

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

IRC284014

Custody Prison Officer (CPO) (Full-time)

Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than:
12 noon (UK time) on Friday 16th September 2022

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible (**either via email or SMS**), you should therefore check your email account (including junk mail folder) / SMS messages 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. You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	3
Background	4
Familiarisation Session	5
Job Specification	6
Key Responsibilities	10
Assessment Process	13
NICS Competency Framework	19
Interview Criteria	20
Interview Guidance	24
Application Process Guidance	25
Security/Vetting	29
Health Criteria/Requirements	30

FOREWORD

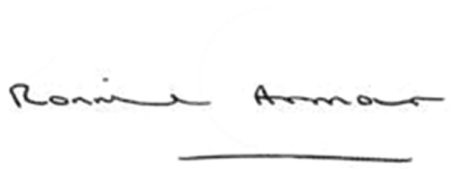
Thank you for your interest in becoming a Custody Prison Officer. Prison is a complex working environment and the role of a Custody Prison Officer is both challenging and rewarding. Challenging, in terms of the individuals who will be in your care; rewarding, because every day you will have the opportunity to make a difference as you challenge and support them to change and to play your part in building a safer community.

We are looking for individuals from all parts of our community who are motivated, courageous, respectful, resilient and compassionate; people who want to work as part of a professional team in a dynamic environment. If you believe you have what it takes to be a Custody Prison Officer, then I would encourage you to apply.

Successful candidates will undergo extensive training and will receive support and guidance as they begin working with prisoners. You will have the opportunity to develop new skills as you work with a range of other statutory and voluntary organisations and to progress through our management structure during a career that will be varied, demanding and enjoyable.

The role of a Custody Prison Officer is about much more than "locking people up," It is about keeping individuals safe and secure while working to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending through rehabilitation, resettlement and ultimately their reintegration back into our community.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is a competent, confident and compassionate organisation - if you want a challenging and rewarding job working in a unique environment, then join us and make a real difference.



Ronnie Armour
Director General,
Northern Ireland Prison Service

BACKGROUND

About the Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is part of the Department of Justice (DoJ) and plays a vital role in helping to build a safer community in Northern Ireland. Their core purpose is to keep people safe and secure while they are in prison and to work with them so they can address their offending behaviour and play a positive role when they are released.

NIPS Statement of Purpose and Strategic Priorities
NIPS core Statement of Purpose is: *Building a safer community by challenging and supporting people in our care to change.*

Organisational Structure and Staffing

NIPS is an executive agency of the Department of Justice (DOJ) which is a part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). It is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system. The NIPS operates under the direction and control of the DoJ, within a statutory framework based on the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 and the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995.

NIPS comprises the three main prison establishments and the Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services (PECCS).

Maghaberry Prison – a high security prison, housing adult male long-term sentenced and remand prisoners in separated and integrated conditions.

Magilligan Prison – a medium security prison, housing shorter-term sentenced adult male prisoners. This establishment also has low security accommodation for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison – a medium to low security establishment accommodating remand and sentenced young men between the ages of 18 and 21 and all female prisoners.

Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services (PECCS) – PECCS staff have responsibility for the safe operation of the cell holding areas in each Courthouse throughout Northern Ireland and for producing prisoners in court rooms when required. Additionaly PECCS are a prisoner transport and escorting service for adult males, adult females, young people and children within the Criminal Justice System. Driver/Escort staff use cellular vehicles which hold and deploy, mainly, from Maghaberry Prison.

The main administrative centre for NIPS, Prison Service Headquarters, is located on the Stormont Estate, Belfast, Prison Service College (PSC) is currently located at Hydebank Wood.

Further details on the Northern Ireland Prison Service are available at www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons

CPO FAMILIARISATION SESSION

NIPS will host a Familiarisation Session for individuals who are interested in applying for the CPO role which will be hosted through a WebEx platform at **2pm on Monday 5th September 2022.**

The purpose of this event is to provide information to applicants on the learning programme, the process of becoming a prison officer and to give you an opportunity to hear from our officers about what it is like working as a prison officer in the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

This will include video clips of real-life examples to show the full remit of the NIPS role and how our staff keep individuals safe and secure while working with them to reduce the likelihood of reoffending through rehabilitation, resettlement and ultimately, reintegration back into our community.

For more information and to book your place for this event, please email: CPO2022@justice-ni.gov.uk

JOB SPECIFICATION

There are currently a number of permanent vacancies available across the CPO grade.

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

Location

CPOs are required to serve in any Prison Establishment in Northern Ireland throughout their career in the NIPS. Currently these are:

- Maghaberry Prison – near Moira;
- Magilligan Prison – near Limavady; and
- Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison – near Belfast.

Salary and Allowances (at time of advertising)

Custody Prison Officer

£22,149 - £32,629 per annum (under review).

The position attracts a supplementary risk allowance which is currently £3,492 per annum (under review) and a boot allowance of £92.80 per annum.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. Pay progression will be as per current NIPS pay policy.

Working Pattern

The shift pattern for a CPO is based on a **39 hour week**. The actual hours worked per week will vary as they will be calculated across your assigned shift cycle, which will include evenings, weekends and public/privilege holidays and may, on occasions include nights. A shift will start when you are on post and will end when you leave your post. Time spent travelling to and from your post is not included as part of your shift. No additional payments or premiums will be paid for working weekends or public and privilege holidays. Shift patterns will change from time to time.

Annual Leave

The annual leave year starts on 1 February and ends on 31 January of the following year. For staff joining NIPS after the leave year has started, entitlement for the remainder of the year will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Annual leave entitlement for CPOs is calculated in hours (hrs). The successful candidate will be entitled to the equivalent of 288.6 hrs rising to 327.6 hrs (25 days annual leave rising to 30 days after 5 years satisfactory service and 12

days public/privilege holidays allocated in hours). This includes 12 days Public and Privilege holidays.

Travel

CPO's are classified as a mobile grade and can be required to transfer to a location anywhere within Northern Ireland, both on a permanent basis or for a period of time on detached duty in order to meet operational needs.

It is your responsibility to bear the cost of daily travel between home and your permanent work place. When you travel to a temporary work place mileage is payable for travel in excess of your normal home to permanent work place commute. When you travel to a temporary work place, the mileage you may be entitled to receive is limited to the lesser of either (a) your home to the place visited or (b) the mileage you would have incurred if your journey had begun from your permanent workplace, to the place visited, by the shortest practicable route.

Training

All candidates are required to possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to effectively and efficiently perform the duties of a CPO prior to being deployed within their located Prison.

If successful in this competition, you will be required to complete the nine weeks induction training at the Prison Service College and undertake any other training as required to perform the duties of the post you have been assigned to. The College is based at Hydebank Wood and successful candidates will attend training sessions there as well as at Maghaberry and Magilligan Prisons. Starting time on the 1st day will be 09.00; thereafter start/finish times will be 08.00 – 16.45 but there will be occasions during job-shadowing when these will be subject to change.

The nine week induction training forms part of the overall Certificate of Competence (see below) training programme. You will be required to complete, and attain the required standard of, all modules of training. This includes training in Use of Force and Control and Restraint Techniques. You will be required to achieve a high level of occupational competence during your training and you must be able to demonstrate your ability, level of knowledge and understanding through practical application. This will be assessed during the training programme through on-going observation, practical assessment and written exams.

As well as a high level of occupational competence, successful candidates will be required to conduct themselves in line with the standards required for the conduct of NIPS employees. Should you display unacceptable behaviour, or a conduct issue arises, this may result in dismissal.

At the end of the initial training an assessment of your capability to fulfil your role in the NIPS will be carried out. If the assessment confirms you have not achieved the acceptable standard your appointment may be terminated.

Certificate of Competence

Successful candidates will also be required to complete a development programme accredited through Ulster University and attain the Certificate of Competence. This is designed to reflect the high level of professionalism expected from this role. This is comprised of a 9 week induction training programme as above, followed by a period of further study and development. The programme combines formal study with practical assessments, job simulation and written work including examinations, work-based assignment and reflective statements.

Candidates will be required to undertake home study in order to meet the required professional standards. Attainment of the qualification is mandatory to ensure continued employment and as a means of pay progression. It is expected that staff will complete their certificate within approximately one and a half to two years.You will be required to make sufficient progress towards the qualification before the end of your probationary period. You will also be expected to maintain the level of competence once qualified and will be assessed on a regular basis.

Attaining the certificate is mandatory and failure to do so may result in dismissal.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Vetting Requirements

Those successful at interview will require clearance to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), and an Enhanced AccessNI check which includes checked against the barred list. Please refer to page 29 for further information.

You will be required to complete these questionnaires within one week of receiving them (or you risk your application being discontinued).

Candidates who pass their OHS medical and Enhanced Access NI stages will be made a conditional offer of appointment as a CPO. However, your appointment can only be confirmed following confirmation of you being granted CTC clearance.

If you are not granted CTC level of security clearance, your employment will be terminated.

In addition to this you must also satisfactorily complete your induction training to have you appointment confirmed.

Health Requirements

Those successful at interview for the role of a CPO in NIPS should be aware that the role is both physically and psychologically challenging, requiring a level of physical fitness that ensures duties are carried out effectively and safely, without undue stress or risk of injury. Successful candidates may be required to undergo and pass extensive medical checks (details of which can be found at Annex A on page 30) before being offered a position.

Outside employment in the Reserve Forces & Voluntary Work

While employed by NIPS you must seek permission from NIPS to undertake Secondary Employment or to join the Emergency or Voluntary Rescue Services.

Tattoos

The NIPS recognises that having a tattoo does not necessarily prevent you from serving in or joining the NIPS. However, certain tattoos and their visibility may not be acceptable.
All CPOs are required to adhere with the Corporate Uniform Standard. Therefore, careful consideration will be given by the organisation to any tattoos on the head, face, neck and hands or tattoos which cannot be covered by uniform. This includes the size, nature and prominence of the tattoos in question.

- Tattoos will be unacceptable if they are contrary to any of the equality areas identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or are in contravention of the NICS Standards of Conduct.
- Whether visible or not, tattoos will be unacceptable where they could reasonably be interpreted as offensive to members of the public, those in our care or colleagues due to their content or alignment with a particular group.
- The NIPS regularly engages with some of the most vulnerable members of society. Therefore, tattoos which conceal the identity of a CPO to the extent where it would potentially inhibit their ability as a CPO to undertake their duties or which may make a member of the public feel uncomfortable, intimidated or threatened will be unacceptable.

All tattoos must be described giving size, location and nature. A verifiable translation must accompany any tattoos containing non-English words, characters or representations. Applicants to the NIPS may be required to supply photographs of tattoos as a condition of the recruitment process.

Probationary

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.

Uniform

A uniform is provided for all new staff which you must wear at all times whilst on duty and when required to do so. Each establishment has a set of Governor's Orders pertaining to the standard of dress for staff and you will be expected to maintain a clean, neat and tidy appearance at all times. Staff uniforms are not currently worn at Hydebank Wood College which currently attracts a clothing allowance.

Further Information / Contact

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 primary role of the CPO is to help build a safer Northern Ireland by supporting and challenging the people in our care to change. CPOs are also responsible for keeping people safe and secure.

Main duties and responsibilities

1. Prisoner engagement

- Actively encouraging prisoner participation in regime activities and offender management activities.
- Effectively manage and supervise prisoner activities and movements ensuring prisoners attend activities on time.
- Sharing information as appropriate on prisoner behaviour/progress by directly reporting into sentence planning and risk management arrangements.
- Model pro-social behaviour and use every opportunity to discourage and challenge negative behaviour.

2. Providing a safe and secure environment

- Support offenders to reduce their risk of re-offending through the implementation of prisoner's sentence planning and risk management arrangements. Contribute to this work by liaising and sharing appropriate information with other staff and organisations operating in the prison.
- Initiating prisoner induction by committing prisoners through reception.
- Support the principles of dynamic security by building positive relationships with prisoners to create and sustain the flow of security information from prisoners to staff.
- Conduct headcounts, locking/unlocking routines, fabric checks, alarms, and ensure recording and reporting of same.
- Adhere to and implement safer custody policies and procedures.
- Maintain order and discipline by monitoring/supervising prisoners and taking appropriate action to address any issues which may arise.

- Conduct searches of prisoners, visitors, staff, accommodation and areas in compliance with Governors Orders and Security manual.
- Control and manage the movement of prisoners, visitors, staff and goods, including transporting, in accordance with operating policy and procedures.
- Maintain the safe use and custody of security and IT equipment used in performing duties.
- Ensure that all incidents occurring during the course of duty are reported and are dealt with in an effective and timely manner.
- Contribute to briefings and handovers.
- Offer support and assistance to offenders on issues which may be causing them concern.
- Conduct regular equipment checks and maintenance of vehicles and report requirements for maintenance or repair as appropriate.
- Respond to emergencies in accordance with local Contingency Plans.

3. Promoting decent custody

- Promotes the aims and values of the NIPS.
- Treat prisoners humanely and take care of their property, taking account of their human rights and dignity within the framework of Human Rights and Equality legislation.
- Process non staff related prisoners' complaints, applications and grievances in accordance with the required timescales and procedures.
- Maintain systems and structures to promote confidentiality and the rights, responsibilities and diversity of people.
- Maintain required standard of cleanliness of residential areas and ensure prisoners maintain a high standard of personal hygiene.
- Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the prison regime on a daily basis through effective records.

4. General

- Complete all administration in support of duties including:
    - Maintenance of journals/logs.
    - Completing prisoner reports.
    - Recording prisoner requests/non staff related complaints.
    - Completing accidents/incident reports.
- Ensure all work is carried out to the highest professional standards.
- Continually manage and develop self-performance and personal resources in the role, including actively participating in the process of supervision and appraisal.
- Management of information and records in accordance with policy.
- Shift work including working nightshift will be a requirement.

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.

Before you apply, ask yourself … Can you commit?

Working Hours / Location

- NIPS operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year therefore you may be asked to volunteer to work overtime/additional hours at short notice.
- The operational requirements also mean that you will be needed to work during seasonal holiday periods and bank holidays.

Uniform Requirements

- You will be expected to wear a uniform at all times whilst on duty, with the exception of Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison.

Training and Skills

- You must successfully complete a challenging training programme with regular and ongoing assessment.

Professional Standards

- You will be required to deal with individuals who are volatile and often unpredictable.
- You will be required to work in challenging environments and deal with complex and difficult situations.
- You will be required to display a high degree of motivation, be conscientious, resilient and act with a high degree of integrity.
- You will be responsible and accountable for your own actions or omissions.
- NIPS expect all staff to act professionally both on and off duty at all times. It is expected that you maintain the highest standards of integrity at all times and throughout your service.
- NIPS expect all staff to treat colleagues, and those in their custody with respect recognising the need for fairness, impartiality and confidentiality.
- NIPS expects all staff to respect plurality and diversity and not to discriminate against any prisoner on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, political or other opinion, disability or, in the case of a prisoner, the type of offence alleged or committed by that prisoner.
- NIPS require all staff to respect human rights of those in your care and ensure compliance with Human Rights legislation.
- NIPS require all staff to manage resources efficiently and effectively at all times.

Employment within the NIPS is probationary for a period of one year.

ASESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment for this competition will comprise of several stages as outlined below:

1. Online Application Form;
2. Formal Screening of Applications;
3. Online Assessments;
4. Interview; and
5. Merit List.

1. ONLINE APPLICATION

- Read the Candidate Information Booklet and fully consider and ensure you meet the eligibility requirements and commitment needed.
- If you wish to apply, complete your online application at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk
- **Please note that candidates can be placed at any location therefore if you are offered and do not accept a post due to its location no other offers will be made.**

2. FORMAL SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS

- Formal screening of applications will take place to ensure that you meet the statutory requirements for working within the NIPS (nationality, age, etc). **Only detail included in the application form will be considered. Further clarification will not be sought.**
- Applications deemed invalid at this stage will be withdrawn from the competition and these candidates will be notified accordingly.

3. ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

During this stage of the selection process you will be required to complete an online assessment to determine your suitability for the Custody Prison Officer role. The online assessment consists of 3 Tests and 1 Questionnaire.

Test 1: Verbal - assesses your ability to organise written material in the way that makes the most sense. You will have 25 minutes to complete this test.

Test 2: Following Procedures and Basic Calculations - assesses your ability to follow rules and apply criteria, and to do calculations correctly. You will have 20 minutes to complete this test.

Test 3: Situational Judgement Test - In this test you will be provided with a number of scenarios/situations similar to what may be encountered in the role. After each scenario you are given a number of options as to how a Custody Prison Officer might deal with the situation. Your task will be to rate, using a four point rating scale, how appropriate **each** response is for the situation described.

There are 15 scenarios to complete and you will have 40 minutes to complete them.

Skills, Preferences and Experience Questionnaire – This assessment covers four areas and in each you are provided with a number of statements and asked to rate yourself against each using the rating scale provided.

- Section A contains a series of statements and you are asked to indicate how well each of the statements describe you.
- Section B contains a series of statements about what you want from a job and you are asked to rate the extent to which these are important.
- Section C contains a series of tasks and skills and you are asked to rate yourself against these in comparison to others.
- Section D contains a series of work areas and you are asked to rate your experience in relation to these.

This section of the assessment is not timed, however you should work quickly and not deliberate over each statement.

You will be able to complete a familiarisation test in advance of the 'live' test and you are strongly encouraged to acquaint yourself with this.
You should receive an email (sent to the email address you provided) with a link to the online test by **5pm on Tuesday 4 October 2022.** You will have until **5pm on Tuesday 11th October 2022** to complete the test. The link will take you to a website where you will find the test and the familiarisation materials. The online test can be completed in your own time and at a place that suits you.

If you do not receive an email by **5pm on Tuesday 4 October 2022 please** e-mail **recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net** inserting '**Custody Prison Officer test link not received**' in the subject line.

Preparing for your online assessment

You will need a computer, a working webcam and a reliable internet connection. You will need to use an up to date **Chrome** or **Microsoft Edge** browser on your PC. If you are using a Mac, **you MUST use Chrome**.

Do not use a tablet, phone or Chromebook. **Safari is not supported.**

Once you have accessed the assessment website **you MUST do the following before you can take the live tests –** and you need to do these things well in advance of taking the live tests. **We recommend that you access the site and start the process straight away.**

All of these steps and the live assessments are completed on the same assessment website.

NOTE – the final deadline for completing of the live tests is **5pm on Tuesday 11th October 2022.**

1. **Check your webcam**
2. **Verify your identity**
3. **Study the Familiarisation material**

Step 1 - Check your webcam

NOTE – you will need a working webcam to enable the proctoring to take place.

The onus is on candidates to ensure they have access to a webcam, regretfully no alternatives are available.

Click the 'Webcam test' button. This will check if your webcam is working within the program. Also make sure that you are clearly visible and front on in the image and be aware that you need to remain clearly visible throughout the live assessment.

Do this well in advance of taking the live assessment and also do it immediately before taking the live assessment in case something has changed.

Step 2 - Verify your ID

IMPORTANT: DO NOT SEND ANY PHOTOS OF YOURSELF OR YOUR ID BY EMAIL. YOU MUST DO THIS THROUGH THE ASSESSMENT WEBSITE.

Before starting the ID Verification process, you should click the yellow-highlighted link at the top of the main menu page ('ID Verification and Proctoring – instructions, common issues and resolutions.pdf') and read the document. If you encounter a problem with your ID verification or starting a live test, please consult it before emailing support.

NOTE – you cannot start the live tests unless your ID has been verified.

For this you will need to have a valid photo ID (Passports, driving licenses and electoral cards are acceptable photo IDs). The process is straightforward and is explained at the time. Using the webcam, you will need to take a webcam image of yourself and image photo ID (e.g. passport). You will be informed by email of the verification outcome using the email you provided at application. You will be asked to check that this is correct when you submit your images for verification.

We will check your ID and you will receive an email from **admin@assessmentintelligencemail.com** informing you of the outcome (**but do check your junk/spam folder and do log on to check your ID verification status if you feel you are waiting too long**). You may be asked to re-take the photos and this is not uncommon, so please start the verification process early to ensure you have enough time to complete the process. You can check your ID Verification Status by logging in. If you have not been notified

within 24 hours of submitting images AND your online verification status is still 'Submitted waiting approval', email: **support@assessmentintelligence.com** including your **Candidate Reference Number** and '**CPO2022**' in the subject line.

We advise you to submit your webcam images as soon as possible. **You should have submitted your images for identity verification by 6pm Friday 7th October 2022 otherwise we cannot guarantee that the identity verification process will be completed in time for you to take the live tests before the final deadline**.

NOTE – if the name on your photo ID will differ significantly from your name on your application, you MUST inform HR Connect by emailing Recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net including your Candidate Reference Number and 'CPO2022' in the subject line. Your email should explain the reason and include any supporting document (e.g. marriage certificate).

NOTE – you **MUST** complete the identity verification process online.

Under no circumstances send any images by email to the 'support@' address – unless we specifically request it.

Please note, it is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your images in good time.

Step3 - Study the Familiarisation material for the online assessments

It is **ESSENTIAL** that you use the online familiarisation material to check that your browser and the internet connection that you intend to take the live test on are compatible with the online tests. Note that some network firewalls may block access to the test site or prevent images from showing. If you can complete the Verification of ID process, your Webcam check is successful and the Familiarisation material works well on your IT equipment, this is a good indication that the live tests will work also. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you access the Familiarisation materials using the computer and internet connection that you intend to take the live test on well in advance of the tests.

The familiarisation material will give you a detailed description of the tests, include full instructions for completing the tests and provide example and practice questions so that you know how to record your answers and navigate your way around the tests. You should be fully familiar with these things before taking the live tests in order to perform at your best.

Taking the live assessments

For best results we recommend completing the online assessments in a test-like environment. Any possible distractions should be turned off, for example mobile phones, TV and music. Concentration is needed throughout the

assessments, so when completing each test, ensure other people are aware that they should not disturb you until you are finished. No responsibility can be accepted for any issues arising from where you choose to sit the tests.

Before starting a live test you should close all other browsers and browser tabs. You should not take the test on a computer that is remotely connected to a work network as the link may be unstable.

Once you log into the test platform and complete the honesty and privacy statements you will see a menu showing (i) the Identity Verification, (ii) Webcam Test and (iii) the Familiarisation material. The links to the Live assessments will appear on the menu once your identity has been verified.

Immediately before you click the start button to begin a Live assessment, there will be an image of you at the bottom of the page. This should be a front-on view of you as you take the assessment. You need to make sure that you are clearly seen in this image before starting the assessment and that you will remain visible in the image during the assessment. Another photo of you will be taken by the webcam for a last automated check before starting each assessment.

During the assessment, you will see a small video stream from your webcam in the top left corner. Images from this stream will be monitored.

We take great care with your webcam images and retain them for as short a time as possible. The image of your photo ID is deleted as soon as your identity has been verified.

Technical issues

If you lose internet connection while in the live test, you should immediately close your browser.
You will be able to continue the test without losing time and your previous answers will have been saved (except possibly on the last page you were on before losing connection).

If you experience any other issue while taking the live test, you should immediately close your browser and email:
support@assessmentintelligence.com including your **Candidate Reference Number** and '**CPO2022**' in the subject line.

If you do need to close your browser or your computer crashes and restarts, you must start up a fresh browser and paste in the test link again. **If your browser starts up and reloads the test again automatically, you must close it down immediately and start from a fresh browser. If you browser starts up and asks if you want to restore sessions or pages, you MUST decline.**

Final deadline

IMPORTANT – you must complete all of the live tests by 5pm on Tuesday 11th October 2022 and we strongly advise that you complete them well in advance of the deadline. If you leave it towards the end of the assessment window and find you have a problem (e.g., with your computer or internet) you may not have time to resolve your problem and complete the tests before the deadline. You must have submitted your images for ID Verification before **6pm on Friday 7th October 2022** and preferably well before then.

Disability Requirements: Reasonable Adjustment Requests

The NIPS is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. If you have a disability you may request a reasonable adjustment to ensure you are given as much support as possible throughout the recruitment process.

It is essential that you do this in advance of starting the live test. You will need to provide relevant evidence to support your request for a reasonable adjustment, for example, an occupational psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

Evidence to support your request should be sent to HRConnect at recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net as soon as possible following submission of your application.

Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number IRC284014 and title it 'Supporting evidence for reasonable adjustment request'. We may contact you directly to discuss your requirements.

It is essential that special arrangements concerning any adjustment requests are made in advance of starting the live test, as retrospective arrangements cannot be made after you have started.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information on the GIS can be found on the NICS Recruitment website under the section 'Information for Disabled Applicants' -

https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/pages/content.aspx?Page=Information-for-Disabled-Applicants-

In assessing whether applicants meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria, they are required to undertake a test/assessment. All applicants must achieve the required minimum score in order to be invited to interview.

Should a large number of candidates achieve the required score, we may limit the overall numbers of interviews offered and those applicants who demonstrate they best meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the job (i.e. the highest scoring) will be invited to interview. In this scenario, we will take positive action to ensure that the number of GIS applicants invited to interview will be in proportion to those who pass the test/assessment.

4. INTERVIEW

- Candidates who are successful in Stage 3 of the assessment process will be invited to interview in phases based on Test score order and the number of vacancies to be filled.
- **Further phases of interviews will be conducted as additional vacancies arise during the lifetime of this competition. You should therefore check your e-mails (and junk mail folder) /SMS messages on a regular basis in the event that you are notified of an interview.**
- **You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition.**
- The interview will be conducted face to face. Further guidance for online interviews can be found on www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk
- **Please be advised that while it is anticipated that interviews will be face to face for this competition, other delivery methods such as the WebEx platform may be considered in line with the relevant government health advice.**
- The interview will be based on NICS Competency Framework for the CPO grade as outlined below.
- **Candidates must present appropriate photographic identification (passport or driving licence) at the start of the interview for the interview to proceed.**
- If you pass the interview you will be placed on an order of merit list.
- The top scoring candidates will start the security clearance including self-disclosure and medical processes.
- As vacancies arise candidates will be offered these in merit order based on business need.

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.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 1.

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.

The NIPS has a Core Competence Framework, which is grade specific and describes what people need to do in order to be effective at work. It is not enough to just have the knowledge and skills to do our jobs. Competence is about what people actually do, it is about how you apply or demonstrate the knowledge and skills whilst carrying out your tasks. Demonstrated competence is observable and measurable.

The competency requirements for the role of CPO are categorised under:

1. **Seeing the Big Picture;**
2. **Making Effective Decisions;**
3. **Leading and Communicating; and**
4. **Collaborating and Partnering.**

Interview questions will be designed to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in the above areas and award marks accordingly. The evidence you use may relate to your achievements and/or experiences in any kind of setting, for example, work, education or leisure and must, of course be factual.

Further guidance on preparing for the interview can be found on page 24.
It is important that candidates being invited for interview read the guidance and prepare appropriately for attending interview.

INTERVIEW CRITERIA

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility criteria applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

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. It is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet NIPS goals and deliver the greatest value.

Effective Behaviours

- Gather information from a range of relevant sources inside and outside their Department to inform own work.
- Understand what is required of them in their role, and how this contributes to team and departmental priorities.
- Consider how their own job links with, and impacts on, colleagues and others in partner organisations.

Marks available: 20

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. It means showing clarity of though, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Effective Behaviours

- Make and record effective decisions following the appropriate decision making criteria, framework or guidance.
- Ask questions when unsure what to do.
- Undertake appropriate analysis to support decisions or recommendations.
- Investigate and respond to gaps, errors and irregularities in information.
- Speak up to clarify decisions and query those constructively.
- Think through the implications of own decisions before confirming how to approach a problem/issue.

Marks available: 20

3. Leading and Communicating

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.

Effective Behaviours

- Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method e.g. email / telephone / face to face.
- Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others.
- Write clearly in plain, simple language and check work for spelling and grammar, learning from previous inaccuracies.
- Ask open questions to appreciate the point of view of others.

Marks available: 20

4. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NIPS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Effective Behaviour

- Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team.
- Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences.
- Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively.
- Be open to taking on different roles.
- Try to see issues from others' perspectives and check understanding.
- Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others.

Marks available: 20

Candidates will be required to achieve an overall score of 40/80 in order to pass the interview.

INTERVIEWS DATES & AVAILABILITY

It is intended that the first phase of face to face interviews for this post will take place from week commencing Monday 24th October 2022.

Please note that further phases of interviews will be conducted at a later date as vacancies arise. If you are therefore not called for interview during the first phase you may be called during subsequent phases (which may take place up to 18 months following advertisement) and should therefore check your e-mails/SMS messages on a regular basis in the event that you are notified of an interview. You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition.

Reschedule requests will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

If having received your invitation, you decide to withdraw from the competition, please inform HRConnect as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of receiving your invitation. This time frame will assist us in the timely rescheduling of panels.

Key Dates

CPO Online Familiarisation Session	**2pm Monday 5th September 2022**
Closing date for applications	**12pm Friday 16th September 2022**
Closing date for ID verification	**6pm Friday 7th October 2022**
Live tests available	**5pm Tuesday 4th October 2022**
Final deadline for completion of live tests	**5pm Tuesday 11th October 2022**

5. MERIT LIST

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 merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to two years.**

Candidates will normally only receive one offer of appointment from this competition unless there are exceptional individual circumstances which would require a further offer to be made.

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

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in NIPS 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.

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.

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 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.

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

Making your application

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

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.
- 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.

Application Form Submission

- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before an 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.**
- Only online applications will be accepted.
- 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 such as new contact details. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details for each applicant.

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible **(either via email or SMS)**, you should therefore check your email account (including junk mail and spam) and SMS messages 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.

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 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:
www.finance-ni.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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

Eligibility and Nationality Vetting Requirements

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

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.

National of a Commonwealth country; or

(iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or

(iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or

(v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or

(vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or

(vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals

For candidates applying under categories iv – vii you are required to provide the following information in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form. Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

Category iv – Please provide 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

Category v - Please provide 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. You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;

Category vi - Please provide 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. Alternatively please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii - Please provide 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. In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation. Further documentary evidence may be request from HRConnect to support this;

'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' 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

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 via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Security

1. Counter Terrorism Check (CTC)

For CPO posts in NICS, the level of vetting is CTC. To facilitate this 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.

Please note that this role requires CTC clearance, which would normally require 3 years' UK residency in the past 3. This is not an absolute requirement but supplementary checks may be required where individuals have not lived in the UK for the required period. This may mean that your security clearance (and therefore your appointment) will take longer or, in some cases, not be possible.

We will carry out a Criminal Record Check on all candidates through AccessNI.

The category of AccessNI check required for these posts is an Enhanced Disclosure.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: http://www.accessni.gov.uk/. Those candidates who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview and, will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. This can be downloaded from the AccessNI website. Guidance notes of the completion of the form are also included on the website. 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 above form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.**

The AccessNI code of practice can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni. Criminal Record information is subject to the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exception) Order (NI) 1979 applies to the Northern Ireland Prison Service. You should therefore not withhold information about previous conviction, caution or fixed penalty ticket on the grounds that it is for other purposes spent under the Order. You should therefore declare ALL previous convictions, whether spent or otherwise.

Please note that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

Annex A

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The role of a CPO in NIPS is both physically and psychologically challenging, requiring a level of mental and physical capacity that ensures duties are carried out effectively and safely, without undue stress or risk of injury.

Activities that place a high demand on physical fitness are generally infrequent but when required they are often critical to success. The failure of a CPO to perform a given duty because of a lack of mental and/or physical capacity could have serious, even fatal consequences for the officer, his or her colleagues, prisoners and the public. Certain conditions may be incompatible with work within NIPS for example those causing sudden and unexpected loss of consciousness or dizziness or significant restriction of physical fitness or mobility. Candidates should note that a history of a significant medical condition which interferes with the functional ability to undertake the duties of the post or has the potential to put the candidate or anyone else at significant risk may be a cause for rejection but that cases will be assessed individually in compliance with relevant disability legislation.

All candidates must be physically and psychologically capable of under taking the work of a CPO. Fitness testing may be carried out by NIPS after recruitment on a periodic/regular and ongoing basis.

Please note that the candidate is responsible for any costs incurred obtaining any medical reports or contact lenses if required (detailed below). Failure to enclose the necessary reports will result in applications being returned.

The following health standards must be met by all candidates in order for them to be deemed fit to work as a CPO:

Custody Prison Officers need to be physically fit and have a standard of health such that neither their safety, the safety of their colleagues nor the safety of prisoners should be compromised.

Candidates should have a body mass index (BMI) within the range of 19-30. A BMI outside the 19-30 range may not in itself be a bar to employment unless there is an impairment of functional capacity.

Blood pressure must be within acceptable limits.

Where a candidate indicates on their health declaration that they suffer from an ongoing medical condition they are required to include with their health declaration a medical report from their GP/Consultant indicating the nature of the condition and any likely impact on functional ability to work as a CPO.

Insulin dependent diabetics may be accepted if their GP/Specialist confirms that they can demonstrate long-term stability of their diabetic control without significant hypoglycaemic episodes. An individual with a history of significant hypoglycaemic episodes may be rejected. An individual with a history of impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia may be rejected. Candidates must ask

their GP/Specialist to complete a diabetic form and return this with their health declaration.

Tuberculosis (TB) immunity will be assessed at pre-employment assessment, candidates must submit a completed TB immunity letter with their health declaration, candidates must also comply with any additional tests required to establish TB immunity.

Eyesight requirements:-

a. **(i) No corrective lenses required; uncorrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12**

(ii) Corrective spectacles worn; uncorrected minimum 6/24 - 6/24 corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

(iii) Contact lenses worn; corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

If contact lenses are needed to meet the visual acuity standard, a certificate from the applicant's Optometrist / Ophthalmic medical practitioner will be required. The certificate should indicate that the lenses are appropriate, well tolerated, without adverse effect and can be worn for at least 14 hours continuously per day.

The uncorrected visual acuity (i.e. without contact lenses) must also be stated.

They should also have alternative corrective lenses in the form of glasses, in the event of inability for any reason to wear contact lenses at work

b **Candidates must have a normal test of colour vision.**

c **If you have any doubt that your eyesight does not meet the relevant standard, you are advised to consult a qualified optician before completing the application form.**