

**Candidate Information Booklet**

**IRC273565**

**Board Members for the Victims and  
Survivors Service**

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

**on**

***Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022***

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 Board Member for the Victims and Survivors Service. 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 Board Members for the Victims and Survivors Service 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 Board Members for the Victims and Survivors Service 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>

## **CONTENTS**

Introduction

Role Description

Person Specification

Selection Criteria

Selection Process

How to Apply

Annex A - Further Details on Selection Criteria

Annex B - Interview Guidance

Annex C - Probity and Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates

Annex D - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **BACKGROUND TO THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS SERVICE**

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. The Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 provides that 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 conflict related incident and those who provided emergency assistance are also included in the interpretation if they have been psychologically injured.

The Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009 – 2019 was published in December 2009. The Strategy was designed to provide the outline of a coherent and comprehensive approach for taking forward work on a range of issues relating to victims and survivors. It articulated Government's commitment to victims and survivors and stated that Government should adopt a victim and survivor centred approach built around:

- a) a Victims and Survivors Service
- b) the Commission for Victims and Survivors; and
- c) a Victims and Survivors Forum.

### **The Victims and Survivors Service**

The Victims and Survivors Service was established under The Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee. The objects for which the Company is established are to:

- provide grant in aid funding to voluntary and community groups for the provision of services to victims and survivors;

- secure through the provision of an appropriate range of support services and other initiatives a measurable improvement in the wellbeing of victims and survivors;
- address the practical and other needs of victims and survivors in a co-ordinated manner;
- ensure that services for victims and survivors are provided in response to assessed need, adhere to published standards and are designed to have clear outcomes;
- promote collaborative working between statutory and voluntary organisations, community groups and others, where practicable;
- assist victims and survivors, where this is consistent with their wishes and wellbeing, to play a central role, as part of wider society in addressing the legacy of the past; and
- assist victims and survivors to contribute to building a shared and better future.

For policy/administrative purposes the Service is classified as an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB). An NDPB is a body which has a role in the process of government but is not a government department, or part of one. Accordingly NDPBs operate at arm's length from NI Departments. The constitution of the Service is set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Ministers set the policy framework and the Service ensures the effective delivery of services.

The Service implements a delivery model based on assessed need and the commissioning of services.

The VSS is headed by a Chief Executive Officer with a staffing team of 44. The Chief Executive Officer acts as designated accounting officer for the organisation. The initial budget for 2021/22 is approx. £14m.

To achieve a suitable level of accountability and governance and to ensure a high standard of service delivery the Service requires a Board. The Board complement is comprised of a Chair and seven Board Members.

### **Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse**

In addition to delivering support to victims and survivors of the troubles/conflict, VSS are also providing support to victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA). The HIA inquiry recommended additional service provision and specialist care and help for those who were abused. The Executive Office requested VSS to provide Health and Wellbeing services to survivors in October 2020, with this new service launching on 1 December 2020.

In this new role, VSS aims are to:

- Ensure the effective delivery of service provision and specialist care and support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA);
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of services to inform and improve service provision; and
- Ensure that services are victim-led, trauma-informed, accessible and continually responsive to the health and wellbeing needs of victims and survivors.

HIA have a budget of £940k for 2021/22.

### **The Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS)**

The Service is supported and advised by the Commission for Victims and Survivors. <http://www.cvsni.org/>

The Commission is a Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Commission's principal aim is to promote the interests of victims and survivors of the Troubles/Conflict which is the central reference point for all of CVS work.

Since 2009, CVS have made a significant impact promoting the interests of victims and survivors by:

- Helping to improve services provided.
- Providing research to help enable support and understanding.
- Promoting a voice through the sector's Forum and our activities.

More specifically, CVS have contributed to policy development of victims' payments; provided advice on legacy issues and dealing with the past; and given guidance to the Veterans' Commission UK.

The Commission plays a vital role in addressing the interests of victims and survivors in Northern Ireland and is the primary source of advice to government on victims and survivors issues; in particular the three key themes of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors (i) Dealing with the Past, (ii) Building for the Future, and (iii) Services.

### **Victims and Survivors Forum**

The Victims and Survivors Forum was established by the Commission in May 2012 and is based on the Strategy for Victims and Survivors. The aims of the Forum are:

- To be a place of consultation and discussion with victims and survivors of the Northern Ireland conflict/troubles;
- To provide advice to the Commission for Victims and Survivors.

In October 2012, three working groups were established in pursuit of the Forum's aims and objectives. Each of these working groups reflects the three key themes of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors as outlined above.

### **The Executive Office**

The Executive Office is a fully functioning department of the Northern Ireland Executive with a wide range of responsibilities. It has approximately 400 staff with the majority of staff based in Castle Buildings on the Stormont Estate, Belfast.

The overall aim of the Department is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society. The Department supports this vision through its Business Plan which reflects the commitments and key milestones in the Programme for Government for which TEO has responsibility. The Programme for Government is currently being reviewed.

The Victims and Survivors Unit sits within the Victims and Survivors Division, which is part of the SPGER Directorate. The unit was established to ensure that the rights and needs of victims and survivors are given high priority and to act as the sponsor team for the Victims and Survivors Service and Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.

### **VSS Board**

There are currently 5 vacancies on the Board.

While VSS is not a regulated body under CPANI legislation the appointment process will mirror the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland's (CPA NI) Code of Practice and the competition may be audited by the CPA NI for compliance with the Code.

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**

Members of the Board will be appointed in order to bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of operational management, performance and corporate governance.

Board members will be committed to ensuring that the Victims and Survivors Service is capable of providing support for all victims and survivors of the Northern Ireland Troubles/Conflict and Historical Institutional Abuse in a coordinated, outcome focused and efficient manner.

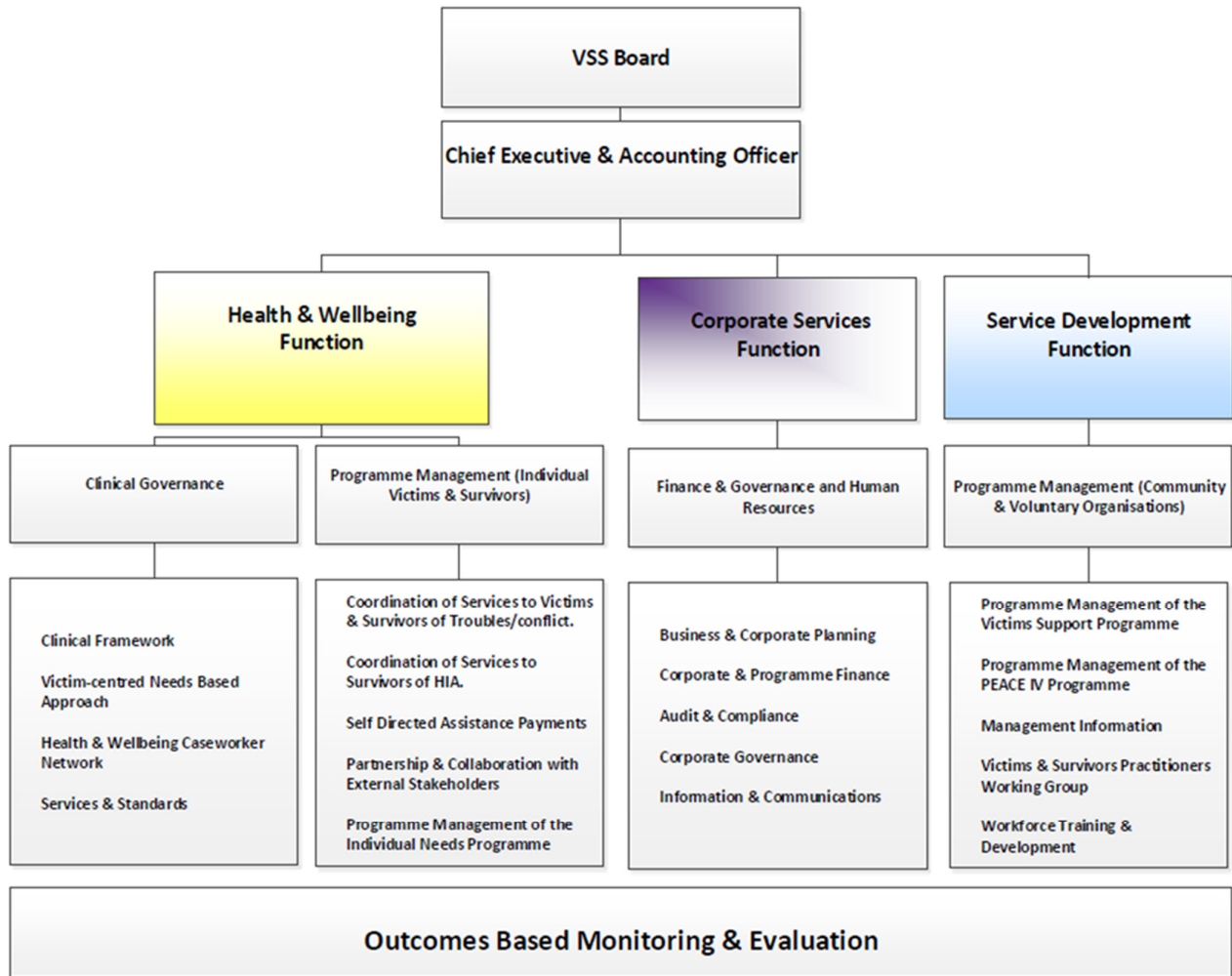
As Board Members of the Victims and Survivors Service, the post holders will take collective responsibility for maintaining an organisation that listens and is responsive to the needs of victims, and which works closely with the Commission for Victims and Survivors and Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse, (COSICA), to improve the lives of victims and survivors. The Chair and Board also have responsibility for ensuring the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by the organisation including the safeguarding of public funds and the promotion of propriety and value for money.

### **Key duties for all Members of the Board will include:**

- ensuring a high level of service delivery within the policy framework. Policy will be set by TEO and not by the Service;
- taking collective responsibility for the corporate governance of the Service;
- taking collective responsibility for the strategic oversight of the operational delivery of the Service;
- being responsible for directing and monitoring the Chief Executive;
- ensuring that the policies laid down by TEO are fully adhered to and that the Service operates within the limits of its strategic aims;

- ensuring that the Service complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds;
- overseeing the handling of non-clinical complaints;
- contributing to internal debate and decision-making on key operational issues relating to the delivery of publicly funded core services;
- overseeing the delivery of planned results by reviewing the Service's performance against agreed strategic objectives and targets;
- making use of specialist knowledge to provide advice as necessary;
- supporting the Chair in ensuring that business is carried out in accordance with approved codes of conduct;
- being formally responsible, alongside the Chair, for directing and monitoring the Chief Executive and his or her staff;
- making decisions on procurement issues; and
- members may also be called upon to chair sub-committees

## VSS Organisation Chart



## **Time Commitment and Remuneration**

The posts will be for a term of four years, with the possibility of one renewal for one further term of four years, subject to satisfactory performance.

The remuneration for Board Member positions will be up to a maximum of £3750 per annum (£125 per day), plus travel and subsistence costs. This is calculated on the basis that general board membership will require an average of 30 days per annum.

In order to comply with disclosure requirements, the Executive Office will be required to disclose details of the total remuneration, including any taxable benefits in kind and pension benefits for these posts in its annual accounts.

## **Location**

The Victims and Survivors Service is located in the centre of Belfast and the Chair and Board Members may be expected to travel throughout Northern Ireland. Travel and subsistence payments will be in accordance with those applicable in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

## **Training**

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

## **Code of Conduct**

To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the Service, Board Members are required on appointment, to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and to subscribe to the organisations Code of Conduct and Accountability / Code of Practice for Board Members.

## **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 Board Members performance throughout the period of appointment.

### **Further Information**

Any applicant seeking additional information about Board Members for the Victims and Survivors Service should contact the TEO Victims and Survivors Unit [victims.unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:victims.unit@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk), telephone 028 90528634.

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 5 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>

The current Board would benefit from a candidate with experience in Clinical Governance - Psychology or one of the allied professions. The Board would also benefit from a candidate with expertise in Human Resources.

## **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

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

1. at least 2 years senior management\* experience in, with or across the public, private, voluntary / community or other appropriate sectors; and
2. a proven track record in governance and accountability practices (this includes the development, implementation and management of governance and accountability practices including people, finances and annual business plans); and
3. had responsibility for strategic decision making and problem solving within resource constraints; and
4. experience of making a significant contribution to the strategic direction of an organisation; and
5. evidence of working collectively with others to deliver successful outcomes.

### **The following clarification is provided;**

\*Senior Management Level includes providing detailed advice on, or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting, strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or on a voluntary basis.

## **SHORTLISTING**

Applicants should be aware that, after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, this will be done by carrying out an objective evaluation of the information provided by candidates against the eligibility criteria. This will be completed on a scored basis with only the higher scoring applicants progressing to interview.

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



## 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 page 16. **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 16 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 D**). 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 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### **Interview of Eligible Candidates**

It is anticipated that interviews will take place week commencing 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022. 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 via e-mail to TEO VSU Division [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. 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.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister will make the final decision regarding an appointment from this competition. This may be based on the objective analysis provided by the selection panel. However, Ministers may also decide to meet with the most suitable applicants.

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.

### **Vetting**

The level of vetting for Board Members is a Baseline Standard. 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;

### **Basic 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 a Board Member.

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 VSS 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 the Victims and Survivors Service Board Member post is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of TEO.

Application forms can be completed via the online application at [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.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.

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.

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 Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022. 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 at <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/publications>

## **Further details on Selection Criteria**

### **Background**

1. A criteria-based selection procedure will be used in this appointment process.
2. The Board members do 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. at least 2 years senior management experience in, with or across the public, private, voluntary / community or other appropriate sectors;
2. a proven track record in governance and accountability practices (this includes the development, implementation and management of governance and accountability practices including people, finances and annual business plans);
3. had responsibility for strategic decision making and problem solving within resource constraints;
4. experience of making a significant contribution to the strategic direction of an organisation;

5. evidence of working collectively with others to deliver successful outcomes.

**The following clarification is provided;**

\*Senior Management Level includes providing detailed advice on, or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting, strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or on a voluntary basis.

**Shortlisting Criteria**

Applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, this will be done by carrying out an objective evaluation of the information provided by candidates against the eligibility criteria. This will be completed on a scored basis with only the higher scoring applicants progressing to interview.

## 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:**

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

The 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.

## **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 carryout 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.