Lay Membership of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's Registration and Fitness to Practise Committees

Guidance Notes for Completion of Application Form

March 2022

Guidance Notes

The following notes are designed to help you provide the relevant information when completing your application form. You should read these notes and the Information Pack carefully before completing the form.

Part 1: Your Personal Details

Please give full details of your home address, work address if you have one and other contact details.

Part 2: References

Please give details of two referees who would be prepared to comment on your suitability for the position. One reference should be from someone who has, or has had, contact with you in a professional or business capacity. They will be expected to have confident and authoritative knowledge of your achievements. Referees will only be contacted if your application is successful.

Part 3: Relevant Experience

This section requires you to list details of your previous experience. This can include relevant employment, public appointments, voluntary work, community work or caring responsibilities. It is important that you include both professional and personal life experience that could be relevant to the selection criteria. Even if you have been out of the workplace because you are a service user or carer, you may still have the appropriate skills and abilities. To apply for lay membership, you must **not** have been a social worker or social care worker in the last five years. It is also important to note that you must **not** have been involved in the training, education, appointment, employment, supply, supervision, monitoring or representation of social workers or social care workers.

Part 4: Suitability for Appointment - Essential and Desirable Criteria

Appointments are open to lay people from a range of employment and / or personal backgrounds.

This section is your opportunity to provide practical evidence and examples of why you feel you are suitable for appointment to a Social Care Council Committee. You should set out clearly how you meet the essential criteria for the post. You should refer to the Personnel Specification in the Information Pack, and interpret the essential and desirable criteria according to your experience. This could include activity within your working life and / or any personal experience which could be relevant. The information you provide will be assessed during shortlisting for interview.

It is important to remember that the Social Care Council is interested in what you have done individually and as part of a team. To complete this section effectively, you need to understand the relationship between the examples you will use and the relevant selection criteria. You should bear in mind the following points:

- Use actual examples rather than how you *would* do something;
- Use examples from your working life and / or from your personal life, including any voluntary or community work experience;

- There are 18 essential criteria – ensure that you address all of them, although you may find that one example is relevant to several criteria;
- If it was a team activity, ensure that you focus on *your* role in that;
- Avoid descriptions of personal beliefs;
- Focus on your achievements and results.

What information should I provide?

To assist your completion of the form, selection criteria are now discussed in more detail. Some examples of the type of information you might want to include are provided.

Abilities and Skills (Essential Criteria 1 – 9)

You will possess many skills and abilities that are relevant to this application. It is important to focus on areas such as your communication skills, both written and verbal, giving examples of where you have used these skills effectively. This will include listening, asking questions and the ability to take account of different viewpoints and perspectives. You might want to think about situations where you have had to gather information and analyse it to help you reach decisions that are fair and proportionate.

Team-working skills are important in order to reach a consensus and agree decisions. You can use examples of where you have had to work with people with different views and people from different backgrounds to yours. Your examples could include being part of a work team or outside of a work environment. Have you had to handle sensitive situations with tact and diplomacy and, if so, can you give examples of how you did that?

Knowledge and Experience (Essential Criteria 10 - 11)

The Social Care Council is very interested in any experience you might have that would be relevant to your application. If you have been a member of any other Committees, you can give examples of this. It is not a requirement, however, to have been a member of a Committee previously.

Your day-to-day experience both in and outside of work may also be relevant, for example, situations where you have had to analyse information and make decisions based on that information. There are many examples of relevant life experience working within the public arena which you may be able to use, for example, you may have been involved in a parent / teacher association or church Committee.

You will also have relevant knowledge and need to be able to demonstrate a willingness to learn. You might want to write about your knowledge of the Social Care Council, especially the important role of protection of the public. You will be expected to have an awareness of the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) as outlined in your Information Pack.

It would also be helpful to have knowledge of equal opportunities and diversity policies and practice.

Comprehensive training is given to all successful applicants prior to participation in Committee activities.

Personal Characteristics (Essential Criteria 12 – 16)

In response to this question, you should outline your personal commitment to making a significant contribution to safeguarding the welfare of the public. This will include how you would behave in a professional manner, perhaps giving examples of sensitivity and confidentiality in practice. If you work in public service as a Committee Member, you will be expected to demonstrate integrity and trust in all that you do. You might have examples of how you have demonstrated the values of integrity and honesty, maybe under difficult circumstances.

It is important that you also demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. You might have examples of having worked with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

As a Committee Member, you will be expected to remain calm under pressure and have the confidence to support your decisions and views.

There are many personal qualities required in being an effective Committee Member and you should try to identify those, along with examples, using the selection criteria in the Information Pack.

Desirable Criteria (1 - 3)

Whilst it is not essential, it can be helpful to have some experience of investigative proceedings either within work or outside of your own job role. This might not be as part of a formal Committee, but there may have been situations in your work setting where you have contributed to an investigation or have been part of the process of investigation. Equally, outside of the work setting, you may have had opportunities where you were required to analyse information you've been given and come to a decision based on that.

It is important that the public and the Social Care Council have confidence in you as a Committee Member. You might want to include examples of how others have had confidence in you on both a personal and / or professional level.

Part 5: Registration Details

This section requires you to confirm that you are not registered, or eligible to be registered, with the Social Care Council. If you are registered, or are eligible to be registered, you may not apply for the position of lay member.

Part 6: Referrals / Convictions / Offences

In this section, you are asked to confirm if you have ever been the subject of fitness to practise proceedings as a registered professional. This may have been when you were registered with another regulatory body. If this is the case, you must provide full details. This includes information on any referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and / or Disclosure and Barring Service as a result of misconduct or alleged misconduct involving children and / or vulnerable adults.

You must also include information on any offences either in the past or which are still pending.

Part 7: Disability

The Social Care Council actively encourages applications from people with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate completion of the application form, attending the interview or participating in the Committee process.

Part 8: Conflict of Interest

In this section, you are asked to provide information regarding interests that you or your immediate family have that might be construed as being in conflict with appointment to a Committee. Some examples of this might include being related to an existing Social Care Council employee or a member of its Board. Any close personal relationships with the Social Care Council and / or other Committee Members should be declared at application. Other examples might include additional work in which you are engaged which could be viewed as conflicting with the work of the Social Care Council Registration and Fitness to Practise Committees. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a conflict of interest, you should complete this section giving the panel as much information as possible.

Applicants are required to complete an additional form on Conflicts of Interest at Appendix 1.

Part 9: Declaration

You should ensure that you read, understand and sign the declaration in this section.