



Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Veterinary Officer Candidate Information Booklet

£61,673 - £64,469

IRC316637

Completed application forms must be submitted to HRConnect
no later than **12 noon (UK time) 13th March 2026**

**Please retain a copy of this booklet for your
reference throughout the selection process.**



Department of

**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

*"Delivering a net zero nature
positive future, supporting
sustainable agriculture and
thriving rural communities".*

Contents

Foreword 3

Background 5

Key Responsibilities 7

Terms and Conditions 10

Eligibility Criteria 15

Selection Process 17

Guidance For Applicants 19

Interview Preparation 21

General Information 22

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account, including junk mail folder, 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.



Foreword

Thank you for your interest in joining the **Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG)** within the **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)**.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a dynamic, professional, and highly skilled team that plays a vital role in safeguarding animal health, animal welfare, and public health in Northern Ireland.

At DAERA, our purpose is clear: “**Delivering a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities**”. Within **VSAHG**, we are fully committed to this vision, ensuring that our work not only protects and enhances animal health but also contributes to a sustainable agri-food sector, a thriving rural economy, and a safe and healthy environment for all.

Why Join Us?

As a **Veterinary Officer** in DAERA, you will be part of a diverse and highly skilled team of veterinarians, technical experts, policy professionals, and administrative staff, all working together to make a real difference. Our people come from a wide range of backgrounds, bringing different experiences, expertise, and perspectives. What unites us is our shared passion for high standards in veterinary services and our commitment to serving the public good.

We are looking for **dedicated, talented, and motivated veterinary professionals** to enhance our team and help us continue to lead the way in animal health and welfare, disease prevention and control, and food safety. This is a role that offers variety, challenge, and impact - whether you are conducting official controls, shaping policy, working in disease surveillance, or engaging with farmers and industry stakeholders.

A Rewarding Career

Joining **DAERA** as a **Veterinary Officer** means more than just a job - it is a fulfilling career with **wide-ranging benefits and opportunities**, including:

- A **competitive salary** and an excellent **public sector pension** scheme.
- **RCVS fees fully covered** as part of your role.
- The opportunity to become an **Authorised Veterinarian** for **Official Controls** and other official activities.
- A clear **career pathway** with access to **ongoing professional development**, specialist training, and opportunities to progress.
- The chance to work with **cutting-edge science, research, and innovation** in the field of veterinary public health and animal health.

- A strong culture of **collaboration, support, and teamwork**, where you will be surrounded by skilled and experienced colleagues willing to mentor and share their knowledge.

Our Commitment to Excellence

Our vision is to be an **exemplar in veterinary services**, setting the highest standards in **animal health, welfare, and public health**. We champion a **One Health** approach, recognising the interconnectedness of **animals, people, and the environment**.

We **strive for a supportive and inclusive environment**, where **teamwork, respect, and open communication thrive**. We work to empower our people to contribute their unique skills and perspectives towards shared goals, to make **DAERA a great place to work and develop your career**.

If you are looking for a **career with purpose, a role that makes a difference, and an opportunity to work in an environment where you will be valued and supported**, then we encourage you to apply and become part of **our team**.

We look forward to welcoming new colleagues who share our passion for veterinary excellence and public service.

Brian Dooher

Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Background

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

The Department has responsibility for food, farming, environment, fisheries, forestry, climate change and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. The Department assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

The Department also leads on the Executive's Green Growth Strategy and Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan which is being developed to tackle the climate change agenda and move Northern Ireland towards net zero carbon emissions.

The Department currently employs just over 3,000 staff who are located across 900 buildings.

You can read more about the work of the department in its most recent annual report and accounts on the [DAERA website](#).

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG)

The Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) within DAERA is responsible for the development and implementation of animal health and welfare policy in Northern Ireland. Operating within a One Health framework, VSAHG ensures the interconnected health of animals, humans, and the environment, playing a key role in disease prevention, control, and eradication to support public health, international trade, and the agri-food sector. The group oversees the identification and movement of food animals, imports of livestock and animal products, and collaborates with Defra to facilitate the export of animals and animal products worldwide.

VSAHG contributes to DAERA's strategic goal of developing sustainable agriculture and food production by maintaining high animal health and welfare standards, ensuring maximum market access for NI producers, and minimising production costs associated with poor health outcomes. The group enforces veterinary public health controls, food safety regulations, product certification, and marketing standards, working alongside the Food Standards Agency and other partners. VSAHG's remit spans farms, companion animals, livestock markets, ports, processing plants, and animal-related businesses, ensuring that Northern Ireland maintains high biosecurity, traceability, and food safety standards. Through this work, VSAHG plays a critical role in protecting public health, supporting the economy, and maintaining environmental sustainability.

Organisational Structure

The Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) is led by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), supported by six Directors, including three Deputy Chief Veterinary Officers (DCVOs) and three Business Area Directors. This leadership team is responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of animal health, welfare, and veterinary public health policy, disease control programs, and trade facilitation.

VSAHG operates across several key areas, with veterinary professionals playing vital roles in field operations, portal operations (covering imports and exports), veterinary public health (ensuring food safety and regulatory compliance), and headquarters-based policy and program development. This structure ensures a coordinated approach to safeguarding animal health and welfare, protecting public health, and supporting Northern Ireland’s agri-food sector and international trade interests.

See organisational chart below.



Key Responsibilities

Within Veterinary Service Animal Health Group, there are four distinct veterinary roles. These are in:

- **Field Operations,**
- **Portal Operations,**
- **Veterinary Public Health and**
- **Headquarter Programmes.**

At VSAHG, we offer a diverse and dynamic career, where veterinary professionals play a crucial role in protecting animal health, ensuring food safety, and supporting Northern Ireland's agri-food sector. Our team operates across a range of areas, including field and portal operations, veterinary public health, and headquarters-based policy and programme development.

We believe in a flexible and adaptable workforce, which means that throughout your career, you will have the opportunity to gain experience across different areas of service delivery, developing a well-rounded skillset while responding to VSAHG delivery needs. This approach ensures varied career progression, exposure to different challenges, and a highly rewarding professional journey.

As part of our commitment to protecting animal and public health, all staff play a role in emergency response when required.

This includes participation in on-call rotas and, in rare cases of national emergency, contributing to coordinated efforts across the service.

While job roles provide the opportunity to build expertise in a specific area, we encourage a broad-based experience approach, with opportunities designed to enhance skills and career development. Specialisation comes at higher grades through promotion, ensuring that every veterinary professional is well-prepared for the next step in their career.

Field Operations

As a Field Veterinary Officer, you will be the first point of contact for farmers, private veterinary surgeons, and industry stakeholders, providing essential veterinary leadership at a local level. You will play a key role in ensuring animal health and welfare, supporting trade, and protecting public health by leading disease surveillance, control, and eradication programmes.

Your work will focus on:

- Managing and auditing disease control programmes for enzootic (endemic) and epizootic (high-risk) diseases.
- Ensuring compliance with animal welfare standards and traceability requirements through inspections and enforcement.
- Supporting trade facilitation, ensuring animals and products meet export requirements.
- Providing veterinary expertise across specialisms such as pigs, sheep, and aquatics.
- Offering relief cover for Official Veterinary roles at ports and meat processing facilities.

This role requires strong leadership, decision-making, and collaboration, ensuring that Northern Ireland's agricultural sector remains resilient, compliant, and competitive.

Portal Operations

Portal Veterinary Officers are responsible for ensuring the safe import of live animals and animal products into Northern Ireland under the NI Windsor Framework. Working at Points of Entry (POEs), you will safeguard animal health and welfare and public health by ensuring the movement of animals and their products are compliant with the relevant sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

Key responsibilities include:

- Conducting import inspections on live animals, animal products, and by-products.
- Enforcing compliance with international import regulations and sanitary controls.
- Sampling and testing to detect zoonotic and notifiable diseases.
- Liaising with key agencies, including Border Force, HMRC, and Port Health.
- Providing guidance to importers, helping businesses navigate regulatory requirements.

This role places you at the heart of international trade and disease prevention, offering varied work, a high level of responsibility, and critical decision-making opportunities.

Veterinary Public Health Programme (VPHP)

Public Health Veterinarians play a vital role in food safety and trade, ensuring that meat and animal products meet the highest sanitary standards for both local and export markets. You will be on the front line, working with food business operators, farmers, and regulatory bodies to uphold NI's high animal health and welfare and public health standards.

Your work will focus on:

- Overseeing and ensuring adherence to animal health and welfare and public health standards in slaughter and processing facilities.
- Conducting ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections to ensure food safety compliance.
- Auditing food business operations to uphold public health and industry regulations.
- Providing export health certification, ensuring NI products meet international standards.
- Advising businesses on compliance, supporting industry success.

This is a fast-paced, high-impact role that combines technical expertise, regulatory enforcement, and industry engagement, making a tangible difference to animal health and welfare, public health and trade.

Headquarters Programmes

Headquarters-based veterinarians play a role, bridging the gap between policy and front-line service delivery by developing veterinary policies, overseeing disease control programmes, and shaping the future of animal health, this role offers varied and strategic work.

Your responsibilities include:

- Managing disease control programmes, such as TB and BVD eradication.
- Developing policy and strategy, drafting options papers and staff instructions.
- Providing expert advice to senior officials, government agencies, and industry bodies.
- Auditing and supervising veterinary programmes, ensuring compliance and efficiency.
- Representing DAERA at stakeholder meetings and cross-government working groups.

This role is one which encompasses problem-solving, research, and policy development, making a lasting impact on Northern Ireland's animal health landscape.

The above lists are not exhaustive but give a good indication of the main duties of the roles. The emphasis on particular duties may vary and develop over time according to business needs.

Terms and Conditions

There are approximately 41 permanent, full-time vacancies at Veterinary Officer grade across VSAHG, some of these will require shift working and non-standard work patterns. Alternative working patterns, including part time hours, can be requested at the point of job offer and will be considered, subject to business needs. These figures are indicative only and may increase due to the implementation of the new TB Strategy.

Veterinary Officers may be deployed across Field Operations, Headquarters functions, Veterinary Public Health, and Portal Operations in line with business need and NICS mobility policy.

Applicants must indicate on the application form the Veterinary Officer job roles they wish to be considered for in order of preference ranked 1-4. Number 1 being 'most preferred' - number 4 being 'least preferred'. All 4 preferences must be completed. Allocations will be matched to preference as far as possible subject to available vacancies. *Applicants should note that where a preference is not recorded for any role, they may nonetheless be allocated to any of the four work areas in accordance with post availability and business needs.*

Veterinary Officers are a mobile grade and may be required to work in any of the VSAHG areas, Field Operations, Headquarters functions, Veterinary Public Health, and Portal Operations, subject to business need and in accordance with the NICS mobility policy.

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 successful candidates will be based at one of a variety of locations throughout Northern Ireland including field offices, meat plants, cold stores, ports (Larne and Belfast) or at the Department's Headquarters buildings at Jubilee House, Ballykelly, or Clare House, Belfast.

DAERA Direct Offices are located in Armagh, Ballymena, Coleraine, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Magherafelt, Mallusk, Newry, Newtownards, Omagh and Strabane.

Meat plants and cold stores are located in areas such as Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine, Cookstown, Craigavon, Crumlin, Dungannon, Londonderry, Lurgan, Newry, Omagh and Richhill.

Salary

Salary will be within the range **£61,673 - £64,469**, within which pay progression will be performance related.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.



Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the Civil Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 25 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 42 hours per week (37 hours, 7.4 hours per day excluding meal breaks). In Field and Headquarter posts the hours of work are normally Monday to Friday. However, the Portal operations and Veterinary Public Health Programme posts will be outside the NICS normal hours. The post successful candidates are appointed to will dictate the work pattern.

The differences are set out below.

Portal Operations posts - these posts are 37 hours per week net, working a rotational 12-hour shift pattern (currently under review) Monday to Sunday as follows:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WEEK 1	REST	DAY	DAY	DAY	DAY	REST	REST
WEEK 2	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	NIGHT	NIGHT
WEEK 3	NIGHT	NIGHT	REST	REST	REST	DAY	DAY
WEEK 4	DAY	REST	NIGHT	NIGHT	NIGHT	REST	REST

Current Shift

- Day - 07.00am to 19.00pm
- Night - 19.00pm to 07.00am

Staff who work in portal operations on the above shift pattern also receive a 20% Shift Disturbance Allowance (SDA) as per the NICS handbook which is payable on the first £31,536 of salary.

Veterinary Public Health Programme - these posts are 37 hours per week net, working the hours as set per the Food Business Operator responsible for the establishment. Successful candidates will be required to work early and/or late starts and finishes.

The majority of posts are Monday to Friday, and the scheduled work hours are typically 6.30am to 5.30pm. Hours are notified in advance monthly. A small number of food businesses work a 7-day week.

Within VPHP, there may be options to work required hours over a reduced number of days depending on business requirements.

There may also be opportunities to work voluntary overtime which will attract additional payments as per the NICS handbook.

On Call

Many of the posts within VSAHG will require the post holder to participate in an 'on call' rotational arrangement and work outside of conditioned hours.

Remuneration for working outside of normal conditioned hours will be paid in line with the NICS Handbook.

Along with all staff within the Group, as required, successful candidates will also be required to attend work out of hours in the event of an epizootic disease outbreak. These events are uncommon.

Travel

The post holder will be required to travel on official duty throughout Northern Ireland, and on occasions, within the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere as required.

Veterinary Officers will be required travel to remote and rural locations, often inaccessible by public transport. It is therefore essential that applicants must have a valid driving licence to enable them to drive in Northern Ireland and have access to a form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full, in line with the **NICS HR Travel and Subsistence Policy**.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required for this post is Standard AccessNI.

Medical

All successful candidates will initially be required to undergo a Tuberculosis assessment.

Staff who are posted to VPHP will also be required to undergo Colour Vision and audio medical assessments to ensure their suitability to undertake the full range of duties of these posts.

To comply with the Working Time Regulations any member of staff allocated to night work will be requested to complete a health assessment for night workers. You may be called for an examination by the Occupational Health Service.

Probation

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

Training

At DAERA, we recognise that our people are our greatest asset. We are committed to continuous training and development, ensuring

our Veterinary Officers are equipped with the expertise to excel in their roles.

Comprehensive Training & Development

New Veterinary Officers will undergo extensive training in animal health, welfare, and official controls including:

- NICS, DAERA and VSAHG Induction training.
- Enzootic, Epizootic and zoonotic disease training.
- Training on Animal Health requirements.
- Border Control Posts (NI Points of Entry): Become a DAERA- authorised Official Veterinarian.
- Export Health Certification: Play a key role in ensuring the safe and legal export of animals and animal products.
- Food Safety & Meat Inspection: Train as an Official Veterinarian with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to oversee meat hygiene and food safety in Northern Ireland's meat plants.

This is not an exhaustive list of trainings which may be needed to be completed by the successful candidate.

For those already authorised as FSA (or Food Standards Scotland) Official Veterinarians, a short refresher course will fast-track their transition into meat hygiene and inspection duties.

Career Development

The NICS is committed to career development and offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. Career development is an integral part of the performance management system. Personal Development Plans identify learning and development needs with a view to enhancing skills and capabilities. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.

Successful applicants will be expected to undertake essential training as identified by the Department and proactively seek out and undertake activities associated with their continuous professional development, including availing of membership of approved professional bodies.

Conflict of Interest

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them into conflict with their official duties.

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.

It is permissible, with the approval of line management and NICS HR, for staff to engage in secondary employment activities. Duties relating to this post opportunity are linked to the delivery of Official Controls (outlined in Regulation (EU) 2017/625). Therefore staff must ensure that they are not in a situation which, directly or indirectly, could affect their ability to carry out their professional duties for DAERA in an impartial manner.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the role of Veterinary Service Animal Health Group, the excellent NICS terms and conditions and the variety of work and opportunities for new Veterinary Officers may contact:

1. Barry McGarvey (Veterinary Public Health) Senior Principal Veterinary Officer (SPVO, Grade 6). Tel: 07584 057 084 or email: barry.mcgarvey@daera-ni.gov.uk
2. George Byrne (Field Operations) Senior Principal Veterinary Officer (SPVO, Grade 6). Tel: 02886 768 334 or email: george.byrne@daera-ni.gov.uk

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

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1a. Be a Member or Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS/FRCVS)

or

1b. Be eligible to seek membership of the RCVS*

**Please note that the successful candidate, if not already fully registered with the RCVS, will be required to obtain registration in a timescale deemed reasonable by the Department and prior to taking up appointment, and must remain on the register while in the post.*

2. Have at least one year's post-graduation experience working with farmed animals or in veterinary public health.

and

3. Have a full, valid driving licence enabling the licence holder to drive in Northern Ireland and access to a form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications/professional membership considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

Equivalent professional membership: give details of the professional membership held and reasons why you consider it enables you to seek membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. The onus is on you to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well informed decision can be made.

You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your qualifications/professional membership at interview so please ensure you have these readily available.

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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored 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.



- State clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. State “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.
- 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. Please do not include your name in the employment history or eligibility criteria sections.
- No additional information or evidence provided in support of your experience will be considered at any time after the closing date for applications.
- The NICS Competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Selection Process

The selection process will include an eligibility sift and a competency based interview.

Eligibility sift

This is an assessment of the evidence provided in your application form against the eligibility criteria. Successful candidates at sift will progress to the next stage of selection.

Competence based interviews

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the below areas **with each competency having 20 marks available**. You will be asked to give examples of when you have demonstrated the competencies being assessed.

No notes or personal documentation may be brought into the interview room.

The interview will assess the following competencies:

- 1. Managing a Quality Service**
- 2. Making Effective Decisions**
- 3. Collaborating and Partnering**
- 4. Leading and Communicating**
- 5. Seeing the Big Picture**

Total Marks Available: 100

(Overall Pass Mark: 60)

Interviews

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Greater Belfast area during week commencing **20th April 2026**. Candidates should make themselves available on these dates. Reschedule requests will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. Alternative ways to facilitate remote interviews may also be considered.

NICS Competency Framework

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 4.

The NICS 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 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

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

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of selection process. Should you require assistance in accessing the competency framework please contact HRConnect.

Guidance For Applicants

Application Form

You can apply online at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before making your application and retain a copy for your reference. 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. **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.

Please note:

- 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.
- All applications must be submitted by the advertised closing date and time.
- 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. State for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- 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.
- 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.
- You must click SUBMIT once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within 24 hrs.

Help with making your application

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office - contact details are available on NIDirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-and-benefits-offices>

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, email: info@niuse.org.uk, Tel: 0044 (0) 28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 7137 2077.

Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn. Please see our candidate guidance, via the link below for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

[Artificial Intelligence & Recruitment Guidance](#)

Interview Preparation

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 fulfil 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 to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. 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.

For professional and technical posts, questions may be framed in the context of professional elements of the post.

General Information

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.

NICSHR Privacy Notice

NICSHR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICSHR, in line with the NICSHR privacy notice available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Offers of Employment

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

Please ensure HRConnect Recruitment Team is informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect Recruitment Team has up to date

contact details for you. If your email address changes then it is your responsibility to inform the Recruitment Team at HRConnect.

(Note for existing NICS staff - An update to your employee records will not result in your applicant profile being updated. You must still inform HRConnect Recruitment Team of a change in contact details.)

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.

Merit List

HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However, you should be aware 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.

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.

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation when requested will result in your application being rejected.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. Please note ALL applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check.

Applicants must be either:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iv) Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein with settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\)](#); or
- (v) Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\)](#).
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service or who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EU, EEA, Swiss & Turkish nationals.

ALL candidates are required to state their nationality and the category they are applying under in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form.

For candidates applying under categories iii – vii you are required to provide the confirmation of Right to Work and Nationality Requirements, including your 'Share code' in the response box in Part 1 of your application form.

You should provide details of your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your Right to Work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your 'Share code' [here](#).

Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

[EU Settlement Scheme EU, other EEA, Swiss citizens and family members](#) provides guidance on EUSS and certain family members.

Where a candidate has a Right to Work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the Right to Work is maintained.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available in the [Nationality Guidance](#) section of the NICS Recruitment website.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this 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) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via www.gov.uk

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: **Standard 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.

Security Policy for AccessNI Disclosure Information is available at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk under Useful Information.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks>

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.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note the Equal Opportunities monitoring section of the application form is mandatory in order to submit an application.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the DoF website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/equal-opportunities-information-candidates>

Applications from Protestants, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcomed for this post.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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**

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - **Veterinary Officer** **Candidate Information Booklet**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard



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

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

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