

## **Candidate Information Booklet**

**IRC269395**

### **Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be returned to HRConnect  
no later than 12:00 noon**

**on**

***Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021***

You are advised to download and keep a copy of this booklet for future reference - it will no longer be available online after the above date.

This information booklet is designed to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form. It can be requested in alternative formats by contacting **HRConnect** on **0800 1 300 330** or via email to [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)

This information booklet has been produced as a guide to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form for the post of Commissioner for Victims and Survivors. These documents are only a memorandum and should not be taken as constituting conditions of appointment.

The qualities required and details of how to complete the application form are set out within this pack. It is recommended that you read this information carefully before completing the application form.

The competition to appoint a Commissioner for Victims and Survivors 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. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

### **Privacy Notice**

TEO is committed to protecting your privacy. We will process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting a Commissioner for Victims and Survivors in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (CPANI) Code of Practice. For more information please see our Privacy Notice at <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/teo-privacy-notice>

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## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND TO THE COMMISSION FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

The post of Commissioner for Victims and Survivors relates to those who have suffered as a result of the Troubles/Conflict in Northern Ireland. The appointment will be made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister in accordance with the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (the 'Order'), amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2008/6/pdfs/nia\\_20080006\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2008/6/pdfs/nia_20080006_en.pdf)

The principal aim of the Commissioner appointed under the Order will be to promote the interests of victims and survivors. It is intended that victims and survivors should have a strong independent voice and that the Commissioner will be able to contribute to the development of policies which address the longer-term needs of those who have suffered as a result of the Troubles/ Conflict.

During the period of the Troubles/ Conflict it is estimated that over 3,500 people have been killed and many thousands have suffered injury or bereavement. As defined by the legislation in 2008, the term 'victims and survivors' relates to someone who has been physically or psychologically injured, someone who cares for them, or someone bereaved, as a result of a 'Troubles/Conflict related' incident. Those who have witnessed a Troubles/Conflict -related incident and those who provided emergency assistance are also included in the interpretation if they have been psychologically injured.

Further information on the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) can be found at: [About Us | CVSNI](#)

TEO is seeking to appoint one Commissioner

This appointment process will be regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and the competition may be audited by the CPA NI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

TEO is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. We are also

committed to equality of opportunity and welcome application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

We are operating the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for applicants with a disability.

**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.

## **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

### **Introduction**

The Commissioner's role which is outlined below is based on the provisions of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, (amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

### **Key areas of responsibility**

The overall aim of the Commissioner is to promote the interests of victims and survivors of the Troubles/Conflict in Northern Ireland. The duties of the Commissioner are to:

- (a) promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors and of the need to safeguard those interests;
- (b) keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors;
- (c) keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for victims and survivors (this will include services provided by Victims and Survivors Service, statutory and voluntary organisations);
- (d) provide advice on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors to Ministers, the Executive Committee of the Assembly and any organisation or person providing services for victims and survivors;
- (e) take reasonable steps to ensure that the views of victims and survivors are sought concerning the exercise by the Commissioner of his or her functions;
- (f) make arrangements for, and facilitate a forum for consultation and discussion with victims and survivors.

In fulfilling these statutory duties it is critical that the Commissioner at all times remains impartial in providing advice to Ministers and in representing the interests of victims and survivors in the public domain. The Commissioner must also embody the core values that underpin the work of the Commission which are currently as follows:

## **Values**

TRUST - Working confidentially, impartially and respectfully with victims and survivors, stakeholders and each other to develop and sustain open and honest relationships;

UNDERSTANDING - Listening to and learning from the experiences of victims and survivors;

RESPONSIVENESS - Continually developing our people and raising standards for victims and survivors through growth and innovation;

ACCOUNTABILITY - Applying the highest level of corporate governance and standards to all that we do for victims and survivors; and,

INDEPENDENCE - Our statutory duties allow us to provide critical challenge and to hold government and relevant authorities to account on behalf of victims and survivors.

Additionally, the Commissioner has an integral role in the delivery of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors November 2009, with particular responsibility for providing policy advice to Ministers around the three key themes of:

- (i) Dealing with the Past,
- (ii) Building for the Future, and
- (iii) Services.

Going forward the Commissioner will advise on the development of the new Strategy for Victims and Survivors. The Strategy originally had a ten-year timeframe which ended in 2019. This was extended to allow time to finalise the new strategy. Ministers are currently considering an additional extension of 18 months.

## **The Victims and Survivors Forum**

Participants of the Forum are invited into membership by the Commissioner, in accordance with Article 6 of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The Victims and Survivors Forum is a group of volunteers who have lived experience and have been affected by the Troubles/Conflict, directly or indirectly, and is consulted

to inform the work of the Commission for Victims and Survivors. The Forum is a fundamental part of the Government's 10 year strategy (2009-2019) for victims and survivors and has an important contribution to make to this and to the development of the new Strategy for Victims and Survivors.

The Forum has three objectives, reflecting the key themes of The Executive Office's Strategy for Victims and Survivors -

- To contribute to the Commission's assessment of the needs of victims and survivors, funding arrangements and the provision of services;
- To advise the Commission on dealing with the past; and
- To advise the Commission on the contribution of victims and survivors to building a shared and better future.

The Commissioner also has responsibility for engaging and consulting with individual victims and victims groups through the Victims Forum, seminars/conferences and one to one meetings, which will be critical in the development of evidence based policy advice to Ministers.

The Commissioner's powers will include:

- (a) undertaking, commissioning or providing assistance for research or educational activities;
- (b) issuing guidance on best practice; and
- (c) providing advice or information on any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors.

The Commissioner will also be able to make representations and recommendations to any body or person, whether public or private, on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors. He or she will be expected to work, where appropriate, with other bodies to ensure access to services for victims and survivors. The Commissioner may also work in co-operation with other bodies within the UK or elsewhere where necessary in carrying out his or her functions. The Commissioner may also be required to give evidence to NI Assembly Committees.

## **The Board**

The Commission is legally defined as a 'Body Corporate' which would normally be comprised of a Board of Directors. However as a single appointment the Commissioner solely fulfils the role of the Board.



The Board supports the delivery of effective Corporate Governance and operates within best practice guidelines set out in HM Treasury's Corporate Governance in Central Government Commissions: Code of Good Practice, and Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI). The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the Commission, leading its strategic planning process and meeting the corporate governance responsibilities for the Commission.

The Board is responsible for establishing and overseeing the Commission's Corporate Governance arrangements. The key aspects of the Board's role include:

- (a) Setting the strategic direction for the Commission, including its vision, values and strategic objectives, and overseeing the implementation of the Commission's Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan, and measuring and evaluating its performance;
- (b) Developing, promoting and overseeing the implementation of policies and programmes in line with the Commission's strategic direction;
- (c) Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the Commission's capability to deliver;
- (d) Monitoring performance via the Commission's Corporate Plan, annual Business Plan, budgets and targets, and assessing and managing the strategic risk to delivery;
- (e) Overseeing the strategic management of the Commission's staff, finance, information and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities;
- (f) Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the Commission's corporate governance arrangements, including risk management; and
- (g) Overseeing and monitoring the Commission's progress against all of its equality of opportunity, good relations and human rights obligations.

### **Work Programmes**

The work of the Commissioner will be carried out in accordance with a work programme which he or she will submit for the approval of the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly. The work programme submitted by the Commissioner will set out his or her proposed activities and the associated costs. It will be the duty of the Commissioner to carry out any work programme which has been approved and to be held to account by Ministers for its delivery

## **Annual Report**

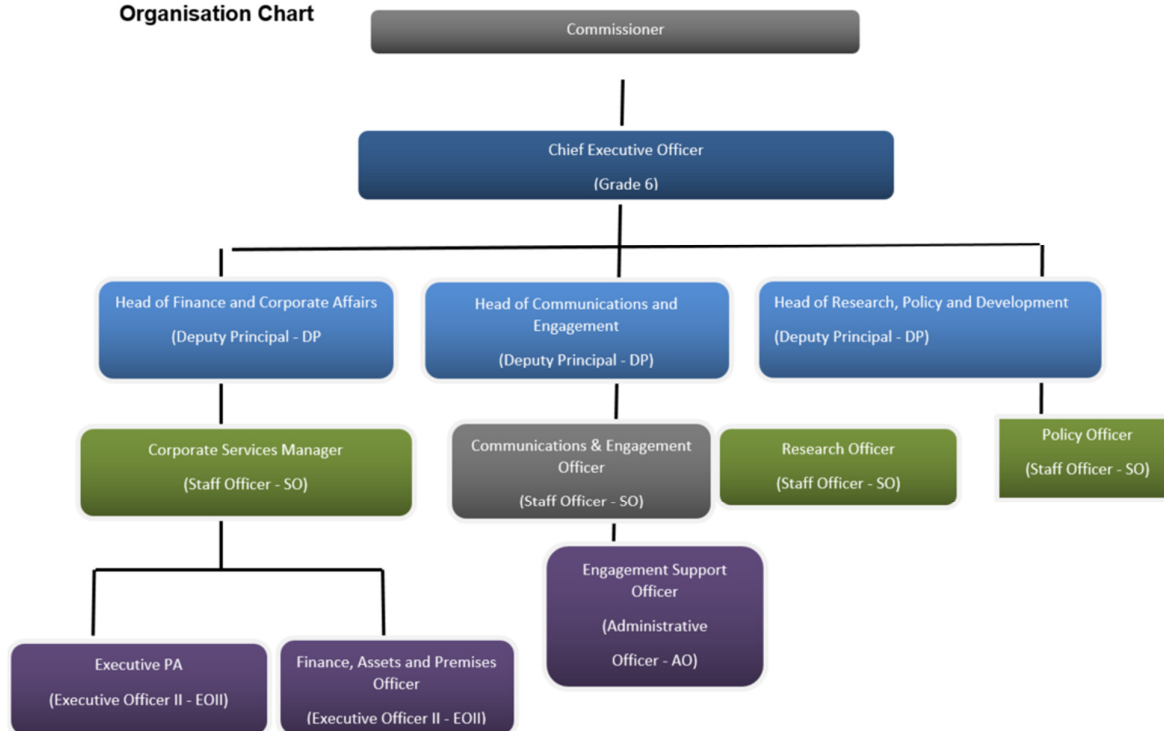
The Commissioner will be required to provide to The Executive Office (TEO) an annual report on his or her activities during the year. TEO will lay a copy of the report before the Assembly and a copy will also be sent to the Secretary of State.

## **Accounts**

The Commissioner will be required to keep proper accounts relating to the operation of his or her office and will be responsible for the management of human and financial resources. The Commissioner will be required to provide statements of accounts relating to the office to TEO and to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In fulfilling these requirements, the Commissioner is supported by the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission who also carries the responsibility as Accounting Officer for the day to day operations of the Commission. The current annual budget for the Commission is £921,000. The current organisational chart is below (it is subject to review)

## Organisation Chart



## Time Commitment and Remuneration

The post will be full-time and the period of appointment will be 4 years. There is a possibility for a renewal of the appointment for one further period of 4 years. The appointment will be made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly. The post will attract an annual salary of £74,912 which will be reviewed annually in line with the NICS SCS pay scale. The post is pensionable. The postholder will be entitled to 30 days' annual leave in addition to public and privilege holidays. Travel and subsistence payments will be in accordance with those applicable in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

## Location

The post holder will be based in Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

## Re-location

Where the successful candidate has to relocate home in order to take up the appointment, the reimbursement of reasonable expenses (in part or full) as a result of the relocation may be considered.

## **Working Hours**

The post holder will be required to work outside normal conditioned hours, where it is necessary, to fulfill the demands of the post.

## **Travel**

The post holder will be required to travel within Northern Ireland regularly, and occasionally across the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Europe and further afield.

## **Annual Leave**

In addition to the 12 public and privilege holidays, the annual leave allowance will be 30 days.

## **Training**

Successful applicants will be required to attend induction and corporate governance training where necessary. The Commissioner will be supported with additional development needs or training as necessary.

## **Code of Conduct**

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 Commissioner. The high standards of corporate and personal conduct required are described more fully in the Code.

## **Double Paying**

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

- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in the Department's view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments (see Annex C);
- they will be asked to confirm that they have permission from their employer to take up an appointment if one is offered and departments will confirm this; and
- there is a general guiding principle that an individual should not be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. As a result applicants who already work in the public sector may not be entitled to claim remuneration including expenses for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period

of time for which they are already paid by the public sector. If in doubt contact your employer for advice.

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

### **Performance Assessments**

There will be annual assessments of the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors performance by Ministers (or delegated to the TEO Deputy Secretary on behalf of Ministers) throughout the period of appointment.

### **Further Information**

Any applicant seeking additional information about Commissioner for Victims and Survivors should contact the TEO Victims and Survivors Unit [victims.unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:victims.unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk), telephone 02890 528634

Any applicant wishing to raise a question about the competition process should contact HRConnect [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background sought. A criteria-based selection procedure is employed in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland Code of Practice.

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.

There are 4 essential criteria. These describe what you need to be able to do in order to be effective in the role being filled.

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.

**Note that examples can be provided from your professional experience, voluntary and/or community sector experience or from within your personal life.**

**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>

## ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications, demonstrate evidence of all of the following criteria on their application form:

### **1. A commitment to promoting the interests of victims and survivors of the Troubles/Conflict and/or trauma evidenced by:**

- An understanding of the consequences of the Troubles/Conflict and/or trauma on victims and survivors in Northern Ireland or in similar situations elsewhere; and
- An ability to work with victims and survivors from all sections of the community and represent their views impartially.

**2. Strong and effective leadership and management skills ensuring a successful and effective organisation demonstrated further by:**

- A proven track record in the development, implementation and management of governance and accountability practices; and
- A proven track record in the development, implementation and management of people, finances and annual business plans.

**3. Influencing and informing strategy and policy development demonstrated further by:**

- Experience in the analysis and use of evidence to support decision making; and
- Experience in reviewing efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and in managing risk; and
- Exercising critical judgement.

**4. A high standard of oral, listening, written and presentational skills demonstrated further by:**

- An ability to empathise and communicate with individuals who are in need of support and help who may have complex issues, including mental health needs; and
- An ability to represent an organisation effectively at very senior levels in a highly politicised and complex environment including public representatives, senior government officials and the media.

The Panel will interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to have fulfilled the essential criteria above and are therefore deemed to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

You must, demonstrate evidence of the following criteria on your application form:

**Please note that further details are attached in Annex A**

**SHORTLISTING**

After the eligibility sift, if it is necessary to shortlist applicants the following criteria will be applied.

- **Experience in working with people with complex issues and needs.**

## SELECTION PROCESS

### **Eligibility Sift of Application Forms**

Following the closing date for applications, the Panel will formally assess each application form against the selection criteria, listed on pages 14-15. **Only the Eligibility Section of your application form will be forwarded to the Panel.**

The Selection Panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets each criterion on the basis of the evidence the applicant provides on the application form. Where it is necessary to prepare a shortlist for interview, the shortlisting process detailed on page 15 will be applied.

**It is essential that you demonstrate in your application form how and to what extent your personal experience and skills are relevant to the post and the extent to which they satisfy the criterion specified.**

**Only those applicants assessed as meeting all essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.**

### **Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

The aim of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage. Applicants with a disability **who meet all of the essential criteria at the sift stage** will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place. 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 (See **Annex E**). If you qualify and wish to apply for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme please complete the appropriate section of the application form. This section of the application form will not be provided to the selection panel

The eligibility sift and shortlisting (if required) are expected to take place week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

### **Interview of Eligible Candidates**

It is anticipated that interviews will take place week commencing 15 November 2021. Candidates should make themselves available during this time. 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. Requests for rescheduling interviews will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and decisions to allow such reschedules will be at the discretion of the Selection Panel.

***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 Victims and Survivors Unit in TEO via e-mail [Victims.Unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Victims.Unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)***

The Panel will design interview questions based on the job description and essential criteria listed in this document.

The selection panel will assess the information presented by the candidate at interview against each selection criterion. A score will then be allocated against each selection criterion and a total interview score derived accordingly. A minimum pass mark for the interview will apply.

### **Presentation of Results to Ministers**

A list of the applicants that the Selection Panel assesses as suitable for appointment will be provided in an unranked format to the First Minister and deputy First Minister. 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.

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

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.

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.

### **Pre-appointments Checks**

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.

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.

### **Vetting**

The level of vetting for Commissioner is an enhanced check. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Other acceptable documents are listed on [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk) HRConnect will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI.

The category of AccessNI check required for this post is;

### **Enhanced Disclosure Certificate**

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity. Individuals who are barred may be able to work in controlled activity.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk>. Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. This can be downloaded from the

AccessNI website. Guidance notes of the completion of the form are also included on the website. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the above form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

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.

### **Disqualification – Statutory Disqualification**

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975, the European Assembly Elections Act 1978 and the NI Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs, MEPs and MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up an appointment as Commissioner

The onus is on the person standing for election to state that they are aware of the provisions of the Acts and that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they are not disqualified from being an MP, MEP or MLA.

If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MP, MEP or 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 MP, MEP or MLA, their election will be void.

### **Disqualification – Other**

- (a) 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;
- (b) According to the CPA NI Code of Practice appointments for the same position are restricted to two terms. Those who have served two appointments, of whatever length, on a Board are ineligible to apply for the same position.

Notwithstanding the length of individual appointment terms, the maximum period in a post must not exceed 10 years. **Applications received from applicants who have already served two terms or 10 years in this position will be discounted at the sift stage.**

### **Nationality Requirements**

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

### **Civil Servants – Rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments**

Serving or former civil servants are not debarred from applying for public appointments. However, serving civil servants will require their Department's approval and former civil servants may require the approval of their last Department (depending on their grade and whether they left within the last two years) before taking up an appointment.

### **Probity and Conflicts of Interest**

The Department must ensure that the individuals they appoint are committed to the principles and values of public service. These principles are: **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.** Further information is available at <http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/>.

Departments must take account of 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.

The Panel will determine, at interview stage, whether you are aware of the standards of behaviour required of public appointees and can demonstrate your understanding of the issue. You will also be asked to declare whether or not you are involved, or have been involved, in activities that could call into question your reputation and/or damage the reputation of the body to which you are applying. The Selection Panel will consider fully your answers and, if necessary, question further or challenge.

Conflicts of interest may not be a barrier to appointment but both real and perceived conflicts must be discussed with all candidates by the interview Panel. This is to ensure that the public can have confidence in the Board's independence and

impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointee. Please refer to **Annex C** for further information on this subject.

Successful candidates will be asked to complete a **Political Activity Questionnaire form**. The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended that all candidates for public appointments be asked to declare any significant political activity (including office holding, public speaking and standing for election) that they may have undertaken in the previous five years. The question only asks for information that is already in the public domain.

### **Announcing the Appointment**

If you are appointed some information on your completed application form will be made public in a press release. This will include your name, a brief summary of your career/experience; length of the appointment; details of any other Ministerial appointments held along with any related remuneration received; and your response to the Political Activity Questionnaire.

### **Reserve List**

Ministers may agree that a reserve list will be held to be used to fill any future vacancies that arise within the 12 months following the Ministers decision.

## HOW TO APPLY

The competition to fill Commissioner for Victims and Survivors is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of TEO.

Application forms can be completed via the online application at [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk) or by hard copy. Hard copy and alternative formats of the application form (Braille, Large Print, etc.) can be requested by contacting HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or via email to [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)

Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability.

To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and **must not** be altered.

We **will not** accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.

Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible writing using black ink.

HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline.

Completed hard copy application forms can be returned by post or hand delivered to the address below:

**HRConnect  
PO Box 1089  
Beacon House  
27 Clarendon Road  
Belfast  
BT1 9EX**

Completed application forms should be submitted to HRConnect before the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021. You will receive an acknowledgement following receipt of your application. **Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.** You should retain a copy of this booklet for your reference in the event that you are invited for interview. Please be aware that the Department may decide to extend the closing date for this competition. If this is the case, all applicants who have submitted an application by the original closing date/time will be informed.

## **Feedback**

The Department is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit public appointments are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) Code of Practice.

The Department is also committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. HRConnect will forward any feedback requests to the Interview Panel, who will be responsible for providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

## **Changes in Contact Details**

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

## **Accessibility Requirements**

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.

## **Complaints or Queries**

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  
Beacon House  
27 Clarendon Road  
Belfast  
BT1 9EX  
Email: [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto: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 in the CPA (NI) leaflet which is enclosed with this pack at **Annex D**.

## **Further details on Selection Criteria**

### **Background**

1. A criteria-based selection procedure will be used in this appointment process.
2. The Commissioner 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.
3. Applicants are limited to a maximum of 3,700 characters including spaces **per criterion**.

### **Essential Criteria**

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications, demonstrate evidence of all of the following criteria on their application form:

#### **1. A commitment to promoting the interests of victims and survivors of conflict and/or trauma evidenced by:**

- An understanding of the consequences of conflict and/or trauma on victims and survivors in Northern Ireland or in similar situations elsewhere; and
- An ability to work with victims and survivors from all sections of the community and represent their views impartially.

*You will have a demonstrable understanding of issues faced by victims of the Troubles/Conflict in Northern Ireland or in similar situations elsewhere and a proven ability to work with victims and survivors by being able to demonstrate the ability to be empathetic, understand the needs and represent the views and concerns of Victims and Survivors.*

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for in the examples provided are:-

- Demonstration of a clear understanding of the issues faced by Victims and Survivors of Conflict.
- Specific examples / experiences of advocating on behalf of others.



- Ability to represent the views and concerns of all victims and survivors faithfully and impartially.

**2. Strong and effective leadership and management skills ensuring a successful and effective organisation demonstrated further by:**

- A proven track record in the development, implementation and management of governance and accountability practices; and
- A proven track record in the development, implementation and management of people, finances and annual business plans.

*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.*

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;
- Delivering measurable results and achieving outcomes;
- Demonstrable experience of effective development, implementation and management of corporate governance and accountability practices;
- A clear understanding of the management of risks for your organisation in the context of strategic priority.

**3. Influencing and informing strategy and policy development demonstrated further by:**

- Experience in the analysis and use of evidence to support decision making,
- Experience in reviewing efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and in managing risk; and
- Exercising critical judgement.

*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, inform strategies, and develop policies which will achieve outcomes in high profile and*

*controversial areas. You will also have the ability to ensure the achievement of outcomes by ensuring efficient and effective service delivery ensuring that risks are effectively managed.*

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

- Experience of making effective decisions through the interpretation of a wide range of information considering external pressures and influences to develop strategies.
- The ability to exercise critical judgement by weighing up competing views to generate ways forward which will meet organisational goals including influencing and negotiating to achieve consensus;
- Experience of maintaining and improving services by managing risks to ensure own business area and partners deliver against defined outcomes.

**4. A high standard of oral, listening, written and presentational skills demonstrated further by:**

- An ability to empathise and communicate with individuals who are in need of support and help who may have complex issues, including mental health needs; and
- An ability to represent an organisation effectively at very senior levels in a highly politicised and complex environment including public representatives, senior government officials and the media.

*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 (i) your ability to communicate effectively with key stakeholders in a sensitive area including with individuals with complex needs seeking support and help.; (ii) your ability to represent an organisation at senior levels in a complex environment.

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.

The Panel will interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to have fulfilled the essential criteria above and are therefore deemed to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

The candidates who are successful in the interview will be invited to give a presentation to Ministers.

### **SHORTLISTING CRITERIA**

If shortlisting is required, the following criteria will be applied:

- **Experience in working with people with complex issues and needs.**

*You will have direct experience of working with people with complex issues and needs and be able to demonstrate the ability to be empathetic, understand the needs and represent their views and concerns.*

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

- Specific examples/experiences of working with individuals with complex issues and needs

## 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 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:**

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

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.

**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

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet “CPA NI Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and how to raise a complaint” which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests – please see **Annex D**.

### Standards of Behaviour

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve in public office will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

### The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

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.

All candidates who put themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the principles and values of public service. The Commissioner's Code of Practice states that individuals must meet the integrity principle. This is highlighted in paragraph 2.7 of the Code, which states:

*"Public appointees must be people who understand, apply and are committed to the principle of integrity and will perform their duties with moral rigour and honesty without personal or corporate gain."*

It is important that the candidate's commitment to the integrity principle is tested and assessed at interview. One of the issues which might arise in relation to this is that of conflict of interest.

### **What is a conflict of interest?**

Public appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

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

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

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of an office holder can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that an office holder 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 and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed.. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings when an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest.

However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Office or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process, which is put to the Ministers, will include clear written reference to any probity issues or perceived or actual conflicts of interest connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the 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 is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

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

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

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

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue in their role,

You may be asked to sign a declaration of commitment to the above principles as a condition of your appointment.

## Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a complaint



Judena Leslie, Commissioner

### ***Thank you for your interest in this appointment***

Public bodies have an important role to play in the lives of everyone. Among other things, they help run our health and social care services, arrange our education services and provide a wide range of social, economic, cultural and environmental services. Appointments to boards of public bodies are commonly known as public appointments.

Public appointments are made by individual Government Ministers. If you decide to apply for a public appointment the administration of your application will be handled by civil servants in the relevant Department. I regulate the selection process but I am not involved in individual competitions.

Departments must follow my 'Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Northern Ireland', to ensure that appointments are made on merit, after fair and open competition. The Code of Practice covers Ministerial appointments to a wide range of boards and public bodies. A full list can be found on the CPANI website at [www.publicappointmentsni.org](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org). The Code of Practice is also there.

### ***Making a Complaint***

If you apply for a public appointment, and you feel you have not been treated correctly, you may make a complaint.

I am responsible for investigating complaints about public appointments. I will look at the process used to make an appointment and the way an application was handled.

You should first raise your concerns with the relevant Department. If, after you have received a reply, you still feel you have not been treated correctly, you should contact me using the contact details below.

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland  
Annexe B - Dundonald House  
Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB  
Tel: 028 905 24820



Email: [info@publicappointmentsni.org](mailto:info@publicappointmentsni.org)

### ***Guidance on Conflicts of Interest and Integrity***

As part of the assessment process for a public appointment, you will be asked if you know of any possible conflicts of interest in connection with that appointment. Conflicts of interest are not always a barrier to appointment. However, all perceived, potential and real conflicts must be explored by the selection panel to ensure that the public can have confidence in the Board's independence and impartiality and in your position on that Board.

To give you an idea of what might constitute a conflict of interest here are a few examples of areas which could lead to a conflict of interest.

- You are the director of a building firm and the Board to which you are seeking appointment conducts regular procurement exercises for building materials. You could benefit personally from decisions taken by the Board.
- You are a manager in a voluntary organisation, whose funding applications are considered by the Board to which you are seeking appointment. The body for which you work could benefit financially from decisions taken by the Board.
- You have, in the past, contributed or lent significant funds to the political party to which the appointing Minister belongs. Your appointment could be viewed as a reward for past favours.

These are examples only. Please remember that identifying a conflict will not necessarily stop you being appointed. You should consider carefully your own circumstances to decide whether or not a perceived, potential or real conflict exists and be ready to discuss it with the Selection Panel at interview.

Even if you have not identified any conflicts of interest when applying for the post, you will still be asked about the issue if you are interviewed.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) has produced a good practice guide to conflicts of interest. This can be found on the NIAO website at [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk).

### **Integrity**

Anyone applying for a public appointment must understand and be committed to the principle of integrity. You will be asked about this at interview.

### **Feedback**

You may request feedback on the outcome of your application from the Department running this public appointment competition. This application pack contains relevant contact details. Feedback can be delivered in writing, by e-mail or by phone. It is up to you. It should be useful, jargon-free and based on the assessment of the selection panel. Please see paragraphs 3.48 and 3.49 of the Code of Practice.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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.

This section provides an explanation of the definition of disability.

### Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

This definition is interpreted as follows:-

**Physical Impairment:** this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs etc) caused through illness by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

**Mental Impairment:** this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability, and social functioning.

**Substantial:** put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day to day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

**Long-term adverse effect:** the effect has to have lasted or be likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

**A normal day to day activity:** this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

### ***What sort of effect must there be?***

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate,

learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

***What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?***

Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

***Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?***

Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:

Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;

Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and

People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

***Are any conditions not covered?***

Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:

Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);

Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;

Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;

Exhibitionism and voyeurism;

Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

***What if someone has recovered from a disability?***

Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Access to this data is restricted and misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.