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**PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS**

**APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF**

**THE NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS’ PENSION SCHEME**

**PENSION BOARD**

**INFORMATION BOOKLET**

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**SECTION 1: DIVERSITY**

**Diversity in Public Appointments**

1. The Department of Education (DE) is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. DE is also committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants and to improving diversity and eradicating under-representation.
2. Applications are welcome from all backgrounds regardless of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not you have dependants. We would particularly welcome applications from women, people under 30 years of age, members of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities as these groups continue to be under-represented on the boards of public bodies.
3. In 2016, the previous Northern Ireland Executive agreed to introduce gender equality targets to help improve diversity in public appointments. These targets are:
   * + - To achieve gender equality amongst those appointed in-year by 2017/18; and
       - To achieve gender equality amongst all public appointees by 2020/21.

**Disability Discrimination Act**

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a **substantial** and **long-term adverse effect** on a person’s ability to carry out **normal day-to-day activities**”.

This definition is interpreted as follows:-

* **Physical impairment** - this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples are blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease;
* **Mental impairment** - this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability;
* **Substantial** - put simply, this means that the effect of the physical or mental **i**mpairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect;
* **Long-term adverse effect** - the effect has to have lasted, or be likely to last, overall for at least twelve months and the effect must be a detrimental one. People who are diagnosed with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
* **A** **normal day-to-day activity** is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something as individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

1. To meet the definition, a person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA:

* mobility;
* manual dexterity;
* physical coordination;
* continence;
* ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
* speech, hearing or eyesight;
* memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
* perception of risk of physical danger.

1. People who satisfy the definition of ‘disability’ are covered by the DDA. This includes people who have had a disability in the past.

**SECTION 2: INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION**

**About the NI Teachers Pension Scheme Pension Board (NITPSPB)**

**Background**

1. The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission (IPSPC) (Hutton) Report recommended the establishment of Pension Boards for all public sector pension schemes to give scheme members, taxpayers and others confidence that the schemes are being efficiently and effectively administered. The IPSPC also recommended the establishment of Scheme Advisory Boards (SAB) to provide a forum through which stakeholders can provide advice to the relevant Department on the desirability of changes to each scheme’s rules. Those recommendations have been implemented in the Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014. Although these Boards provide additional layers of scrutiny and challenge, the Department retains overall responsibility and accountability for the scheme. The Act says:

“5 (1) 1) Subject to subsection (2), scheme regulations for a scheme under section 1 must provide for the establishment of a pension board for the scheme.

(2) Scheme regulations for a scheme under section 1, which is a scheme made by virtue of section 1(2)(c), may make the provision required under subsection (1) above by providing for the appointment of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee as the pension board for that scheme.

(3) It is the responsibility of the pension board for a scheme to assist the scheme manager (or each scheme manager) in relation to the following matters—

(a) securing compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme and any statutory pension scheme that is connected with it;

(b) securing compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the scheme and any connected scheme by the Pensions Regulator;

(c) such other matters as the scheme regulations may specify.”

1. To assist the Scheme Manager in the administration and the assessment of policy changes to the NI Teachers’ Pension Scheme (NITPS) the establishment of both the Board and the SAB adds value to existing administration arrangements. In appointing the membership there is an expectation and a requirement that Board appointments are made based on individual knowledge, skills and experiences that can be used to improve the NITPS for its members and employers. The combined skill set of those appointed to the Boards should be used to improve the scheme irrespective of affiliations outside of the Board.

**NITPSPB Scope, Aims and Benefits**

1. The Act provides that the Board has responsibility for assisting the Scheme Manager with securing compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme and securing compliance with requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator. The Board assists the Scheme Manager by having oversight of the administration and by ensuring that the scheme is managed in accordance with relevant legislation and any guidance from the Pensions Regulator.
2. To be effective and have the confidence of the membership, the Board must have authority to influence how the scheme is administered and to take action to address any failings. The Board has a role in ensuring that the services provided reflect the needs of the membership and employers, and that they have the mechanisms to deliver those. To avoid the Board becoming too reactive and focussing overly on service delivery, they must agree and maintain a strategy for scheme administration, and provide the Minister and stakeholders with confidence that the scheme is continuing to develop and meet the changing needs of teachers and schools.
3. The Board has three main roles:
   1. Strategy – The Board sets the scope and direction of the administration ensuring that it meets the changing needs of members and employers.
   2. Administration – The Board ensures the effective administration by close scrutiny and challenge of the level and quality of service provided for the membership and employers by the administrator; focussing on scheme performance, continuous improvement, value for money, risk management and compliance with statutory requirements.
   3. Finance - The Board provides assurance to the DE Permanent Secretary, members and employers about the effective financial management of the NITPS, including contribution collection, financial forecasting and production of scheme accounts.
4. Further details on the specific tasks that the Board carries out for each of the three main roles can be found in the terms of reference.
5. The Board is not in a position to have detailed oversight of all aspects of scheme administration, due to the size of the NITPS. In common with private sector schemes and Pensions Regulator guidance, it is expected that the Board takes a risk-based approach and focus attention on areas of the administration where there is evidence that there is a high impact and/or probability of failure or where there are high levels of dissatisfaction. To support the Board in making these judgments, they receive a variety of information including: risk registers; reports from the administrator on the range and quality of services; financial reports; details of complaints/Pension Ombudsman’s determinations regarding the administration of the scheme; audit reports and feedback from stakeholders.
6. As the Accounting Officer for the NITPS, the Permanent Secretary retains financial responsibility for the NITPS. The Board has secretariat support, provided by DE officials. The role of the secretariat reflects the Pensions Regulator’s expected code of practice.

**Structure of the Board**

1. The Department has established the Board using the structure shown below. There is the ability to review this arrangement at a future date and to flex the constitution to reflect circumstances at the time.

The Board is constituted as follows:-

1. A Chair,
2. Four member representatives,
3. Four employer representatives
4. A Public Service Pension Scheme member, and
5. Two DE officials (policy and finance/audit).

The current membership of the Board is available at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/governance-northern-ireland-teachers-pension-scheme-nitps>

16. For a copy of the full Terms of Reference of the NITPSPB please see attached link:

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/NITPSPB%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20June%202017.pdf

**SECTION 3: ROLE PROFILES**

1. The Chairperson is appointed by, and is responsible to, the Minister for Education.
2. Acting as figurehead for the NI Teachers’ Pension Scheme Pension Board (NITPSPB); providing effective leadership of the Board and oversight of all of its activities.
3. Representing the NITPSPB in contacts with a range of stakeholders including: Employers, Members, Trade Unions, the Minister, Operations Manager for Teachers’ Pay and Pensions Team and other contractors, Department of Education (DE) officials, Department of Finance and Personnel officials and the Pensions Regulator.
4. Chairing meetings of the NITPSPB (approximately 4 per annum at quarterly intervals) ensuring that these are conducted in an expeditious manner, including taking steps to ensure:

* agenda and reports are timely and sufficient;
* all Board members contribute to deliberations; and
* access to appropriate professional advice is available.

1. Ensuring that the NITPSPB operates as an effective and efficient mechanism for governing the NI Teachers’ Pension Scheme (NITPS).
2. Promoting agreement between the bodies and individuals represented on the Board by working to create mutual understanding and by facilitating action to resolve differences in the event of disagreement.
3. Ensuring Board members, collectively and individually understand their roles and responsibilities.
4. Agreeing requirements and expectations with individual Board members; ensuring support is provided in the form of induction, development and mentoring where necessary; and reviewing the performance of Board members.
5. Identifying the Board’s stakeholders and ensuring that there is effective communication with, and feedback from, stakeholders.
6. Liaising with the Minister and DE officials to report on progress and delivery and make any recommendations.

**SECTION 4: PERSON SPECIFICATION**

1. The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, and competences sought.
2. The information you provide will be used to determine your suitability for appointment. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time activities or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.
3. Applicants are expected to demonstrate evidence that they have the necessary experience, skills or competencies, both in the application form and at interview, to meet the following essential criteria:

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA FOR CHAIRPERSON**

30. Applicants for the post will be expected to meet the essential criteria. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate evidence that they have the necessary experience, skills or competencies, both in the application form and at interview, to meet the following essential criteria:

**Leadership:** strategic vision combined with the ability to deliver results, as well as a proactive approach to making things happen.

* Combines strategic vision with a proven track record in shaping agendas and delivering programme outcomes;
* Takes a proactive stance. Able to engage others, spark debate and discussion, ensure appropriate decisions are made and agreed and able to drive through action; and
* Balances the need to achieve ‘quick wins’ with longer term gains.

**Advocacy and Influence:** the ability to engage with stakeholders, gain their commitment and raise the profile of the Pension Board agenda.

* + Able to act as a figurehead and advocate, raising the profile and visibility of a given agenda;
  + Track record in influencing and gaining commitment from stakeholders and those working in senior positions;
  + Standing and repute commensurate with chairing a public body with influence over high profile public services.

**Partnership skills:** the ability to bring people together, broker deals and gain agreement.

* Ability to form and develop strategic partnerships and alliances with a diverse range of stakeholders;
* Acts as an ‘enabler’ for partnership activity – able to bring people together, broker deals, provide constructive challenge and gain agreement;
* Works through others to achieve objectives and is able to demonstrate the added value of working together; and
* Effective chair of meetings.

Additionally, the NITPSPB Chair will demonstrate experience and appreciation of the:

**Strategic and Policy context**

* A strategic and operational understanding of:
  + The NITPS and local educational environment; and
  + Legislation and regulation relating to public service Pension Schemes.
* An understanding of policy and public accountability, sound judgement and awareness of political sensitivities; and
* A commitment to equality, efficiency and system reform.

**Financial context**

* An understanding of public finances.

**SECTION 5: NUMBER OF POSTS, TIME COMMITMENT, REMUNERATION, TERM OF APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING**

**Number of Posts**

31.The Department is seeking to appoint:

* a Chairperson

to the NI Teachers’ Pension Scheme Pension Board (NITPSPB). Should the Minister wish to create a reserve list, this will be operative for one year from the date of the Minister’s decision.

**Time Commitment**

32. The Chairperson is expected to make a time commitment of **10-20 days per annum** (the Board meets 4 times per annum). By applying for the post it is assumed that you can make this commitment.

**Remuneration**

33. The post attracts a daily rate of **£415 per day**, plus travel and subsistence allowances necessarily incurred on NITPSPB business**.** Remuneration will be taxed at source and subject to National Insurance Contributions. The appointment is non-pensionable.

**Double Paying**

34. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that no one can be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. Therefore, to avoid double payment of remuneration or travelling expenses, if any of the successful appointees are employed within the public sector, the Department will agree with the appointee and the other employer the arrangements for the retention of such costs.

**Abatement**

35. Applicants should be aware that if they receive a PCSPS (NI) pension or have taken an Annual Compensation Payment (ACP) and they subsequently take up a remunerated appointment with a public body covered by the PCSPS (NI) they may not earn more, by way of remuneration and pension, than they were earning before they retired. Where the new remuneration and pension exceed their previous salary it may be necessary to deduct the excess from their pension. This is known as abatement. The Department will liaise with Civil Service Pensions if it believes that abatement may be necessary.

**Term of Appointment**

36. The term of appointment for the post will be **3 years** (unless terminated before that time) but can be extended with the approval of the Minister, for a further **2 years**.

**Location**

37. The Board meets **4 times per annum** at various locations throughout Northern Ireland, including via online.

**Training**

38. Training will be provided, which the successful applicant must complete and any training events considered necessary.

**Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities**

39. Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support the Chairperson may need to help them carry out their duties.

**SECTION 6: APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

1. The appointment will be made following an open, transparent and merit based competition conducted, in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI. The Department operates a criteria-based selection process, which is currently the most common method of making public appointments here. Please see the enclosed criteria-based selection guidance note which has been provided to assist you with your application.

**Application Procedure**

1. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge, experience, skills or competence through completion of the application form. This form contains the Essential Criteria which reflect the knowledge, experience, skills and competences required by applicants in order to be eligible for appointment.
2. Applicants will be tested against the essential criteria both in their application forms and at interview stage.
3. Electronic or legible, hand written versions of application forms are acceptable. **We cannot accept** CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms, or applications where the format of the form has been altered. Please complete your application form in **black ink**, in either typescript Arial, font 12 or handwritten. **You are limited to maximum of 400 words per each criterion; any words over the limit will be discounted.**

**Selection process**

1. A three member Selection Panel has been appointed which includes two Department of Education officials and an Independent Assessor, appointed from a pool of suitably trained Independent Assessors managed by the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPANI). Independent Assessors provide independent scrutiny as part of the appointment process to help ensure that appointments are open, transparent, based on merit and command public confidence.Independent Assessors are fully involved in the selection process.
2. A sift of all application forms received will be carried out by the Selection Panel to assess each applicant against the following criteria (as set out in the application form):

**1. Leadership**

**2. Advocacy and Influence**

**3. Partnership skill**

**4. Strategic and Policy context**

**5. Financial context**

The Selection Panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets each criterion on the basis of the evidence provided on their application form. The level and quality of the evidence provided will be scored by the panel against the following framework:

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| **Level / Quality of Evidence** | | **Demonstration of Evidence** |
| Outstanding | 5 | Significant evidence of a high level of competence demonstrated. |
| Very Good | 4 | Significant evidence of competence demonstrated. |
| Acceptable  (**Pass Mark**) | 3 | Appropriate evidence of competence demonstrated. |
| Development Potential | 2 | Limited evidence of competence and/or some aspects not fully demonstrated. |
| Unacceptable | 1 | Insufficient evidence of competence demonstrated and/or significant failure to demonstrate some aspects. |

Only those applicants assessed as meeting all the essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process which will involve an interview.

1. In order to encourage diversity, the Department is committed to interviewing as many eligible applicants as practicable without further short-listing being applied. However, in the case of a high volume of applications the Panel may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. If this happens, the Selection Panel will agree a higher acceptable requirement (i.e. a higher overall pass mark) prior to commencing the eligibility sift. The purpose of this will be to identify those applicants whom the Selection Panel considers best meet the essential criteria from the written evidence provided in their application forms.
2. The Department will operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for this appointment process. The GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with a long term impairment or health condition, which is expected to last for at least 12 months. In these circumstances, provided that the applicant has demonstrated in their application form that they have met the criteria, the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview and will not have to meet any additional shortlisting standards. If you wish to apply under this scheme, you must indicate this and sign the declaration. You must be considered as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This means you must have, or have had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, people who have had a disability in the past even if they are no longer disabled, people whose disability is likely to last for 12 months or the rest of their life and people whose condition is likely to progress or recur. Severe disfigurement is also acknowledged as a disability.
3. Those applicants who remain in the process following short-listing will be invited for interview. Applicants invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses, to and from the interview.
4. Applicants who are not offered an interview will receive written feedback based on the Selection Panel’s agreed assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest not being short-listed for interview they must do so within the timescale stated in their feedback letter, setting out in writing their reasons for contesting the decision. Further details about the process will be provided in the feedback letter.
5. The Selection Panel will score candidates at interview against an agreed pass mark for each criterion. Those who pass the interview will be recommended to the Minister as suitable for appointment and presented to the Minister as a pool of candidates.
6. An applicant summary agreed by the Selection Panel will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant’s knowledge, skills and experience based on the information provided by each applicant and the panel’s assessment of that applicant during the selection process. The Minister will decide who should be appointed.

**Probity and Conflict of Interest**

1. DE must ensure that the individuals appointed have an understanding of or a clear commitment to the principles and values of public service. These principles are: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; and Leadership. These are described more fully in the enclosed information leaflet “Probity and Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for Candidates”. The conduct of those appointed to serve on public bodies must be above reproach. To this end, applicants, in their application form, must disclose whether or not they are involved, or have been involved, in activities that could damage their own reputation or that of the body to which they are applying for membership if raised in public. 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. Some examples to help applicants evaluate whether or not they have a potential conflict are also included on the above leaflet.
2. DE must take account of actual, or perceived, conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose all appointments held whether or not they are remunerated. In addition, information on personal connections, which, if they were appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such, must also be disclosed on the application form.
3. It is very important, therefore, that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be perceived as being in conflict with the appointment for which they are applying. If it appears from the information provided on the application form a possible probity and/or conflict issue exists, or may arise in the future, these will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether they are sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Selection Panel will do this at interview stage.

**Political Activity**

1. All those selected for appointment will be asked to complete a form indicating if they have undertaken any political activity in the last five years. The information provided on political activity will be included in the press release announcing the appointment.

**Announcing the Appointment**

1. In the interests of openness and transparency, information on the individual appointed as a result of this process will be made public in a press release.  If you are appointed, some of the information you supply – that is, your name, a summary of your experience, the skills you bring to the Board, other public appointments held with any related remuneration and your response to the political activity question (see above) – will be included in the press release.

**Disqualification Criteria**

1. The following disqualification criteria apply to the position of independent Chair of the NITPSPB:
2. NITPSPB member cannot hold office for more than two terms; and
3. NITPSPB member does not have a conflict of interest, which is defined as a “financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice the person’s exercise of functions as a member of the board, but does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of membership of the scheme or any connected scheme”.

**Civil Servants – Rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments**

1. Serving or former civil servants are not debarred from applying for public appointments. However, serving civil servants will require their Department’s approval and former civil servants may require the approval of their last Department (depending on their grade and whether they left within the last two years) before taking up an appointment.

**Timeframe for Process**

1. **The deadline for return of applications is 5pm on Monday 15 April 2024**.
2. The eligibility sift and any short-listing required are expected to take place during **week commencing 15 April 2024.**
3. Interviews are expected to be held during the **week commencing 29 April 2024**.
4. The successful candidate being appointed week commencing 03 June 2024 (subject to the satisfactory outcome of the necessary pre appointment checks).

**Pre-appointment Checks**

1. Criminal History Record Check – This appointment is subject to a criminal history record check and will require an AccessNI Basic Disclosure Certificate. If you are selected by the Minister for appointment, you will be asked to apply to AccessNI for a Basic Disclosure Certificate using their online system. This disclosure is sought to assist with the decision making process, however a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.  A copy of DE’s Storage and Retention of Disclosure Policy is available to all applicants on request.  If you do not apply for the Basic Disclosure certificate through the AccessNI online system within the specified time, we will regard you as no longer interested in the post and your application will be withdrawn.
2. Other Public Appointments – Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to their public bodies will carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. For candidates who hold other public appointments, this means that we may approach other departments for confirmation that their performance in other public roles has been satisfactory.

**Privacy**

1. Your privacy is important to us and the Department will process your personal data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A copy of the Department’s Privacy Notice is available on our website [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk).

**How to Apply**

66. An application pack is available by contacting DE as follows:

**Website:** <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/public-appointment-opportunities>

**E-mail:** [pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 7132 1295

**By writing to**: Pensions Policy Team, Department of Education, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Gobnascale, Londonderry, BT47 6FP.

1. If you require an application pack in a different format e.g. large print please contact us as detailed above.

**Closing date**

1. The closing date for applications is **5pm on Monday 15 April 2024**.It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the form is received by the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Applications must bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery and the closing date may be missed. All electronic applications must also be received in the Department by **5pm on Monday 15 April 2024.**
2. Applications will normally be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, either by email or by post, within three working days of submitting your application, please contact the Pensions Policy Team – see contact information above.
3. Any general queries about this public appointment competition should be addressed in the first instance to:

**Telephone**: 028 7132 1295

**Email:** [pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk)

**SECTION 7: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Complaints Procedure**

71. The Department is committed to getting this appointment process right first time. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter. Our aim is to resolve any complaint quickly and you are invited to bring any matter of concern to the attention of the DE official named below. However, if you still feel dissatisfied after this approach, you may initiate a formal complaint in writing. Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

Pensions Policy Team,

Department of Education

Waterside House

75 Duke Street

Gobnascale

Londonderry

BT47 6FP

Tel: 028 7132 1295

Email: [pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pensionspolicy@education-ni.gov.uk)

72. If after receiving a comprehensive response from the Department, you remain dissatisfied, you can write to the Commissioner for Public Appointments using the contact details below:

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

Stormont Castle

Stormont Estate

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast

BT4 3XX

Tel: 028 905 24820

Email: [info@publicappointmentsni.org](mailto:info@publicappointmentsni.org)