

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA) Board Member Appointments (x3)



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

CPANI
The Commissioner
for Public Appointments
Northern Ireland

REGULATED

Contents

Welcome Statement	3
Appointment overview.....	4
Section 1 - Outline of the Public Body and its Role.....	5
Section 2 - Role profile for Board Member positions	7
Section 3 - Person Specification.....	11
Section 4 - Application and selection procedure	14
Section 5 - Probity and conflicts of interest.....	19
Section 6 - Diversity and equal opportunities monitoring	22
Section 7 - Complaints Procedure.....	23
Annex A - The Seven Principles of Public Life	24
Annex B - Guide to Competency Based Interviewing	25

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 or any other reasonable adjustment, please contact:

Public Appointments Unit, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, BT49 9HP
Tel: 028 7744 5130 or by email to: PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk

If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact DAERA via Text Relay.

Making a call from a textphone dial: 1 8001 77445130. Making a call from a telephone dial: 1 8002 77445130

Welcome Statement

Thank you for your interest in the position of member of the Board of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA).

NIFHA and its Board plays an essential role in improving, managing and maintaining the fishery harbours and harbour estates in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. NIFHA is key to supporting the NI fishing industry, in what are challenging times, through the provision of safe and sustainable harbours and supporting healthy seas and thriving seafood communities.

As a new member of NIFHA's board you will play a key role in setting the strategic direction of the organisation in ensuring that there are effective governance and oversight arrangements in place within the organisation; ensuring resources are effectively deployed; and key organisational priorities are effectively delivered.



I would particularly encourage you to apply where you can contribute your successful leadership skills, your track record of achievement and can demonstrate the ability to innovate and bring about change, while providing support to the executive team.

Bringing these skills to the NIFHA Board will help support the delivery of my own Departmental priorities through the important contribution that NIFHA makes to the NI fishing sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Muir', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Andrew Muir MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Appointment overview

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) wishes to appoint **three Members** to the Board of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA). Further information about NIFHA can be obtained from the website at:

www.nifha.co.uk

Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland

The procedure for these appointments adheres to the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). This means that the appointments will be based on merit through a fair, open and transparent process. A copy of the code can be found at:

<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/>

Selection Panel

The appointment process will be overseen by a selection panel. The panel includes an independent panel Member appointed by CPANI who has had no recent operational connection with DAERA. The panel will compile a list of candidates found suitable at interview for consideration for appointment by the DAERA Minister.

The selection panel for this appointment process is:

- Catherine Fisher, (Panel Chair), Director of Windsor Framework Implementation, DAERA
- Stephen Welch, Chair of the Northern Ireland Fisher Harbour Authority (NIFHA) Board
- Raymond Mullan, Independent Assessor appointed by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)

Stage	Date
Closing date for applications	12 noon on Thursday 24 September 2026
Planned sift	Week commencing Monday 5 October 2026
Planned interviews	16, 19 and 20 October 2026
Planned date of appointment	1 January 2027

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The appointment process will offer the Guaranteed Interview Scheme to candidates with a disability. Please see section 6 for more information.

Section 1 - Outline of the public body and its role

Appointment

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority is an executive non-departmental public body (Executive NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

It is a statutory body established in 1973 under the Harbours Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 and the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority Order (Northern Ireland) 1973. The NIFHA is responsible for the three fishery harbours and harbour estates of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie.

Primary functions of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

The primary functions of the NIFHA are to:

- improve, manage and maintain the three fishery harbours and harbour estates of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie;
 - operate such facilities as may be provided at the harbours;
 - dredge and maintain the harbour berth, channels and entrances;
 - lease, dispose of or develop land vested in the Authority; and
 - construct, alter or extend any tidal work (subject to regulatory consent).
- The NIFHA is primarily responsible for ensuring that all onshore and marine activities within port limits are carried out safely and efficiently and that harbour facilities are maintained and improved in an effective manner.
- In terms of service provision, the NIFHA has seven key areas of operation, including the:
- provision of safe navigation channels and berths;
 - maintenance of a safe operating environment within the harbours;
 - provision of services to the vessels including ice, water and electricity;
 - provision of services to repurpose, recycle and dispose of various waste streams;
 - provision, and management of fish market facilities;
 - provision of slipway facilities for vessel maintenance and repair; and
 - management and development of the harbour estate.

In recent years, capital projects have generally been funded through the Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund. In 2020/21, the Fishing and Seafood Development Programme recommended major infrastructure development for Ardglass, Kilkeel and, to a lesser extent, Portavogie harbours. These proposals are currently subject to review in order to determine their affordability, need and viability. If the review does recommend any capital investment at NIFHA port infrastructure, and funding be secured to deliver, NIFHA will have responsibility for the project management of such investments.

Organisation and operational structure

The NIFHA is managed by a Board consisting of the Chair and between four and eight other Members. In order to hold meetings, the Board requires a minimum of the Chair plus not less than four Members to form a quorum. The Board is currently made up of six Members. The Chair and Members are Ministerial appointments and are non-executive.

The Board has one sub-committee, the Audit and Risk Assurance sub-committee. This sub-committee provides objective advice to the Chief Executive of the NIFHA, who is also the organisation's designated Accounting Officer, and the Board on corporate governance, risk management and internal control issues.

The Chair and Board Members have overall responsibility for the corporate strategy and governance of the NIFHA and for setting aims and objectives. The Corporate Plan is normally updated every four years, and the process involves the continuous monitoring and review of performance with a view to ensuring that overall aims and objectives are achieved. Annual business plans are derived from, and are consistent with, the Corporate Plan.

The NIFHA head office is located in Downpatrick and there are offices at each of the three harbours.

For further information about the NIFHA (including minutes of Board Meetings and its Annual Report and Accounts) please visit: <http://www.nifha.co.uk>

Section 2 - Role profile for Board Member positions

The NIFHA Board's role

The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the NIFHA fulfils its aims and objectives as agreed with DAERA and as approved by the Minister, and the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources. To this end, the Board establishes the overall strategic direction of the NIFHA within the policy and resources framework agreed with DAERA, whilst ensuring that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with.

The Board ensures that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times and that key financial and other risks facing the NIFHA are addressed. Corporate governance is the way in which an organisation is managed. In particular it defines responsibilities within the organisation, how decisions are made and provides for the monitoring of the organisation's performance.

Board Members must comply with the NIFHA's Code of Practice for Board Members. In particular they must not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for gain to themselves or associates. They are also required to declare publicly to the Board any private interests that may be perceived to conflict with their public duties and to comply with the Board's rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

All Board Members must adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Board Member role

Board Members must regularly attend Board meetings, keep up-to-date on relevant issues, and contribute to the decision-making process at Board meetings. In so doing they must act in the best interests of the NIFHA and accept corporate decisions once made.

Summary of terms and conditions of appointment

- **Location:** The NIFHA Board meetings are normally held on a rotational basis between their premises at 3 St Patrick's Avenue, Downpatrick, Co. Down, BT30 6DW and the three harbours at Ardglass, Kilkeel, and Portavogie.
- **Period of Appointment:** The Board Member appointments will be for **four** years.
- **Termination of appointment:** Your appointment may be terminated if at any time you are considered unfit to continue in office or are incapable of performing your duties as a Member of the Board.

- **Performance Appraisal:** An annual assessment of the performance of the Board Member is completed by the Chair of the Board.
- **Re-appointment:** Reappointment to a future second term is not automatic and should not be assumed. Reappointment may be considered subject to an appropriate standard of performance and attendance having been achieved during the initial period in office, evidence of continued adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life (**see Annex B**) and the applicable business needs. Reappointment for a second term requires the approval of the Minister.
- **Time Commitment:** The total time commitment for a NIFHA Board Member is 16-18 days per annum. Members will be expected to attend the NIFHA Board meetings and stakeholder meetings and where nominated, to serve on any sub-committee. This may involve attendance at meetings held in any of the three harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel or Portavogie. Provisions relating to annual leave do not apply to these positions.
- **Attendance:** The Members of the NIFHA Board are expected to attend meetings regularly. The appointment may be terminated if attendance becomes such that it interferes with the effective running of the Board.
- **Remuneration:** Remuneration for the NIFHA Board Member is **£5,847** per annum, paid quarterly in arrears. As remuneration is taxable the NIFHA will apply PAYE deductions in respect of Income Tax and National Insurance. The appointment will not be pensionable.
- **Expenses:** In carrying out the role as a Board Member you are entitled to claim the following expenses:
 - All expenses are paid to any location when on NIFHA Business. Mileage to Downpatrick is paid through the PAYE system (subject to TAX and NIC) as Downpatrick is classed as the place of business. All other mileage is paid through a submitted expenses claim on a monthly basis and is not taxable;
 - Reasonable expenses incurred in relation to the care of dependants (including childcare costs); and
 - Any other appropriate expenses such as particular costs associated with disabilities.
- **Training and Development:** New Board Members are required to undergo formal training on corporate governance within six months of appointment and may be required to attend other relevant training courses organised by the NIFHA or DAERA.

- **Indemnities for Personal Liability:** The Department has indicated that an individual Board Member who has acted honestly and in good faith will not have to meet out of his/her own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in the execution or purported execution of his/her Board function, save where the person has acted recklessly.
- **Conduct:** All public appointees have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality. In exercising their duties, the Member must:
 - demonstrate impartiality, integrity and objectivity and should be aware of the wider responsibilities of the Board;
 - undertake on appointment to comply at all times with the Seven Principles of Public Life and with the rules relating to the use of public funds;
 - act in good faith and in the best interests of the Board;
 - not use information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purposes, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses, or other organisations.
- **Gifts and Hospitality:** All public appointees are expected to ensure that the acceptance of gifts and hospitality can stand up to public scrutiny. Gifts should be declined wherever possible and any offers should be reported to the NIFHA's Secretariat. Where it would be ungracious or otherwise difficult not to accept, you should inform the NIFHA's Secretariat of the gift, the estimated value, and the donor. Public appointees must take personal responsibility to ensure that a record is placed in the appropriate hospitality register. Similarly, care should be taken that no extravagance is involved with working lunches and other social occasions.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, can be damaging to the individual Board Member, the Board, the NIFHA and the Department. If a conflict of interest arises or is identified, it is essential that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

You must declare any personal or business interests, pecuniary or non-pecuniary which may, or may be perceived to, influence your judgement when performing your duties as Member of the Board. Failure to do so could lead to your appointment being withdrawn.

If appointees are deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Public Life, the Department may terminate the appointment.

You are required to register your own interests and the interests of close family members and persons living in the same household that appear closely related to your activities

as Member. Should you be in any doubt about what to disclose it is best to err on the side of caution and disclose the information. These interests will be included in an appropriate register of interests maintained by the NIFHA and you must ensure that your entries are kept up to date.

Should an issue arise subsequent to the completion of the register of interests that could give rise to a potential conflict of interest you must inform the Chair of the NIFHA Board.

If at a meeting of the Board an issue arises that could give rise to a potential conflict you should disclose your interest and withdraw from any discussion or consideration of the matter.

In extreme situations, if a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, dismissal may be the most appropriate option, however due process must be followed and the principles of natural justice applied.

- **Other Appointments:** You must inform DAERA Sponsor Branch in advance of taking up any new appointments which may impinge on your duties.

- **Political Activity:** You should not occupy paid party-political posts or hold particularly sensitive positions of responsibility in a political party. Subject to the foregoing, you are free to engage in political activities provided that you are conscious of your general public responsibilities and exercise proper discretion, particularly with regard to the work of the Board and be prepared to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- You are expected to inform the Minister of any intention to accept a prominent position in any political party and to understand that your appointment as Member of the Board may be terminated if the Minister decides that, in the case of you accepting such a role, the positions are incompatible.

Section 3 - Person specification

In making these appointments DAERA wants to ensure a broad range of skills and experience that reflect the range of activities of the NIFHA and the Board.

Before applying for these positions, please take the time to study the essential criteria set out below and consider whether you meet these. Candidates who do not meet the essential criteria will not be considered for interview.

Essential Criteria

Candidates will need to demonstrate by way of example that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience. It is your responsibility to provide relevant examples, at application and interview stages, which clearly show how you meet each criterion listed below as relevant to the position you are applying for.

Criterion 1 - Corporate Governance and Accountability

Please demonstrate a practical example (or examples) of applying effective corporate governance, including risk management, and accountability arrangements to monitor organisational performance and ensure effective decision making.

Board Members will be expected to demonstrate and ensure that the NIFHA has high standards of corporate governance and accountability, including personal accountability.

Corporate governance may be described as the way in which an organisation is directed and controlled. Risk management involves establishing and maintaining systems to identify, evaluate, monitor and manage risks. Accountability can be defined as the process by which public sector bodies and individuals within them are responsible for their decisions and actions, including their stewardship of public funds and oversight of all aspects of performance and activities to achieve corporate aims and objectives.

Criterion 2 - Collaboration and partnership

Please demonstrate by way of practical example(s), your experience in building and maintaining effective partnerships, and the communication skills you used, to develop and deliver good outcomes.

NIFHA Board Members should demonstrate strong interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills, together with the ability to promote NIFHA and its work. They should be able to work effectively with fellow Board Members, the Chair, the Chief Executive and the wider team and Departmental officials to support delivery of NIFHA's corporate objectives, while also providing constructive challenge to the Executive Team.

Effective Board Members will be able to build and maintain positive relationships with a range of stakeholders, communicate their views clearly and persuasively, listen carefully to others and influence outcomes in a constructive and respectful way. They should also be able to challenge appropriately; present balanced and reasoned arguments; contribute to collective decision-making; and manage differing views or conflict so that productive working relationships are maintained and beneficial outcomes are achieved.

Criterion 3 - Relevant experience

Please demonstrate by way of practical example (or examples) where you have contributed to an organisation's objectives in one of the areas specified below.

We are looking for evidence that you have knowledge and experience in any of the following areas*

**You do not need to detail experience in each of these areas. You must provide sufficient detail to allow the selection panel to make a full assessment of your response, therefore it is recommended that you focus on one (maximum of two) area(s). The examples provided are intended to be illustrative only and are not exhaustive.*

i. Asset; estate; or facilities management

Demonstrable experience in any of the above areas, for example managing or maintaining an asset management strategy, asset register, or physical assets; asset surveys; delivery of infrastructure or asset projects; investment planning; sustainability; applying relevant guidance and legislation; planning, organising and managing resources, spaces and risks; maintaining and enhancing physical spaces and land; business continuity arrangements; or property management.

ii. Health and safety or marine safety

Demonstrable experience in either of the above areas, for example ensuring regulatory compliance; developing safety systems; risk mitigation strategies and prevention of incidents/accidents; safety audits, inspections and investigations; implementing safety controls and improvements; training, policies; procedures and monitoring; ensuring safe equipment, handling and workplace environments; or emergency preparedness.

iii. Fisheries or maritime sectors

Demonstrable experience in either the fishing or maritime sector, for example commercial fishing and aquaculture; recreational activities; processing and marketing; understanding of applicable regulations, standards and safety requirements; fisheries management and sustainability; or shipping, ports and logistics.

iv. Project or programme management

Demonstrable experience in project or programme management, for example responsibility for management and delivery of projects; utilising recognised project management techniques to plan, organise, execute and monitor tasks, manage risks and issues; and deliver on time and on budget to meet the project brief. At programme level, it may involve coordination and oversight of multiple interlinked projects or

initiatives to achieve goals and realise benefits at a strategic level.

v. Financial planning and management

Demonstrable experience in financial planning and management, for example strategic planning, organising, directing, control and oversight of the financial activities of an organisation; ability to interpret financial information and risks; ability to assess financial sustainability of an organisation; knowledge of financial regulations, accounting practices, rules governing the management of public money.

vi. Corporate planning or strategic management

Demonstrable experience in corporate planning or strategic management for example, setting organisational vision, strategic goals and objectives; providing strategic direction and oversight; taking into account the strategic and operating context; developing strategies and plans; monitoring organisational performance; making effective decisions; managing risks; applying effective governance and accountability, budgetary control and oversight; directing and challenging performance; previous experience at senior executive or Board level**.

** senior executive and Board level is defined as taking decisions affecting the corporate body or organisation.

Section 4 - Application and selection procedure

Application procedure

Application forms and the candidate information pack is available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/public-appointment-vacancies-members-x3-board-northern-ireland-fishery-harbour-authority-nifha>

Alternatively, the application form and further information can be obtained from the Public Appointments Unit at: publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk

Making Your Application

Parts A, B and C of the Application Form must be completed in full. It is your responsibility to ensure the form is fully and correctly completed.

Part D - Applicants are requested to complete the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form (Voluntary). This will **not** be shared with the selection panel.

The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the appointment requirements. The 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 fuller understanding of your abilities.

The information you provide in the application form will be assessed in relation to the essential criteria. Only the details provided by you in your application form will be presented to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post or shortlisting (if necessary). Details must be provided in the relevant box for each of the essential criteria. Any information over the **maximum word limit** or provided on continuation sheets will **not** be shared with the selection panel.

You can use examples from your working life, including any voluntary or community work you are, or have been, engaged in or, if preferred, you can use examples from your personal life. Please note that formal degree-level qualifications and details of previous employment are **not** required.

The selection panel will not make assumptions from a job or post title, or the nature of the organisation, as to the skills and experience you may have. You should ensure that you provide details of your personal role and evidence in your application form which outlines how your experience matches the essential criteria detailed above. If you do not provide sufficient detail under each of the criterion the selection panel may reject your application.

When providing examples in your application, you may find it helpful to follow a structure similar to that set out in the 'Guide to competency-based interviewing' at Annex B. This involves reading each criterion/ question; identifying a relevant example(s) which demonstrates how you meet the criteria and breaking your answer down under the headings below (you do not need to list headings in your answers).

- Describe the **challenge** presented,
- Explain the **context** of that challenge,
- Outline the **action** taken and
- Describe the end **result**.

Alternatively, you may wish to use another similar method, such as the STAR [Situation, Task, Action, Result) method.

Useful resources

It is strongly recommended that all applicants read the 'Public Appointments Guide' which provides an overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and helpful information for those wishing to apply. A copy of this Guide can be found at the following link: www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf

Further information on public appointments and how to apply is available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/public-appointments-explained>

You may also be interested in workshops on the public appointments process offered by CPANI at no cost. Further details can be found at: <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/workshops>

Closing Date

The closing date and time for receipt of completed application forms by post or e-mail is:

12, noon on Thursday 24 September 2026.

Late applications

Late applications will **not** generally be accepted. The selection panel may decide to accept a late application if there are exceptional and/or extenuating circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their application arrives with DAERA on or before the deadline, whether by email or post and to ensure the form is completed in full. Applications will not be processed or assessed by the selection panel until after the closing deadline.

Sift process

Applications will be **anonymised** before the selection panel conducts the sift exercise. The selection panel will only be supplied with **Part C** of the application form.

Only the information supplied under each criterion in the application form will be considered in the sift process. It is therefore essential that you provide in the application form information relevant to **each** of the essential criteria as applicable.

The scoring framework of **1-5** will be used at sift stage. The pass mark for each criterion will be **3**.

Shortlisting Criteria

If following the sift of applications it is necessary to undertake further shortlisting of candidates to proceed to the interview stage, this will be undertaken on the basis of overall score, subject to meeting the minimum pass mark for each criterion.

It is anticipated that the eligibility sift will take place week commencing **Monday 5 October 2026**.

Feedback

If an applicant does not pass the sift stage of the process, feedback will be provided on request. This will be based on the panel's consensus assessment of the application.

DAERA has a system in place to deal with queries, challenges, or complaints raised during the appointment process and to reassess decisions not to invite candidates for interview.

Reassessment Process (sift stage)

If an applicant is unhappy with the decision of the panel, in that they have not been invited to interview, they have the right to make a request in writing to have their application reassessed. The applicant must contact the Public Appointments Unit requesting a review within **10 days** of receiving the outcome letter from the sift process.

The reassessment request will be shared with the panel in full and the panel is clearly advised **not** to take any additional information provided by the applicant into account, that the reassessment must be based only on the information provided by the applicant in their application form.

Applicants should contact the DAERA Public Appointments Unit by email at: publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk to request a reassessment.

Interview Process

Interviews will be conducted in person by the selection panel. Requests for remote interviews will only be considered by the panel in exceptional circumstances. Audio only interviews will not be permitted.

At interview stage the criteria will be marked on a scoring framework from **1 to 5**. Candidates need to meet the satisfactory level required, which is obtaining the minimum pass mark of **3** for each criterion to be considered suitable for appointment.

It is anticipated that interviews will be held on **Friday 16, Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 October 2026** at a Belfast venue to be confirmed. Candidates should make themselves available during this time. Requests to reschedule an interview will be considered by the panel, but it may not be possible and cannot be guaranteed, other than in very limited circumstances, such as statutory requirements. A valid form of photographic identity will need to be presented to the panel by each candidate at interview. Applicants will be able to claim expenses for travel at standard NICS rates for attendance at interview.

The interviews will be competence-based interviews which test candidates against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. Please see the enclosed Guide to Competency Based Interviewing (**Annex B**).

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

- reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
- reminding yourself of 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.

At interview, the panel will assess the evidence provided by a candidate for each competency. Following the interview the panel will collectively agree scores according to the agreed mark frame (1-5). Candidates will need to achieve the minimum pass mark of **3 for each and all** competencies to be found suitable for appointment.

The merit list of candidates found suitable will go forward to the Minister for his consideration and selection (see below).

We aim to notify the candidates of the interview outcome by week commencing **2 November 2026**. If unsuccessful at interview, candidates may request feedback on their performance, this can be arranged by contacting the Public Appointments Unit by email at: publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk

Ministerial Choice

Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables Ministers to indicate if they wish to be presented with the names of candidates found suitable for appointment in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list. The Minister has requested an **unranked** list for this appointment process. This means that all candidates found to be suitable for appointment by the panel following interview can be considered for appointment to the available positions by the Minister. Being found suitable for appointment by the selection panel does not automatically mean that you will be appointed by the Minister (as there may, for example, be more candidates than positions available).

Candidates should be aware that, for candidates who are successful at interview, the panel will prepare an **'applicant summary'** which is provided to the Minister, along with the **unranked** merit list. The applicant summary contains the panel's objective analysis of performance at interview and declarations made as to any appointments held, probity, integrity and conflict of interest. This is the only candidate information that is shared with the Minister.

Reserve List

A reserve list may be produced to cover any vacancies that arise within 12 months following the initial appointment.

Date of Appointment

It is anticipated that the successful candidates will take up appointment from **1 January 2027**.

Announcement of Appointment(s)

Applicants who are selected for appointment will be asked to provide information for a short pen picture for inclusion in a press release to announce the appointment, in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointment's Code of Practice. This will include:

- their name;
- a brief summary of the skills and knowledge they bring to the role;
- details of current appointments they hold and any related remuneration received; and
- details of any political activity declared in the last five years.

DAERA will add the following information to the press release:

- a short description of the body to which they have been appointed;
- the period of appointment; and
- any remuneration associated with the appointment.

Section 5 - Probity and conflicts of interest

The highest standards of propriety are expected of NIFHA Board Members. Public appointees must show a willingness to work under any administration irrespective of political opinion. Public appointees, including NIFHA Board Members, must adhere to the **Seven Principles of Public Life**. A copy is attached at **Annex A**.

Any private or business interests that potential Board Members might have, and that may be relevant to the work of the NIFHA, must be declared in the application form. Any issues of probity or integrity must also be declared in the application form.

Examples of what might constitute a conflict of interest are given on the enclosed leaflet issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments:

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

A conflict of interest may also arise where you or a close relative is employed by, or has a relationship with, the sponsor department or any of its sponsored bodies.

Potential conflicts of interest are not necessarily a barrier to appointment, but both real and perceived conflicts, if viewed as relevant, will be explored to ensure that the public can have confidence in the NIFHA's independence and impartiality.

You should declare in your application form any matter(s) which could cause or be perceived to cause a potential conflict of interest or any other integrity matters which may cause reputational damage to DAERA or the NIFHA including any links you or close family Members have to DAERA or any of its sponsored bodies to ensure these can be fully explored and resolved.

Probity Checks

Departments have a duty to ensure, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to the Boards of public bodies will perform their duties in an effective manner. DAERA will therefore conduct a cross-departmental check on the probity and performance of those candidates holding any NI public appointments in the preceding 7-year period. Similar information will be provided by DAERA to other departments on request.

Applications from Civil Servants/Former Civil Servants

Civil servants or former civil servants are subject to the rules on Acceptance of Outside Business Appointments, Employment or Self-Employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category who wish to

apply must check their eligibility to do so with their current/ former Department and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Human Resources. (Standards of Conduct Policy Sections 8, IRO Public Appointments: The NICS Staff Handbook includes the HR policy, 6.01 Standards of Conduct).

Civil servants (or former civil servants) should be aware that a judgement may also be made by the interviewing panel, as to whether the nature of their employment could lead to a perceived, or real, split of loyalties of a sufficiently serious nature to render appointment as NIFHA Board Member an unmanageable conflict of interest, in particular where there is a current or former relationship with the sponsoring Department (DAERA) or body (NIFHA).

Double Paying

If you already work in the public sector you need to be aware that:

- you 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 your existing commitments, in particular where there is a relationship with either the sponsor department or body;

- you will be asked to confirm that you have permission from your employer to take up an appointment if one is offered; and
- there is a general guiding principle that an individual should not be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. As a result, if you already work in the public sector, you may not be entitled to claim remuneration including expenses for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which you are already paid by the public sector. If in doubt, contact your employer for advice.

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur or a conflict of interest arising, DAERA reserves the right to contact your employer/ organisation regarding your candidature.

Access NI Checks

If successful, you should be aware that you will be required to complete a basic Access NI check. Further details in relation to Access NI checks can be found in the Access NI Code of Practice (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/accessni-code-practice>).

Nationality

In general, you should have the right to work in the UK to be eligible to apply for a public appointment. Please note:

- DAERA has no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only.
- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
- Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.

It is the responsibility of any non-UK or non-RoI applicants to provide evidence that they have the appropriate permission if being offered a post. The Department will undertake pre-appointment checks to confirm if they can legally work in the UK.

Two term rule

In accordance with the CPANI Code, appointments to the same position are restricted to two terms. Those who have served two appointment terms of whatever length, on a Board are ineligible to apply for the same position.

Section 6 - Diversity and equal opportunities monitoring

Equality and diversity in public appointments

DAERA is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. All applications for appointment are considered strictly on merit. Since women, young people, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities are currently under-represented on the NIFHA Board, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) is applicable in this appointment process. The GIS aims to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage. Applicants with a disability **who meet the minimum pass mark** for each essential criteria at stage one of the selection process (the sift process) will be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any additional short-listing which may take place.

DAERA will also seek to facilitate reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability on request.

Equal opportunities monitoring form

The NICS monitors appointment processes to help ensure that processes and procedures promote equality of opportunity as far as possible. Please complete the equal opportunities monitoring form - **Part D** of the application form.

The information provided in the monitoring form will be detached from the information on the application form and held separately. It will not be available to selection panels or to anyone else involved in the selection process.

DAERA's Public Appointments Privacy Notice

The Department is committed to ensuring that any personal information received from you is processed in a way which complies with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act (2018).

A full copy of the **DAERA'S public appointments privacy notice** can be found here:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daeras-public-appointments-privacy-notice>.

Section 7 - Complaints Procedure

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this appointment process, you should in the first instance contact the Public Appointments Unit. Your complaint will be managed in accordance with a set procedure.

Public Appointments Branch
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Telephone: 028 7744 5130

Textphone: 1 8001 7744 5130

If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact DAERA via Text Relay.

Making a call from a text phone dial 18001 77445130

Making a call from a telephone dial 18002 77445130

If you are unhappy with DAERA's response, you may wish to write to the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (see contact details below):

The Commissioner for Public Appointments
for Northern Ireland (CPANI)
Room E5:08
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Annex A

The Seven Principles of 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.

Annex B

Guide to Competency Based Interviewing

Competency Based Interviewing (CBI) is currently the most common method adopted for making public appointments in Northern Ireland. CBI is based on the premise that past performance is the best indicator of how someone will perform in a similar situation in the future. The CBI approach places the onus on you, the candidate, to provide evidence from your own experience of specific skills, competencies and behaviours at the required standard of performance. A **'competence'** is simply a desirable skill or quality.

CBI provides the opportunity for you to answer questions about how you have reacted to and dealt with previous situations, the lessons you have learned and how you might manage similar situations in the future. CBI gives you an opportunity to illustrate your personality, skill set and individual competencies to the interviewer.

During the interview each competence is tested separately and you will be told which competence you are being questioned on. For each competence, the interviewer will begin by asking a **lead question**. These questions are seeking an example of a situation or task which led you to take a certain course of

action. Lead questions are standardised and are therefore asked to each candidate in the same way. Some examples of lead questions are:

- *Describe a situation when you have worked as part of a team?*
- *Tell me about a time when you have been faced with a challenge in work?*

Probing questions will then be used to determine the course of action taken, what changes were created by those actions and the effects of those actions on others. Examples of probing questions are:

- *What did you actually do?*
- *What risks did you take?*
- *How did you plan it?*
- *What were the implications of....?*
- *What went well?*
- *What went badly?*
- *What were the outcomes?*
- *What would you do differently?*

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 the interview;
- rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel emphasising your own role and contribution; and
- not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.

During the interview:

- listen carefully to the questions, if you don't understand a question ask for clarification;
- answer with good clear examples that provide evidence of your ability and which relate to the criteria the panel is looking for; and
- don't sell yourself short, be positive and show enthusiasm.

The competencies being tested are the criteria indicated in the application form.

Further information on competency-based interviews is available in the '**Public Appointments Guide**'. A copy of this Guide can be found at the following link: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf>

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA)

Board Member Appointments (x3)



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**