

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC220061

**Chief Executive – Forest Service
Department of Agriculture,
Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be returned to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 26th January 2018***

**Department of Agriculture
Environment and Rural Affairs**

**A thriving and sustainable
economy, environment and rural
community**

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

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FOREWORD

The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) seeks to recruit a senior forestry professional for an exciting opportunity to lead the Forest Service as a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service. The successful applicant will guide the forestry sector in Northern Ireland as it delivers important services to industry, protects the environment, and promotes public access to forests. He or she will be the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Forest Service, an Executive agency of DAERA.

He or she will respond to the challenges of the UK's exit from the European Union whilst ensuring that those responsible within the forestry sector have sufficient capability and are empowered to deliver an ambitious and challenging agenda spanning forestry, plant health and renewable energy. He or she will also provide clear, compelling advice to the Minister and robust evidence to the Assembly Committee on these matters and about the need for new forests, as required.

He or she is likely to have considerable senior experience in a substantial forestry organisation dealing with public policy issues and commercial practice and will be able to draw on the learning and experience of others through their network of supporting contacts.

Thank you for your interest.

Noel Lavery
Permanent Secretary
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

BACKGROUND

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policies and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland (NI). DAERA assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the NI economy, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

DAERA is responsible to the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for the administration of schemes affecting the whole of the United Kingdom, including forestry grants. DAERA also oversees the application of relevant European Union policies to NI including plant health.

DAERA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Vision

“A thriving and sustainable economy, environment and rural community”

Strategic Outcomes

- Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors;
- A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy; and
- A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.

How we operate:

- A well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

DAERA organisational structure comprises:-

- Central Services and Rural Affairs Group
- Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
- Environment Marine and Fisheries Group; and
- Food and Farming Group

DAERA has two Executive Agencies and several Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB's) including:

- NI Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Forest Service (an Executive agency of DAERA)
- The Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

The Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Noel Lavery.

FOREST SERVICE

Forestry in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter. The duties and powers of the Department are set out in the Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010. The forestry sector operates on an all island basis with strong linkages to forestry in Great Britain. Consequently the Forest Service maintains informal links to the Forestry Commission in Great Britain, and with the Forest Service and the Irish Forestry Board (Coillte Teo) in the Republic of Ireland. The Service also maintains strong commercial relationships with industry in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and with other government bodies delivering economic and environmental policy.

The Forest Service is subject to the overall direction of the Minister, who determines the policy framework within which the Agency operates, the level of resources made available each year, and the scope of Agency activities. The Minister approves the Business Plan, sets the key performance targets and monitors the Agency's performance. The Agency's status is under review.

Forest policy is to expand the area under forest and to manage forests sustainably, so as to supply a wide range of forestry services. These are chiefly timber, public access and environmental services. An annual harvest of 0.4 million cubic metres sustains a rural wood processing industry of £80 million turnover. Forest Service properties host 4.7 million visits valued at £75 million and most visitors rate their experience as being excellent or very good. 25% of the Forest Service 75,000 ha estate is designated as protected area for one or more conservation interests. The Service also has an aspiration to release £40 million of wind energy value from its estate. 50,000 ha of privately owned forests are subject to certain provisions of the Act, and this and support for forest expansion is administered by the Forest Service.

The Agency's broad strategy for maintaining the flow of benefits from forests is to engage partners from industry, local government and the charitable sectors to invest in and deliver goods and services from forestry lands. The Service's contribution is to engage society in decisions about forests; to protect forests from fire, damaging storms, pests and disease; to plan their development; by encouraging forest planting and managing forests according to professional standards, and to ensure that people working in the industry are suitably trained and equipped.

The Forest Service takes a commercial approach to timber production and has developed strong working relations with its major customers on both sides of the land border. The Service works to ensure that it takes a fair reward for the timber, that people working in or visiting forests are safe, and that the environment is properly protected in the course of forest operations. The Service holds both Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forestry Certification (PEFC) accreditation for its standard of forest management, certifying that it manages its forests in a sustainable manner. Its customers similarly hold chain of custody accreditation and meet the required forestry standards when working on forestry lands.

Similarly, the Forest Service supports local government and the charitable sector in developing formal agreements to build, maintain and deliver recreation and environmental services in forests.

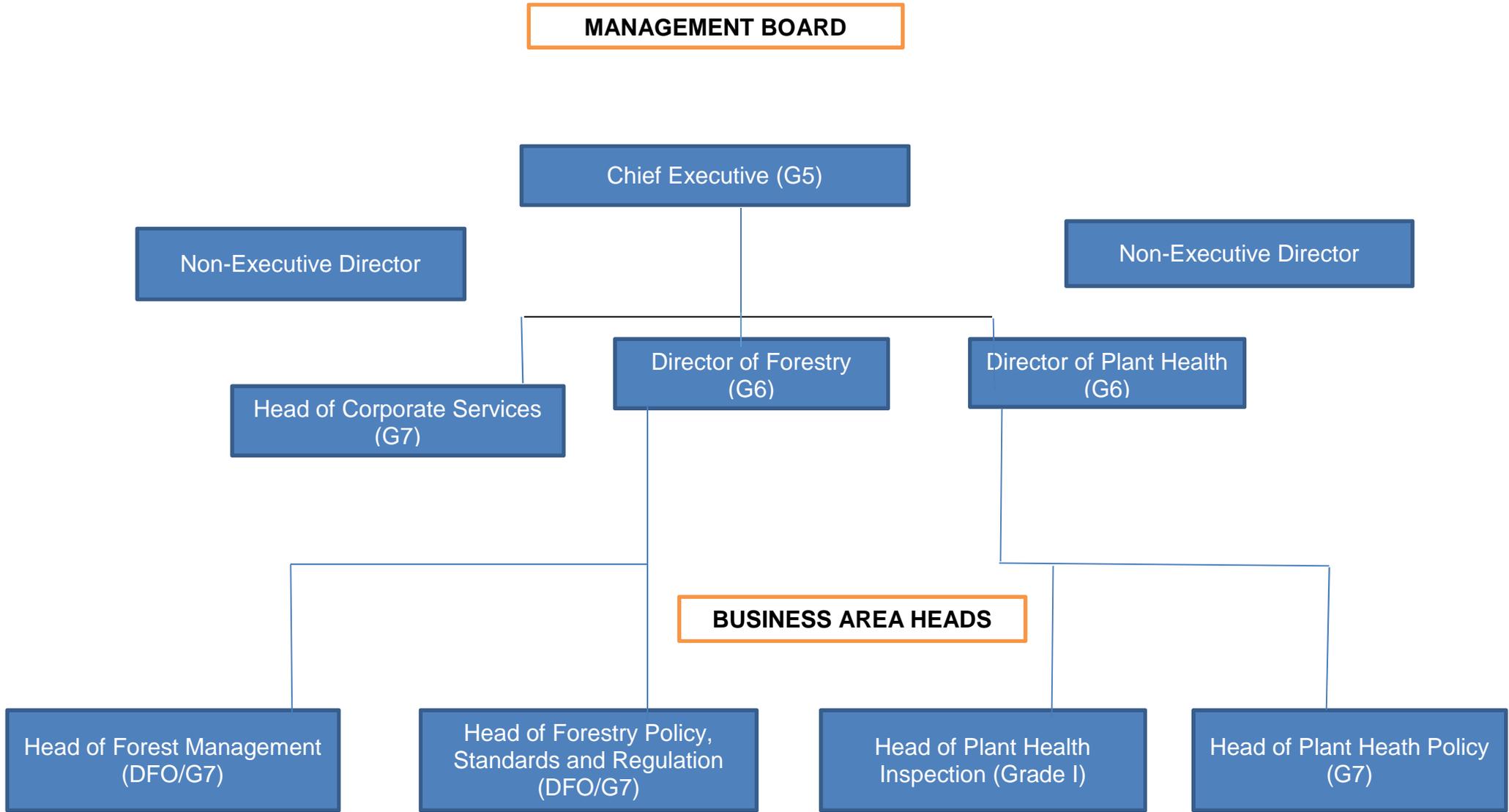
Plant Health is also a devolved matter within the scope of Forest Service responsibilities. The Forest Service safeguards the plant health status of forests, agriculture and horticulture and carries out a programme of inspection, certification, surveillance and contingency planning to support trade within the Single Market and with third countries. The Forest Service co-ordinates its activity as a member of the UK Plant Health Service and, as Ireland is best regarded as a single epidemiological zone, with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in Dublin.

The Agency is a multidisciplinary organisation whose staff are employees of DAERA and are drawn mainly from forestry, agriculture and administrative disciplines.

The key tasks to deliver the Minister's policies are:

1. To promote forest expansion through research, advice and grant aid;
2. to provide a regulatory framework, inspection programmes and administrative processes that monitor compliance with legislation on forestry, plant and bee health, and aid scheme rules;
3. to maintain the knowledge base needed to inform policy development and the Agency's work; and
4. to manage the Department's forests sustainably by:
 - Working with industry to supply timber, regenerate forests and develop renewable energy potential;
 - Working with local government and others to promote public access to forests and protect the forest environment; and
 - Ensuring that management practice complies with the UK Forestry Standard and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The Agency is changing its internal organisation, consistent with the resources available, to better respond to forestry and plant health policy needs, and to consolidate and further develop its arrangements for partnership working with industry, local government and the charitable sector.



JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a permanent full time appointment.

The Chief Executive is at Grade 5 level in the Senior Civil Service (SCS), which is the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) top leadership and management resource. The successful candidate will be an employee of DAERA.

This posts may be filled by the secondment of the successful candidate from their current position. The terms of the secondment will need to be agreed by all parties and will be based on the candidate's current terms and conditions of service.

It is advisable that candidates interested in the secondment option make their employers aware, if offered an appointment, that under the NICS secondment arrangements the successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer. The necessary administrative arrangements will be agreed between the Department and the employer before secondment commences.

'Secondment' means a voluntary transfer from a permanent employer for a fixed period which does not sever the employment relationship of the seconded person with the permanent employer.

Further appointments may be made from this competition should NICS positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities.

Location

The post holder will be headquartered in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh.

Salary

Salary will be within the Unified Grade 5 Band range, currently £68,961 - £79,058 (under review) within which pay progression will be in line with the NICS SCS pay policy.

The successful candidate should expect to be placed at the minimum of the range. Whilst a higher starting salary can be considered in order to secure the most suitably qualified candidate to a post where there are exceptional requirements for particular skills, qualifications or experience, this provision is used only in exceptional circumstances. If the successful candidate is an existing NICS civil servant, normal pay on promotion/regrading will apply if these are more favourable than recruitment terms.

In order to comply with Department of Finance (DoF) guidance, we must disclose details of salary, including any taxable benefits in kind, and pension in the Department's annual accounts. Additional information may also have to be disclosed, should DoF guidance change. It is a condition of appointment to any SCS post that the successful candidate must agree to this disclosure.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 42 hours per week (37 hours excluding meal breaks) Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time, and Forest Officers are employed on an “all-hours worked basis”, in recognition of their duties in fire-fighting, plant health emergencies and providing visitor services. The successful candidate may from time to time have to work outside conditioned hours as required in support of their staff in emergencies or to attend events and meetings inside and outside of Northern Ireland. The post-holder may from time to time also be required to support the Department in resolving other emergencies.

Travel

The successful candidate will be expected to travel throughout Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and internationally as necessary. The successful candidate must, therefore, have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and be prepared to travel nationally and internationally as required.

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, there is an annual leave allowance of 30 days.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pensions package. Further details of this can be found on page 25 of this booklet.

Relocation

Prospective applicants should note that consideration may be given to financial assistance with relocation costs depending on the successful candidate's circumstances.

Conflict of Interest

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them in to conflict with their official duties. A potential for conflict to arise within Forest Service may be due to the close and quite legitimate links that staff could have with the agricultural community, industry and business who are in essence their “customer”.

Conflict of Interest is not limited to the individual's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Department's business directly or indirectly.

Therefore to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an officer must not, without prior

approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business. As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

Probation

Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. All appointees will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Malcolm Beatty, current Chief Executive – Forest Service on 028 6634 3086 or email Malcolm.Beatty@daera-ni.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Forest Service (FS) directly manages 5% of the land area of Northern Ireland and influences management of a further 3% as private forests. It has 200 staff dealing with forestry, plant health and corporate affairs, a resource budget of £14 million, a capital budget of £2 million. The Chief Executive is expected to deliver an annual income in excess of £12 million, to encourage new forest planting, and to seek additional means of producing sustainable value from forests. The Chief Executive leads a multi-disciplinary team of foresters, agriculturalists, administrators, accountants and industrial staff. He /She provides the Minister with strategic advice on forestry and plant health, and delivers a comprehensive forestry and plant health programme that will have outcomes for economic development; for society, and for the environment. The Chief Executive achieves this by working closely with stakeholders in industry, local government, Trade Union side and the environment.

The main responsibilities of the Chief Executive are:

Advice

The Chief Executive provides high quality strategic and professional advice to the Minister.

- In the annual business plan, in which he/she sets the “annual allowable cut”, which is the amount of timber that can sustainably be removed from forests and is the primary intervention initiating many other forest activities.
- On forest policy, promoting afforestation, the practice of sustainable forest management, the scope for greater social development of forests, and regulations.
- On plant health matters to inform and direct policy on risk, preparedness and regulations.

Governance

The post holder is the Chief Executive and Agency Accounting Officer (AAO). He/She:

- Provides stewardship of the Department’s forests, ensures that regulation is appropriate and effective, and that there is a strategic match between the forestry programme, the DAERA vision and strategic aims and the Programme for Government.
- Ensures that expenditure represents value for money, meets the standards for regularity and propriety in the public service, personally signs the Forest Service Accounts and is liable to appear before the Public Accounts Committee on matters within his/her area of responsibility.

Leadership/Management

The Chief Executive is head of the forestry profession in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. He/she will command the confidence of professional foresters and the multi-disciplinary team to plan and deliver a comprehensive programme across the forestry and plant health agenda. He/she:

- Ensures that the FS is properly equipped with the staff, experience and skills needed to carry out the Agency's specialist work.
- Communicates the Minister's decisions to staff, industry and stakeholders, so that resources can be organized to harvest, process and market timber; prepare plans for development of forests; and be able to respond in a timely and comprehensive fashion to new disease findings and trade patterns following Brexit.
- Draws on his/her knowledge and experience of disease as it affects forestry to lead the Chief Plant Health Officer in his/her discharge of their responsibilities for forestry, agriculture and horticulture.
- Contributes as a member of DAERA's Senior Civil Service Group (SCSG) to broader policy development, implementation and evaluation across the Department.
- Contributes effectively as a member of SCSG in the discharge of the Department's corporate responsibilities.

Relationships

- Build and maintain effective working relationships with external stakeholders to inform the evidence-based development of forest and plant-health policy;
- Represent and articulate the forestry and plant-health policy position at regional and national events and inter-departmental and external working groups, particularly on future policy and trade, and support the Minister and senior Departmental officials.
- Lead on engaging and working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in the forestry and tourism industries, local government and environmental organisations, and support the Strategic Investment Board working with the renewable energy sector and government energy customers, to bring external resources and expertise into play to develop forestry assets and achieve policy goals and outcomes relevant to the forestry, plant-health and energy sectors.

The above list is not exhaustive but gives a good indication of the main duties of the post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Be a Chartered Forester

AND

2. Have at least 5 years' experience in directing or undertaking forestry analysis and the provision of forestry advice at a senior management level*;

AND

3. Have at least 3 years' experience, gained within the last 7 years, of making a direct contribution to strategic decision making and to policy formulation and delivery at a senior management level*;

AND

4. Have at least 3 years' experience of successfully leading staff in a large and complex organisation** and managing working relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders operating at senior levels within their organisations.

The following additional clarification is provided:

* **Senior management level** - for those working in the private sector or voluntary/community service, a senior manager is defined as a role which works just below Board level and with a Director as line manager. Within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), this is at Grade 7 or equivalent.

** **“Large and complex organisation”** is defined as having the following features:-

- A mix of professional and administrative staff (minimum 50 staff).
- A budget in excess of £2 million.
- An organisation with changing constraints and aspirations affected by the influence of key stakeholders.
- An organisation that needs to work with a range of strong interest groups inside and/or outside the organisation.

Equivalent professional memberships: give details of the professional membership held, and reasons why you consider it to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on you to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well-informed decision can be made.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criteria will be used. The shortlisting criterion will be applied incrementally and it may therefore not be necessary to use all listed:

1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of current forestry and plant-health policy issues which would relate to Northern Ireland and of the main challenges facing the forest and forest-products industry.
2. Be a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

Please note:

- **You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.**
- **Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk**

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria *and shortlisting criteria (if applicable)*. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 5 for the purposes of personal and professional development.

Chief Executive – Forest Service is analogous to Grade 5 in the NICS.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results. Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 5 should be demonstrating levels 1 to 4 as a matter of course.

How does the NICS framework look?

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.

INTERVIEW CRITERIA

Applicants will be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

PRESENTATION

As part of the selection process candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes. Candidates will be advised of presentation topic when they report for interview and will be given a maximum of 30 minutes to prepare for their presentation. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 45 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview appointment to allow time to prepare their presentation.

A flipchart and writing materials will be provided for candidates' use. No personal documentation may be brought in to the pre-interview room. Candidates will be allowed to bring any flipchart sheets and some short speaking notes into the interview room for assistance during the presentation (but note that use of the flipchart is not mandatory). No other materials or visual aids will be permitted.

The presentation will be used to assess the Seeing the Big Picture and Leading and Communicating competences.

Marks available: 30 (20 content / 10 communication)

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

2. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned, justifiable decisions. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based

strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

Marks available: 20

3. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

Marks available: 30

4. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve a good mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay, thus reducing the risk of fraud and error. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. At senior levels, effective people embed a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the NICS maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

5. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches to support service delivery. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

Marks available: 20

6. Achieving Outcomes through Delivery Partners

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities involving delivery partners (whether from the private, public or voluntary sectors). For all, it is about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added value and working to stimulate economic growth. At senior levels, it is about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, delivery partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities.

Marks available: 20

Total Marks Available: 180

Overall Pass Mark: 108

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Dundonald House during week commencing 5th March 2018.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org.

Making your application:

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet, eg an organisational chart.
- Should an organisational chart be required this must be submitted to HRConnect by the closing date for applications.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- Please note - the session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Transgender Requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the NICS is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

Merit List Extensions

It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However the Department would wish to alert candidates to the possibility, however remote, that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise in the future.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to page 27.

As women are currently known to be under represented in this occupation across Northern Ireland, applications from women would be particularly welcome.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit

Assessment Information

It is HRConnect policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility/shortlisting criteria and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. The Chief Executive - Forest Officer position is classified as Non-Public Service, therefore certain nationality requirements apply. Applicants must be either:

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) A Commonwealth citizen; or
- (iii) A British Protected Person; or
- (iv) An EEA national; or
- (v) A Swiss National; or
- (vi) A person who is not an EEA or Swiss national, but is a family member of an EEA national who has moved to the UK from another EEA Member State for an approved purpose.

For further guidance on Nationality requirements please see Annex A.

Advice on Nationality for (i), (ii) and (iii) above may be obtained from the Home Office website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For the Chief Executive - Forest Officer post in the NICS, the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is;

Basic Disclosure Certificate

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/>. Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview/test,

and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pensions:

The NICS offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

<http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/new-members>

or

if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 02871 319000
Email: cspensions.cpg@finance-ni.gov.uk

Feedback

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Completed application forms should be sent to the HRConnect Recruitment Team:

HRConnect
PO Box 1089
2nd Floor
The Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 9EW

NOTE: Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted.

Contact Details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address above or by:

Email: Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net
Tel: 0800 1 300 330
Fax: 028 9024 1665

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement is set out below.

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in an harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:-

Equality – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

Diversity – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

Inclusion – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

Legislative Context

This section explains the reasons for gathering this information by setting out the legislative background.

Gender

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also provided in the annual statutory monitoring the, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ages and age groups.

Community Background

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This takes the form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS at the 1st January each year.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality

Commission for NI the NICS has decided to use “community background” information as a proxy for political opinion.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The 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 etc) caused through illness by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental Impairment: this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability, and social functioning.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carryout 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 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

A normal day to day activity: this 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 so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

What sort of effect must there be?

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?

Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?

Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:

Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;

Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and

People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

Are any conditions not covered?

Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:

Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);

Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;

Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;

Exhibitionism and voyeurism;

Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

What if someone has recovered from a disability?

Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

Race

The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group(s).

Sexual Orientation

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies

information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

Marital Status

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended), makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status.

Dependants Status

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions in NI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without.

Confidentiality of Monitoring Information

The following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:-

- individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained, or is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of HRConnect and Trade Union officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.

ANNEX A

Nationality

(i) 'UK National' means a person who is a British citizen (including persons from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), a British subject under Part IV of the British Nationality Act 1981 having the right of abode in the UK or a British Dependent Territories citizen acquiring his/her citizenship from connection with Gibraltar.

(ii) 'Commonwealth Citizen' means any person who has the status of a Commonwealth citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981, not covered by the 'UK Nationality' definition above. This includes British Dependent Territories citizens (other than Gibraltarians), British Overseas citizens, and from 1986 those persons in the category British National (Overseas).

(iii) 'British Protected Person' means a member of any class of persons declared to be British Protected Persons by Order in Council under the British Nationality Act 1981, or by virtue of the Solomon Islands Act 1978.

(iv) 'EEA National' means a national of one of the following countries:

Austria	Finland	Latvia	Portugal
Belgium	France	Liechtenstein	Romania
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
**Croatia	Greece	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Cyprus	Hungary	Malta	Spain
Czech Republic	Iceland	Netherlands	Sweden
Denmark	Ireland	Norway	United Kingdom
Estonia	Italy	Poland	

N.B. nationals from Switzerland also have the same free movement and employment rights.

'Family member of an EEA or swiss national' means:

- (i) That national's spouse*; or
- (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
- (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc) of the EEA national or his/her spouse.

*Note: 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students; family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only.

**Croatian nationals who want to work in the UK must obtain authorisation prior to commencing employment. They require a certificate of sponsorship and must also apply for an accession worker card before they can commence employment. There are no provisions for Croatian nationals to take up low-skilled work.

Further guidance on nationality can be obtained at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

ANNEX B
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

CSC NI
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

AN INTRODUCTION

Ensuring appointment on merit
And safeguarding ethics

WHO ARE WE?

Brian Rowntree, CBE (Chairperson)
Sinead Burns
James Scholes

LOCATION

Our Office is in Stormont House.
The full address is:

Stormont House
Room 105
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

OPENING HOURS

The Office is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm,
Monday to Friday, except Public and Bank Holidays.

How to contact us

- **write to us at the address at the top of the page**
- **telephone us on 028 9052 3599**
- **visit us at www.nicscommissioners.org**

Annex B CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

WHAT ARE WE HERE TO DO?

Civil Service Commissioners are appointed by the Crown to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the Civil Service should be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

WHERE DO WE GET OUR AUTHORITY FROM?

Commissioners derived their responsibilities from prerogative Orders made by the Secretary of State. Our authority currently derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

We do it by:

- making General Regulations.
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code setting out the essential principles and procedures on which recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service must be based. Departments and Agencies must follow this Code. A copy is available online at: www.nicscommissioners.org
- it is inevitable that occasions will arise when special circumstances lead to Departments needing to depart from the Merit Principle. The Commissioners have set out the circumstances in which they are prepared to look at requests to depart from the Merit Principle. These 'exceptions' must be notified to, and in some instances approved by, the Commissioners before an appointment can be made.
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed by Departments and Agencies in making appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Each year, the Commissioners decide on a particular aspect of recruitment to examine in detail (an audit) and request management consultants to carry out independent investigations on their behalf. The results of these audits are published in the Commissioners' Annual Report.
- requiring Departments and Agencies to publish information about their recruitment activity.

- approving procedures for appointment, through open competition, to the Senior Civil Service in Northern Ireland.
- hearing and determining appeals under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics. Under the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999, we have been assigned the role of providing an independent appeals mechanism for Northern Ireland civil servants. The Code of Ethics sets out the constitutional framework within which civil servants work and the values they are expected to uphold. Details of the number and nature of the appeals received by the Commissioners are published each year in our Annual Report.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

If you have ever applied for a post in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, you can be assured that, whether or not you were successful, the Department or Agency was obliged to make that appointment in accordance with directions for good practice set out by the Commissioners.

We are concerned that civil servants are not fully aware of the appeals mechanism under the Code of Ethics. We would strongly encourage any civil servant who believes that he or she has been asked to act in a way which

- is illegal, improper or unethical;
- is in breach of constitutional convention or a professional code;
- may involve a possible maladministration; or
- is otherwise inconsistent with the Code

to report the matter in accordance with procedures laid down in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions Code or Departmental guidance.

Where the matter has been reported in the appropriate manner and a civil servant believes the response does not represent a reasonable response to his or her concerns, s/he may report the matter in writing to the Civil Service Commissioners.