Department of Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Candidate Information Pack

Appointment to The Independent Monitoring Board for Northern Ireland

2026

This Candidate Information Pack has been produced as a guide to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form to become a **member of the Independent Monitoring Board for Northern Ireland**. These documents are only a memorandum and should not be taken as constituting conditions of appointment. It is recommended that you read this information carefully before completing the application form.

An e-version of the application form may be obtained from the public appointments section on the Department of Justice's website at www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/independent-monitoring-board-member-recruitment This pack and the Application Form can be made available in alternative formats. Candidates are requested to advise of their requirements as soon as possible allowing for the fact that the **closing date is 23 November 2026.**

Completed application and monitoring forms must be received by the Department of Justice no later than 12 noon (UK local time) on Monday 23 November 2026. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Independent Monitoring Board for Northern Ireland (IMB) Candidate Information Park – Members

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Contacts

If you would like to speak to someone in connection with any aspect of the process or if you require an application pack in a different format such as Braille, large print, audio etc. please contact:

Justice Sponsorship	Telephone: 028 9072 8888 or Email: imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk
DoJ Public Appointments Unit	Telephone: 028 9054 3986 or Email: DOJPublicAppointments@justice-ni.gov.uk

Section 1: Outline of the Department of Justice and the Independent Monitoring Board for Northern Ireland

Department of Justice

The Department of Justice (DoJ) came into existence on 12 April 2010 following the devolution of policing and justice powers to the NI Assembly. It was established by the Department of Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 and is responsible for a range of devolved policing and justice functions, as set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

The role of the Department is to support the Minister of Justice in working to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other.

In addition to its statutory functions, the Department provides resources and a legislative framework for its agencies and arms-length bodies (which together constitute most of the justice system in Northern Ireland). Together with these organisations the Department is responsible for ensuring there is a fair and effective justice system in Northern Ireland and for increasing public confidence in that system.

The Independent Monitoring Board for Northern Ireland

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is an independent statutory body whose role is to monitor the treatment of prisoners and the conditions of their imprisonment at the three prison establishments: Maghaberry, Magilligan, and Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison.

The statutory role of the IMB is set out within the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995, which you can view at: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doj/prison-young-offender-centre-rules-feb-2010.pdf

There are three Boards, one for each of the prison establishments in Northern Ireland. Each Board elects a Chair and Vice Chair annually. The Boards are made up of unpaid members of the community who fulfil their duties by carrying out regular visits to establishments.

Members have access to all parts of the prison and will deal directly with prisoners. Candidates must live in Northern Ireland to enable them to fully carry out the duties of this role. The IMB is independent from the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Department of Justice.

Further information

Further information about the IMB is available on their website: http://www.imb-ni.org.uk/, and also by viewing this video about what the role of an IMB member involves: IMB Member | Videos & Movies on Vimeo

The IMB is a member organisation of the United Kingdom National Preventative Mechanism (UK NPM) as required by the Operational Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (OPCAT).

Further information about the NPM, including member organisations and details of their current work, is available on their website: https://www.nationalpreventivemechanism.org.uk/

Section 2: Role Profile – IMB Member

Role of an IMB Member

Responsibilities:

- Monitoring that prisoners are treated fairly and humanely whilst in custody;
- Carrying out regular monitoring of the Care and Supervision Unit of the prison and attend restriction of association hearings (Rule 32 reviews), adjudications, and any other meetings when required;
- Monitoring the treatment of prisoners including provision for their health care and other welfare while in prison;
- Building positive relationships and engaging with prisoners, senior management and all other prison personnel;
- Monitoring the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time;
- Monitoring the cleanliness and adequacy of the prison premises; and
- Recording matters of concern and reporting them as appropriate.

An IMB member will need to:

- Meet the time commitment of the role as set out in the terms and conditions below. This includes rota visits to the prison 3 or 4 times per month and attendance at a minimum of 9 monthly board meetings which are held during normal working hours (remote attendance may be facilitated).
- Positively engage with a diverse range of individuals in prison and establish rapport quickly in challenging situations;
- Be able to engage with prisoners regardless of why they are in prison;
- Record information succinctly during prison observation visits; and
- Work independently and provide clear and impartial feedback on your observations to a range of people including other IMB members and senior prison personnel.

Code of Conduct and Accountability

Members shall act in accordance with their wider responsibilities as members of the IMB – namely to:

- adhere to the seven principles of public life. Full details can be found at The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).
- NICS Code of Ethics
- During their term of appointment IMB members must ensure that their conduct is such that public confidence in the impartiality and independence of the IMB

is maintained and no active part is taken in any matter which might compromise their position as an IMB member or otherwise give rise to conflicts of interest with their appointment.

- report any changes in their working or personal life that may give rise to a new possible conflict of interest to the Chair of the Board and the Sponsoring Department immediately.
- recognise and respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the issues with which they will be dealing and of the information to which they will have access.
- hold the appropriate level of security vetting as determined by the Justice Minister.
- be personally responsible for the safeguarding of any information entrusted to them in the course of their duties. They must protect its security and confidentiality and must not use any information gained in the course of their IMB duties for any purpose other than the discharge of those duties.
- Members should adhere to information security guidelines detailed in the guidance document they will receive on commencement of their appointment.
- Members must adhere to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and any Information Assurance and Data Handling guidance and policy as may be issued by the Department of Justice.

Terms & Conditions

Time Commitment

Each prison operates a flexible monthly rota. You will be expected to volunteer at the prison 3 or 4 times each month.

IMB Members are expected to attend a minimum of nine monthly Board meetings each year, which are held during normal office hours (remote attendance may be facilitated) and mandatory training events, including induction training.

Remuneration

IMB Members are volunteers and do not receive remuneration for time spent on IMB business. Reasonable travel and subsistence is payable at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates.

Period of Appointment

IMB Members are appointed for a period of three years, with a possibility of re-appointment for a further two terms up to a maximum of nine years, subject to satisfactory performance and adherence to the seven principles of public life **(see Annex A)**. It is anticipated that members will formally take up the role from after the security clearance has been confirmed.

Location

You will be asked in the application form to express a preference for which prison you wish to volunteer in:

- Maghaberry;
- Magilligan; or
- Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison.

However, it may not always be practicable or possible to provide your first preference due to prison needs. There may also be a requirement to visit other establishments as and when necessary.

Transport

Members are expected to have access to a form of transport that will enable them to carry out their role, and it should be noted that public transport to each of the three prisons can be infrequent. However this can be discussed further if successful after the sift process.

Security Vetting

IMB Members will be subject to security clearance at CTC level prior to appointment given the high level of access to the prisons. Training will not start until security checks have been completed.

Members will also be required to complete an enhanced AccessNI check once they are appointed.

Training

IMB Members will be provided with the following induction training:

- half day in person Induction training with existing IMB members where you will be given further background information regarding the role and signposted to

any relevant reading material such as IMB guidance booklet and aide memoire.

- half day in person Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) training to cover personal security and fire safety. This is usually held at Maghaberry's training facility.
- job shadowing an experienced member during the first few months of appointment until both parties are content to work independently.
- Online computer-based learning (members will be provided with laptops).
- additional ad hoc training needs may also be identified.

Performance Assessment

An assurance review is a recognised process across IMB's within the UK. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for constructive and supportive interaction between Board Chairs, the Sponsor Body and individual Board Members in order to assist them to best fulfil their roles.

The review will take place annually and be informal in nature and provides an opportunity to reflect on how the role is working for all parties concerned.

Guidance and Support

The IMB Executive Council, which is made up of representatives of each Board, provides leadership and guidance to ensure consistency of operating procedures across all Boards.

The IMB Secretariat provides secretariat support and processes Members' travel and subsistence claims.

Prison Familiarisation Visit

Applicants who have been successful at the sift stage are invited to undertake a prison familiarisation visit prior to interview. Applicants will be accompanied by a member of the Prison staff and an IMB member for a tour of areas within the prison. This will be to give applicant a perspective of the prison environment and what the role will involve. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and the visit usually lasts for around two hours.

Section 3: Person Specification – IMB Member

Person Specification

No specific qualifications are required, however applicants for the role will need to be to be open-minded, a natural communicator and be able to exercise sound objective judgement.

Candidates will be required to answer all sub-questions captured within Question 11 on the application form and this will be scored as satisfactory/non- satisfactory at the sift stage.

Question 11 of the application form asks applicants to describe why they wish to a) volunteer for the IMB, b) what is their understanding of the role of the IMB and c) describe what skills and attributes they will bring to this role.

Candidates are required to provide a satisfactory answer to Q11 to support progression to interview stage.

An answer may be deemed non-satisfactory in the following circumstances,

- failed to address all aspects of the question
- did not provide a valid reason for applying
- has a misunderstanding of the role; and or
- failed to describe skills and attributes that are relevant to the role of the IMB

Interview

At interview candidates will be required to demonstrate, with examples, how they meet the essential criteria below. Examples can be drawn from experience gained in areas other than employment - for example, through voluntary work, caring responsibilities or outside interests.

Essential Criteria:

Applicants must demonstrate competence in Essential Criteria 1 – 3. The criteria are all of equal weight. A marking framework with a scale of 1-5 will be used. The pass mark for each criterion is 3.

1. **Building Collaborative Relationships** – Works confidently and collaboratively with a diverse range of individuals to build supportive, responsive relationships that provide mutual recognition, trust and respect. Develops and maintains co-operative and inclusive relationships externally and internally to achieve results, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

2. **Effective Communication** – Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people, and question effectively to draw out relevant information. Record information succinctly during prison observation visits. Work both independently and as part of a team and provide clear and impartial feedback on your observations to a range of people including other IMB members and senior prison personnel.

3. **Analysing Information and Making Effective Decisions**–. Demonstrate an ability to assimilate and analyse a range of information resulting in an evidence based decision that will withstand challenge and/or scrutiny. Show respect for differing views and expectations. Demonstrate rational assessment and consideration of facts in determining a course of action to manage/address the situation.

Criteria Based Selection Process/Suitability for Appointment – Skills, Knowledge and Experience

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 essential criteria headings 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.

Successful applicants will not necessarily have followed a traditional career path. These appointments are open to people who have relevant personal experience, or people who, for example, do voluntary or community work, or are involved in trade union activity.

For example, you may be a member of a School Board of Governors and developed ideas and made recommendations for school fund raising (Strategic Thinking, Governance Oversight and Accountability). You may have experience of managing a sports team (Leadership, Building Effective Relationships). You may be a committee member of a local community group with input to forward planning or have played an important role in organising a key event (Strategic Thinking, Building Effective Relationships, Leadership).

When completing the interview, you should provide examples of your role and what you have done individually, or your role as a team member. You will need to ensure there is relevance between the examples used and the selection criteria. In addition, you should bear in mind the following points:

- use language which is simple and easy to understand in your examples to describe what you have done;

- use actual examples, rather than 'how you would do something;

- use examples from either your working or personal life including any private, voluntary, community or trade union work you are, or have been, involved in;

- avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies – focus on specific challenges and results; and

- describe what you did and how you behaved – if your example includes activities undertaken by a team, focus on your role and not that of the team as a whole.

It is not sufficient simply to list positions you have held.

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

You are strongly advised to read the public appointments guide which is available online at https://www.executiveofficeni.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 actually do?
What was your unique contribution?

Result: What happened?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?

Section 4: Application and Selection Process – IMB Member

Application Procedure

Completed application forms can be submitted in a variety of ways:

By email to: imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk

Or post/hand delivered to:

IMB Recruitment
Knockview Buildings
Block 3
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SG

no later than: **12noon (UK local time) on Monday 23rd November 2026.**

Applicants are reminded that email is not a secure medium and that anyone who has any concerns about information security may submit their application and monitoring information questionnaire in hard copy format**.**

Please note that, 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;

- If completing the application online you must use **Arial font size 12**. The layout of the application form should not be changed or altered in any way. **Any attempt to alter the form will render your application invalid and it will be excluded from consideration;**

- Applicants must comply with the word limits that have been set for relevant sections of this form**.** Any words over this limit will not be made available to the selection panel;

- Applicants should ensure that the form is fully completed before being submitted;

- Applicants invited for interview **will not** be eligible for reimbursement of travelling expenses;

- If you are successful and are appointed as a Member to the Independent Monitoring Board, your name and length of the appointment, will be made public at the time of appointment.

Disability Requirements
Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to complete any part of the assessment process. Any information provided will be used for this purpose only and will not form any part of the selection process. Should you be successful, you will be asked to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to carry out the role effectively.

Selection Process
A selection panel consisting of a Departmental official, an Independent Assessor and a current member of the IMB will assess your application form. Applications will be anonymised at the sifting stage.

The selection panel will decide at the sift stage if a satisfactory answer to Q11 has been provided to support progression to interview stage. Only those applicants assessed as satisfactory will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

Feedback

The Department of Justice is committed to ensuring that the process used is fair and in accordance with the principles of the Office of Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) Code of Practice. The Department is committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken at sift stage as well as at interview. The Chair of the Interview Panel will be responsible for providing feedback in respect of decisions taken upon request.

Requests for feedback must be submitted in writing within five working days of the date on which the outcome letter relating to the application form was issued. Requests should be submitted to imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk

This feedback will be provided in writing only and is intended to give candidates a clear understanding of the reasons for the Panel's decision.

If, after reviewing the feedback, you believe that information already contained within your application form was not taken into account, you may request that the Panel undertake a review of the application. Requests for a review must be submitted in writing no more than five days from the date the written feedback was issued. Requests should be submitted to imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk

When submitting a request for review, you may only refer to information that was included in your original application form. No new information, additional evidence, or supporting documentation will be accepted as part of the review process. The outcome of the Panel's review will be provided to you in writing.

As is best practice, applicants who are deemed suitable for interview following the outcome of a review will progress to the interview stage in the normal manner.

Once the Panel has completed its review of your application and notified you of the outcome, there is no further right of appeal, and the Panel's decision will be final.

Interview

It is anticipated that the interviews will be held January 2027 and will be in-person.

Each question will be marked out of a total of five. The overall pass mark will be nine, and you must attain a minimum of three marks per question.

Applicants whom the selection panel assess as not deemed suitable for appointment will be advised of the panel's decision following interviews.

Applicants whom the selection panel assess as suitable for appointment will have their names presented, as an unranked list, to the Justice Minister who will decide who is appointed.

The individuals that are to be appointed as Members of the Independent Monitoring Board will be invited to indicate if they accept the appointment.

The appointment will be formally confirmed in writing and confirmation of acceptance of the post and the Terms of Appointment are required, subject to successful security clearance.

All other interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of their interview once the appointment process has been completed.

Timetable / Timeframe

The deadline for receipt of applications in all cases is **12noon (UK local time) on Monay 23 November 2026.** Applications will be individually date stamped and the time of receipt formally recorded and acknowledged. **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.**

Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline. Applicants who send their application electronically are also required to meet the deadline for receipt in this office. To ensure equality of opportunity for all, applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.

The eligibility sift is expected to take place week commencing 30 November 2026**.**

The prison familiarisation visit is expected to take place Thursday 10 December between 12 and 2pm.

Interviews are expected to be held in January 2027.

Canvassing

Applicants must not contact or seek support for an application from a member of the Interview Panel or any official involved in this recruitment campaign. Canvassing, either directly or indirectly will disqualify you from appointment.

Data Protection

As much of the information involved in the appointment process will be of a personal nature, the provisions of Data Protection legislation will be followed.

To ensure that you, the candidate, are aware of how and why your personal information is to be used, and with whom it may be shared, a ‘privacy notice’, as required by legislation, is included in the application form for your information and reference.

Disqualifications

The Department may remove a Member from the Independent Monitoring Board, giving one month's notice in writing, if satisfied that the individual:

(a) has been convicted of a criminal offence;

(b) Is the subject of any legal, criminal or statutory investigations or actions, or any that are pending;

(c) has become bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement with their creditors;

(d) has ever been disqualified from acting as a company director or in the conduct of a company, or are under investigation in relation to a potential Directors disqualification;

(e) have failed to comply with the terms of their appointment; or

(f) is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of the Independent Monitoring Board.

Before submitting your application, please ensure you are satisfied that you are not precluded from applying by virtue of falling into any of the categories detailed above.

Probity And Conflicts of Interest

'Probity and Conflicts of Interest – A Guide for applicants' is attached at **Annex A** at the end of this Candidate Information Pack.

Candidates will be tested on their responsibilities in relation to probity and conflict of interest during the selection stage of the appointment process.

A further CPANI leaflet is available: CPANI Guidance on conflicts of interest, integrity and how to raise a complaint:

https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/publications/guidance-conflicts-interest-integrity-and-how-raise-complaint

Pre-Appointment Checks

A security check will be requested for all appointees to CTC level. As this can take a number of weeks, the candidate may be appointed subject to a satisfactory security check.

All documentation relating to the security check will be destroyed by the Department once the appointment process has been completed.

A Company Director's disqualification check and a bankruptcy check will also be carried out. In addition, a cross-departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of those candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles.

Number Of Terms Served

Applicants who have served three terms as a member of the Independent Monitoring Board are not eligible to apply for reappointment.

Double Paying

Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:

- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in the Department's view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments;
- where applicable you will be asked to confirm that you have permission from your employer to take up an appointment if one is offered; and
- no-one can 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 or travelling expenses for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which they are already paid by the public sector.

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

Former Civil Servants

Former civil servants are subject to rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments, employment or self-employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. It is recommended that you read Section 8 of the NICS Handbook – Standards of Conduct, Annex 4, via the following link: https://www.finance-

ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/HR%20Policy%206.01%20Standards%20of%20Conduct.pdf

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

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 or exceed the pass mark set for each of the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any shortlisting which may take place.

Section 5: Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure

Monitoring Information

The Department monitors applications to ensure that equal opportunity measures are effective in its appointments processes. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/independent-monitoring-board-member-recruitment.

This information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is not made available to the selection panel and does not play a role in the decision-making process. The information will be analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and will be treated in strict confidence.

Equality and Diversity

Accessibility to appointments is fundamental. The appointments process promotes and demonstrates equality of opportunity and equal treatment to all applicants at every stage of the appointment process.

The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants. Applications are welcomed regardless of age, gender, disability, marital status, religion, ethnic origin, political opinion, sexual orientation or whether or not you have dependants.

We particularly welcome applications from **ethnic minorities, people with a disability** and **young people,** who are currently under-represented on the IMB.

All applications for appointment will be considered strictly on merit.

Disqualified Candidates

There is no statutory disqualification criteria for this role. Any information provided in the Application Form may be taken into account when the panel discuss probity and conflicts of interest.

Any information provided in this section of the Application Form will only be made available to the Selection Panel as set out in the Public Appointments Privacy Notice contained in the Application Form.

Complaints

The Independent Monitoring Board is not a public body that is regulated under the Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended). The appointment process will, however, be run in the spirit, principles and practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland, except in relation to the handling of complaints from applicants.

Complaints should be made to:

IMB Sponsorship Branch
Department of Justice
Block 3
DOJ Knockview Hub
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SG

Or Email: imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk

Your complaint will be handled in line with DoJ Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available at: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/doj-complaints.

Annex A: Probity & Conflicts of Interest

Guidance For Candidates

Standards of Behaviour

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve on the Boards of public bodies will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services. These are:

Selflessness – Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

What is a conflict of interest?

Public appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest regarding an IMB member could be damaging to the IMB 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?

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give the selection panel as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

No – each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the IMB and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. However, if, following the discussion with you, the panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the IMB or the appointment, they can withdraw your application from the competition.

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

Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

This situation may arise where the applicant is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work 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.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Sponsoring Department, to decide whether or not the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue as an IMB member, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the IMBs routine business. In such cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.