Candidate Information Booklet

REF: IRC199515

THE CROWN SOLICITOR FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ADVOCATE GENERAL’S OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than 12:00 noon on Friday 9th January 2015
This Candidate Information Pack has been produced as a guide to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form to become the Crown Solicitor.

The experience, skills and qualities required and details of how to complete the application form are set out within this pack. It is recommended that you read this information carefully before completing the application form.

Completed application forms must be received by HRConnect no later than 12:00 noon on Friday 9th January 2015.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

Applications must be submitted via www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk

If you have a disability and require an application form in an alternative format please contact:

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

Telephone: 0800 1 300 330
Email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net
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Foreword

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland. This is a unique role, leading an office which is engaged exclusively in legal work for ministers and departments of the UK Government, agencies of UK departments, some non-departmental public bodies and public officers.

The role is a crucial one and I want to appoint a person who is best fitted for this important post. I have no fixed view on where the best candidate may come from but I welcome interest from as wide a variety of potential candidates as possible. I want to appoint someone who can clearly demonstrate the leadership qualities, vision and integrity to do the job well. If on reading the job specification you feel you have the required qualities and experience I am looking for, you should apply.

The Right Honorable Jeremy Wright QC MP
Advocate General for Northern Ireland
Background

The Crown Solicitor is accountable to the Advocate General for Northern Ireland for his legal functions but the Crown Solicitor’s Office is funded through the Northern Ireland Office.

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 after consultation with the Attorney 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 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, 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.

The work of the office is litigation orientated. The range of litigation is wide and includes: employer’s liability cases, claims involving allegations of unlawful conduct by the police and security forces, industrial tribunal and fair employment tribunal cases, judicial review, commercial and chancery cases, debt recovery and condemnation proceedings. The office also acts in extradition matters and carries out some non-contentious work such as Bona Vacantia as nominee for the Treasury Solicitor.
The Office is also a participating unit of the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland (GLSNI). GLSNI brings together a community of lawyers from five legal units operating in the devolved and non-devolved sectors.

The Crown Solicitor's Office is located in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast. There are currently 74 staff in CSO, of whom 25 are legal staff. It has a total running cost of approximately £4.6 million, mostly salaries, and operates on a full cost recovery basis by hard charging for its services.
**Job Description**

This is a Home Civil Service appointment and will be conducted in accordance with the Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles 2014.

**Key Responsibilities**

The main functions of the Crown Solicitor are:

- To lead a mixed team of lawyers and administrative staff in providing effective and efficient litigation services.
- To act in all civil litigation in Northern Ireland brought by or against the Departments of the Government of the United Kingdom as listed pursuant to Section 17 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947 as extended to Northern Ireland in relation to Her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom by the Crown Proceedings (NI) Order 1981. Also to act in litigation matters for all who may instruct him and who come within the provisions of Section 35(3) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 (as amended).
- To provide legal advice and assistance as required.
- To act in extradition matters under the provisions of the Extradition Act 2003 for foreign states under the European Arrest Warrant system and in category 2 country requests. Also to provide such advice as appears appropriate on matters relating to proceedings or proposed proceedings under the 2003 Act.
- To act for the Advocate General for Northern Ireland when required.
- To act as nominee for the Treasury Solicitor in Bona Vacantia matters - the administration of estates of deceased persons which devolve to the Crown; and in relation to the property of dissolved companies and failed trusts.
- To carry out other miscellaneous functions such as the taking of evidence and service of documents in foreign suits.
- To represent CSO interests on the Management Board of the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland.
Terms and Conditions

Salary
The appointment will be within the range £85,000 - £110,000 per annum. Starting salary is normally the minimum of the pay scale although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if the successful candidate has exceptionally relevant skills/experience in the public law field.

Pension
Civil Service pension arrangements will apply. Full details can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website at: www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/pensions

Other terms and conditions will be in line with those that apply to Senior Civil Servants in Northern Ireland.

Location
The successful candidate will be based in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 3JY.

Tenure
The appointment will be for a fixed term contract of 5 years, with the possibility of renewal for a further period(s) or conversion to permanency.

Vetting
The successful candidate will be required to undergo developed security vetting, which is a condition of appointment. The appointment will only be confirmed on completion of a successful developed security vetting.
**The Appointment**

The successful candidate will be appointed by the Advocate General for Northern Ireland after consultation with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

**Further Information**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact Kevin McGinty on 02072712412 or email Kevin.McGinty@attorneygeneral.gsi.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HR Connect, quoting reference IRC199515, either by telephone on 0800 1 300 330 or by email recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net
**Eligibility Criteria**

**EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

**Essential Criteria**

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Be a solicitor of the Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland of at least ten years' standing or a member of the Bar of Northern Ireland of at least ten years' standing; and

2. Have at least eight years' experience of civil law and practice of Northern Ireland and a comprehensive up-to-date knowledge of such law with particular emphasis on litigation and public law; and

3. Have at least three years' senior level professional experience.

**Shortlisting Criteria**

In addition applicants should be aware that following an eligibility sift against the essential criteria, should it be necessary to shortlist applicants further to go forward to interview, candidates will be required to demonstrate that they can meet the competence requirements, as set out in the Person Specification below.

**Personal Specification**

As the Crown Solicitor you will set the direction for the Office and help shape its future role. You will engage your people and develop their capability; manage performance effectively; drive savings and efficiencies and role model the Civil Service values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity as outlined in the Civil Service Leadership Model. A link to this can be found at Annex A. The candidate profile for this role is below:
Candidates will be able to demonstrate that they:

1. have the principal attributes required to lead the Office, namely first class leadership and organisational skills together with the ability to run and further develop the Office’s professional services;

2. can provide sound legal advice to Ministers and others of equivalent standing, often under extreme time pressure, on the widest range of complex legal issues;

3. have excellent judgment skills complemented by calmness, clarity of thought and expression, a deep understanding of the political environment and the ability to see the wider strategic context;

4. have the communication skills, stature, ability and integrity to command the respect of all those in the Office, the wider Government Legal Service of Northern Ireland (GLSNI) and Government Legal Service (GLS), senior Ministers and officials, the senior judiciary, the leaders of the legal profession and the Crown Solicitor’s counterparts in other jurisdictions;

5. have the ability to set the strategic direction for the office, to conceive, develop and drive forward innovative change and to engage successfully with stakeholders. All this must be done in the context of the Office’s values and its strong public service ethos and

6. have the energy and resilience and to be able to navigate obstacles, ambiguity and change.

It is essential that in your written application you give examples of proven experience or ability against each of the selection criteria. These responses will be developed and discussed with those candidates invited for interview.
How to Apply

The competition to fill the post of Crown Solicitor is being managed by HR Connect on behalf of the Advocate General’s Office for Northern Ireland.

The following notes give guidance on completing the application form.

The information will be treated as confidential during the selection process.

**Personal Details**

Please give full details of your name, home address, e-mail address and contact telephone numbers. Please ensure HRConnect is informed immediately of any changes in your contact information.

**Essential Criteria / Evidence Used in Your Application**

Please read carefully all the information provided, paying particular attention to the job description which gives details of the key areas of responsibility and the eligibility criteria / person specification which describes the selection criteria which will be used to assess your application.

Failure to address all of the areas may result in rejection of your application. Answers must be typed in the spaces provided and no other additional pages should be included in your completed application. Additional pages as well as Curriculum Vitae or other documents in support of your application are not acceptable.

You should take full advantage of the application form to provide practical evidence and examples of how your experience, skills, knowledge, achievements and background make you suitable for appointment as Crown Solicitor, evidence provided may include details and dates of previous employment or any voluntary third sector appointments to which your examples refer.
In this section you are asked to provide practical information against the essential and shortlisting criteria for appointees. It is your responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient and relevant information to enable the panel to make a decision on whether you meet the criteria.

The Panel will want to know about what you have done rather than what a team has done. Before starting to complete this section it is important to think about your role and what you have done individually, either on your own or as a team member. To complete this section effectively you need to understand the relationship between the examples you will use and the relevant selection criteria.

In addition, you should bear in mind the following points:

- You should use language which is simple and easy to understand in your examples to describe what you have done;
- Use actual examples, rather than ‘how you would do something’;
- You can use examples from either your working life or your personal life including any voluntary or community or trade union work you are, or have been, involved in;
- Avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies - focus on specific challenges and results;
- Describe what you did and how you behaved – if your example includes activities completed by a team, focus on your role and not that of the team as a whole;
- Given the limitation on words permitted in applications, lengthy descriptions of your experience will not be possible. You are advised to focus on the issue and on your personal involvement;
- You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required;
- ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (essential criteria) will be provided to the selection Panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post;
• The Panel will interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to have fulfilled the essential criteria and are therefore deemed to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

**Notice Period**
Please state the period (in months) you are required to give notice, if appropriate, to your current employer before being able to take up the position, if offered.

**Reasonable Adjustments**
Please let HRConnect know if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Any information provided will be used for this purpose only and will not form any part of the selection process. Should you be successful, you will be asked to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to carry out the role effectively. Please state if you have any particular access or other requirements if called for interview. If you wish to discuss your requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

**Equal Opportunities**
We promote equality and aim to reflect the diversity of the society in which we live. We are committed to maximising the skills and potential of all our staff. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons irrespective of disability, race, colour nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, religion or politics.

**ALL APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT ARE CONSIDERED STRICTLY ON THE BASIS OF MERIT**
Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. The Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland is classified as a non-public service post for the purposes of nationality rules and therefore. Applicants must be either:

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

For further guidance on Nationality requirements please see the link at Annex A.

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

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Department is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By ‘minimum criteria’ we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of skills and experience defined as essential within the person specification of this information pack.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines someone as a disabled person if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
You will be asked to confirm on the application form if you wish to claim an interview under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

**Please note that, to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:**

- CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;
- Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline;
- Late applications will not be accepted;
- Incomplete application forms will not be considered;
- Applicants must not contact or seek support for an application from a member of the Interview Panel or any official involved in this recruitment competition;
- Evidence of canvassing will disqualify you from appointment.
**Assessment**

Applicants who meet all of the essential criteria, and if required, the short listing criteria listed on pages 10 & 11 will be invited to participate in the next stage of the selection process.

**Presentation and Interview**

The assessment will consist of a presentation followed by an interview which will test the applicant’s experience, skills and knowledge of the essential criteria and personal specification listed on pages 10 & 11 and also against the Civil Service Leadership Model. Details of this can be found at Annex A.
Interview Guidance for Applicants

If this is your first experience of a criteria/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/criteria the question is designed to test.

A criteria/competence-based interview does however require you to:

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

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

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

The Panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences/criteria. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail an example or range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence/criteria area. You may draw examples from any area of your work/ life experiences.
Recruitment Process and Indicative Timetable

All applications will be acknowledged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advert appears</td>
<td>Monday 15th December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
<td><strong>Friday 9th January 2015</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of applications</td>
<td>The Panel will meet to consider applications, and HRConnect hope to advise whether you have been selected for interview in mid-January 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>It is intended that interviews will be held late-January/early February 2015.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The Department is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commission. The Department is committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining essential/short listing as well as at interview. HRConnect will forward any feedback requests to the Panel, who will be responsible for providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining essential/short listing as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of essential/short listing will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

**Complaints**

Should you wish to make a complaint about any stage of this process you should first direct your concerns to:

**HRConnect, PO BOX 1089,**  
**2nd Floor,**  
**Metro Building,**  
**6-9 Donegall Square South,**  
**Belfast, BT1 9EW**  
**recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net**  
**Tel: 0800 1 300 330**  
**Fax: 028 9024 1665**

**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**
Annex A

Civil Service Leadership Model:

The Leadership Model – SCS expectations

Leadership is critical to the success of the Civil Service. Performance will be assessed by not only what you have achieved, but how you have achieved it. Whilst this model applies to leaders at all levels of the organisation, the supporting text below specifically targets the Senior Civil Servants. You will be expected to demonstrate the behaviours in the Leadership Model when achieving objectives.

Set Future Direction

Leaders need to paint a picture of the future which is compelling and will galvanise commitment and action; in doing this they must identify the strategic context and set a clear direction.

Manage Effectively and Deliver Results

Leaders are responsible for challenging and supporting their teams to deliver excellence across all our business plan commitments. Leaders need to manage within tight fiscal constraints and should encourage new and innovative ways to deliver those commitments. Leaders need to ensure their teams collaborate across the service, utilising strong project management disciplines to ensure delivery of work to time and budget. Leaders must ensure a culture of performance management at all levels: individual, team and organisation.

Engage People and Develop Capability

Leaders need to harness the ideas and energy of our people and our stakeholders, especially during this significant period of change and reform. Leaders need to create a culture of continuous organisational improvement, through feedback and learning. Leaders need to encourage and provide opportunities for individuals to grow; ensuring our rich mix of skills and experience is properly developed and deployed. Leaders also need to develop their own capability and demonstrate self awareness, confidence and resilience.

Live Our Values

Leaders must demonstrate themselves, and embed in their teams the statutory Civil Service values: honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.
Civil Service Recruitment Code:

The Department’s recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition, as described in the Civil Service Commissioners Recruitment Code which can be found at http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/

Civil Service Code:

All civil servants are subject to the provisions of the Civil Service Code that details the Civil Service values, standards of behaviour and rights and responsibilities. For further information visit Civil Service Code. http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/civil-service-code/

Nationality Requirements: