with victims of crime and be able to demonstrate the ability to be empathetic, understand the needs and represent the views and concerns of victims of crime to a range of audiences.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for include:

- Specific examples/experiences of working with victims of crime;
- Advocating on behalf of victims of crime; and

- Ability to represent the views and concerns of victims of crime accurately and impartially to a range of audiences.

- **Criterion 2**

Effective leadership and strategic direction

Proven experience of leading and setting direction as well as motivating, inspiring and guiding others towards a common purpose and vision, enabling achievement of goals and managing difficult situations with skill and sensitivity.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for include:

- Setting and communicating vision, direction and purpose;
- Working effectively both as an individual and as part of a team;
- Motivating others;
- Managing diversity;
- Managing sensitivities, conflict and constructive challenge; and
- Behaving with integrity in tackling difficult issues and taking responsibility for decisions.

- **Criterion 3**

Collaboration and influencing across disciplines and sectors

You will have proven experience of being able to collaborate and influence at a senior level across disciplines and sectors; to engage at all levels, to develop and sustain co-operative and collaborative working relationships with organisations across a range of interests; and to instil a strong partnership approach to solve problems and achieve outcomes in high profile and controversial areas.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for include:

- Fostering trust;
- Promoting effective relationships through engagement and collaboration;
- Influencing and negotiating to achieve consensus;
- Working in partnership;
- Exercising critical judgement; and
- Effectively chairing meetings of groups with a diverse range of interests.

- **Criterion 4**

Effective engagement and communication with a range of audiences

You will have proven experience of engaging meaningfully with a diverse range of audiences and stakeholders, and demonstrating effective communication skills including active listening, oral, written and presentational skills.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for include:

- Being the public face of a body or organisation including dealing with and managing the media;
- Leading or engaging in discussions on challenging topics;
- Listening to diverse viewpoints and handling diversities, sensitivities, conflict and challenge constructively;
- Adapting method, style and content to match your audience including using appropriate communication methods and media; and
- Ability to be empathetic and understanding of the needs, interests and concerns of victims of crime.

• **Criterion 5**

Analytical thinking and effective decision making on challenging issues resulting in improvements

You will have the skills to collect and analyse information from a range of sources including research, assessment and feedback from engagements to make informed decisions. You will be able to analyse issues, and where problems arise engage those who need to be involved and generate options and solutions that result in improvements and effective change.

Examples of the type of evidence the Panel will be looking for include:

- Showing clarity of thought in analysing and evaluating information to make decisions;
- Listening and gathering feedback;
- Involving others in decision making;
- Identifying the main issues in complex problems;
- Solving problems;
- Making and defending difficult decisions; and
- Being objective and accountable.

3.7 Applicants are limited to a maximum of 3700 characters including spaces **per criterion.**

Shortlisting Criterion

3.8 In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift in which the Panel will consider all the evidence provided in reaching their decision, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to the next stage of selection, the following shortlisting criterion will be used:

- The Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the depth and breadth of information provided by applicants in response to the above eligibility criteria.

The shortlisting criterion will be scored with only the top scoring applicants progressing to interview.

- 3.9 The Panel will complete this assessment only against the information provided by applicants in response to eligibility criteria.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **It is essential that you clearly demonstrate in your application form how and to what extent (including dates where applicable) you meet each of the essential criteria and shortlisting criteria for the post.**
- **You must provide sufficient details to allow the panel to assess how well you meet these requirements.**
- **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the application form is completed appropriately, applicants are therefore strongly advised to demonstrate each criterion in the section of the form that specifically addresses that criterion.**
- **If you do not clearly demonstrate in your application form that you meet all the essential criteria and if necessary, the shortlisting criteria you will not be invited to interview.**
- **Only the details provided by you for the essential and shortlisting criteria, in Part 3 of your application form will be available to the sift panel.**

Person Specification

- 3.10 The Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate is a time-limited public role for 3 years with the potential for an extension of up to one year. The appointment process will follow the public appointment principles and will be competitive. The appointment will take the form of a decision of the Minister for Justice.

- 3.11 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the essential criteria and shortlisting criteria.

Interview Criteria

- 3.12 The selection process will include a presentation and a criteria based interview.

Presentation

- 3.13 As part of the selection process applicants will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than **10 minutes**. Applicants will be advised of the presentation topic within their 'invitation to attend interview' letter.
- 3.14 Applicants should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview and no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Applicants will be allowed to bring prepared speaking notes or cue cards to the interview for assistance only during the presentation part of the assessment. No other materials, visual aids or handouts will be permitted.

Section 4 – Application and Selection Process

Equality and Diversity

- 4.1 The Department of Justice is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.
- 4.2 We are also committed to providing equality of opportunity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of gender, age, marital status, disability, religious belief, ethnic origin, political opinion, sexual orientation or whether or not you have dependants. Applications are also welcome from individuals irrespective of gender identity, including those proposing to undergo, who are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.
- 4.3 We particularly welcome applications from women, people with a disability, young people and those from ethnic minorities, as these are currently under-represented on public bodies. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability.
- 4.4 DOJ will act in the spirit of the principles and practices of the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)

Making an Application

- 4.5 The application form is designed to ensure you provide the necessary information to determine how you meet the selection criteria. All relevant sections of the application form must be completed. There may be several aspects to a criterion, so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all aspects.
- 4.6 You must demonstrate clearly on your application form how and to what extent your experience is relevant to the criteria for the post. It is not enough simply to list the various posts that you have held. The Selection Panel will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills or experience gained.
- 4.7 You should give specific examples from past performance to demonstrate that you have the abilities and competencies that make you suitable for this appointment. Skills, knowledge and experience can be acquired throughout an applicant's life. Examples can be provided from your professional experience, voluntary and/or

community experience, a non-traditional career path or from within your personal life.

4.8 Please note that:

- Application forms should be fully completed; no information, other than that supplied under the criteria sought, will be taken into account during the sifting process.
 - CVs, letters or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted.
 - Online or hard copy versions of the application form are acceptable. Application forms should be completed clearly using typescript minimum font size 12 if completed electronically, or in block capitals in black ink if completed in hard copy.
 - Applicants are limited to a maximum of 3,700 characters including spaces **per criterion**.
 - Hard copy and alternative formats of the application form (Braille, large print, etc.) are available on request from HR Connect via any the methods on page 1. Requests should be made at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.9 Your application will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt. If you do not receive formal written acknowledgement within 3 working days you should contact HR Connect via any of the methods detailed on page 2 of this information pack.
- 4.10 Application forms should be submitted online or by post to arrive with the HR Connect by **12 noon 05 November 2021**. The date and time of receipt will be formally recorded for all applications. 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 HR Connect on or before the deadline. Late applications will not normally 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.
- 4.11 Please check your application form before submitting it as the Department will not examine applications until after the closing deadline and failure to fulfil the application requirements may result in your application form being excluded from the process.

Selection Process

Panel

4.12 The Selection Panel will be made up of two senior officers representing the Department of Justice and a CPANI Independent Assessor.

4.13 The selection panel members are:

- Glyn Capper, Acting Director of Access to Justice (Chair);
- Julie Wilson, Acting Head of Victims Support and Judiciary Division;
- and
- Dolores O'Reilly, Independent Assessor, The Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (Panel member).

Eligibility Sift

4.14 The Selection Panel will carry out an anonymised sift of all of the application forms received to assess each applicant against the selection criteria.

4.15 The Selection Panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets each criterion on the basis of the evidence supplied on the application form. All criteria will be weighted equally. Only those applicants assessed as meeting each of the selection criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

4.16 If, after the eligibility sift, it is necessary to shortlist applicants, the paper sift scores will be used to identify a merit order of applicants. Applicants will need to achieve the acceptable score or above to meet the quality threshold in each of the eligibility criteria. Only the top scoring candidates will be called for interview.

4.17 Applicants who are not selected for interview will be advised by letter after the eligibility sift. Feedback will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All further requests for feedback are welcome.

4.18 If you are dissatisfied with the Panel's decision or have any queries in relation to not being selected for interview, you should write to HR Connect, within 7 working days from the date on the letter notifying you of the outcome of the shortlisting process. All correspondence will be acknowledged by return.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

- 4.19 The Department will operate in the spirit of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme which provides 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** will automatically be offered an interview and will not therefore be subject to shortlisting.
- 4.20 To be eligible for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme you must be considered as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which 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 and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If you qualify and wish to apply for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme please complete the relevant section of the application form. This section of the application form will not be provided to the selection panel.

Interview of Eligible Candidates

- 4.21 It is intended that interviews for this post will take place between 6 -15 December 2021. Candidates should make themselves available on these dates. Reschedule requests will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and are at the discretion of the panel. Candidates should be aware that the interview room will be set up to accommodate social distancing and will comply with current public health guidance in relation to Covid-19. In person interviews are preferable, however if you have specific concerns in relation to this approach, you should make HR Connect aware of these concerns at the earliest opportunity and alternative ways to facilitate remote interviews may be considered. The decision of how interviews will proceed will rest with the panel. Further consideration will be given to this as the situation regarding COVID-19 develops.
- 4.22 Travel and subsistence is not payable during the selection process.
- 4.23 At interview, all candidates must satisfy the Selection Panel that they adequately meet all the criteria. The Panel will score applicants at interview against an agreed pass mark and those scoring above the line will be recommended to the Minister of Justice with whom the decision regarding an appointment rests.
- 4.24 Applicants who are assessed by the Selection Panel as not suitable for appointment will be advised by letter following interview. They should contact HR Connect in relation to any request for any further feedback.
- 4.25 Applicants who are assessed by the Selection Panel as suitable for appointment and whose names are being put forward for selection will be advised by letter following interview.

4.26 Please see Annex A for Interview Guidance.

Presentation of Results to Ministers

4.27 A list of the applicants that the Selection Panel has assessed as suitable for appointment will be provided in an unranked format to the Minister of Justice. The Minister will receive applicant summaries from the Selection Panel that provide an objective analysis of each applicant's skills and experience, based on the information provided by the applicant during the appointment process and the Panel's assessment of that applicant.

4.28 The Minister of Justice will make the final decision regarding an appointment from this competition.

4.29 If you are selected for appointment by the Minister, you will be formally notified in writing and you are required to confirm acceptance of the post and Terms of Appointment.

4.30 All other applicants whose names were presented to the Minister will be advised in writing of the outcome once the appointment process has been completed. This will include options for requesting further feedback.

Reserve List

4.31 A reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancy that may arise within 12 months of the date of the decision to appoint may be retained.

Checks and Disqualifications

Access Northern Ireland (Access NI)

4.32 The appointment will be subject to the successful candidate undergoing an "Enhanced Disclosure Check".

4.33 The criminal record check will be undertaken by Access NI, which is the responsibility of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997. Access NI enables organisations in Northern Ireland to make more informed recruitment decisions by providing criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in certain defined areas, such as working with children or vulnerable adults.

Barred List Checks

4.34 The Disclosure and Barring Service keeps two barred lists:

- people who are unsuitable for working with children
- people who are unsuitable for working with vulnerable adults

4.35 People on these lists are barred from regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity. Candidates should be aware that by submitting an application form for this post, they are confirming there is no reason why they cannot work in regulated activity.

4.36 The Access NI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Counter Terrorism Check

4.37 The successful candidate will be required to undergo a “Counter Terrorism Check”. They will be required to complete and return a brief form, along with a copy of their ID, in order for the creation of a vetting account through which they would complete and submit their CTC application form online to the vetting service provider, i.e. UKSV.

Pre-appointment Checks

4.38 Before the names of suitable candidates are presented to the Minister of Justice a Company Director’s disqualification check and a bankruptcy check will be carried out.

4.39 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. The recorded performance and attendance in other public appointment roles will not form part of the candidate assessment by the Panel, but may be taken into account in selecting candidates for appointment by Minister.

Disqualification – Other

4.40 Individuals with a conviction for a recordable offence are not eligible for consideration.

4.41 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.

Nationality Requirements

4.42 There are no nationality restrictions on this post: however, before an offer of appointment can be made to an overseas candidate, the Department will need to ensure that all UK visa and immigration requirements are met.

Section 5 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest

- 5.1 The Department of Justice must ensure that any individual appointed is committed to the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and values of public service. These principles are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. Candidates will be asked questions on probity and conflicts of interests at interview. The successful candidate will be asked as part of their appointment to sign a declaration committing to the seven principles.
- 5.2 Attached for your information at Annex B is a copy of “Probity & Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates”. This provides information on these issues including some examples to help applicants evaluate whether or not they have a real, perceived or potential conflict.
- 5.3 The Department of Justice must take account of any actual or perceived conflict 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. Failure to do so could lead to the appointment being terminated.
- 5.4 If it appears, from the information provided on the form and/or from answers to questions at interview, that a possible conflict might exist, or arise in the future, this will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether it is sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post.

Double Paying

5.5 Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:

- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if the Department is of the view that there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments;
- where applicable they will be asked to confirm that they have permission from their employer to take up an appointment if one is offered; and
- if they already work in the public sector they may need to be aware that no one should 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 for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which they are already paid by the public sector.

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

Transparency in Publicising Appointments

5.7 A Press Release will be published to announce the appointment. Should you be appointed, you will be required to complete a political activity form. Details of any political activity, together with some of the information that you have provided in your application form will be made public in the press announcement. This applies particularly to any other public appointments you may hold and to any significant political activity recently undertaken by you. The Press Release will include:

- Your name;
- A short description of the role to which you have been appointed;
- A brief summary of the skills and knowledge you bring to the role;
- The period of appointment;
- Any remuneration associated with the appointment;
- Details of all public appointments held and any related remuneration received; and
- Details of any political activity declared in the last five years.

Section 6 – Complaints and Queries

- 6.1 Should you wish to make a complaint or a query about any stage of this process, you should first direct your concerns to:

HRConnect,
PO BOX 1089
2nd Floor, Beacon House
27 Clarendon Road
BELFAST
BT1 9BG

Email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

- 6.2 If after receiving a response you are still concerned, you can send your complaint, in writing to the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Information on how to go about this is available at <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/publications>

Changes in Contact Details

- 6.3 Please ensure you inform HRConnect immediately of any changes in personal circumstances, such as name, address, email address or telephone number.

Requests for rescheduling of interviews

- 6.4 Please note that it will not be possible to reschedule interviews for this competition.

Feedback

- 6.5 The Department is committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria at eligibility/shortlisting sift. Feedback following interview is available on request by contacting HRConnect. Further requests for feedback are welcome. In respect of further feedback, HRConnect will forward any requests to the Interview Panel, who will be responsible for providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting and at interview.

Accessibility Requirements

- 6.6 Please let HRConnect know if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend the interview. Any information provided will be used for this purpose only and will not form any part of the selection process. If you are subsequently successful in the selection process and are being

considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

Annex A

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

If this is your first experience of a criteria-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the criterion the question is designed to test.

A Criteria-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the criteria required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience and specific role in relation to the required criteria areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

Situation:	Briefly outline the situation
Task:	What was your objective?; What were you trying to achieve?
Action:	What did you actually do? What was your unique contribution?
Result:	What happened? What was the outcome? What did you learn?

The Interview Panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the criteria. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which appointments made on merit illustrate your skills and abilities in each criterion area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

You are strongly advised to read the ‘Public Appointments Guide’ when preparing for interview - <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-guide-overview-public-appointments-northern-ireland-and-helpful-information>

PROBITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

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

- **Selflessness** – holders of public office should 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 so doing.
- **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.

As part of the selection process, you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

An appointment of this nature requires 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 Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate 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.

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 this 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?

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

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

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?

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 position of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. 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 Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process put to the Minister for any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment will include clear written reference to any probity issues or perceived or actual conflicts of interest. 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?

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?

This situation may arise where the applicant does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the work of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate, 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?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the individual's circumstances may change, for example, they may take on other roles or work and in doing so, a conflict with their Commissioner role becomes apparent. The second is where an individual is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate but, after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Department of Justice to decide whether or not the individual can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the individual to continue to act as the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate. In such cases, the individual may be asked to stand down from the role.

See link to CPANI leaflet on Conflicts of Interest and Integrity at
<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/publications>

Whilst this is not a CPANI regulated competition it is being carried in accordance with the principles and practices of the CPANI Code.

As outlined in Section 6, any complaints which remain unresolved by the department may be directed to CPANI.