



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Máinnystrie O tha Laa

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

INDEPENDENT CHAIR

OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

PRACTITIONERS' GROUP

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this role.

Northern Ireland Search and Rescue is seeking committed individuals who want to make a meaningful contribution to public safety. We welcome applications from individuals with a range of skills and experiences and are motivated to support life-saving activity across Northern Ireland.

Statement from the Outgoing Chair

“Over the past number of years, the Northern Ireland Search and Rescue Practitioners Group has grown into a respected, collaborative forum bringing together organisations and individuals, both voluntary and statutory, committed to saving life. The group has played an important role in sharing learning, strengthening partnerships, and promoting good practice across the search and rescue community.

As I step down as Chair, this presents an exciting opportunity for new leadership to build on a strong and well-established foundation. The next Chair will help guide the group through an evolving risk landscape, support effective collaboration across agencies, and ensure the practitioners' voice continues to inform and influence search and rescue activity across Northern Ireland.

I would strongly encourage individuals with a passion for partnership working, operational learning, and public safety to consider applying. This is a rewarding role that offers the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the future of search and rescue across Northern Ireland.”

This pack explains:

- What the role involves

- Who can apply
- How the appointment process works
- How to complete the application form

Please read this pack before applying.

If you need this information in another format, contact:

- **Email:** DOJSMSearchand.RescueMailbox@justice-ni.gov.uk
- **Phone:** 028 9052 0061
- **Address:** Block 4, Knockview Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SG

The appointment of the Independent Chair to the Northern Ireland Search and Rescue Practitioners' Group will follow the principles of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland's Code of Practice. This means that it will be based on a fair, open and transparent process that involves independent scrutiny.

Please note that the closing date for applications is **noon on Friday 21st August 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any enquires about this appointment, please do not hesitate to contact the Branch using the above details.

About the Role

Job title

Independent Chair

Northern Ireland Search and Rescue Practitioners' Group (NISAR)

What the Group Does

The Practitioners' Group:

- Brings together organisations involved in search and rescue
- Focuses on **operational** (practical) issues
- Advises the **Search and Rescue Policy Group**, which deals with strategy

The Department of Justice provides administrative support.

The Northern Ireland Search and Rescue Practitioners Group has been operating since late 2014. The Group has responsibility for advising the Northern Ireland Search and Rescue Policy Group on all operational Search and Rescue issues. The Policy Group focuses on strategic level issues.

The current objectives (under review) of the Practitioners Group are to:

- develop a programme of work to implement the tasks outlined in the recommendations of the Review of the Strategic Framework for Search and Rescue in Northern Ireland;
- establish additional sub-groups to look at specific issues where required;
- determine the terms of reference and issue other guidance as appropriate to any sub-groups which are established;
- work collaboratively and to seek to come to decisions based on consensus;
- provide input into the development of appropriate funding allocation, ensuring efficient use of resources and maximising available funding;
- provide advice to the Policy Group on all relevant operational issues, as required.

Additional information on NISAR can be found at <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-search-and-rescue>

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

As Chair, you will:

- Lead meetings in a fair and independent way
- Deliver agenda agreed with DoJ and guide discussions
- Lead and manage change in an evolving environment
- Ensure conflicts of interest are managed properly
- Represent the group at policy-level meetings
- Review and agree an annual report for the Policy Group

You must act with integrity, fairness and confidentiality at all times.

Terms and Conditions

Time Commitment

- Around **1 day per month**

- Meetings take place:
 - Practitioners' Group: usually evenings
 - Policy Group: normal working hours
- Some meetings are online; some require travel

This role is unremunerated.

Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses will be paid at NI Civil Service rates.

Length of Appointment

- Fixed term of **3 years**
 - Possible reappointment for a further 3 years
 - Either side may end the appointment with **3 months' notice**
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Location

- As Chairperson you will be required to mostly attend meetings in person. The Department of Justice will pay reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, at civil service rates.
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Who Can Apply

You **must be independent**.

This means:

- You should not have been involved in search and rescue in Northern Ireland, as your primary role, within the six months up to the closing date of this competition.

You do **not** need formal qualifications.

We welcome applications from people with:

- Public, private, voluntary or community experience
 - Non-traditional career paths
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What We Are Looking For

You must show evidence of the following **three criteria**.

1. Setting Direction

Please provide an example of how you have demonstrated setting direction in your role.

You may wish to include how you have:

- Leading or managing change
- Identifying risks or problems
- Setting priorities
- Making informed decisions
- Managing limited resources

2. Delivering Results

Please describe a situation where you have delivered results.

You may wish to include how you have:

- Chairing or leading meetings in an effective manner
- Improving services and value for money
- Turning decisions into action
- Working with partner organisations

3. Engaging People

Please provide an example of how you have engaged effectively with others.

You may wish to include how you have:

- Clear communication
- Negotiation skills
- Respecting confidentiality
- Building inclusive and professional relationships
- Working with a wide range of stakeholders

General Guidance

Criteria-Based Selection Process

Criteria-based selection is currently the most common method of making public appointments in Northern Ireland. What this means is that the onus is on you to provide evidence of workplace or personal performance which demonstrates that you can perform to the specified standard.

Under each of the criteria headings in the application form you are required to provide specific and relevant examples of past behaviour which illustrate how you match the

competences being sought. It is not just *what* you have done – but also *how* you did it.

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

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

You should structure your responses by setting a context for your examples, explain what you were trying to achieve, describe what you did and why, indicating your own individual contribution and outline the outcome or results.

You are strongly advised to read the guide to public appointments entitled 'Public Appointments Guide' which is available online at: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf>

Hard copies are also available on request.

The guide suggests the following model to help you structure your examples and express them in a logical manner: -

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

The Appointment Process

- Applications are assessed against the criteria
- Shortlisted candidates are invited to interview
- Interviews are expected to take place in **September 2026**

- A selection panel makes recommendations to the Minister
 - Appointments are made **on merit**
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Conflicts of Interest and Integrity

Public appointments must meet high standards.

You must:

- Declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest
- Follow the **Seven Principles of Public Life**:
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership

Declaring a conflict does **not automatically exclude you**.

Equality and Accessibility

We are committed to:

- Fair and open recruitment
- Equal treatment for all applicants

Please tell us if you need **reasonable adjustments** for interview or appointment.

How to Apply

- Complete **all parts** of the application form
- Do **not** send a CV or extra documents
- Use **plain examples** from work, voluntary or personal experience
- Stay within word limits

Closing date:

Noon on Friday 21st August 2026