

nipsa

General  
Secretary  
Election

2026

Election Regulations

Biedlin Public Services  
Heffin' Waarkers in the Public Airt

Protecting Public Services  
Supporting Public Servants

Ag Cosaint Seirbhísí Poiblí  
Ag Tacú le Seirbhísigh Phoiblí

# 2026 General Secretary Election

## Election Regulations

### General

1. These regulations have been prepared by the General Council under Rule 7.2 of the union. Subject to any amendments which may be issued, the regulations will govern the conduct of the election for the General Secretary. They are binding on all members.
2. Only ordinary members of the union and employees of the union may be nominated for General Secretary.
3. Only **ordinary members** of the union may cast a vote in the election for General Secretary. Associate, honorary and life members may not cast a vote.

### Nominations

4. A branch may not nominate more than one nominee. An excess of nominations shall invalidate that branch's nominations for the election.
5. Nominations may be made only **by branches or the General Council**. Nominations may be made only at branch meetings of which due notice, including notice of the business to be transacted, has been given to all branch members.
6. All nominations must be sent in writing to the current General Secretary of the union at Harkin House, 54 Wellington Park, Belfast BT9 6DP. They must be made on the official nomination form issued to branches for this purpose on **1 May 2026** and they must be signed by the branch. They must reach the current General Secretary no later than **2.00 p.m. on 22 May 2026**. Electronic signatures will be accepted.

7. It is a condition of entry of a candidate's name on the voting paper for the election that they shall:
  - a. obtain **not less than 10 branch nominations**, duly notified to the current General Secretary by the branches concerned or obtain the nomination of the General Council; and
  - b. notify the current General Secretary, in writing, of their express consent to stand in the election and, if elected, to serve as General Secretary in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment for that post. This consent must be received by the closing date for nominations, or within seven days of the dispatch of the relevant terms and conditions to the candidate, whichever is the later.

## **Voting Arrangements**

8. Entitlement to vote will be accorded equally to all ordinary members. No member will be entitled to vote more than once. Every member will be allowed to vote without interference or constraint and, so far as is reasonably practicable, without incurring any direct personal cost.
9. So far as is reasonably practicable, every member who is entitled to vote in the election will:
  - a. have sent to them, at their proper address and by post or other means provided for by law:
    - i. a voting paper which lists the candidates in the election;
    - ii. a copy of the election address submitted by each candidate;
    - iii. a prepaid reply envelope; and

- b.** be given a convenient opportunity to vote by post.
- 10.** Every member has a duty to notify the union in writing of their proper address which shall be either their workplace address, home address or some other address which they wish the union to treat as their postal address.
- 11.** The closing date for return of the completed voting paper will be clearly marked thereon. The closing date will be **2.00 p.m. on Friday, 26 June 2026.**

### **Candidates Written Statements and Election Addresses**

- 12.** Each duly nominated candidate may supply to the current General Secretary of the union (at Harkin House, 54 Wellington Park, Belfast BT9 6DP) by not later than **2.00 p.m. on Friday, 22 May 2026** documents consisting of the following:
  - a.** a statement of the candidate's branch (if appropriate), address for correspondence and grade;
  - b.** an election address by the candidate which may consist of 500 words (or fewer) and no other material.
- 13.** Under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995, no person other than the candidate shall be subject to any civil or criminal liability in respect of the candidate's election address.
- 14.** Where a candidate's election address exceeds 500 words, the union will publish only the first 500 words.

### **Uncontested Election**

- 15.** In the case of an uncontested election, no ballot will be held and the candidate nominated will be declared elected.

## **Returning Officer**

- 16.** The Returning Officer (and Independent Scrutineer under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995) for the election will be the Civica Election Services (CES) The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW.
- 17.** The Returning Officer will supervise the production and distribution of voting papers, and will keep a record of the name and address of each member to whom a voting paper is sent.
- 18.** All completed voting papers must be returned so as to reach the Returning Officer by the closing date, in the prepaid envelope provided. Voting papers not so received will not be counted.
- 19.** The Returning Officer will be responsible for the fair and accurate counting of votes. Any inaccuracy in counting will be disregarded if it is accidental and on a scale which could not affect the result. The decision of the Returning Officer with regard to the rejection of any voting paper as invalid will be final.
- 20.** The Returning Officer will retain custody of all voting papers returned for the purposes of the election until the end of a period of one year from the announcement by the union of the election result.
- 21.** The Returning Officer will make a report to the union as required under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995, including a statement of the result of the election. The current General Secretary of the union will be responsible for announcing the result, and the report of the Returning Officer will be published on the NIPSA website.
- 22.** The Returning Officer will make available to the union's staff such assistance as they may require to enable them to carry out their duty in relation to the General Secretary election.

## Guidance to Candidates and their Supporters During and Prior to Election

- 23.** Any candidate or their supporters **may** circulate election material of any candidate/group of candidates. This can be by leafleting outside or inside buildings, via social media, face to face or by email.
- 24.** Any candidate or their supporters **shall not**:
- a.** use any centrally funded service e.g. text messaging paid out of NIPSA's funds. This also includes NIPSA supplied mobile phones and laptops;
  - b.** interfere or intercept ballot papers for the election. Post for the election must arrive with the member without interference. It is a breach of the Election Regulations for anyone to attach or append any additional material to the official post/envelope;
  - c.** use the NIPSA Headquarters or Regional Office address in any campaigning material;
  - d.** use the NIPSA official logo in campaigning material which could be construed as being a NIPSA officially sanctioned document. Photographs of protests etc which include the NIPSA logo are acceptable;
  - e.** claim travel expenses from NIPSA for campaigning in the election;
  - f.** seek information or assistance from any NIPSA staff member regarding any element of the election;
  - g.** NIPSA staff [or representatives] shall not supply any data or membership information to any member which may be in breach of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any and all activity is subject to NIPSA's Data Protection Policy (available on the NIPSA website).

## Copy of Regulations

**25.** The union will supply any member on request with a copy of these regulations free of charge.

## Timetable Summary

**26.** The timetable for the election will be as follows:

<b>1.</b> Issue of nomination papers	<b>1 May 2026</b>
<b>2.</b> Deadline for receipt of nominations and election address	<b>22 May 2026</b>
<b>3.</b> Deadline for distribution labels to Independent Scrutineer	<b>22 May 2026</b>
<b>4.</b> Camera ready copy of ballot paper, list of names etc Independent Scrutineer	<b>29 May 2026</b>
<b>5.</b> Deadline for issue of ballot papers	<b>5 June 2026</b>
<b>6.</b> Deadline for return of ballots	<b>26 June 2026</b>
<b>7.</b> Certificate of results	<b>29 June 2026</b>
<b>8.</b> Issue of results to members including certificate	<b>1 July 2026</b>

**April 2026**



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