



Department of  
**Finance**  
An Roinn  
**Airgeadais**  
[www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)



## **Candidate Information Booklet**

### **Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee (NIBRAC)**

### **Appointment of Committee Members**

**REF: IRC254981**

**Completed application forms  
must be returned to HRConnect  
no later than 12 noon (UK time)  
on  
Friday 6 November**

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

**This 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 Candidate Information Pack has been produced as a guide to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form for the post of Member of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee (NIBRAC). These documents 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 NIBRAC Members is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of the Department of Finance. 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.

If, after reading this candidate information booklet, you have further queries about the posts, we would encourage you to contact **Anna McNulty** either by phone **028 9025 7027** or email [anna.mcnulty@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:anna.mcnulty@finance-ni.gov.uk)

## **Privacy Notice**

A copy of the Public Appointments Privacy Notice is available at **Annex D**.

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page No</b>
<b>Welcoming Note from Department of Finance</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 2 Role Profile</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 3 Person Specification</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Section 4 Selection Process</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Section 5 How to Apply</b>	<b>16</b>

## **ANNEXES**

<b>Annex A Guidance to Essential Criteria</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Annex B Probity and Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex C CPANI Leaflet</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex D Privacy Notice</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Annex E Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b>	<b>34</b>

## FOREWORD

Dear Candidate,

### **Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee – Appointment of Committee Members**

Thank you for your interest in the role of Member of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee.

These are critical roles. Building Regulations are central to government's efforts to ensure that building work secures the health, safety and welfare of people in and around buildings and conserves fuel and power for generations to come. The system provides the main regulatory platform to control technical standards for building work in a Northern Ireland construction industry worth some £2.5 billion and providing 33,000 jobs.

As a Committee member you will have the opportunity to participate in reviewing the measures being put forward by the Department and contributing to the detailed development of the technical booklet guidance supporting the legislation, which is referenced daily by the industry.

These are exciting and challenging times and there is much to do. I hope you will consider applying for these positions. If you decide to apply please ensure that you read this booklet carefully, before completing the documentation fully and submitting your application by the required closing date.

If you have any queries about the post I would ask you to contact **Anna McNulty** either by phone on **028 9025 7027** or email to [anna.mcnulty@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:anna.mcnulty@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully



Sue Gray  
Permanent Secretary  
Department of Finance

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Department of Finance (The Department) is seeking to appoint six members to the Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee (NIBRAC).

NIBRAC is a statutory body which was set up in 1973 under Article 4 of the Building Regulations (NI) Order 1972 (now Article 4 of the Building Regulations (NI) Order 1979).

These appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland (CPANI) and the competition may be examined by CPANI for compliance with the Commissioners' Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

NIBRAC's function is to advise the Department on the amendment of building regulations and any matters arising out of or connected with the amendment or operation of building regulations which the Department may refer to NIBRAC. The Committee does not, therefore, have a direct interface with the building industry or the general public. The Department is required to consult NIBRAC about any amendment it proposes to make to building regulations.

The Committee comprises of a Chair and eight members, with all positions having a term of three years, which may be extended at the end of a term of office. The Chair, Mabel Higgins, and two of the members – David Algie and Ross Reid - have already been appointed following previous recruitment competitions<sup>1</sup>.

The Department is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit, independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants. Women, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority communities have been under-represented on NIBRAC to date. Therefore, applications from members of these groups would be particularly welcome.

Further information about Building Regulations and NIBRAC can be found at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/building-regulations-and-energy-efficiency-buildings/building-regulations>.

Further information about public appointments can be found at <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/public-appointments>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/appointment-chair-northern-ireland-building-regulations-advisory-committee>  
<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/appointment-members-northern-ireland-building-regulations-advisory-committee>

## SECTION 2 – ROLE PROFILE

### **Role of the Committee**

The Committee's role is to give independent expert advice to the Department on matters related to building regulations.

The Committee is an important forum for policy and technical matters directly affecting the building/construction industry and it is consulted before the Department carries out formal public consultations. The Committee also assists the Department in the development of detailed proposals through its working groups.

The composition of the Committee is aimed at providing an appropriate cross-section of experience from a wide range and variety of interests, backgrounds and professions associated with the building industry, including construction, research, design and material supply. This also includes those responsible for the implementation or enforcement of building regulations. The structure of the Committee and the positions allocated to the areas of expertise are indicated in Figure 1.

NIBRAC normally meets three to four times a year. In addition to these full meetings, essential work is carried out by members working in working groups called technical sub-committees. The working groups consider and advise on draft proposals for amending aspects of building regulations provisions and legislation. There is an expectation that members will participate in working groups where their expertise is essential in the review and amendment of legislation and in the consideration of complex technical issues in such areas as:

- Energy efficiency and conservation;
- Fire safety;
- Accessibility and sustainable buildings;
- Provision of services and Environmental matters; and
- Health, Safety and Welfare of people in and around buildings.

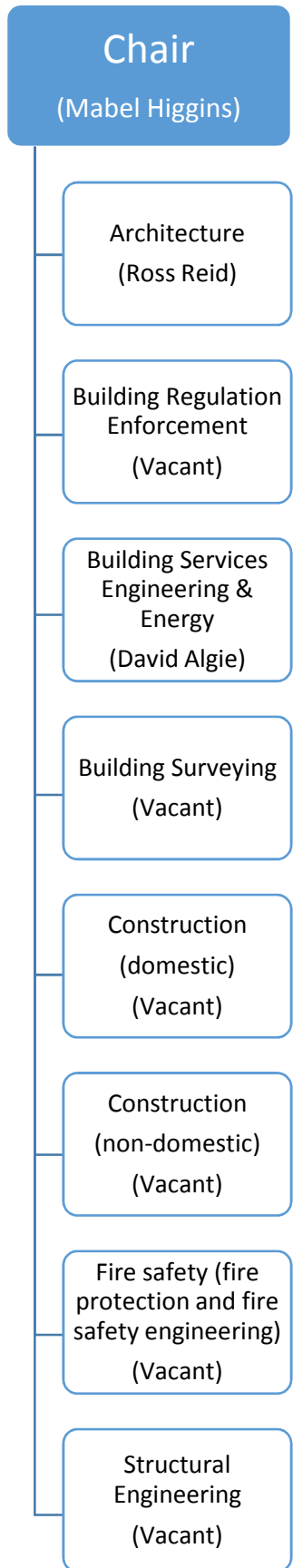


Figure 1: Composition of NIBRAC, detailing areas of expertise and associated posts. The Department aims to fill all vacant posts as a result of this competition.

## **Role of a Committee Member**

Members are expected to be able to fulfill duties and attend meetings regularly.

Members are not appointed to represent particular interests or organisations, but are expected to provide independent experience and knowledge.

Members are expected to contribute to working groups based on their expertise. Members may also have to chair working groups and provide feedback to the main Committee.

## **Training**

Appropriate induction training will be provided to successful candidates, subject to requirements.

## **Term of Appointment**

Members will be appointed for a three year term, which may be extended at the Department's discretion based on the performance of, and with the agreement of, the member.

If you have previously served two terms as a member of NIBRAC, you are ineligible to apply.

**Due to the immediate need to fill these vacancies, it would be intended for successful applicants to take up their post, with immediate effect, once all appointment decisions have been confirmed.**

## **Time Commitment and Remuneration**

The full NIBRAC meets on average three to four times per year. Additional time will be required to prepare for and follow up Committee meetings.

The frequency of working group meetings is determined by the scope and complexity of the areas under discussion.

Meetings are usually held in the Greater Belfast Area but have more recently been held remotely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a non-remunerated position, however, the Department will pay, in full, the reasonable expenses incurred by the member in attending meetings, including working groups, and undertaking other Committee business. These expenses will be paid at NI Civil Service Rates and cover:

- travel and subsistence costs; and
- overnight accommodation.



## **Code of Conduct**

To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the NIBRAC, Committee Members are required, on appointment, to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and to adhere to the conditions and procedures set out in the NIBRAC Members Handbook.

## **Performance Assessments**

There will be annual assessments of the performance of the Committee members by the NIBRAC Chair throughout their period of appointment.

## SECTION 3 – PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification addresses the qualities, experience and background sought. A criteria-based selection procedure is employed in accordance with CPANI guidance.

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 their ability against the criteria. 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.

In addition to holding a specified professional qualification, there is only one other essential criterion at application stage. Candidates invited for interview will be asked to demonstrate how they meet four essential criteria. These describe what you need to be able to do in order to be effective in the role being filled.

At each stage in the competition, 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.

Please note that applicants to previous NIBRAC recruitment competitions are very welcome to apply, subject to them meeting the criteria and conditions of application set out in this booklet.

**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>.

### **Member Specification**

Members will be selected on the basis of their suitability and expertise as demonstrated on the application form and at interview. Each NIBRAC member position is allocated to a specific area of expertise, as shown in Figure 1. Appointments have already been made to the Architecture and Building Services, Engineering and Energy areas of expertise.

Therefore, the six specific areas of proven expertise from which this recruitment is sought, are:

- Building Regulation Enforcement
- Building Surveying
- Construction (domestic)
- Construction (non-domestic)
- Fire safety (fire protection and fire safety engineering)
- Structural Engineering.

Candidates must demonstrate in their application forms experience and knowledge in relation to the area of expertise of each of the member position(s) that they wish to be considered for in this competition. Provision has been made for candidates to apply for more than one position in this competition on the same application form. However, it is important to note that only one person can ultimately be appointed for a single position as a result of this process.

### **Essential Criteria**

Appointment to NIBRAC as a member is conditional on the ability of the candidate to demonstrate competence against the following criteria (see **Annex A** for further information):

#### **At application stage:**

All applicants must be a current member (or higher) of a Chartered Professional Body incorporated under or with Royal Charter or equivalent; and hold the title of Registered Architect, Chartered Engineer, Chartered Surveyor or a title of equal standing from another construction profession<sup>2</sup>.

They must also demonstrate that they meet the following essential criterion:

- experience and knowledge of the area of expertise for the position(s) being applied for (candidates wishing to be considered for more than one position are required to demonstrate how they meet this criterion separately for each position applied for.)

#### **At interview stage:**

1. Up to date knowledge of the scope and application of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations;
2. Proven experience in a building or construction related field. (Must relate to the area of expertise of the position(s) applied for. Candidates applying for more than one position will be required to answer separate questions for this criterion in relation to each position for which they have been invited for interview.);
3. Effective Team Working & Communications Skills; and
4. Sound judgment and decision making.

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<sup>2</sup> Please give details of the professional membership held, and reasons why you consider this to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on the applicant to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well informed decision can be made.

## **Shortlisting**

Should shortlisting be necessary, this will be done by assessing the strength and quality of the evidence **provided in the candidate's application form** for the eligibility criterion for each position applied for. This will be completed on a scored basis with only the higher scoring applicants for each position progressing to interview.

## SECTION 4 – SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will adhere to the following steps:

- an eligibility sift of application forms by the Panel including the application of shortlisting if required.

Following the closing date for applications the Panel will formally assess each application form against the essential criteria, listed on page 10. **Only the Eligibility Section** of your application form will be forwarded to the panel.

**It is essential that you demonstrate in your application form how and to what extent your personal experience and skills are relevant to the position(s) being applied for and the extent to which they satisfy the criterion specified.**

**Only those applicants assessed as meeting all requirements set out (and shortlisting if required) 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 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 adverse long term 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 relevant section of the application form.

### **Interview of eligible candidates**

It is anticipated that interviews will take place in **Belfast during weeks commencing 7 December 2020**, however this may be subject to change, particularly if a decision is taken to extend the closing date of the competition. The Department of Finance will undertake the interview process in line with the applicable guidelines that the NI Executive and Public Health Agency have in place regarding COVID-19 at the time of interview. This is likely to include social distancing measures, or the hosting of the interview remotely by video.

Candidates should make themselves available during this time as reschedule requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Should there be any dates on which candidates are not available, they should declare this in the Further Information section on the application form. Reasonable travelling expenses will be reimbursed.

Please note that candidates invited for interview for more than one position will only need to attend one interview, during which all of the relevant questions will be covered, as set out in Annex A.

The selection panel members are:

- Desi McDonnell, Director of ESS Properties Division (Chair);
- Billy Black, Building Standards Branch (Panel member);
- Mabel Higgins, Chair of NIBRAC (Panel member); and
- Audrey McKeown, Independent Assessor, The Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (Panel member).

The selection panel will ask questions on each of interview criteria as listed on page 10 and further outlined in **Annex A** of this booklet.

The selection panel will assess the information presented by you 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.

Following interviews, the list of applicants who met the pass mark (including a short candidate summary) will be recommended to the Minister.

### **Presentation of Results to the Minister**

Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy, and the Minister has requested that he is presented with candidates in a ranked (merit) list.

The selection panel will present the names of candidates suitable for appointment in merit order.

The Minister will decide who should be appointed and may decide to meet the candidates prior to making his decision.

## **Appointment**

The candidates, whose applications are successful and who are appointed, will have their appointment formally confirmed in writing. Unsuccessful interviewees will also be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview.

Before appointment, a cross-departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles.

The Minister may choose to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancies that arise within 12 months of the date of the decision to appoint.

Upon appointment to the Committee, the appointee will undergo an induction programme.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Please refer to page 19 for information in relation to Disqualification, Probity/Integrity and Conflicts of Interest.

## **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 this 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.

## **Transgender Requirements**

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

## **Pre-appointments Checks**

Before the names of suitable candidates are presented to the Appointer, 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.

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.

If you are successful and are appointed, some information on your completed application form will be made public at the time of the announcement. This will include a brief summary of your career/experience; length of the appointment; details of any other Ministerial appointments held with any related remuneration received; and your response to the political activity question.

### **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.**



## SECTION 5– HOW TO APPLY

The competition to appoint Committee members is being managed by HRConnect on behalf of the Department of Finance.

Application forms can be completed via the online application or by hardcopy. In addition, alternative formats of the application form can be obtained 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.

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

**HRConnect  
PO Box 1089  
2nd Floor, The Metro Building  
6-9 Donegall Square South  
Belfast  
BT1 9EW**

Completed application forms should be submitted to HRConnect before the closing date of **12 noon (UK time) on Friday 6 November 2020**. The Department reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition, in which case all existing applicants would be notified and given the opportunity to amend their application forms before re-submitting them in advance of the revised closing date.

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.

### **Help with making your application**

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.

## **HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM**

**The following notes give guidance on completing the application form:**

### **Personal Details**

Please give full details for your name, home address, e-mail address and contact telephone numbers.

### **Data Protection**

Your rights under data protection legislation are outlined at Annex D.

### **Legal entitlement to work in the UK**

The Department must ensure that anyone it appoints is not subject to immigration control.

Advice on these issues can be obtained from the following website [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).

### **Changes in Contact Details**

Please ensure HRConnect is informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances, such as name, address or email address.

## **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

This is a criteria based selection process. The application form asks you to give practical examples of past experience to demonstrate your ability or competence. It's not just what you may have done but also how you did it and the level of responsibility held.

You can use examples from your working life, where appropriate, or from your personal life, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.

**It is not appropriate simply to list the various posts that you have held. Assumptions will not be made from the title of the post or the nature of the organisation as to the experience, qualities and skills gained.**

The following model may help you to structure your examples for each criterion and express them in a logical manner:-

**Challenge:** Describe a specific example(s) that relates to the criterion. Use actual examples, rather than 'how you would do something'.

**Context:** Explain the context or background to the example. Who else was involved? What were the particular circumstances etc? (E.g. colleagues, clients, shrinking budget, low morale.) Who were the principal decision makers?

**Action:** Outline the specific **actions you took** to meet the challenge and how you behaved. If your example includes activities undertaken by a team, focus on **your unique role** and not that of the team as a whole. Avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies.

**Result:** Describe the result or outcome of your actions and lessons you have taken from the example.

**Please note that further details on the Selection Criteria for this post(s) are contained at Annex A.**

## **DISQUALIFICATION, PROBITY / INTEGRITY 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 B** for further information on this subject.

The document provided at Annex C and [here](#) on the CPANI website provides information on conflicts; including some examples to help you evaluate whether or not you have a potential conflict. Conflicts of interest are any business or other interests or any personal connections which, if you are appointed, could be misconstrued or cause embarrassment to the Department or NIBRAC. These could include financial interests, or where you share ownership, active connections within a field of expertise in which NIBRAC works, membership of societies, activities, associations or employment of a partner or friend in any field NIBRAC operates.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **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.

## **DECLARATION**

You should read the declaration statement and confirm that you agree with this.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING**

Northern Ireland Departments are keen to encourage applicants from all sections of society and we are interested in monitoring all applicants in order to see how effective we have been. As such, we would like to ask you to complete the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form which is attached to the application form. **Please note, the monitoring form is not regarded as part of your application and is voluntary.** It is not made available to the selection panel and does not play a role in the decision-making process. All applications for appointment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

## 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 criterion.

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

**Challenge:** Describe a specific example(s) that relates to the criterion. Use actual examples, rather than 'how you would do something'.

**Context:** Explain the context or background to the example. Who else was involved? What were the particular circumstances etc.? (E.g. colleagues, clients, shrinking budget, low morale). Who were the principal decision makers?

**Action:** Outline the specific **actions you took** to meet the challenge and how you behaved. If your example includes activities undertaken by a team, focus on **your unique role** and not that of the team as a whole. Avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies.

**Result:** Describe the result or outcome of your actions and the lessons you have taken from the example.

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 best illustrate your skills and abilities against each criterion. 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>**

## **Feedback**

The Department of Finance 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 of Finance is 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.

## **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  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Metro Building  
6-9 Donegall Square South  
BELFAST  
BT1 9EW  
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 C**.

## Guidance to Essential Criteria (see Section 3 Person Specification)

### At application stage:

All applicants must be a current member (or higher) of a Chartered Professional Body incorporated under or with Royal Charter or equivalent; and hold the title of Registered Architect, Chartered Engineer, Chartered Surveyor or a title of equal standing from another construction profession<sup>1</sup>.

Applicants must provide details of their current membership and title held.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they meet the following essential criterion:  
**Experience and knowledge of the area of expertise for the position(s) being applied for**

Candidates wishing to be considered for more than one position are required to demonstrate how they meet this criterion separately for each position applied for. Provision has been made for candidates to apply for more than one position in this competition on the same application form. However, it is important to note that one person can ultimately only be appointed to one position as a result of this process.

### Essential criteria at interview stage:

#### **1. Up to date knowledge of the scope and application of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations.**

Applicants are to demonstrate, by way of examples, their up to date knowledge of the building regulations and supporting technical guidance.

Examples of the type of evidence that would demonstrate your suitability are outlined below. The answer you provide in your application and at interview does not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points.

- Knowledge of the functional or performance requirements imposed by the Northern Ireland Building Regulations;
- How you keep your knowledge up to date;
- How you have been involved in the application of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations; and
- How you have demonstrated compliance with the relevant requirements of the Building Regulations through alternative methods.

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<sup>1</sup> Please give details of the professional membership held, and reasons why you consider this to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on the applicant to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well informed decision can be made.



## 2. Experience and knowledge of the area of expertise for the position(s)

Applicants are to demonstrate, by way of examples, their knowledge, skills and experience in the construction or building related field relating to the area of expertise of the position(s) applied for. The specific areas of proven expertise from which this recruitment is sought, are:

- **Building Regulation Enforcement**
- **Building Surveying**
- **Construction (domestic)**
- **Construction (non-domestic)**
- **Fire safety (fire Protection and fire Safety Engineering)**
- **Structural Engineering.**

Examples of the type of evidence that would demonstrate your suitability are outlined below. The answer you provide in your application and at interview does not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points.

- How you have managed or delivered projects in a construction or building related field in line with best practice;
- How you have developed construction policy for the built environment in line with best practice;
- How you have provided advice in a construction or building related field in line with best practice; and
- How you maintain competence through regular professional development.

As set out above, candidates must select address this criterion for each of the positions for which they wish to be considered in this competition. The same approach will be taken at interview, where the questions asked in relation to this criterion will be tailored to focus on the area(s) of expertise applicants have selected. For example, all applicants applying for the Building Surveying position who are invited for interview will be asked questions relevant to that specialism.

Please note that candidates invited for interview for more than one position will only be required to attend one interview. In this scenario, separate questions relating to the area of expertise for each position applied for would be asked in relation to this criterion. For example, if an applicant was invited for interview for both Building Surveying and Structural Engineering, they would be asked separate questions for both of these areas of expertise. Questions relating to the other criteria will only be asked once at each interview regardless of the number of positions applied for.

### **3. Effective Team Working & Communications Skills**

Applicants are to demonstrate, by way of examples, their ability to communicate and work effectively as part of a team

You are to demonstrate how you have used your communication skills to develop constructive working relationships both internal and external to an organisation you have worked for or been involved with.

Examples of the type of evidence that would demonstrate your suitability are outlined below. The answer you provide in your application and at interview does not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points.

- Communicates effectively with colleagues, senior leaders and the public, challenging others when necessary;
- Ability to identify and use suitable communication methods depending on the audience and the situation;
- Using persuasive and compelling arguments, using clear, concise language, to get others to understand and accept a different perspective; and
- Ability to develop trustful peer relationships and to achieve consensus and ownership of team decisions.

### **4. Judgment and Decision Making**

Applicants are to demonstrate, by way of examples, sound judgment and decision making.

You are to demonstrate how you have used your judgment and made decisions that solved problems as an individual or as a team member in an organisational environment.

Examples of the type of evidence that would demonstrate your suitability are outlined below. The answer you provide in your application and at interview does not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points.

- Makes good decisions based upon research, analysis, experience and judgment;
- Makes decisions in a timely manner, sometimes with incomplete information and within tight deadlines;
- Uses logic and organisational analysis methods to solve difficult problems with effective solutions;
- Monitors outcomes and amend approaches to meet changing circumstances and quality improvement;
- Anticipates potential future scenarios or hidden problems that will impact on the organisation; and
- Gives advice and offer solutions on difficult problems.

## 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 C**.

### 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.

### **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.

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.

**PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS PRIVACY NOTICE**  
General Data Protection Regulation

Data Controller Name: Department of Finance  
Address: Clare House  
303 Airport Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9ED

Data Protection Officer Name: Data Protection Officer  
Address: Information Management Unit  
Room 23, Dundonald House  
Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

Telephone: (028) 9052 4961  
Email: [DataProtectionOfficer@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@finance-ni.gov.uk)

**Why are you processing my personal information?**

- Your personal information is required for the purposes of making this/these public appointment(s). Public body requirements are specified in law and the process of making appointments is carried out in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments in Northern Ireland.
- Equal opportunities monitoring information (provided voluntarily) is collected in an anonymous form for analysis by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). This information is used to monitor diversity in public appointments and a composite analysis is published in a Public Appointments Annual Report for Northern Ireland.

**What categories of personal data are you processing?**

- Contact details
- Equal opportunities monitoring information which includes sensitive data (special category data): national insurance number; gender; date of birth; marital status; disability; sexual orientation; race; community background; dependants; employment history sector; level of educational attainment.

**Where do you get my personal data from?**

- From the competition application form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring form you will have submitted.



### **Do you share my personal data with anyone else?**

- The relevant details from your application form will be shared with the competition panel which will include a departmental representative, an Independent Assessor and usually a representative from the public body. At the sifting stage this will exclude your identity details
- The equal opportunities monitoring information, in an anonymous form, is shared with NISRA. Your equal opportunities monitoring information will not be shared with the competition panel.
- Some of the information you have provided will be used in a press release announcing your appointment, including your response to a political activity questionnaire.
- Your name, address, date of birth, details of the post held and remuneration will be shared with NISRA to update the Public Appointments Database.
- Some of the information you have provided will be presented anonymously within the Public Appointments Annual Report.
- Your name, appointment term and details of remuneration will be published in the Public Bodies Annual Report.
- Some of the information you have provided may be disclosed to other government departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, or anonymously in response to Assembly/Parliamentary Questions and other enquiries.

### **Do you transfer my personal data to other countries?**

- No.

### **How long do you keep my personal data?**

- If you are successful in the competition, your details will be retained for a period of up to 10 years after the appointment ends (including reappointments).
- If you are unsuccessful, your details will be retained for three years from the close of the competition.

### **(If you use automated decision making or profiling) How do you use my personal data to make decisions about me?**

N/A.

### **What rights do I have?**

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being [processed, and access to your personal data](#)
- You are entitled to have personal data [rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete](#)
- You have a right to have personal data erased and to prevent processing, [in specific circumstances](#)
- You have the right to 'block' or suppress processing of personal data, [in specific circumstances](#)
- You have the right to data portability, [in specific circumstances](#)

- You have the right to object to the processing, [in specific circumstances](#)
- You have rights in relation to [automated decision making and profiling](#)

### **How do I complain if I am not happy?**

**If you are unhappy with how any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Department of Finance Data Protection Officer using the details provided above.**

**If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):**

#### **Information Commissioner's Office – Northern Ireland**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
14 Cromac Place,  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9027 8757

Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

## 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.