



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie O tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

2025

This Candidate Information Pack has been produced as a guide to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form for the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. These documents are only a memorandum and should not be taken as constituting conditions of appointment. The qualities required and details of how to complete the application form are set out within this pack. It is recommended that you read this information carefully before completing the application form.

An e-version of the application form may be obtained from the public appointments section on the Department of Justice's website at [Recruitment Probation Board Northern Ireland | Department of Justice](#) 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 **12noon (UK local time) on 16 December 2024**

Completed application and monitoring forms must be received in the Department of Justice no later than 12noon (UK local time) on 16 December 2024. Late applications will not be accepted except in exceptional circumstances.



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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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

The Department of Justice is committed to encouraging a diverse range of applicants for public appointments and to the principle of appointment on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. Applications are welcomed from all backgrounds regardless of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not you have dependents.

We particularly welcome applications from women, people under the age of 40, those from ethnic minority communities and people with a disability. We also welcome applications from those not currently serving on public bodies.

All applications for appointment are considered strictly on merit.

We are operating the Guaranteed Interview Scheme in this competition for applicants with a disability. Applicants with a disability who meet all of the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.”

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:

DoJ Public Appointments Unit	Telephone: 028 9052 6496 or Email: pbni.appointments@justice-ni.gov.uk
Justice Sponsorship	Telephone: 028 9052 3782 or Email: pbni.appointments@justice-ni.gov.uk

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SECTION 1: OUTLINE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE PROBATION 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.

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Probation Board came into existence in 1982 and is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Justice; its statutory responsibilities are set out in the Probation Board (NI) Order 1982. Board members are appointed by, and accountable to, the Minister of Justice. The Board can consist of a Chair, a Deputy Chair and between 10 to 18 board members. In this competition the Minister is seeking to appoint a Chair and 12 Board Members. A Deputy Chair will be appointed via an internal process from the pool of board members following appointment.

The Board Chair and members are appointed for a 3 year term and can serve in their posts for a maximum of 2 terms (if successfully reappointed).

The Board has the following mandatory functions:

- secure the maintenance of an adequate and efficient probation service;
- make arrangements for persons to perform work under Community Service orders;
- provide such probation officers and other staff as the Department of Justice considers necessary to perform social welfare duties in Prisons and Young Offenders Centres; and
- undertake other such duties as may be prescribed.

The full Board generally meets once a month. Special meetings and Away Days may also be arranged.

There are four committees of the Board:

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- Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;
- Corporate Resources Committee;
- Policy and Practice Committee; and
- Remuneration Committee.

The Board's standing orders also provide for the facility to create an Emergency Committee. Meetings of each are convened as required.

The Probation Board plays an important role at each of the key stages of the criminal justice process:

- at court,
- in custody,
- in the community; and,
- with victims of crime.

The main strands of the Probation Board's work are to:

- Risk assess people convicted of criminal offences;
- Prepare probation reports to assist decision-making in the criminal justice process;
- Supervise people who have offended;
- Provide a range of services to individuals in prison;
- Provide behavioural change programmes;
- Maintain a Victim Information Scheme; and
- Work with partner organisations to reduce reoffending, and make Northern Ireland a safer place.

The Probation Board helps to reduce levels of offending and prevent further victims of crime, and also contributes to increasing community confidence in the Northern Ireland criminal justice system.

PBNI's current Corporate Plan covers the period 2023-26 and identifies the following strategic priorities:

- **Our People** - We will develop, support, and empower our staff to maintain effective service delivery
- **Our Service** - We will deliver an effective, statutory probation service to reduce reoffending and protect the public
- **Our Funding** - We will prioritise our budget and estate to maximise service delivery
- **Our Partnerships** - We will develop our current partnerships and create new partnerships to help make communities safer

The Probation Board is funded by the Department of Justice. Its grant allocation Resource DEL for 2024-25 is approximately £23 million. Its capital allocation for this period is £1.2 million.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the Probation Board for Northern Ireland is available from:
www.pbni.org.uk

SECTION 2: ROLE PROFILES – CHAIRPERSON & BOARD MEMBERS

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Applicants can decide to apply to be the Chair, Board Member or Both roles. It is your responsibility to indicate your preference on the application form.

The Chairperson will:

- provide strategic leadership and direction to the Probation Board in the effective and efficient performance of its statutory duties against its aim of 'Changing lives for safer communities' and against Ministerial objectives outlined in the Programme for Government;
- in conjunction with Board members and the Chief Executive develop the Corporate Plan and Annual Business Plans. Ensure the aims and objectives contained within these are regularly monitored and evaluated. In support of these activities, the Chair will encourage the efficient and effective use of resources;
- lead the Board at the annual Accountability Review with the Minister of Justice to report on progress against targets and to account for stewardship of public funds;
- develop and maintain co-operative working relationships with Board Members and PBNI staff;
- apply personal expertise in contributing to the work of PBNI as a whole and act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the Board;
- ensure compliance with the PBNI Management Statement and Financial Memorandum; and
- ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies and abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life, set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Chair of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland shall act in accordance with their wider responsibility – namely to:

- Comply at all times with the framework document between the Department and the Office with awareness of the requirements outlined within Managing Public Money.
- Comply with the Seven Principles of Public Life namely Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.

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- Not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations;
- Comply with relevant NICS policies including the rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and of business appointments; and
- Act in good faith and in the best interests of the Office of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

Members of PBNI are bound by the Board's Code of Conduct. A copy is available on request or via the PBNI website:

<https://www.pbni.org.uk/publication/pbni-code-conduct-board-members>

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Time Commitment	A minimum of 2 days per week. It is also expected that the Chair will attend seminars, functions and other events outside normal working hours.
Working Pattern	This is a hybrid working position with flexibility for home and office working, based on business need, with an expectation of being office based for the majority of the time.
Location	80-90 North Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT1 1LD.
Remuneration	The remuneration for this role is fixed for the term of appointment at £33,010. This is taxable.
Allowances	Travel and incidental expenses will be reimbursed for costs necessarily incurred on PBNI business in line with NICS rates.
Pension	This is a non-pensionable position.

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Term of Appointment The Chair of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland is appointed for a term of three years. The maximum number of terms that the Chair can serve is two. There is no automatic reappointment to the role and therefore, should the Chair wish to serve a second term, they are required to reapply for the role.

It is anticipated that the appointee will take up post in March 2025, subject to a successful Basic Disclosure Certificate check.

Performance Assessment An annual performance appraisal of the Chair of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland is conducted by the Director of Safer Communities.

A Board Member will:

- be expected to become a member of a Committee and attend Board and Committee meetings regularly and participate fully at these meetings;
- act as a representative of PBNI as required, e.g. at community engagement events, seminars or other functions;
- perform roles within PBNI e.g. chairing meetings as appropriate;
- support and assist the Chair in developing policy and in providing strategic direction for PBNI in the effective and efficient performance of its statutory duties;
- accept corporate responsibility for ensuring that PBNI complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public resources and accept corporate decisions, once made;
- apply personal expertise in contributing to the work of PBNI as a whole and act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the Board;
- ensure effective financial management and deliver value for money;
- work collaboratively in a team environment towards business objectives;
- develop and maintain co-operative working relationships with Board Members and PBNI staff;
- work effectively with colleagues to address issues and reach evidence-based decisions;
- provide effective organisational oversight and performance scrutiny; and
- ensure compliance with the Board Members' Code of Practice as outlined on PBNI's website and abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life, set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Members of PBNI are bound by the Board's Code of Conduct. A copy is available on request or via the PBNI website:

<https://www.pbni.org.uk/publication/pbni-code-conduct-board-members>

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TERMS & CONDITIONS:

Time Commitment	A minimum of 25 days per annum. It is also expected that that Board members will attend seminars, functions and other events outside normal working hours.
Working Pattern	Attendance, in person, at scheduled meetings and events is mandatory.
Location	80-90 North Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT1 1LD.
Remuneration	The remuneration for this role is fixed for the term of appointment at £5,050. This is taxable.
Allowances	Travel and incidental expenses will be reimbursed for costs necessarily incurred on PBNI business in line with NICS rates.
Pension	This is a non-pensionable position.
Term of Appointment	<p>Board Members of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland are appointed for a term of three years. The maximum number of terms that Board members can serve is two. There is no automatic reappointment to the role and therefore, should Board Members wish to serve a second term, they are required to reapply for the role.</p> <p>It is anticipated the appointees will take up post in March 2025, subject to a successful Basic Disclosure Certificate check.</p>
Performance Assessment	An annual performance appraisal of Board Members on the Probation Board for Northern Ireland is conducted by the Chair of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

SECTION 3: PERSON SPECIFICATION

PERSON SPECIFICATION – ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

A criteria-based selection process is employed by DoJ. Applications will be considered against the specific criteria and the criteria will form the basis of the interview.

No specific qualifications are required, but candidates must demonstrate that they have the experience and expertise appropriate to the role. Examples that evidence this can be drawn from experience gained through employment, voluntary work, caring responsibilities or other areas of personal life and interests. Candidates should take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how they are suitable for this appointment.

The Chairperson and Board Members are challenging positions with a significant public profile. The successful candidates must have the ability to lead, oversee and scrutinise the work of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. It will require a combination of appropriate skill-sets and experience.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate, with examples, how they meet the following competences:

Selection Criteria

Applicants for the position of Chairperson must demonstrate competence in Criteria 1 – 4. Applicants for the position of Board Member must demonstrate competence in Criteria 2 – 4. For both positions all criteria are of equal weight.

1. **Leadership** – Deploys leadership skills effectively to provide an organisation with the strategic direction, internal support and external promotion and influence to secure positive outcomes for people and wider communities.
2. **Strategic Thinking** – Thinks and acts strategically to make a contribution to the long-term direction of an organisation, taking account of the internal and external environment and wider impacts, and is able to evaluate outcomes. Delivers effective change and improvement while managing financial or resource constraints
3. **Building & Maintaining Effective Relationships** – Works collaboratively within a team environment and with external stakeholders to meet business objectives and maintains co-operative and inclusive relationships in times of change.
4. **Governance & Organisational Performance** – Demonstrates knowledge and experience of contributing to overall governance and accountability. Scrutinises an organisation's performance, measuring outcomes and impact, provides effective oversight and manages risks. Identifies problems and works effectively to reach evidence-based decisions.

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WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I PROVIDE?

To assist you more fully in completing the form, each selection criterion is explained in detail.

Criterion 1 – Leadership (Chairperson Only)

Please provide evidence through a key example(s) of how your leadership skills provided an organisation with the strategic direction, internal support, and external promotion and influence to achieve positive outcomes.

As Chair, you will need to demonstrate leadership whether in the Committee structure of the Board or in representing the Board externally. As such, you should be able to show that you can provide direction, manage competing views effectively and be able to take decisions. You should demonstrate your ability to manage relationships and risks, and be able to initiate change for the good of the organisation. You should willingly strive to serve and promote the organisation. You will take responsibility, both personally and organisationally, to help the public secure the best service possible from the Board and act in line with public service values at all times.

You should be able to demonstrate self-confidence, honesty and integrity in dealing with a wide range of situations and people at all levels. As Chair, you are expected not only to contribute but also to commit and take responsibility for decisions when they are taken. You should be able to influence stakeholders, partners and customers successfully to secure mutually beneficial outcomes.

Examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below.

- Experience of boardroom leadership, or similar, contributing to an effective board.
- Understanding of leadership's role in fostering an enabling culture which constructively addresses, challenges and drives change, improvement and excellence.
- A proven track record of achievement that demonstrates the necessary vision, leadership and management skills, and personal resilience to act as Chair of a public body.
- Ability to successfully and collaboratively challenge and counsel an executive leadership team.
- Creating an environment where different expertise, approaches and opinions are valued.
- Constructively challenging and managing difficult conversations and conflict effectively.
- Building credibility, effective and influential relationships and collaboration with partner organisations and key stakeholders.
- Making timely decisions and defending difficult decisions.

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Criterion 2 – Strategic Thinking

Please provide evidence through a key example(s) of how you contributed to setting the long-term direction of an organisation, and your ability to evaluate outcomes and deliver change and improvement.

As a Board member, you will be responsible for contributing to the strategic direction of the organisation. You will have to demonstrate an understanding of the organisation and the environment in which it operates. You should be able to show that you can think ahead while taking into account a wide range of sometimes complex and inter-related issues, with an understanding of the impact of plans and priorities. The ability to formulate and follow through strategic objectives, including prioritising to ensure value for money in decision making, is an essential element of this criterion.

It is also about seeing the big picture including the political context, identifying an in-depth insight into how your customers and stakeholders may be affected by what you do and the services you provide. You will need to be able to make improvements, challenge the status quo and to weigh up competing views, assessing options and considering reputational risks.

As a Board member you should be able to promote and introduce change with effective improvements based on evidence, challenge views, and achieve success against constraints such as resource and financial challenges, staff resistance and Ministerial objectives and priorities. You should be able to demonstrate success in this area.

Examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below.

- Understanding and taking account of the internal and external environment and key strategic drivers for an organisation.
- Contributing to and/or influencing the setting of a clear vision and direction and realistic objectives and expectations.
- Anticipating potential challenges/opportunities/future scenarios/impacts and recognising and responding to competing and changing priorities and planning accordingly.
- Challenging views and existing practices, and promoting or driving innovation and change within available resources.
- Ability to analyse complex issues, information and argument where decisions are being made and to weigh up options taking risks, priorities, opportunities, etc. into consideration.
- Effectively keeping under review and evaluating implementation and impacts of an organisation's strategic plans.
- Reflecting effectively to ensure continuous improvement in planning and actions.
- Making informed evidence-based decisions that are value for money.

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Criterion 3 – Building & Maintaining Effective Relationships

Please provide evidence through a key example(s) of how you worked collaboratively within a team and with external stakeholders to meet business objectives in a time of change, while maintaining co-operative and inclusive relationships.

As a Board member you will be part of a team comprising of 13 members (Chair, Deputy Chair and 11 Board members). You will be expected to contribute to the work of the team. This will require you to be able to communicate clearly and respectfully, and to listen to what others say. You will need to constructively challenge others where necessary, put across rational arguments and influence others, while developing effective working relationships with your fellow Board members. Outside of the Board you will demonstrate willingness to network with others to ensure the continuing success of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

Examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below.

- Building/maintaining constructive and cooperative relationships on a board/team where people work together effectively to achieve results.
- Listening to diverse viewpoints and understanding others' needs and concerns.
- Exercising challenge, at the same time handling diversities, sensitivities, conflict and challenge empathetically and constructively.
- Influencing others through evidence and rational argument.
- Working with others to develop options, solve problems, reach consensus and make decisions.
- Building on relationships to deliver shared objectives and outcomes.
- Supporting an organisation through transition and change, while working to maintain good relations and manage expectations.
- Networking and effective communication with external stakeholders/partners and/or working effectively across organisations to achieve a common purpose.

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Criterion 4 – Governance & Organisational Performance

Please provide evidence through a key example(s) of how you contributed to good governance and accountability in an organisation, providing effective scrutiny and oversight, managing risk and reaching evidence-based decisions.

As a Board member you will have to contribute to solving problems and making decisions as well as overseeing the performance of Probation Board. You will need to demonstrate that you understand the financial position and oversight arrangements for the organisation. You should also be robust in monitoring and reviewing progress and performance. You should seek continuously to improve performance and make the best use of diverse talents, technology and resources to deliver high quality results. You should be able to challenge underperformance constructively where necessary. You should be able to demonstrate a strong grasp of the principles of accountability and propriety, and promote a culture of value for money in spending public funds.

Where problems arise you will have to interpret a wide range of financial and management information to analyse the problem and work with others to find an effective solution in a timely fashion. You should also be able to understand and manage the risks and cost drivers for the organisation.

Examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below.

- Understanding of corporate governance, accountability and risk management and an awareness of how these are delivered in the public sector.
- Ensuring systems and controls are in place to deliver organisational policies, aims and objectives, and monitoring and reviewing performance, outcomes and impacts.
- Understanding the range of controls and how to use these appropriately to manage finance and resources.
- Ability to analyse financial and other complex information to guide the management and development of an organisation, inform evidence-based decisions and ensure best value for money.
- Effectively evaluating and managing adverse risks and uncertainty in a timely manner.
- Identifying areas of concern and challenging/questioning appropriately.
- Constructively challenging decisions, policies and procedures based on relevant evidence.
- Continuously seeking to improve performance and make the best use of diverse talents, technology and resources to deliver high quality.

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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 in which you are, or have been involved.

It is not sufficient 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 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.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 actually do?
What was your unique contribution?
- Result:** What happened?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?

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SUITABILITY FOR APPOINTMENT – SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

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. Please use Section B of the application form to provide practical evidence and examples of what makes you suitable for appointment to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

For example, you may be a member of a School Board of Governors and have 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).

The information you provide should enable an assessment to be made of the extent to which you meet the various criteria. The information will be used for sifting and may be referred to at interview.

When completing this section you should write about **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.

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SECTION 4: APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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

By post to:

PBNI Appointments 2024
Department of Justice
Public Appointments
Room C4
Block C, Castle Buildings
Stormont,
Belfast BT4 3SG

Or deliver by hand to:

PBNI Appointments 2024
Block B Reception
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast

Or email to:

pbni.appointments@justice-ni.gov.uk

no later than: **12noon (UK local time) on 16 December 2024.**

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. **350 words should be provided for each criterion**. Any words over this limit will not be made available to the selection panel;
- Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline. Applicants should ensure that the form is fully completed before being submitted;

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- Applicants invited for interview **will not** be eligible for reimbursement of travelling expenses;
- Successful candidates will be asked to complete a Political Activity Questionnaire form. The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended that all candidates for public appointments be asked to declare any significant political activity (including office holding, public speaking and standing for election) that they may have undertaken in the previous five years. The question only asks for information that is already in the public domain; and
- If you are successful and are appointed to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, some information on your completed application form will be made public at the time of the announcement. This will include a brief summary of your career/experience; length of the appointment; remuneration; details of any other public appointments held with any related remuneration received; and your response to the political activity question.

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.

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 the essential criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any shortlisting which may take place.

SELECTION PANEL

A selection panel consisting of two Departmental officials and an Independent Assessor will assess your application form against the essential criteria. The selection panel will reach a decision as to whether or not you meet each criterion on the basis of the evidence you supply on the application form. Only those applicants assessed as meeting the essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

SIFT & SHORTLISTING PROCESS

Applications will be anonymised for the sift and shortlisting process. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, panel members will use a Marking Frame of 1-5 to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience meets each of the criteria. Applicants must score a minimum of 2 marks for each criterion. Applications which do not meet all of the selection criteria will be sifted out.

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If shortlisting is required, the panel has agreed that the initial pass mark to be invited to interview will be 16 out of a possible 20 for the Chairperson and 12 out of a possible 15 for Board Member. The panel may consider reducing the required overall pass mark by one mark at a time until a sufficient pool of applicants eligible for interview is in place.

All those sifted out or not short-listed will be provided with feedback on request based on the agreed panel's assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest the decision of the Panel, they should seek a review within five working days of receipt of their regrets letter. Further details about the process will be provided in this letter.

Should the outcome of the enquiry result in the applicant being invited for interview, the Department will make the necessary arrangements.

INTERVIEWS

The interview will be competency based on criteria 1-4 for the Chairperson and 2-4 for the Board Member. To be deemed suitable for selection candidates must achieve a pass mark of 2 or above for each of the criteria.

Candidates will also be required to answer questions on the standards of behaviour required of public appointees and any real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest between their circumstances and the appointment applied for. See Annex A.

Competence-based interviewing tests candidates against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These, in turn, provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you, and a deeper understanding of your abilities.

The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare for the interview by:

- reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
- reminding yourself of the examples you used in your application form and being prepared to expand on these at interview, if asked;
- rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel, emphasising your own role and responsibilities; and
- not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.

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 and whose names are being presented for selection will be advised of this following the interview.

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PRESENTATION OF RESULTS TO THE DOJ MINISTER

Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables the Minister to indicate if they wish to have the names of candidates suitable for appointment presented in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list.

The DoJ Minister has indicated that she wishes to receive an unranked list.

An unranked list of those successful at interview will be drawn up, and accompanied by 'candidate summaries'. 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.

Once the Minister has made her decision, the persons appointed to the posts of Chairperson and Board Member for the Probation Board for Northern Ireland will be invited to indicate if they accept the appointment. The appointment will then be formally confirmed in writing. Appointees are required to formally confirm their acceptance of the post and the Terms of Appointment, subject to a successful Basic Disclosure Certificate check.

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

A reserve list will be retained to cover any unforeseen vacancy that may arise within twelve months from the date of the appointment. Interviewees will be advised if they are on a reserve list.

PUBLICISING APPOINTMENTS

A press release will be published to announce the appointment. Consequently, upon appointment, the candidate will be required to complete a political activity form and provide a short biography for publication. The press release will include, the candidate's name, a short description of the body to which they have been appointed, a brief summary of the skills and knowledge the candidate brings to the role, the length of the appointment term and details of the candidate's response to the political activity question.

TIMETABLE / TIMEFRAME

The deadline for receipt of applications in all cases is **12noon (UK local time) on 16 December 2024**. 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 except in exceptional circumstances.**

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.

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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 **W/C 6 January 2025**.

Interviews are expected to be held on **W/C 22 January 2025 and W/C 3 February 2025**.

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.

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 person from their position as Chairperson or Board Member of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, 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;

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- (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 as Chairperson or Board Members of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

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/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPA%20NI%20Guidance%20on%20conflicts%20of%20interest%2C%20integrity%20and%20how%20to%20raise%20a%20complaint.pdf)
<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPA%20NI%20Guidance%20on%20conflicts%20of%20interest%2C%20integrity%20and%20how%20to%20raise%20a%20complaint.pdf>

PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS

A security check will be requested for all appointees to Basic Disclosure Certificate 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 two terms in the same position as Chairperson or Board Member for the Probation Board for Northern Ireland cannot apply through open

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competition for a third term. Applicants who apply for a third term will be discounted at the sift stage.

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>

SECTION 5: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

MONITORING INFORMATION

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is for monitoring purposes only. It is required to monitor age, gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability to ensure that equal opportunity measures are effective. It will not be seen by the selection panel. As with all the information contained in the form, it is gathered, maintained and processed strictly in accordance with our Data Protection Registration, for public appointment purposes only.

COMPLAINTS

Should you wish to make a complaint about any stage of the appointment process you should first direct your concerns, in writing, to:

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PBNI Appointments 2024
Department of Justice
Public Appointments
Room C4, Block C, Castle Buildings
Stormont,
Belfast BT4 3SG
Email: pbni.appointments@justice-ni.gov.uk

If after receiving a comprehensive response you are still concerned, you may send your complaint, in writing, to the Office of Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Information on how to go about this is available in the [CPA NI leaflet](https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPA%20NI%20Guidance%20on%20conflicts%20of%20interest%2C%20integrity%20and%20how%20to%20raise%20a%20complaint.pdf):
<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPA%20NI%20Guidance%20on%20conflicts%20of%20interest%2C%20integrity%20and%20how%20to%20raise%20a%20complaint.pdf>

OTHER INFORMATION

You will be asked to declare if you:

- have been convicted of a criminal offence (other than minor motoring offences) which is not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- are the subject of any current or pending legal, criminal or statutory investigations or actions;
- are you, or have you ever been, subject to the disciplinary process of your employer?
- have been adjudged bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement with your creditors over the past 10 years;
- have been dismissed from any public office over the past 10 years;
- have been disqualified from acting as a company director or in the conduct of a company, or are under investigation in relation to a potential director's disqualification; or
- have been a director, partner or manager of a company which has gone into liquidation, receivership or administration.

DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

Ensure that you understand the degree of publicity the appointment will attract. Read the declaration statement and provide your signature if you agree to accept the conditions.

ANNEX A: PROBITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

Standards of behaviour

There is an expectation that the conduct of anyone appointed to serve on a public body will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

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

Objectivity

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

Accountability

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

Openness

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

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

As part of the selection process, you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest.

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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 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?

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 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 when 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

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would call into question the probity of the Board 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 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.

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 body.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet "CPA NI Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and how to raise a complaint" which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.