



Appointment of Members to the Board of National Museums NI

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed applications must be returned
to DfC Public Appointments no later than
12 noon on Monday 12 October 2026

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

Telephone: 028 9081 9417

E-mail: publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk

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

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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 experienced 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. 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 National Museums Northern Ireland in line with the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order April 1998, and in line with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI.

For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/supplementary-privacy-notices-dfc-business-areas.

Dear Applicant

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of National Museums NI as a Member. You may already be familiar with some of the organisation's important work, but the following pages will provide further insight into its purpose and impact.

National Museums NI is an arm's-length body of the Department for Communities and plays a vital role in enriching society through the promotion of art, history, science and culture. Through inspiring exhibitions, engaging visitor programmes and exceptional collections, its museums spark curiosity, deepen understanding and connect people with their heritage. By helping us to explore the past, they also encourage us to shape a more informed and confident future. The four museums that make up National Museums NI are not only treasured cultural assets but also leading visitor destinations that make a significant contribution to tourism and the local economy.

The Board plays a key role in supporting and guiding the organisation's success, ensuring that its vision, policies and strategies are delivered effectively and responsibly. Board Members have an exciting opportunity to help shape the future direction of National Museums NI, champion its work and contribute their expertise in support of strong governance, innovation and the effective use of resources. In doing so, they help foster a culture built on positive values, collaboration and excellence.

The Department recognises the value that diverse perspectives bring to effective decision-making and is keen to attract applicants with a broad range of skills, experiences and backgrounds to complement and strengthen the existing Board.

I hope the information enclosed inspires you to apply for this opportunity. We look forward to receiving your application. Please ensure that all documentation is completed in full and submitted by the closing date.

Louise Hyland
ALB Sponsor Branch, Culture Division, DfC

Section 1 – Background Information

1. This competition is for the appointment of new Members to the Board of National Museums NI. The appointments are expected to take effect from 1 December 2026, for a period of four years from this date. This competition may also be used to fill any unexpected Member vacancies that arise over the next 12 months.

National Museums NI Information

2. National Museums NI is the corporate name of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries of NI, established under the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998. It is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC). For ease of reference, the term ‘Board Member’ will be used in this document to encompass the full set of duties of an appointee.
3. National Museums NI is responsible for four museums – the Ulster Museum, the Ulster Folk Museum, the Ulster Transport Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park – and serves as custodian for an extraordinary 1.4 million objects in Northern Ireland’s national collection. Over the past number of years, it has embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation, including the landmark ‘Reawakening’ project at the Ulster Folk Museum.
4. To support its transformational work, National Museums NI has rolled out its Corporate Strategy for 2025-30: <https://www.nationalmuseumsni.org/corporate-strategy-2025-2030> The intention of the Strategy is to amplify the impact of museums and collections even further, using them to spark conversation, provoke action and tackle today’s biggest challenges. It focuses on four key areas, which are aligned to the missions in the NI Executive’s Programme for Government.

- a. Identity: Champion diverse and ever-evolving identities, creating spaces where different cultures are visible and respected.
- b. Peacebuilding: Encourage courageous conversations that support the ongoing journey from conflict to lasting peace.
- c. Environment: Mobilise our museums and collections to promote environmental action and protect our shared planet.
- d. Innovation: We will be a learning platform to equip a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs with skills, confidence and creativity.

As a Board Member, you will have a key oversight role in the implementation of the Strategy.

5. National Museums NI’s annual operating costs are approximately £20m, and it employs around 300 staff. In addition to funding provided by the Department, National Museums NI is focussed on implementing its commercial strategy to help realise its purpose, with attention on revenue generation and alternative funding avenues.
6. Further information about National Museums NI and its Board can be found at <https://www.nmni.com>

Public Appointments Information

7. Appointments to the National Museums NI Board are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and the competition may be examined by CPA NI for compliance with the Commissioner’s Code of Practice.
8. The NI Executive has introduced targets for the equal representation of men and women on public body boards.

9. Useful information about public appointments, including how to complete an application form, can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/public-appointments as well as the CPANI website <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/workshops>.

Key Competition Dates

10. The below table provides details of key dates for this competition:

Closing date for applications	12 October 2026
Panel meets to sift applications	22 October 2026
Update provided to candidates	w/c 26 October 2026
Interview dates	9, 11 and 12 November 2026
Expected date of appointment	1 December 2026

Section 2 – Role Profile

Role of the National Museums NI Board

11. In line with its legislation, the membership of the National Museums NI Board should consist of between 12 to 15 members including the Chair. The body is also a registered charity with the Board acting as Charity Trustees.
12. Its main statutory functions are to care for, preserve and add to the objects in its collections, interpret and exhibit them to the public, and to promote the awareness, appreciation and understanding by the public of art, history and science, the culture and way of life of people and the migration and settlement of people. The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that National Museums NI fulfils its statutory remit as fully outlined in the Museums & Galleries (NI) Order 1998.
13. The purpose of the Board is to provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation and to ensure that the policies and priorities set by the Minister for Communities, and the NI Executive, are implemented. The Board sets the culture and values of the organisation and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers.
14. 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.
15. Board Members act solely in the interests of National Museums NI 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). A Board Code of Conduct is in place 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 National Museums NI.

16. Communication and relationships within the Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect. The Board recognises that using consensus to avoid conflict or encouraging members to consistently express similar views or consider only a few alternative views does not encourage constructive debate and does not give rise to an effective Board dynamic.

Governance Arrangements

17. Good governance is essential to 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 Board. The Board is committed to high standards of corporate governance. 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.
18. The Board currently has one sub-committee to support its work, an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. This Committee's membership is drawn from National Museums NI Board members. Further information on corporate governance can be found within the National Museums NI Annual Report which is available on its website.

Integrity, Conflicts of Interest & Conflicts of Loyalty

- 19.** 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 C. Any private or personal interests that a potential appointee may have and that may be relevant to the work of National Museums NI must be declared publicly and to the Board.
- 20.** 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.
- 21.** Therefore, applicants must disclose in their application form information or personal circumstances which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict or be perceived as such. Conflicts 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.
- 22.** 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

- 23.** Board Member appointments are not paid but individuals are entitled to reasonable travelling expenses and other out-of-pocket expenses. The time commitment is one day per month. The appointments will be for a period of four years from 1 December 2026.
- 24.** The Board meets 8-9 times per year. By applying for this position, it is assumed that you can meet the required time commitment. Candidates will be asked to confirm their ability to meet this commitment at interview. The majority of meetings are held in the National Museums NI offices in Cultra but may take place in other National Museums NI locations.

Appraisal

- 25.** Members will be appraised on an annual basis by the Chair of the Board. These assessments shall be carried out in line with the Department's policies for assessing the performance of Board Members of its Arm's Length Bodies.

Previous Appointments to the National Museums NI Board (the Two Terms Rule)

- 26.** Under the CPA NI Code of Practice, applicants who have served two terms as a National Museums NI Board Member are not eligible to apply for a third term. Any previous time served as a 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

Person Specification

27. Applications are welcome from a wide range of individuals who have an interest in public service. DfC 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, the third sector and wider public sector.

Selection Criteria

28. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate in their application form and - if shortlisted - at interview specific examples that show they are able to satisfy the essential criteria and have the skills, experience and knowledge required as listed below.

In their completed application form, candidates must complete criteria 1 and 2, plus one from 3a or 3b.

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

Essential Criteria

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;
- Using 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. Organisational Direction

Ability to make a contribution to an organisation’s or team’s overall direction.

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, and you can draw on any personal experience:

- Ability to identify key issues that will impact on an organisation or team;
- Ability to plan an organisation’s or team’s objectives for the medium to long term ensuring targets are met;
- Understanding of, and considering the effect of, current and future internal and external factors when planning for the future of the organisation or team;
- Knowledge of the political, economic and social environment in which an organisation or team operates and why this is important;
- Consideration of potential future scenarios that may impact on the organisation or team and planning how they should be addressed;

- Involvement in the development and implementation of business or corporate plans to deliver on the aims of an organisation or team.

3. Relevant Experience

The National Museums NI Board requires a strong mix of skills and experiences in its Members to be successful. 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. Please ensure that you tick the area on the application form that you are providing an example(s) for:

(a) Capital Projects and Construction

Experience in the development, delivery or oversight of capital projects and/or construction programmes.

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 leading, managing or providing strategic oversight of capital investment projects or construction programmes;
- Experience of project governance, including assurance, risk management, procurement, business case development and performance monitoring;
- An understanding of the challenges associated with large-scale capital and construction development projects;
- Experience of identifying and mitigating strategic, financial, operational and reputational risks associated with capital projects;
- The ability to provide constructive challenge and strategic advice on capital investments and estate development opportunities.

(b) Commercial Management

Experience of commercial management including income generation.

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 contributing to or leading commercial activity within an organisation;
- Experience of making informed decisions relating to commercial activity and performance;
- Ability to identify and secure income opportunities and successfully raise funds through these avenues, for example through tourism initiatives;
- Experience of introducing plans, strategies and/or models to support commercial activity;
- Experience of monitoring commercial performance, evaluating outcomes and driving improvements.

Section 4 – Application, Assessment and Selection

How to Apply and Contact Details

29. All applications must be made on the form provided. Hard copy or electronic versions are acceptable, although you are encouraged to return your application via e-mail. Completed application forms can be delivered by hand, post or email to:

Email publicappointments@communities-ni.gov.uk

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

Telephone: 028 9081 9417

If you are unable to e-mail your application and wish to post or hand deliver it, please inform the Department via e-mail or telephone before doing so. 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.

30. Applicants must demonstrate clearly in the application form how and to what extent their personal experience is relevant to the selection criteria. In the application form, examples may be used from applicants' working or personal life, e.g. part-time or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work they are or have been involved in. Applicants should take full advantage to provide practical evidence and example(s) of how they consider that they meet the requirements for these appointments. Further advice and guidance can be found within the application form.

31. 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 handwritten;
- the number of words on the application form is limited to 350 per criterion. Any words exceeding that amount will be redacted in advance of forms being provided to the selection panel;
- applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline; and
- application forms will be anonymised for sift purposes.

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

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

33. 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

36. The deadline for receipt of all applications is 12 noon (GMT) on Monday 12 October 2026. 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.

37. Applicants who send their application form electronically should note that the date and time at which the application was received as recorded by DfC's IT system will be used to determine whether an application sent electronically is received before or after the closing date/time. Once your application has been received, it will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

Sifting and Shortlisting of Applications

38. The selection panel will meet to consider applications on 22 October 2026 and will carry out a sift exercise, against a rating scale, to assess how the skills, knowledge, experience and other qualities presented in your application meet the selection criteria. Applications provided to the selection panel will be anonymised, which means that it will not include your name or personal details.
39. Only those applications that meet the agreed panel standard for each criterion, based on the evidence contained within the application form, will be considered for interview. If a high number of applications are received and shortlisting is required, only the top scoring candidates, with a cumulative score across all three criteria, will progress to interview. All applicants 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)

40. 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 at Section 6 of the application form.

Interviews and Outcomes

41. Interviews are expected to take place on 9, 11 and 12 November 2026 in Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast. Further details will be provided to candidates invited for interview. The selection panel members are:
- Louise Hyland: ALB Sponsor Branch, Culture Division, DfC (Chair);
 - Gordon Milligan: National Museums NI Chair (Panel Member);
 - Jim Beatty: Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Independent Assessor (Independent Panel Member).
42. 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.
43. 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.

44. 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.

45. 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

46. Those candidates whose applications are 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.

47. 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.

48. 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 and Diversity

49. A press release will be published to announce appointments made. Those appointed will be 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.

50. The press release will include:

- The appointee's name;
- A short description of National Museums NI;
- A brief summary of the skills and knowledge they bring to the role;
- The length of the appointment term and whether it is remunerated; if remunerated the amount will be included;
- Details of all other ministerial public appointments held and any related remuneration received; and
- Details of the candidate's response to the political activity question.

51. 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. Applications are particularly welcome from women, people with a disability, young people and people from minority ethnic groups as these are under-represented across public appointments.

52. 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 for appointment. The final decision on appointment will rest with the Minister for Communities.

Induction and Training

- 53.** Those appointed will be expected to attend appropriate induction and training courses, as a condition of appointment. Further information will be provided upon appointment.
- 54.** Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support is needed to help the new appointees carry out their duties.

Complaints

- 55.** 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 and 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

- 56.** 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

Candidates from the Public Sector

57. Candidates 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.
- 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.
- applicants who already work in the public sector may not be entitled to claim 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.

- 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.

Former Civil Servant

58. 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

59. 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:

ANNEX A

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: Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates

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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