

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC238538

Principal Legal Officer

**Department of Finance (DoF)
Department of Justice (DoJ)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 24th May 2019***

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

**Department of Finance/
Department of Justice**

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.

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FOREWORD

This competition is to fill a number of Principal Legal Officer (PLO) vacancies in the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Justice (DoJ).

The Departments participate with other legal service providers in the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland (GLSNI), an umbrella organisation that brings together legal staff working in a number of Departments and Agencies, in both the devolved and non-devolved sectors, creating new opportunities for career development and training. GLSNI operates alongside the NI Civil Service of the Future reform agenda, and these posts will offer an exciting opportunity for fast, challenging, agile and tech-enabled working.

BACKGROUND

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Departmental Solicitor's Office

The Departmental Solicitor's Office provides key legal advice and counsel to all Northern Ireland Ministers and departments in a complex constitutional, political and legal environment. Staff are engaged in a wide variety of work, often at the leading edge of issues relevant to government, as well as providing legal advice on policy issues and the legislative process and conducting litigation and property transactions on behalf of NI Departments.

The purpose of Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) is to provide excellent legal advice, counsel and representation so as to serve, enable and empower government bodies in Northern Ireland to achieve their objectives, within the rule of law. It has seven legal Divisions, all of which are supported by a Corporate Services Division, namely

- Three Advisory Divisions;
- Litigation Division;
- European Law and Civil Law Reform Division; and
- Commercial and Property Division.

DSO assists and supports the Executive and Departments in the performance of their functions to best advantage in the devolved sphere of government in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for advising Departments across a wide range of serious and complex issues, ensuring proper transposition of EU law, advising on future EU relations, Human Rights proofing, assisting the development of Department policies and legislation and advising on some of the biggest property developments in Northern Ireland. It also defends Departments' interests in a wide range of litigation including judicial review and European litigation and, where appropriate, initiates cases in the Courts on their behalf. It also has policy responsibility for civil law reform and the policy in relation to the solicitors' profession.

DSO is currently split between: Victoria Hall, May Street, Belfast; Centre House, Chichester Street, Belfast; Orchard House, Foyle Street, Londonderry; and some staff are outposted to other Departmental locations. There are currently approximately 150 staff in DSO, of whom approximately 100 are legal staff.

Crown Solicitor's Office

The Crown Solicitor's Office is engaged exclusively in legal work for the public service. The office provides a service to ministers and departments of the UK Government, to agencies of UK departments and to some non departmental public bodies and public officers.

Section 35 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 (as amended) provides for a Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland to be appointed by the Advocate General for Northern Ireland.

Under Section 35 (as amended) the Crown Solicitor “must make his services available to any Minister or department of the Government of the United Kingdom and may make his services available to any Northern Ireland Minister or Northern Ireland department or any other public body or holder of public office.”

The Office provides a service to ministers and departments of the UK Government, to agencies of UK departments, to some non-departmental public bodies and public officers (such as the Chief Constable of the Police Service for Northern Ireland) and undertakes some debt recoveries for the NI Administration. Since the completion of devolution on 12 April 2010 the Crown Solicitor also supports the Advocate General for Northern Ireland in the discharge of his functions. The work of the Office is litigation orientated. The range of litigation is wide and includes: employer’s liability cases, legacy inquests, claims involving allegations of unlawful conduct by the police and security forces, industrial tribunal and fair employment cases, judicial review, commercial and chancery cases, debt recovery and condemnation proceedings.

In addition, the office carries out a certain amount of non contentious work such as ‘Bona Vacantia’, which involves the administration of the estates of persons who have died intestate and without known relatives and the collection of assets of dissolved companies and failed trusts. The legal work of the office is carried out in two divisions each with a Legal Clerical Unit. In addition there is an office wide administrative division. The Crown Solicitor’s Office is funded by the Northern Ireland Office and is required to recover its full running costs. The Office is located in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice was established in April 2010 following the devolution of justice powers to the NI Assembly. The Department is responsible for the resourcing, legislative and policy framework of the civil, criminal and family justice system. It is responsible for draft Outcomes Delivery Plan Outcome 7 “We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other”. The legal grades in the Department are largely based in the Access to Justice Directorate and Justice Delivery Directorate and associated agencies - the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and the Legal Services Agency NI.

Enabling Access to Justice Division

Within the Justice Delivery Directorate, Enabling Access to Justice Division is responsible for maintaining the legal framework for legal aid. The legal posts contribute to the strategic development of legal aid provisions, the

development of legal aid policy, drafting of Statutory Rules, including participating in the legislative process, and advise on and robustly defend, where required, challenges to existing provisions.

Legal Services Agency

The Legal Services Agency is responsible for the grant and administration of civil legal services and the administration of criminal legal aid granted by the court. The legal posts are responsible for the strategy, direction, management, guidance and quality assurance of individual decisions whether to grant civil legal services; provide legal advice to staff making decisions, and senior managers on challenges to the decisions of the Agency and lead on litigation involving the Agency. In addition the posts will deal with all aspects of appeals against decisions of the Agency including reviewing cases which are considered by the independent appeals panel.

Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an Agency of the Department of Justice and is responsible for providing support for the Northern Ireland Courts, Tribunals and Parole Commissioners. In addition the NICTS supports an independent Judiciary; enforces Civil court judgments through the Enforcement of Judgments Office; manages funds held in Court on behalf of Minors and Patients; and acts as the Central Authority under certain International Conventions.

Legal Officers are currently deployed in the Office of the Lord Chief Justice, the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland, the Legacy Inquest Unit, the office of the Official Solicitor and a number of civil and criminal justice policy divisions within Department of Justice.

The Coroners Service for Northern Ireland (CSNI) was established in April 2006 to carry out investigations into sudden, unexplained or suspicious deaths occurring within Northern Ireland. Coroners are independent judicial officers, appointed by the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission, who deal with matters relating to deaths, in accordance with the Coroners Act (NI) 1959 and Coroners (Practice and Procedure) Rules (NI) 1963. A Coroner will make all the necessary enquiries regarding reported deaths in order to establish cause. To date, this has included responsibility for legacy inquest cases, which relate to deaths between the 1970s and 1990s, covering some of the most sensitive, complex and high profile deaths during the "Troubles". Disposing of them through the coronial process is an essential part of dealing with the past and fulfilling the state's obligations in respect of these deaths, including those under Article 2 of the ECHR.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful candidates will be allocated to one of the roles described in this documentation. The balance of the functions described here will differ from post to post.

Generally

- To provide accurate and timely legal advice and counsel to client departments on all corporate matters and domestic, EU and international law that impacts, or may impact, on the work of the client organisation.
- To provide advice to client departments on legal issues arising from the department's policies and to support the development and implementation of those policies through Acts of Parliament or the Assembly, secondary legislation and guidance.
- To work collaboratively with client departments in the identification and management of legal risks to the organisation.
- To undertake legally complex operational, policy or litigation casework including inquests and inquiries in which client departments have an interest or for which they are responsible.
- To manage a range of legal projects using proven methods and techniques.
- To manage resources ensuring these are used effectively in order to maximize benefits, including value for money and efficiency.
- To provide line management and developmental support to more junior legal and administrative colleagues as required.
- Such other duties as the Head of Office may direct.

Advisory Role

- To provide legal advice and counsel to client departments across a wide range of legal subject areas including administrative, constitutional and human rights' law, criminal justice, employment law, environmental law, procurement law, social security law, energy law, housing law, information law, health law, agricultural law.
- To research, analyse and provide written and oral advice on complex legal matters including explaining and where necessary defending the advice given to senior departmental officials.
- To draft or proof secondary legislation and other legal instruments and assist departments' Bill Teams in the preparation of legislative instructions for primary legislation.
- To work closely with policy clients as policies are developed which may lead to legal changes or changes which need to be implemented by legal processes.
- To provide legal support to clients and Ministers in relation to Bills and other matters, engaging with Legislative Counsel and supporting the Parliamentary and Assembly process.

- In the short to medium term, a large proportion of work in many advisory roles in DSO is comprised of advice on different aspects of the UK's exit from the European Union.

Litigation role

- To advise on litigation in which client departments are involved; working collaboratively with the client and Counsel drafting pleadings and other documents; assembling instructions to Counsel, and instructing Counsel at consultations and in hearings; and to provide advocacy services to client departments in the Courts and tribunals.
- To provide a litigation service to client departments at all levels of Courts and tribunals in relation to, for example: employer's liability cases; industrial tribunal and fair employment tribunal cases; judicial review; commercial and chancery cases; debt recovery; and prosecution of offences under the Insolvency and Companies regimes.
- To provide support to Public Inquiries and to clients participating in Inquiries
- To support negotiations and ADR.
- To participate in the out of hours rota. These rotas are in place in Litigation Division and in CSO.

Legal Aid Role

- To provide legal advice and exercise a legal quality assurance/challenge function to policy colleagues.
- Provide legal advice on challenges to legal aid provision including drafting responses to pre-action protocol letters.
- Uphold the DoJ interest in legal aid litigation including instructing DSO and Counsel in response to challenges.
- Contribute to the strategic development of legal aid and maintain and update the legal aid framework.

Legal Services Agency NI Role

- To provide legal advice and exercise a legal quality assurance/challenge function to operational colleagues.
- Provide legal advice on challenges to the Agency's decisions including drafting responses to pre-action protocol letters.
- Uphold the Agency's interest in legal aid litigation including instructing Counsel in response to challenges.
- Manage and quality assure the work of front line adjudication staff responsible for decision making.
- Review decisions subject to independent appeal panel consideration and monitor consistency of appeal panel decisions.
- Legal decision maker on applications for exceptional legal services, that are novel and contentious, both in the High Court and Supreme Court and cases which expose legal aid to high costs.

Legacy Inquest Unit Role

- To provide accurate and timely legal advice to the Coroner; as the Coroner's legal representative, engaging and instructing counsel when appropriate in accordance with agreed protocols and providing advocacy.
- To progress coronial inquiry to Inquest hearing in compliance with Coroner's directions, advising the Coroner on parameters of potential scope of inquest hearing and addressing queries raised by participants
- To implement robust and proportionate procedures for document redaction, including a consistent 'gisting' approach, where summaries in relation to the effective content of the documents to be considered by the Coroner, are to be undertaken.
- To provide direction to agencies on appropriateness of proposed redactions applied to materials provided to Legacy Inquest Unit (LIU), having regard to issues of potential relevance, and the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- To evaluate disclosure, evidence obtained and identify the need for expert witnesses and any avenues for further inquiry. Instructing Coroner's investigators and monitoring progress.
- To manage a complex set of interdependencies, working collaboratively with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders both inside and outside government to give confidence to the public and have a positive impact not only on the Justice system but also on wider society.
- While acting on behalf of the Presiding Coroner/Coroners, also work collaboratively as part of a multi-disciplinary team comprising lawyers, administrators, case progression officers, external counsel, investigators and others in order to comply with the Lord Chief Justice's five year plan for legacy inquests.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently a number of permanent, full time vacancies. Requests from successful candidates for alternative working patterns will be considered where these can be accommodated within business need.

Further appointments may be made from this competition should Northern Ireland Civil service (NICS) positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities. Regardless of the post to which successful applicants are initially appointed, staff may be required to rotate between posts within a business area (i.e. DSO, Crown Solicitor's Office (CSO) or Department of Justice (DoJ)) or to a post in another business area as business or development needs require from time to time.

Location

Posts will normally be based in Greater Belfast with occasional travel throughout Northern Ireland and, exceptionally, beyond. Some posts will require regular travel in Northern Ireland to court venues.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £47,749 - £52,334 (under review) 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. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (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 which includes a 1 hour meal break (37 hours net) Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time. Postholders will be required to participate in an out of hours rota when needed.

Travel

Access to a form of transport will be required in order to fulfil the responsibilities of this post.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required will range from Basic required for posts in DSO, with vacancies within CSO or DoJ requiring candidates to be cleared to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), Security Check (SC) or Developed Vetting (DV).

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.

Practising certificates

The annual cost of the Law Society / Bar practicing certificate (where required) will be met by the legal office to which the successful candidate is placed.

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.

Conflict of Interest

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

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.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about Advisory posts within DSO before deciding to apply may telephone Ed Boyle on 028 90529518 or email ed.boyle@finance-ni.gov.uk

Applicants wishing to learn more about Litigation posts within DSO before deciding to apply may telephone Maeve Toal on 028 90542530 or email maeve.toal@finance-ni.gov.uk

Applicants wishing to learn more about posts within CSO before deciding to apply may telephone Chris Hogg on 02890546055 or email christopher.hogg@csoni.gov.uk

Applicants wishing to learn more about posts within Legacy Inquest Unit before deciding to apply may telephone Peter Luney on 02890412282 or email peter.luney@courtsni.gov.uk

Applicants wishing to learn more about posts within Legacy Inquest Unit before deciding to apply may telephone Sheila McPhillips on 02890408860 or email sheila.mcphillips@lsani.gov.uk

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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Be qualified as a barrister or solicitor entitled to practice in Northern Ireland or in a position to become so entitled by the date of appointment.

AND

2. Have at least 3 years' post qualification* experience gained within the last 6 years of advising, orally and in writing, on significant legal issues; and doing so in a complex environment**.

*taken from date on which candidate qualified as a Solicitor or Barrister.

**complex environment is defined as one involving matters that:-

- a) are controversial; or
- b) involve political interests; or
- c) involve a conflict between NI law and the law of another jurisdiction/EU law; or
- d) involve conflicting interests within the client organisation or between client organisations; or
- e) involve significant matters of public law defined for this purpose as constitutional law, administrative law, judicial review, human rights law, or public inquiries.

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

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to the next stage of selection:

- The panel will apply the criterion of at least 2 years' post qualification experience gained within the last 6 years of:
 - (i) advising/acting for public bodies or

- (ii) advising on matters of public law as defined above.
- If further shortlisting is required the Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 2. This will be completed on a scored basis. All applicants will be listed in merit order and the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

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.**
- **Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.**
- **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.**
- **The NICS Competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk**

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The selection process will include a presentation and a competence based interview.

PRESENTATION

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

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

The presentation will be used to score the **Leading and Communicating** competency. 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 and diversity. In the legal context it is about being proactive, clear and persuasive while upholding the rule of law.

Marks available: 30

1. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned, justifiable decisions. These are legal posts and questions on this criterion will be asked in a legal professional context, but not necessarily requiring experience of public sector legal practice.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

2. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Outcomes Delivery Plan goals and deliver the greatest value and in the legal sphere about understanding the context in which your clients operate and their priorities.

Marks available: 30

3. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches appropriately and effectively to support service delivery.

Marks available: 30

4. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.

Marks available: 30

5. 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 NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 30

Total Marks Available: 180

Overall Pass Mark: 110

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.

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

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast commencing end of June 2019.

Should it be required, the panel reserves the right to interview further candidates after an initial round of interviews

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

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:

- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, hard copy application packs are available on request. All applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet.
- All applications must be received 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. Write 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-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-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 71 372077

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 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.

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 are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date 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.

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. Applicants must be either:

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

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For Principal Legal Officer posts 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;

Basic Disclosure Certificate

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

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni.

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.

Some vacancies may require candidates to be cleared to the following:

2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.
3. Security Check (SC): as point 2 plus credit reference check.
4. Developed Vetting (DV): as point 3 plus subject interview and field investigation.

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.

As Protestants are currently known to be under represented in this grade in the NICS, applications from the Protestant section of the community would be particularly welcome.

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

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**