

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet**

**IRC239926**

**Veterinary Inspector**

**Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs  
(DAERA)**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be submitted to  
HRConnect no later than 12  
noon (UK time) on  
*Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019***

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

# **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

**“A living, working, active landscape valued  
by everyone”**

## **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.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key Responsibilities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Terms and Conditions</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Assessment Process</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>General Information</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Annex A</b>	<b>25</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

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

DAERA provides a business development service for farmers and growers and a veterinary service for administration of animal health and welfare. The Department's College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) delivers training and further and higher education courses in the agri-food sector. DAERA is responsible to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in Great Britain for the administration of schemes affecting the whole of the United Kingdom. The Department also oversees the application of European Union agricultural, environmental, fisheries and rural development policy to Northern Ireland.

The Department is currently preparing for BREXIT working closely with our partners in Northern Ireland and with colleagues in the other UK Administrations.

## **DAERA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Vision**

“A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone”

### **Strategic Outcomes**

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well-led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

### **DAERA Top Management Team comprises:-**

- Forest Service, Rural Affairs and Estate Transformation Group
- Central Services and Contingency Planning Group
- Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
- Environment Marine and Fisheries Group; and
- Food and Farming Group

**DAERA has two Executive Agencies:**

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)  
Forest Service

The Department also sponsors a number of NDPBs including the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

The Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Dr Denis McMahon.

**VETERINARY SERVICE ANIMAL HEALTH GROUP**

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) is responsible for the development of animal health and welfare policy for both farmed and non-farmed animals and the implementation of that policy in respect of farmer animals. VSAHG is also responsible for policy development and implementation in respect of food animal identification and exports of animals and animal products to non-EU countries.

VSAHG contributes to DAERA's strategic goal to: "Develop sustainable agricultural, fisheries and industrial sectors" (Goal 1) by ensuring that the health standards of the farmed animal population are such that the NI producers have the maximum access to all markets, European and overseas, and that production costs associated with poor animal health and welfare are minimised.

VSAHG also supports DAERA through the implementation, delivery and the enforcement of veterinary public health controls, and agri-food legislation relating to feed and food safety, product certification, marketing standards, labelling, classification and price reporting on behalf of DAERA and Food Standards Agency.

Our Departmental purpose is to support "a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone". VSAHG contribute to this purpose, supporting the economy, the environment and the health of the public, local and global, through the assurance of high standards of animal health, animal welfare and food safety. Our living landscape encompasses farms, farmed and companion animals and their products and all those places where those animals and products pass through such as livestock markets, sea ports and airports, meat and milk processing and storage premises, egg packaging stations, export assembly centres, licensed kennels, riding establishments, pet shops and zoos, registered animal by-products, germ plasm and animal feed storage premises.

Through our work efforts and those of our collaborative partners and in the public interest we:

- (i) Enable exports of agri-food products through:
  - Delivery of official controls including export health certification;
  - Developing access to new markets.
- (ii) Safeguard the welfare of all kept animals, farmed, companion and sporting, including where appropriate: on farm; during animal transport; and at point of export or slaughter.
- (iii) Protect and improve the health of farmed animals through:
  - Rigorous standards of animal identification, registration and movement control supported by world class information technology;
  - Surveillance for economically important diseases whilst implementing plans to eradicate those present and prevent establishment of those which pose a threat;
  - Effective regulatory controls on the import of live animals and products of animal origin;
  - Effective controls on animal waste products;
  - Assisting the Industry to help itself;
  - Enforcing non-compliance in line with the Department's enforcement policy.
- (iv) Protect public health through:
  - Delivering, on behalf of the Food Standards Agency, official control systems for primary meat and milk production;
  - Promoting responsible use of anti-microbial products in animals;
  - Investigating and controlling important zoonotic conditions.

## **VETERINARY SERVICE ANIMAL HEALTH GROUP - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

VSAHG's purpose is to develop and implement policies that aim to prevent, control and/or eradicate animal diseases affecting livestock production and trade, to ensure that meat is safe and wholesome, animal welfare requirements are observed and agri-food legislation relating to feed and food safety is implemented.

This will help deliver the Department's vision.

## **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

VSAHG is in the process of implementing a new operating model at a time of immense transformational change in Government and significantly curbed budgets which has brought a new focus on the grading of many posts, including the veterinary ones. It will take a number of years for the new operating model to be fully implemented and during this time, and going forward, new veterinary staff will be employed at Veterinary Inspector (VI) level, analogous to the NICS Deputy Principal (DP) grade. It has been agreed that Veterinary staff recruited prior to 2018 will remain at the then recruitment grade of Veterinary Officer (NICS Grade 7 analogous). The Veterinary Officer grade will be phased out completely over the years ahead but during the transitional period it will be necessary for VOs and VIs to work alongside each other. The interim arrangements, which also require VOs to carry out a mentoring role over VIs, are necessary to enable continued delivery of a prioritised, high quality veterinary service on behalf of the Department and the agri-food sector in Northern Ireland.

On recruitment, each VI will normally be assigned to one of the 11 Divisional Veterinary Offices co-located in the various DAERA-Direct headquarters. In addition to training in animal health and welfare, international trade and veterinary public health, all VIs will all be expected to undergo official veterinarian (OV) training at an early stage in their careers and thereafter to carry out meat hygiene and inspection duties in licensed fresh meat establishments as required.

Successful VI entrants who already possess an OV qualification acceptable to the Food Standards Agency will be able to avail of opportunities to work in meat hygiene and inspection duties soon after appointment following a short refresher OV training course in Northern Ireland.

VSAHG is headed by a Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), Unified Grade 3. VSAHG comprises several groups of staff including professional, technical and administrative staff. There are six Grade 5 officers heading up the various divisions and sections that make up VSAHG: three Deputy Chief Veterinary Officers, three Programme Directors and one Administrative Grade 6, who reports directly to the CVO.

An outline of the current structure is provided on the next page but is subject to change.

**Head of VSAHG /  
Chief Veterinary Officer**

**DCVO – Director of Enzootic  
Disease and Animal Welfare**

**Programme Delivery Manager,  
Management of Divisional Veterinary Offices and Delivery of Field  
Work Programmes**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
TB Programme and Contracts, Welfare & Enforcement**

**Programme Partnership, Veterinary Epidemiology & Wildlife Unit  
TB Strategic Partnership**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
Imports, Portal Inspection**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
International Relations and Veterinary Trade Facilitation**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
Veterinary Public Health Programme**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
IRM, Cross Compliance, Standards & Compliance, TSE/ABP,  
Epizootics (incl. Br) & CPED**

**Programme Delivery Manager  
Surveillance & Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)**

**Animal Health and Welfare European Union (AHWEU) Legislation,  
Transition and Policy (NC)**

**Animal Health and Welfare Disease Control, Trade, TB and BR (CF)**

**Director of  
NIFAIS  
Programme**  
**NIFAIS  
Business Change Manager**

**Director of  
Structural  
Change and  
Staff  
Engagement**

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The main purpose of the Veterinary Inspector is the implementation of policy in respect of the following:-
  - **Public health**
  - **Animal welfare**
  - **Enzootic disease control or eradication**
  - **Epizootic disease prevention and where necessary, control or eradication**
  - **Zoonotic disease control and**
  - **International trade.**
2. The key objectives for the role include:
  - **Control and eradicate enzootic disease**
  - **Prevent entry to NI/and eradicate epizootic disease as required**
  - **Promote and maintain acceptable animal welfare standards**
  - **Promote the control of zoonotic disease**
  - **Support public health standards**
3. An indicative list of the main work areas and activities is provided at Annex A. However, it should be noted that these are not prescriptive and are subject to review and revision. Also, activities and responsibilities of the role are not restricted to particular business areas e.g. enforcement activities can apply across various business areas.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

There are currently a number of permanent full time vacancies.

Successful candidates will be employees of the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

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

### **Location**

The successful candidates will be based at any one of a variety of locations throughout Northern Ireland (NI). Primarily the work will be within Operational Delivery and the posts are predominantly based in Meat Plants and DAERA Direct Offices which are spread across NI.

The decision on where any successful candidate will be posted will be based on business need at date employment commences. However, once appointed, successful candidates will be required, and must be willing and able to cover duties anywhere in NI as required.

### **Salary**

Salary will be within the range £36,812 to £40,473 (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](http://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 successful candidates will be required to work 5 days per week (37 hours, excluding lunch breaks).

In addition, the successful candidates will be required to participate on weekly on-call rotas during weekdays, weekends and evenings.

It should be noted that when working within a Meat Plant more flexible arrangements and longer working hours may be required depending on operational requirements. Successful candidates may be required to work:

- i. early and/or late starts and finishes, and/or
- ii. compressed hours (where weekly hours are worked over a reduced number of days, for example 4 days rather than 5); and/or
- iii. at night, during weekends and on public holidays.

Successful candidates should expect to be assigned to any of the above duties on appointment and as required following appointment.

## **Travel**

The successful candidates must have access to a form of transport to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and be prepared to travel throughout Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as required.

It should be noted that some veterinarian posts may have regular travel as part of their normal duties and this will be a condition of these roles. This may include overnight stays. As necessary you may need to have a valid passport in place and comply with Occupational Health Service recommendations regarding foreign travel needs e.g. vaccines, medicines etc.

## **Vetting**

The successful candidates will be required to be cleared to Access NI Basic level check.

## **Medical**

Successful candidates will be required to undergo Colour Vision, Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, food handling and audio medical assessments to ensure their suitability to undertake the full range of duties of the post. **Offers of appointment will therefore be on a conditional basis pending satisfactory Occupational Health Service results.**

## **Training**

DAERA recognises that skills of our people are our greatest asset and we will continually seek to train and develop them in line with our business goals.

Successful candidates will be expected to maintain their Continuous Professional Development (105 hours) over three years and to undertake all training considered essential to ensure they become sufficiently expert in all aspects of the role and move between posts in field offices and Veterinary Public Health. The intense initial training for new VIs will in the most cases include specialist training as an Official Veterinarian, a requirement to carry out food hygiene and meat inspection work on behalf of the Food Standards Agency in meat plants.

## **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.

## **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 the job specification before deciding to apply should contact Paddy McGuckian Tel. 028 7744 2329 or e-mail: [Paddy.McGuckian@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Paddy.McGuckian@daera-ni.gov.uk) or Jim McAlister Tel. 028 2566 2828 or email [Jim.McAlister@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Jim.McAlister@daera-ni.gov.uk)

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

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

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

**OR**

- 1b. Be eligible by the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2019, to seek membership of the RCVS\*.

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

**AND**

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

**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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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

### **PRESENTATION**

As part of the interview, candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes. The panel will also ask follow up questions after the presentation. Candidates will be advised of presentation topic in advance of the interview.

Candidates should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview as no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. 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 including a laptop.

The presentation should last 7 minutes and will be used to assess the Seeing the Big Picture competence.

Please note: Notes must not be used during the interview stage of the assessment.

#### **Seeing the Big Picture**

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value.

Marks available: 30

### **COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEW**

#### **1. Managing a Quality Service**

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

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 thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Marks available: 20

## **3. 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. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 20

## **4. Leading and Communicating**

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens.

Marks available: 20

## **5. Changing and Improving**

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. It is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in “smarter”, more focused ways.

Marks available: 20

**Total Marks Available: 130**

**Overall Pass Mark: 78**

## **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 the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE), Greenmount Campus, Antrim from week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.

For candidates outside of NI, arrangements to conduct interviews via Skype can be facilitated on request.

## **NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 3.

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](http://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](mailto:info@niuse.org.uk), tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

## **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

### **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](http://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](http://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 will be required to bring documentary evidence of your qualifications / professional membership to 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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk).

## **Security**

### 1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport OR

- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via [www.gov.uk](http://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](http://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.

### **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](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk).

**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**

## Annex A

### Main Activities

#### **1. Epizootic Disease Preparedness, Detection and Eradication**

Epizootic disease preparedness requires the role holder to have a detailed knowledge of the clinical signs of epizootic diseases and the operational implications should a disease outbreak occur. This is done through the ongoing personal development and participation in contingency planning exercises for epizootic disease. The role holder should make themselves aware of the detail of DEARA's Contingency Planning for Epizootic Diseases (CPED) website and understand how they fit into the Plan. This can be accessed by clicking the link below:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/animal-health-and-welfare/disease-control-and-prevention>

The role holder will be required to undertake training as required to prepare them for dealing with an epizootic outbreak. They may also have a specific role as part of the Epizootic Team that will require additional training in the detection and diagnosis of epizootic disease.

As part of the ongoing veterinary role the post holder is expected to maintain and awareness of the clinical signs of epizootic disease. When dealing with animals the post holder should proactively monitor for clinical signs that may indicate epizootic disease.

The post holder also has a responsibility to respond to reported suspect cases of epizootic disease. This may be preceded by discussions with private veterinary practitioners (PVPs) in response to reports. Where suspect cases are reported the role holder will clinically examine the animal(s) and make a veterinary judgement on whether the animal shows signs of epizootic disease. Where there is some doubt the officer may seek the assistance of a member of the Epizootic Team to provide a second

opinion. The post holder may be required to collect clinical samples for laboratory testing to confirm suspicion of disease.

As the first point of contact or as a “Site Operations Co-ordinator” (SOC) the post holder will be required to secure the site e.g. a farm premises to contain the potential for spread of a micro-organism.

As part of the detection role the post holder will provide farmers with ongoing advice and guidance on clinical signs of epizootic disease and on good bio-security to minimise the risk of obtaining and/or spreading epizootic disease.

The role holder will have a general or specific role in the eradication of epizootic disease. This role will be defined as part of the Contingency Plan and includes clinical examination, participation in slaughter of animals, cleansing and disinfection, tracing, bio-security, epidemiology etc.

The role holder will participate in the Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) out of hour's rotas for emergencies, receiving remuneration for this in line with the NICS HR Handbook.

## **2. Enzootic Disease control and Eradication**

The role holder is responsible for managing enzootic disease levels in their patch and contributing to the overall application of national enzootic disease programmes. These programmes are managed by the relevant field Senior Principal Veterinary Officer (SPVO) who will provide the strategic context and operational direction for the specific disease. The role holder will work to ensure consistency of approach to the control and eradication of the relevant disease.

The post holder is responsible for the detection of bovine tuberculosis infected animals through the interpretation of non-routine skin tests results (those not automatically interpreted by the computer system). The role

holder will make decisions on the risk of disease spread based on a range of clinical and epidemiological factors and decide what follow-up testing of inconclusives, traced animals etc. is required. He/she will work closely with the Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors (AHWIs) and Senior Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors (SAHWIs) in their patch directing them in their support functions such as mapping, farm visits for bio-security isolation and cleansing and disinfecting of premises/equipment, ensuring that the staff with overall responsibility for managing the technical staff are kept advised. The post holder is responsible for making recommendations to their Line Management e.g. Divisional Veterinary Officer on matters of financial impact in the Branch. For example animals to be culled from the herd including the need for the buyout of animals or groups of animals as part of the control procedures. They are also responsible for liaising with the Group staff Line Management to ensure the tracing of herds/animals at risk. This includes identifying at-risk herds.

The role holder on the field operations side will be responsible for liaising closely with private veterinarians (PVPs) and local farmer groups in the locality to ensure all are kept up to date with the TB eradication efforts and issues in the locality. They will be responsible for ensuring that local PVPs are provided with adequate information and have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver bespoke advice to farmers in relation to TB breakdowns.

VI<sup>s</sup> will be required to interpret the signs of progression of disease in the locality, applying veterinary knowledge and skills. They will be challenged to optimise collaboration with private sector vets so to jointly persuade farmers to adopt best practice in relation to disease control and prevention. The carrying through of locally driven animal health approaches will require well developed negotiating skills. In the veterinary public health sector and Portal Offices (at ferry ports and airports) the role holder will similarly be challenged to work collaboratively with Industry to achieve EU and Departmental objectives and overall compliance. This will require the role holder to interpret observations and staff reports combined with well-

developed negotiating skills and an ability to clearly pass on information and explain to stakeholders the reasons for necessary enhancements.

The overall aim for the role holder in whatever Branch of VSAHG will be to ensure that the Department's future delivery agents (subordinate staff and contractors) are properly equipped to provide bespoke advice to farmers and other Industry players on the statutory framework; they will interpret veterinary technical aspects of the statutory framework, persuade and negotiate with Industry stakeholders to adopt necessary enhancements and maintain the capability to take more formal action to restore or improve compliance if required.

The role holder will, in conjunction with Line Management / Programme Management and with input from TB delivery partners such as local PVPs as required, consider alternative approaches to the detection and eradication of TB including the application of supporting diagnostic blood tests. On receipt of direction from Line Management/ Programme Management to carry out supplementary testing the post holder will direct group staff to undertake the blood test as required or otherwise allocate the work appropriately within a future delivery partnership. They will also be responsible for ensuring a common understanding amongst local TB partners including farmers and PVPs of the merits and any limitations of undertaking any supplementary tests. They will do this in face to face and group discussions, with appropriate reference to staff instructions and scientific papers which for example highlight the limitations of sensitivity and specificity of the diagnostic tests and any time limitations for submission of samples. On the veterinary public health and Portal sides, the role holder will similarly be responsible for ensuring industry applies appropriate technology specified in legislation, for example to ensure that the conditions of animal welfare at slaughter or in transport are appropriately and demonstrably observed.

Following Northern Ireland obtaining Officially Brucellosis free (OBF status) and as part of ongoing monitoring for Brucellosis the role holder will

continue to liaise with and take advice from the Field DVO and Brucellosis Programme DVO in assessing the implications of any positive blood test result. For positive cases the role holder will work directly with technical staff at patch level to ensure the mapping of inner and outer rings and the identification of at risk herds within these rings (ensuring the VI line manager is kept apprised for overall management oversight and any work prioritisation required for the technical staff). They are also responsible for tracking key performance measures and other management information agreed with managers of the local Unified Administrative Team (UAT) to ensure that VSAHG work in the role holder's patch is receiving appropriate priority in the mix of DAERA objectives and that, for example, all restrictions of relevant animals/herds are applied as per guidance, abortion tests appropriately set up etc. In the event of a positive reactor the role holder will assimilate and analyse information relating to the herd and present detailed information to the Programme Delivery Manager to enable proper veterinary risk assessment.

The post holder will ensure all reactor animals are culled and will be responsible for making decisions on what animals should be culled as part of the eradication of the disease. This will be in conjunction with the Field DVO and the Programme Manager who has ultimate responsibility within VSAHG for the compensation budget. The role holder will continue to track animals selected for culling and will liaise directly with the office of the Senior Livestock Valuations Officer to expedite valuations if there appears to be an undue delay in the valuation step as evidenced by the Northern Ireland Food Animal Information System (NIFAIS) / Animal Public Health Information System (APHIS).

The role holder will ensure that advice and guidance is provided to herd owners as the first level of enforcement, for example on the detail of any restrictions which have been imposed on the herd and where they can refer for further proactive advice e.g. on herd bio-security, financial or social impact etc.

In addition to the full range of Field Veterinary Inspector responsibilities the post holder may be required to take a main/specialist role in leading the control and eradication of TB or Brucellosis, for example should a flare up of disease occur in the future in the locality.

### **3. Veterinary Certification**

The role holder will provide support documentation for Authorised Veterinary Inspectors (AVI's) to enable them to sign veterinary export certificates for animals/animal products. AVIs are private veterinarians carrying out an official function on the Department's behalf (in this case paid directly by the third party). One or more AVIs will be based in most private veterinary practices in the country and we expect in future that an increasing volume of official veterinary certification will be delivered by this route. The implications of erroneous or false veterinary certification on the international market can be very severe indeed, potentially invalidating not only NI's ability to continue exporting to the destination country but also possible the other UK jurisdictions. The role holder has a responsibility to provide accurate support certification to underpin international trade and will play an increased role in the oversight of this aspect of the work of local PVPs (enhanced procedures to be developed)

VI's will also be regularly required to issue international trade export certificates in relation to meat and milk product exports and at times other animal derived commodities. This area of VSAHG's work is predicted to expand considerably over the years ahead as a result of international recognition of the NI animal health status and as a result of DAERA strategic direction, notably the Going for Growth initiative. Additionally charging for this area of work may be introduced which will place further onus on the role holder to hold to veterinary ethics and certification principles at times in the face of intense commercial pressure.

The VI acting in the Portal area of work will be expected to be familiar with the rules and legislation governing Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) and to

issue official certification to clear animal products, as appropriate, entering the EU through the BIP. Here again the role holder will be challenged to hold to veterinary ethics and certification principles at times in the face of intense commercial pressure.

#### **4. Zoonoses**

The role holder will be familiar with the National Control Programme for Salmonella and VSAHG staff instructions on zoonoses in general and be clear on the roles and responsibilities of staff and stakeholders. Where the lead role lies with PVPs, the job holder will ensure that all communications are carried out in a timely manner in support of the PVP's disease control responsibility to his/ her client.

#### **5. Public Health/Veterinary Public Health Programme (VPHP)**

The role holder will be trained and proficient as an Official Veterinarian for statutory meat inspection and hygiene duties. This is a core element of VSAHG's work as a fully integrated veterinary service. All role holders will be required to carry out term(s) as resident OV, this being on a more formal rotational basis than hitherto, with no VI being allowed to remain for an unduly prolonged period in OV duties in a specific meat establishment.

Even when serving in other duties, the role holder may be required to provide relief cover for OVs in meat plants when VPHP cannot resource the required level of cover from within the core VPHP staff contingent.

The role holder, when involved in milk certification duties, will be required to develop a basic understanding of the product being certified, the process and the wider picture of official supervision in the premises of origin.

The role holder involved in Portal duties will be required to have the same equivalent understanding in relation to VPHP work and OV duties so to

deliver their inspectorial role appropriate in the Border Inspection Posts (BIPs).

## **6. Animal Welfare**

Animal welfare monitoring is a core function of government veterinary service, high in the public interest. The role holder must routinely consider whether the farmer/meat plant/market is in breach of animal welfare legislation. Where potential or actual breaches of animal welfare are detected, the role holder must establish the severity of the breach and tailor their approach to meet the need. This can range from provision of advice on compliance through serving formal notices to restore compliance to the undertaking of enforcement proceedings for severe/consistent breaches in discussion with more specialised enforcement staff.

The role holder may be required to represent VSAHG in court proceedings to provide professional veterinary opinion on the breaches. Although it may be considered best use of resources to retain enforcement specialists who are very highly trained on enforcement, all role holders should have ongoing training and a basic awareness of the enforcement process. All VIs have an enforcement role and will be required to provide support and advice to group and administrative staff in the ongoing application of enforcement processes.

The role holder will investigate complaints of breaches of animal welfare made by the public where there is a clear professional veterinary intervention required. Group staff are trained in making initial visits to investigate welfare complaints including dealing with fallen animals, spotting possible signs of welfare problems. It will be up to the role holder to exercise their professional veterinary knowledge and skill to debrief the technical inspector and to assess whether a follow-up inspection by a VI is justified or whether further inspection by technical staff is required. The Group staff Line Management will be kept apprised by the role holder, in support of their managerial role, for example should prioritisation of

technical staff work be required.

Animal welfare breaches can lead to significant cross compliance/financial penalties to claimant farmers. It will be a responsibility of the role holder to ensure all animal welfare breaches are evaluated and reported to the DVO Welfare under cross compliance rules in accordance with staff instructions.

## **6. Imports.**

Imports of animals and animal products pose a significant risk to the overall health and welfare of animals on the island of Ireland. North-south policies and procedures have been developed to keep such threats out including stringent import requirements which require physical checks as well as identity and documentary checks at various points in the supply chain. The role holder will be expected to have a broad understanding of the all-island fortress-farming principles and to exercise appropriate controls on-farm, at point of despatch, point of slaughter or in the case of the BIP's at point of entry into the EU. Where appropriate, additional intra-Member State (UK) controls shall be exercised as in the agreed ferry checks at sea ports and airports. The role requires familiarity with required operational level checks on animals and documentation and an ability to assess risks and oversee compliance. The role holder will be supported in all material aspects by the technical and administrative staff in all walks of VSAHG work.

## **7. Contribution to the development of policy**

The creation of policy is managed through a programme based environment and the role holder will have a variable advisory role within the VSAHG Programme Delivery Teams (PDTs). For some role holders, those fully embedded in PDTs advising policy this will be close to 100% of the role. In this respect the role holder will serve as a subject matter expert (SME), responsible for providing authoritative advice to policy makers or others e.g. the NIFAIS IT programme. Key areas include

Identification Registration and Movement Controls of animals (IRM), Trade, Epizootics, TB, Animal Welfare, and Epidemiology. VIs based in Field offices will be involved giving policy advice on a lesser time percentage e.g. in special projects which take advantage of their knowledge, particularly in relation to the practicalities of delivery which must essentially inform good policy development. All VIs will be formally required to participate in advising and influencing the development and implementation of policy through the participation in policy project teams where opportunities arise. This will provide the project team with assurance that the policy reflects operational needs and that the policy is fit for purpose and can be operated in a field environment.

The post holder has a role to flag up through line management any potential issues with current policy and to suggest workable solutions. This may include providing comment on draft policy documents by invitation and related staff instructions/ guidance.

## **8. Programme Management**

The role holder will work as part of the PDT assisting the DVO in providing advice to the Grade 6 regarding the development of Policy and implementation of policy. The role holder will assist in delivering and overseeing delivery of VSAHG programmes in accordance with Veterinary Operations Board agreed and prioritised activities in the Summer and Winter Work Programmes. The provisions of technical training for DAERA staff including presentations and the formulation of staff instructions. The role holder will assist the DVO in providing advice as necessary to the industry and other stakeholders at meetings and through proactive and reactive support of the DAERA Press Office.

## **9. Roles which require additional specific training**

It is likely that role holders will undertake roles which require specific additional training. These roles include –

- PVP supervision (supervision of the work of PVPs to ensure compliance and quality of service). This may result in the completion of a report on performance of the PVP's. With the role the PVP plays in service delivery on behalf of VSAHG and the need to ensure value for money this will continue to be a critical role.
- Humane Slaughter Team – role holders will continue to have the opportunity to be trained in the art of humane slaughter. It would appear with the move to part time farming and the subsequent reduction of interaction with animals this may become a more critical role within the organisation.
- Epizootic Team – as part of the diagnosis of epizootic diseases there is likely to be a continuing need for deep experts in the diagnosis of epizootic disease. Although this is an integral role for all VIs there is a need for a team who can make immediate decisions on clinical signs of epizootic disease where the signs are not immediately conclusive.
- Portal controls – provision of professional direction to portal imports inspection staff on import controls to safeguard public and plant health and to prevent the entry of epizootic disease. Clearance of products originating in third country and first entering the EU via Northern Ireland through a BIP here.
- Provision of training in agricultural colleges (Enniskillen and Greenmount) – delivery of training to young farmers and equine handlers in these locations

## **10. Queries - IRM etc.**

This is not a primary veterinary responsibility but the post holder will from time to time deal with queries and enquiries that necessitate a veterinary professional input, for example where there is a dispute with meat plant management over the necessity of a high value carcase condemnation; where a farmer is querying the veterinary decision for removing or not removing animals from a farm for disease reasons; where a dirty farm vehicle entering at the Port has been stopped by a Portal Inspector and VI judgement is required to resolve an appeal.

## **11. Personal administration and staff management where appropriate**

The role holder is responsible for ensuring all personal administration requirements are undertaken in a timely and accurate manner. This includes the completion of all relevant veterinary reports and the input of time spend into the time recording systems.

VIs managing staff should ensure all managerial tasks are completed on time using HR Connect as appropriate, for example staff reporting and managing attendance.