



Department for

**Communities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

# Appointment of three Members to the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd

## Candidate Information Booklet

Completed applications must be returned to DfC Public Appointments  
no later than 12 noon (GMT) on Monday 29 June 2026



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### **Equality of Opportunity and Diversity**

The Department for Communities (DfC) is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants.

We would particularly welcome applications from women, disabled people, young people and people from minority ethnic groups.

An e-version application pack is available from [publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk). This material will be made available on request in other formats such as Braille, large print, audio etc. All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability.

### **Privacy Notice**

DfC will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting new membership to the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd, in line with its Articles of Association and in line with the CPA NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at [www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/supplementary-privacy-notices-dfc-business-areas](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/supplementary-privacy-notices-dfc-business-areas).

### **Contact**

If you require further information about the appointment process or progress of your application, please contact Public Appointments as below:

028 9081 9417

[publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Public Appointments, Governance Unit Level 5,  
Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EG

# Contents

<b>Welcoming Note from Department for Communities</b>	<b>5</b>
USEL Board Member Pen Picture	5
<b>Section 1   USEL Background Information</b>	<b>8</b>
USEL Information	8
Public Appointments Information	9
<b>Section 2   Role Profile</b>	<b>9</b>
Role of the Board	11
Regulatory Responsibilities	12
Governance Arrangements	12
Integrity and Conflicts of Interest & Conflicts of Loyalty	13
Remuneration, Term of Appointment and Time Commitment	13
Appraisal	14
Previous Appointments to the USEL Board (the Two Terms Rule)	14
<b>Section 3   Person Specification</b>	<b>15</b>
Selection Criteria	16
<b>Section 4   Application, Selection and Assessment</b>	<b>19</b>
Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form	20
Timeframe for Process	20
Sifting and Shortlisting of Applications	21
Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)	21
Interviews	21
Appointment	22

Publicising Appointments	22
Diversity in Public Appointments	23
Induction and Training	23
<b>Section 5   Other Relevant Information</b>	<b>24</b>
Double Paying (Candidates from the Public Sector)	25
Former Civil Servant	25
Nationality Requirements	25
<b>ANNEX A</b>	<b>26</b>
THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE	27
<b>ANNEX B</b>	<b>28</b>
Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates	29

Dear Applicant,

## **ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) as a Member.

USEL is a unique and progressive organisation that plays a vital role in supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to gain skills, qualifications, and progress in employment - building their confidence and fostering independence.

Working in close partnership with NI Executive Departments, USEL shapes labour market policy, delivers employability provision, and operates a social enterprise business model that supports 1000's of disabled people annually to move closer, find and thrive in employment.

We are seeking individuals for the USEL Board that are passionate about disability, and in ensuring that everyone is afforded the equality of opportunity to live full and meaningful lives. As a Board Member you will have an excellent opportunity to set direction, support the organisation, and further develop your own skills and experience. A pen picture is attached from Ellen Finlay, a current USEL Board Member, providing detail on her role.

Applications are welcome from individuals from all backgrounds; and in particular from women, people with a disability, people from minority ethnic groups and young people; as they are under-represented on public sector boards. The Department recognises the importance of a diverse Board, to reflect the society it serves.

I trust that the information enclosed encourages you to apply for the position.

**Stephen McGlew**  
**Director for Work and Wellbeing Transformation**  
**Department for Communities**

**Ellen Finlay has been a USEL Board member since December 2024. Below she gives an insight into her background and her role on the Board:**

“I have spent over 25 years working across the community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on advocating for children and young people, those with ill-mental health, social inequality and supporting individuals who face barriers to participation in society. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with statutory bodies, community organisations and policymakers to influence change and improve outcomes for those who are often excluded from opportunity.

I currently hold a number of public appointments, including Non-Executive Director at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Equality Commissioner. These roles have strengthened my experience in governance, accountability and strategic oversight, including scrutinising performance, managing risk and ensuring organisations deliver effectively within challenging environments.

Alongside this, I founded Policy 360, a social enterprise that helps organisations engage more effectively with policy and decision-makers. This work has given me a strong understanding of sustainability, income generation and the importance of aligning social purpose with commercial thinking.

I was drawn to USEL because of its clear social mission and the practical difference it makes in supporting people with disabilities and health conditions into employment. Its model—combining social enterprise with employment support—reflects an innovative and outcomes-focused approach.

From my experience, effective boards balance support with constructive challenge. I bring a focus on governance, strategic thinking and partnership working, alongside a strong understanding of the wider policy and social context.

I believe diverse boards make better decisions. My own path into public appointments has not been traditional, and I recognise that many people may not immediately see themselves in these roles. Applying can feel like a big step, but what matters most is your perspective, your willingness to contribute and your interest in the organisation’s purpose.

I have found board roles both challenging and rewarding. If you want to help create opportunities for people facing barriers to employment, I would really encourage you to consider applying.”

# Section 1

## **Background Information**

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1. The Department for Communities (DfC) wishes to invite applications for the appointment of three Members to the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL). Two appointments are expected to begin on 1 December 2026, with an additional appointment from 1 August 2027. All appointments are for a term of up to four years.

### USEL Background Information

2. USEL was established to provide supported paid employment for people with disabilities and health-related conditions. As a public body operating within Northern Ireland, USEL plays a central role in delivering inclusive employment outcomes aligned to wider economic and social policy objectives.
3. Today USEL is the largest provider of supported employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland. The organisation supports over 1,000 individuals annually, working in partnership with more than 750 employers to help people enter, sustain, and progress in employment.
4. USEL’s vision is: “A Northern Ireland where people with disabilities and health conditions are supported to access, sustain and progress in employment.”

Its Mission is: “To improve economic participation by supporting people with disabilities and health conditions into inclusive and sustained employment.”

### Scale and Operations

5. USEL employs approximately 165 staff across its operations, with around 70% of employees within its manufacturing and recycling facilities in Belfast identifying as having a disability or health-related condition. This reflects the organisation’s dual role as both an employer and an enabler of employment.
6. The organisation operates at multiple sites across Northern Ireland, including its head office in Belfast, delivering a combination of commercial and publicly funded services.
7. USEL’s activities are structured across three core areas:
  - Commercial Operations - Manufacturing (including industrial sewing products), circular economy services (including mattress recycling and confidential paper shredding), and café and hospitality services.
  - Employment Services - Delivery of employment support programmes, skills development and training provision, and in-work support for individuals and employers.
  - Partnership Delivery - Collaboration with public, private, and voluntary sector employers to deliver supported employment pathways at scale.
8. For the 2025/26 financial year, USEL’s annual turnover is approximately £10 million, derived from a combination of commercial income and public funding.

9. Further information on USEL and the work of its Board can be found at **<https://www.usel.co.uk/>**

### **Public Appointments Information**

10. Appointments to the USEL Board are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and this competition may be examined by CPA NI for compliance with its Code of Practice.
11. The NI Executive has introduced targets for the equal representation of men and women on public body boards.
12. If you are interested in applying for this competition, further information about public appointments, including how to complete an application form, can be found at **<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/government/public-appointments>**
13. The CPANI website also hosts useful public appointment information: **<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/>**

# Section 2

## Role Profile

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## Role of the Board

14. USEL operates within a robust governance framework as a publicly funded body, with oversight provided by its Board. The Board is responsible for ensuring:
  - Strategic leadership and organisational direction.
  - Effective governance, risk management, and assurance.
  - Financial stewardship and value for money.
  - Alignment with government policy and stakeholder expectations.
15. Board members play a critical role in supporting the organisation to balance its social mission with commercial sustainability, ensuring that USEL continues to deliver measurable impact for individuals, employers, and the wider economy.
16. The purpose of the Board is to collectively provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation and ensure that the policies and priorities set by the Minister for the Department for Communities are implemented. It is responsible for ensuring that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place and an internal control framework which allow risks to be effectively identified and managed. The Board will set the culture and values of the organisation and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers.
17. Communication and relationships within the Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect whilst maintaining a strong focus on building a productive Board dynamic.
18. The Board is responsible for holding the Chief Executive to account for the management of the organisation and the delivery of agreed plans and outcomes. The Board should also however support the Chief Executive as appropriate in the exercise of their duties.
19. Board members act solely in the interests of USEL and must not use the Board as a platform to champion their own interests or pursue personal agendas. They occupy a position of trust, and their standards of action and behaviour must be exemplary and in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles). USEL has a Board Code of Conduct and there are mechanisms in place to deal with any Board disputes/conflicts to ensure they do not become wider issues that impact on the effectiveness of the Board. A Board Register of Interests is maintained, kept up to date and is publicly available to help provide transparency and promote public confidence in USEL.
20. It is for the Board to decide what information it needs, and in what format, for its meetings/effective operation. If the Board is not confident that it is being fully informed about the organisation this will be addressed by the Chair of the Board, as the Board cannot be effective with out-of-date or only partial knowledge.

21. In order to fulfil their duties, Board members must undertake initial training, and regular ongoing training and development. Review of Board skills and development will be a key part of the annual review of Board effectiveness.
22. USEL operates a separate pension provision for its employees. From time to time, and subject to the needs of the scheme, Board members or other individuals may be considered for appointment to the Pension Scheme Trustee Board. Such appointments are separate from Board membership and are not an automatic or inherent requirement of the role. The Trustee role carries a significant additional time commitment and fiduciary responsibility. Individuals appointed as Trustees will be supported through appropriate training and ongoing development to discharge their responsibilities effectively, in line with the governance requirements of the scheme.

### Regulatory Responsibilities

23. USEL operates under a Restricted Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence, which permits the organisation to operate goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes for the transport of its own goods within the UK and EU. This licence is issued under the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995 and is integral to the organisation's operational delivery.
24. From a governance perspective, directors are formally associated with the operator's licence. As such, Board members should be aware that:
- Director details must be accurately recorded and kept up to date with both

Companies House and the Office of the Traffic Commissioner

- Any changes to Board membership require timely notification to maintain compliance
- The Board holds collective responsibility for ensuring that the organisation meets the regulatory and legal requirements associated with the licence

### Governance Arrangements

25. Good governance is essential to the achievement of an organisation's strategic objectives and demonstration of accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. It is therefore an important area of focus for the USEL Board. The USEL Board is committed to high standards of Corporate Governance and has established a governance framework which reflects all relevant good practice guidance. The framework includes the governance structures and the internal control, risk management and assurance arrangements which are in place.
26. The USEL Board has three sub-committees: the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the Finance Committee, and the People and Organisational Development Committee. It is likely that new Members will join one or more of these Committees. Further information on corporate governance arrangements can be found within USEL's Annual Report which is available on its website.

## Integrity and Conflicts of Interest & Conflicts of Loyalty

27. DfC must ensure that the individuals appointed are committed to the principles and values of public service. These principles are: **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership** and are described more fully at **Annex A**. Any private or personal interests that a potential appointee may have and that may be relevant to the work of the USEL must be declared publicly and to the Board.
28. DfC must take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest or conflicts of loyalty. Conflict of loyalty is a particular type of conflict of interest, in which an individual's loyalty or duty to another person or organisation could prevent the individual from making a decision only in the best interests of the organisation.
29. Therefore, applicants must disclose in their application form information or personal circumstances which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Conflicts of interest may not be a barrier to appointment but both real and perceived conflicts must be discussed with all candidates by the Selection Panel. This is to ensure that the public can have confidence in the Board's independence and impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointees.
30. Please refer to **Annex B** for further information on this subject. The Northern Ireland Audit Office has issued a Good Practice Guide on Conflicts of Interest which can be viewed at: **<https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/conflicts-interest-good-practice>**

## Remuneration, Term of Appointment and Time Commitment

31. Board members receive remuneration of £168.78 for each board meeting attended. Travel and subsistence allowances for official business will be payable. Any extra work undertaken will be paid at an hourly rate. Allowance towards reasonable care costs are available.
32. The time commitment required for all Board Members is attendance at approximately 11 board meetings per year, plus other ad-hoc activities and attendance at any relevant board member training. Board meetings are normally held at USEL's Head Office, Cambrai Street, Belfast. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month during the morning, but this may be open to flexibility.
33. Two appointments are for a term of up to 4 years commencing on 1 December 2026. with a further 4-year appointment from 1 August 2027. All appointments are for a term of up to 4 years commencing on 1 December 2026 or 1 August 2027.

## Appraisal

34. The performance of Board Members will be subject to ongoing performance appraisal with a formal assessment being completed by the Chair of the Board at the end of each year (and prior to any reappointment taking place). Board Members will be made aware that they are being appraised, the standards against which they will be appraised, and will have an opportunity to contribute to and view their report.

## Previous Appointments to the USEL Board (the Two Terms Rule)

35. Under the CPA NI Code of Practice, applicants who have served two terms as USEL Members are not eligible to apply for a third term. Any previous time served as a Board member will be taken into account. If you are unsure if this applies to you, please contact DfC using the contact details in Section 4.

# Section 3

## Person Specification

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36. Applications are welcome from a wide range of individuals who have an interest in public service. The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career paths and experiences such as community involvement or charitable and voluntary work, as well as those experiences found from within the business community and the wider public sector.

## Selection Criteria

37. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate in their application form and - if shortlisted - at interview specific examples that show they are able to satisfy each of the following essential criteria and have the skills, experience and knowledge required:

**Note:** The term ‘organisation’ can be defined as a body operating in the public, community, voluntary or private sectors.

### 1. Working Together

Ability to work effectively and constructively as part of a team, with experience of collective, consensus-based decision making.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below. You do not have to describe activities which meet each and every one of these bullet points:

- Experience of developing trustful peer relationships.
- Ability to use persuasive and compelling arguments, using clear, concise language, to get others to understand

and accept a different perspective on a complex issue.

- Ability to challenge the views of others in a constructive and supportive way.
- Experience of resolving conflicts to ensure the aims of the team/ organisation are met through consensus decision making.
- Ability to make decisions on the basis of analysis, experience and judgement.
- Understanding your role, and the role of others, in a team.

### 2. Governance and Accountability

Experience of good governance within an organisation.

**NB** Governance refers to the way in which an organisation is directed and controlled. This includes how objectives are set, how resources are used, and how performance and risks are monitored and assessed.

Examples of the type of evidence which the selection panel will be looking for are outlined below:

- Understanding your role in the promotion of good governance including how to reduce any potential reputational damage or fraud.
- Experience of constructively challenging decisions, policies or procedures based on relevant evidence.
- Ability to hold people to account for decisions reached.
- Experience in developing, implementing, or monitoring key governance and risk

documents / policies.

- Being able to identify, evaluate and manage risks which may have an impact on an organisation's performance both adversely and positively.
- Demonstrating standards of behaviour that gain a reputation of trust and integrity within a team / organisational environment.

### 3. Relevant Experience

The USEL Board seeks a strong and balanced mix of skills and experience among its Members and will appoint individuals from a broad range of profession backgrounds to support its effectiveness.

Therefore, using **one** of the below areas please demonstrate, by way of example (or examples), the skills you possess that the Board would benefit from.

#### (a) Commercial Experience

Experience of providing strategic oversight of commercial activity at board or senior leadership level.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for include:

- Ability to provide board-level scrutiny and challenge of commercial strategy, business cases, and major investment proposals.
- Experience overseeing value for money, procurement, and contractual arrangements.
- Understanding of commercial risk, assurance, and governance

requirements.

- Experience evaluating partnerships, income generation, or growth opportunities.
- Ability to apply strategic judgement to support long-term organisational sustainability.

#### (b) Financial Experience

Experience of dealing with financial management and financial analysis, including internal control and audit systems.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for include:

- Ability to constructively challenge financial proposals, including value-for-money assessments within business case processes.
- Understanding of public finances, including budget setting, financial planning, and annual reporting standards.
- Experience of financial management and effective use of resources.
- Experience of overseeing risk management, internal control, and/or audit frameworks.
- Ability to scrutinise and interrogate complex financial statements and budgets and raise issues requiring action.

#### (c) Information & Data Management Experience

Experience of overseeing effective information and data management, including cyber security arrangements within an organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for include:

- Ability to provide strategic oversight, assurance, and constructive challenge in relation to technology, data, and cyber risk.
- Understanding how digital and technology solutions support the delivery of organisational aims and objectives.
- Awareness of the opportunities and threats presented by technological developments, including cyber risk and resilience.
- Ability to provide independent and constructive challenge of technology, data and cyber security matters and ensure appropriate assurance.
- Understanding of business-critical cyber security and cyber resilience requirements.

#### **(d) People and Human Resource Management Experience**

Experience of overseeing people management, workforce planning and/or organisational culture.

Examples of the type of the type of evidence the selection panel will be looking for include:

- Experience of contributing to board or senior-level decisions on workforce strategy, organisational structure and/or people-related priorities.
- Experience of utilising people strategies to improve organisational performance.
- Understanding of the role of leadership and culture in supporting organisational performance
- Ability to apply strategic insight, exercise independent judgement and provide constructive challenge in relation to HR & people management issues.
- Awareness of key workforce risks and how these are managed

# Section 4

## **Application, Selection and Assessment**

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38. All applications must be made on the form provided. Hard copy or electronic versions are acceptable. Completed application forms can be delivered by email, hand or post to:

Email **publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk**

Public Appointments  
Governance Unit  
Department for Communities  
Level 5  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90819417

If you have any queries regarding the appointment process or any other aspect of this competition, please contact Ruth McNeill via the above contact details.

39. In your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in. Make sure you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you consider you meet the requirements for this appointment. Further advice can be found within the application form.

40. To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;

- applicants must ensure their completed application form is legible, whether this is completed electronically or written;
- applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline;
- The number of words is limited to 350 per criterion.

**41. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application form is complete.**

### Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

42. The DfC is required to monitor a number of areas including gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form included in the application pack. The information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is not made available to the selection panel and does not play any part in the decision-making process.

### Timeframe for Process

**43. The deadline for receipt of all applications is 12 noon (GMT) on Monday 29 June 2026** with delivery instructions at paragraph 38. It is the responsibility of the applicant, taking into account their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with the Department, on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

44. Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt in this office. The date and time at which the electronic application was received as recorded by the Department's IT system will be used to determine whether an application sent electronically is received before or after the closing date/time.
45. Once your application has been received, it will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

### Sifting and Shortlisting of Applications

46. The selection panel will meet to consider applications on 8 September 2026 and will carry out a sift exercise, against a numerical rating scale, to assess how the skills, knowledge, experience and other qualities presented in your application meet the selection criteria as detailed in Section 3. Applications provided to the selection panel will be anonymised, which means that it will not include your name or personal details.
47. Only those applications that meet the acceptable standard for each of the essential criterion will be considered for interview. If a high number of applications are received and shortlisting is required the panel reserves the right to apply a rating system to further shortlist applicants for interview, so that the top scoring candidates progress. All candidates sifted out will be provided with feedback based on the selection panel's agreed assessment of their application, if requested, as well as

having the option of asking for a review of the selection panel's decision.

### Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

48. The aim of the GIS 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. Further information on this scheme can be found in Section 6 of the application form.

### Interviews

49. Interviews are expected to take place on 9, 15 & 16 October 2026 at Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast. The selection panel members are:
- Stephen McGlew: Director for Work and Wellbeing Transformation, DfC (Chair);
  - William Leathem: Chair, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (Panel Member); and
  - Kate Magee: Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Independent Assessor (Independent Panel Member).
50. The interview will be criteria based which means that all the questions asked by the selection panel will be linked to the criteria. You will be asked to provide specific examples and the selection panel will evaluate your answers. Candidates invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and Ireland only.

**Candidates are asked to advise DfC Public Appointments if they anticipate difficulties attending on the dates specified.**

51. The selection panel will score candidates at interview against an agreed pass mark and those found to have achieved the pass mark will be recommended for appointment. All candidates will be updated on the outcome of their interview, with feedback on their performance provided upon request. The Minister for Communities has stipulated that appointments will be made on the basis of unranked (alphabetical) lists of candidates.
52. A 'candidate summary' will be agreed by the panel. This will provide an objective analysis of each candidate's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each candidate during the appointment process and the panel's assessment of that candidate, and inform the final appointment decision. The summaries will be presented in an unranked order to the Minister.
53. Those candidates who are unsuccessful at interview and do not have their name presented to the Minister, will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview which will include detail on how to request feedback on their performance. Candidates who are successful at interview, and will be considered for appointment, will be advised in writing.

## Appointment

54. Those candidates whose application is successful, and who are appointed by the Minister, will have their appointment confirmed formally in writing. Those candidates not selected by the Minister, will also be advised in writing of the outcome.
55. Prior to names being presented to the Minister, a cross-departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles. Any information that indicates that a candidate's performance and / or probity have been unsatisfactory will be noted in the candidate summary. A bankruptcy check may also be conducted.
56. The Minister for Communities will be asked if he wishes to create reserve lists for Member positions to fill any unforeseen vacancies on the Board that may arise within 12 months from the date of the Minister's decision.

## Publicising Appointments

57. A press release will be published to announce the appointments with the appointees required to complete a political activity form and approve a short biography for publication. The biography will be based on information provided by the candidate throughout the competition process.
58. The press release will include:
  - The appointee's name;
  - A short description of USEL;

- A brief summary of the skills and knowledge they bring to the role;
- The length of the appointment term and detail on remuneration;
- Details of all other ministerial public appointments held and any related remuneration received; and
- Details of the appointee's response to the political activity question.

## Diversity in Public Appointments

59. DfC is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. We would particularly welcome applications from women, people with a disability, young people and people from minority ethnic groups, as these groups are under-represented in public appointments.
60. All public appointments must be made on the basis of merit. Only those individuals judged to best meet the requirement of the post will be recommended to the Minister for appointment. The final decision on appointment will rest with the Minister for Communities.

## Induction and Training

61. Those appointed will be expected to attend appropriate induction and training courses, as a condition of your appointment. Further information will be provided upon appointment.

**62. Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support is needed to help appointees carry out their duties.**

## Complaints

63. If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this appointments process, you should in the first instance contact DfC's Head of Governance Public Appointments who will manage your complaint:

FAO Head of Governance and Public Appointments  
Department for Communities  
Level 5  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

Email: **CGU@communities-ni.gov.uk**  
Telephone: 028 90819192

64. If you remain dissatisfied you may contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI at:

Email: **info@publicappointmentsni.org**  
Telephone: 028 905 24820

# Section 5

## **Other Relevant Information**

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## Double Paying (Candidates from the Public Sector)

65. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:
- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in DfC's view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments; and,
  - they will be asked to confirm that they have permission from their employer to take up an appointment if one is offered and the employer will be asked to confirm this.
  - 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.

## Former Civil Servant

66. Any former civil servant applying for this position must comply with the relevant approvals from section 6.1 Annex 4 of the NICS HR Handbook – Standards of Conduct, i.e. for SCS to seek approval for any appointment up to two years following leaving the service, and following one year for G6 and below. This should be ascertained in advance of any application being submitted.

## Nationality Requirements

67. DfC has no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only. However, there is a mandatory requirement to ensure that those appointed do not contravene immigration legislation:
- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
  - Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.
  - There is an onus on non-UK and non-RoI citizens to provide proof of their right to work in the UK and an onus on the appointer to check that.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual to provide evidence that they have the appropriate permission if being offered a post. The Department will check the individual's passport, share code or other documents, if necessary, to confirm if they can legally work in the UK.

# ANNEX A

A person wearing a light-colored blazer is seated at a desk, using a silver laptop. Their right hand is resting on the laptop's trackpad. To the left of the laptop, there is a stack of papers or a folder. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text 'ANNEX A' is overlaid in the top left corner in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with a blue horizontal line underneath it.

## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

Public appointees are expected to uphold the seven principles of public life as set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

### **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 doing so.

### **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.

# ANNEX B

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This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet “Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and How to Raise a Complaint” produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland, which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests. 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. One of the issues which might arise in relation to this is that of conflict of interest.

### What is a conflict of interest?

1. 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.
2. 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?

3. The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a board member 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 a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

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

4. 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?**

5. No - each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the board 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 where 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 board or the appointment, they can withdraw your application from the competition.
6. The report on the outcome of the interview process which is put to the Minister will include clear written reference to any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or integrity issues connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Minister is fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

### **What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?**

7. 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?**

8. This situation may arise where the candidate 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?**

9. 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 on the board 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.
10. In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the board and the Chief Executive of the body concerned, in consultation 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.

11. It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such, cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the board.

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