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
Welcome

Thank you for your interest in applying for the post of Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

This Candidate Information Booklet has been produced to guide you in providing the relevant information when completing the application form for the post of Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse. 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. 

Management of this Competition

This competition is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of The Executive Office (TEO). 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 Executive Office 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 Executive Office Privacy Notice is available on The Executive Office website at https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/teo-privacy-notice
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Section 1 – Introduction and Background

The Executive Office

1. The Executive Office (TEO), previously the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), was created on 9 May 2016 as part of the implementation of actions emanating from the Fresh Start Agreement. The vision of TEO is to build a peaceful and prosperous society with respect for the rule of law, where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life now and in years to come. Underpinning this vision, the overall aim of TEO is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society.

2. TEO’s vision and aim are supported through the following key functions and objectives:

• The effective operation of the institutions of government in the delivery of an agreed Programme for Government (PfG);
• Delivering the Executive’s Good Relations strategy: Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC);
• Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity; and
• Driving investment and sustainable development, including promotion of the Executive’s policy interests internationally.

TEO’s responsibilities include the Executive’s response to the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.

Strategic Policy, Equality & Good Relations Directorate

3. The Strategic Policy, Equality & Good Relations Directorate within The Executive Office is responsible for Victims and Survivors. The Historical Institutional Abuse Implementation Team is located within this area of the Directorate.

The Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) Inquiry

4. The HIA Inquiry Report (Hart Report) was published on 20 January 2017. One of the substantial recommendations relates to the appointment of a statutory Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA). The Hart Report recommended that the COSICA would have a role in encouraging the co-ordination and provision of relevant services, a monitoring role across a broad range of areas (including the HIA Redress Board), as well as an advocacy role, supported by an Advisory Panel of victims and survivors of HIA.
5. Historical Institutional Abuse is a key strategic policy area and a top priority for the Executive Office. The implementation of a redress scheme for victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse and making payments as early as possible was one of the priorities of the restored Executive under the New Decade, New Approach Deal. The Redress Board is now established and opened for applications on 31 March. Redress payments are now being awarded and paid.

The Interim Advocate

6. Given the time between the publication of the Hart Report and implementation of the recommendations, including those relating to the establishment of COSICA, Mr Brendan McAllister was appointed on 2 July 2019 as Interim Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse. The Interim Advocate is due to remain in post until the COSICA is appointed. Mr McAllister was appointed on the basis that he is not eligible to apply for the position of COSICA.

The Statutory Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse

7. The Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 (HIANI Act 2019) became law on 5 November 2019 legally establishing and providing authority to the TEO to appoint the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA).

8. The COSICA is a new post – this will be the first appointment of a Commissioner to the position.
Section 2 - Role Profile

Click here to see the full Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 (HIANI Act 2019)

9. The Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Abuse (COSICA) is appointed under the Historical Institutional Abuse (NI) Act 2019. The principal aim of the COSICA in exercising functions under the Act is to promote the interests of any person who suffered abuse while a child and while resident in an institution at some time between 1922 and 1995.

10. The COSICA will be responsible for:

- appointing a panel of persons, all of whom are victims and survivors, whose function will be to provide a forum for consultation and discussion with victims and survivors – this panel will be known as ‘the Advisory Panel’;

- providing advice on matters concerning interests of victims and survivors as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving a request for advice, and on whatever other occasions the Commissioner thinks appropriate;

- taking reasonable steps to ensure that victims and survivors are made aware of the functions of the Commissioner, the location of the Commissioner, and the ways in which they may communicate with the Commissioner;

- undertaking or commissioning research into matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors;

- encouraging the provision, and the coordination of the provision, of relevant services in Northern Ireland to victims and survivors;

- taking account of the current provision of relevant services to victims and survivors and identifying any gaps in the provision of those services;

- providing, or securing the provision of, advice and information to victims and survivors on the relevant services that are available to them and the facilities that are available for the provision of those services, and how to obtain those services and access those facilities;

- on becoming aware in the course of exercising the Commissioner’s functions of a matter which comes within the area of responsibility of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, consult that Commissioner;

- monitoring the operation of whatever facilities there are currently which are solely for providing victims and survivors with counselling and supplementary
information about how to access health services, housing services, education services or employment services; helping to improve literacy or numeracy; or advising on opportunities for education or work or on entitlements to housing or welfare benefits;

- making arrangements for publicising the role of the Redress Board. Where a person is considering whether to make an application to the Board for compensation, providing the person with such general advice and information on making the application as the person requests, and if the person wishes to obtain information relating to any period in which the person by or in respect of whom the application would be made was resident in an institution while under the age of 18, providing such assistance in obtaining that information as it is reasonable;

- monitoring the operation of the Redress Board; and

- establishing or making arrangements for establishing, a panel of solicitors, the members of which the Commissioner is satisfied have the necessary expertise for providing legal advice and assistance on applications and appeals.

**Accountable**

11. The COSICA is a corporation sole established by statute to promote the interests of Historical Institutional Abuse victims and survivors. The COSICA therefore acts independently in the exercise of their functions, within the framework set out in the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019. As an arm’s-length body of The Executive Office, the COSICA is however accountable to Ministers, through The Executive Office, for the operation of their office and, through the Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office, for their personal performance. The former is exercised in practice through the COSICA's senior member of staff who is designated Accounting Officer, and through the normal arrangements for sponsorship and assurance of finances, plans, systems and procedures for an arm’s-length body. The latter involves an annual performance review. The COSICA is charged, amongst other duties, with keeping proper accounts, and is responsible for submitting these to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit before The Executive Office lays them in the Assembly.

**Briefing/Training**

12. Appropriate background briefing and any appropriate training will be provided by The Executive Office to the new appointee.

**Time Commitment**

13. The COSICA post will be full-time. The postholder will be entitled to 30 days annual leave in addition to public and privilege holidays.
Remuneration & Expenses
14. 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 (£71,932) 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 an annual review meeting with Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations. The post is pensionable.

15. The COSICA 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
16. An appointment to the post of COSICA is for a period of 5 years and a person appointed is eligible for re-appointment for one further term. If the appointee decides to end the appointment early, a minimum of 3 months’ notice will be required.

Code of Conduct
17. Although not an employee of the Department and therefore not a Civil Servant, the general principles of the Civil Service Code will apply to the COSICA. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required are described more fully in the Code.

Performance Assessment
18. There will be annual assessments of the COSICA performance by TEO throughout the period of appointment.
Section 3 – Selection Criteria

Background

19. A criteria-based selection procedure will be used in this appointment process.

20. The COSICA does not require specific qualifications; however, all applicants must show on their application form and at interview (if invited) how they meet the selection criteria and demonstrate that they have the skills, knowledge, experience and qualities required.

21. Applicants are limited to a maximum of 3,700 characters including spaces per criterion.

Selection criteria

22. The five selection criteria and details of the evidence and examples which we are looking for in applications for the role of the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

(i) Experience of working with and understanding the concerns and needs of victims and survivors.

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

Please provide evidence of your direct experience of working with people who have experienced trauma and your understanding of the needs of victims and survivors.

Examples of the type of evidence the Selection Panel will be looking for are:

- Specific examples/experiences of working with individuals who have experienced trauma;
- Advocating on behalf of victims and survivors;
- Ability to represent the views and concerns of victims and survivors faithfully and impartially.
(ii) **Provide focused leadership and direction in promoting the interests of victims and survivors.**

You will be able to motivate, inspire and guide others towards a common purpose and vision in support of victims and survivors, enabling achievement of goals and managing difficult situations with skill and sensitivity.

Please provide a specific example(s) demonstrating how, through your leadership and motivational skills, you have brought about meaningful change in a complex environment.

**Examples of the type of evidence the Selection Panel will be looking for are:**

- 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;
- Behaving with integrity in tackling difficult issues and taking responsibility for decisions.

(iii) **Collaborating and influencing across disciplines and sectors**

You will have the ability 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 across a sector in order to solve problems and achieve outcomes in high profile and controversial areas.

Please provide a specific example(s) demonstrating how you have collaborated with key stakeholders and influenced senior decision makers and others to achieve positive outcomes in a high profile or controversial area.

**Examples of the type of evidence the Selection Panel will be looking for are:**

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

(iv) Engagement and communication with a range of audiences

You will have the ability to engage meaningfully with a diverse range of audiences and stakeholders, and demonstrate effective communication skills including active listening, oral, written and presentational skills.

Please provide a specific example(s) demonstrating your ability to communicate effectively with key stakeholders in a sensitive area including with individuals with complex needs seeking support and help.

Examples of the type of evidence the Selection Panel will be looking for are:

• 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;
• Ability to be empathetic and understanding of the needs and concerns of victims and survivors of trauma.

(v) Analytical Thinking and Effective Decision Making on Challenging Issues

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.
Please provide an example(s) demonstrating your ability to draw on a range of sources of evidence and information in order to make effective decisions and contribute to the development of recommendations covering complex and difficult issues.

**Examples of the type of evidence the Selection Panel will be looking for are:**

- 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;
- Being objective and accountable;
Section 4 – Application and Selection Process

Equality and Diversity

23. The Executive Office is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. TEO will act in accordance with the principles and practices of the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

Making an Application

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. 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.
30. 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 of the methods on page 1.

31. 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 1 of this information pack.

32. Application forms should be submitted online or by post to arrive with the HR Connect by 12 noon Friday 3rd July 2020. 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.

33. 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

34. The Selection Panel will be made up of a senior officer representing The Executive Office, two independent members and a CPANI Independent Assessor.

35. The selection panel members are:
   • Mark Browne, Director of Strategy, Policy and Good Relations (Chair);
   • Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner of the NI Human Rights Commission (Panel member);
   • Bernie McNally, Independent Chair Safeguarding Board for NI (Panel member); and
   • Bronagh Hinds, Independent Assessor, The Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (Panel member).

Eligibility Sift

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

37. 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.

38. If, after the eligibility sift, it is necessary to short list 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.

39. 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.

40. 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.
Interview of Eligible Candidates

41. It is intended that interviews for this post will take place during week commencing 10th August 2020. 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 during the current COVID-19 situation. Alternative ways to facilitate remote interviews may also 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.

42. Candidates invited for interview will be eligible to claim reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and Republic of Ireland in attending for interview. Other appropriate expenses such as particular costs associated with disabilities or childcare can also be claimed. An expenses claim form can be obtained by contacting the Historical Institutional Abuse Implementation Team via e-mail to TEO HIA Division HIAImplementationBranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

43. 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 First and deputy First Ministers with whom the decision regarding an appointment rests.

44. 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.

45. 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.

46. Please see Annex A for Interview Guidance.

Presentation of Results to Ministers

47. A list of the applicants that the Selection Panel assesses as suitable for appointment will be provided in an unranked format to the First and deputy First Ministers. All those applicants deemed suitable for appointment will be invited to make a presentation to Ministers. The Ministers 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. Ministers will base their selection decision on both the applicant summary and presentation.

48. The First and deputy First Ministers will make the final decision regarding an appointment from this competition.

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

50. All other applicants whose names were presented to Ministers 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**

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

**Checks and Disqualifications**

**Access Northern Ireland (Access NI)**

52. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an “Enhanced Disclosure Check”.

53. 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.

54. **Barred List Checks**
   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

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.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni)

Pre-appointment Checks

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

56. 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 Ministers.

Disqualification – Statutory Disqualification

57. Under the terms of the NI Assembly Disqualification Act 1975 (as amended), existing MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up an appointment as the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

58. If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MLA, they must immediately notify the department of their intentions. If they have not resigned their public appointment before submitting their nomination as a candidate and are subsequently elected as an MLA, their election will be void.

59. It is the intention of TEO to add an amendment to the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 by way of an Order in Council in due course. Therefore existing MPs would also cease to hold elected office if they take up this appointment. The same conditions as in Para 58 would also apply to an individual holding a public appointment who decides to stand for election as an MP.

Disqualification – Other

60. Individuals who have been convicted of an offence are not eligible for consideration.
61. 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.

Section 5 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest

62. The Executive Office 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.

63. 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.

64. The Executive Office 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.

65. 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**

66. 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.

67. 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**

68. 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

69. 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, Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
BELFAST
BT1 9EW

Email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

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

Feedback

70. 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.

Changes in Contact Details

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

Accessibility Requirements

72. 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.
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:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Briefly outline the situation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>What was your objective?;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What were you trying to achieve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>What did you actually do?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What was your unique contribution?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>What happened?</td>
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<td>What was the outcome?</td>
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<td>What did you learn?</td>
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The 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.

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. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) 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.
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 Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) 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 Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) 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 COSICA or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process put to Ministers 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 Ministers are 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 Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA), 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 COSICA 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 Executive Office 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 Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA). 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.