

Candidate Information Booklet

Custody Prison Officer (CPO)

Full Time | IRC308341

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HR Connect no later than **12 noon (UK time) on Monday 25 November 2024.**

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



NORTHERN IRELAND

PRISON  SERVICE

Department of
Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Clár
Máinistire o tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk



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Communications between HR Connect and You

We will issue as many competition communications as possible by email. Please provide a valid email address for this purpose. Please check your email account and junk folder to make sure you don't miss any important messages from us.

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Custody Prison Officer.

The role is both challenging and rewarding. Challenging, as prisons are complex environments where many of the individuals who will be in your care have committed serious offences or have a long-term history of being involved in crime; many will also suffer from mental illness and addictions. Rewarding, because you will have the opportunity to make a difference to people's lives as you challenge and support them to change and you will play a key role in making Northern Ireland safer.

We are looking for individuals from all parts of our community who are motivated, courageous, empathetic and compassionate; people who want to work as part of a professional team in a dynamic environment.

If you believe you have what it takes to be a Custody Prison Officer, then I would encourage you to apply.

Successful candidates will undergo extensive training and will receive support and guidance in their role. You will have the opportunity to gain accredited qualifications and develop new skills as you work with a range of other statutory and voluntary organisations. You will also have the opportunity to progress through our management structure during a career that will be varied, demanding and enjoyable.

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

If you want a challenging and rewarding job working where you can make a real difference, then join us.

Beverley Wall

Director General, Northern Ireland Prison Service

Welcome



This recruitment exercise will be used to fill CPO Operational and CPO Trades vacancies across all NIPS establishments throughout Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service welcome applications from people regardless of their religious belief, race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

We wish to ensure that all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.

We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments in accordance with our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to complete any of the assessments.

If you have any questions, or require any documentation in an alternative format e.g. braille, easy read, large print, audio etc. **you should contact HR Connect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net**

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 12 noon on Monday 25 November 2024.

Please be advised that late applications will not be accepted. Before completing your application form, please read this booklet carefully as it outlines the application and assessment process.

All appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. Custody Prison Officers are expected to carry out their role with dedication and a commitment to the NICS core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

We wish you every success in your application.

About the Northern Ireland Prison Service

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

Our core purpose is:

“Building a safer community by challenging and supporting people in our care to change.”

Organisational Structure and Staffing

NIPS is an executive agency of the Department of Justice (DOJ). It is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system.

Maghaberry Prison

A high security prison, housing adult male long-term sentenced and remand prisoners in separated and integrated conditions.

Magilligan Prison

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

Hydebank Wood College & Female Prison

A medium to low security establishment accommodating remand and sentenced young men between the ages of 18 and 21 and all female prisoners.

Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services (PECCS)

PECCS staff have responsibility for the safe operation of the court custody suite throughout Northern Ireland and for producing prisoners to court when required. The main administrative centre for NIPS, Prison Service Headquarters, is located on the Stormont Estate, Belfast, and the Prison Service College (PSC) is currently located at Hydebank Wood.

Further details are available at www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons

Custody Prison Officer (CPO)

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

CPO Role: Key Responsibilities



Main duties and responsibilities

1. Prisoner Engagement

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

2. Providing a Safe and Secure Environment

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

CPO Role: Key Responsibilities

3. Promoting Decent Custody

The list below is not exhaustive but gives a **good indication of the main duties** of the post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.

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

4. Role within the Trades Department

The eligibility criteria for the CPO Trades roles is set out within the Selection and Assessment Process section on page 21.

- Support the Trades Senior Officer in the day-to-day delivery of maintenance operations across the establishments, providing support and assistance as required working in conjunction with other allied trades in an efficient and effective manner and responding as necessary to any emergencies in accordance with local contingency plans.
- Support the Trades Senior Officer in the delivery of all allocated and planned inspections and reactive repairs, ensuring that the delivery of your tasks comply with the Safe Maintenance Policy and follow all mandated regulations operating at the time.

Note: All CPO Trades staff must take on the operational CPO key responsibilities as and when required.

Career Progression

At the Northern Ireland Prison Service, we want everyone to fulfil their potential. That can mean different things to different people. For some it will mean becoming the best they can be at their grade, for others it will be career progression, whilst some may wish to try new roles within the organisation.

Whilst your first role is likely to be on our residential landings working with the people in our care, after your probationary period you will have opportunities to progress and reach your potential. That could mean working in one of our specialist areas such as prisoner support, the dog section or one of the many specialist positions within the Service.

It could also mean going for promotion to Senior Officer or beyond, like this member of the team who shares her experience of working in the Prison Service.

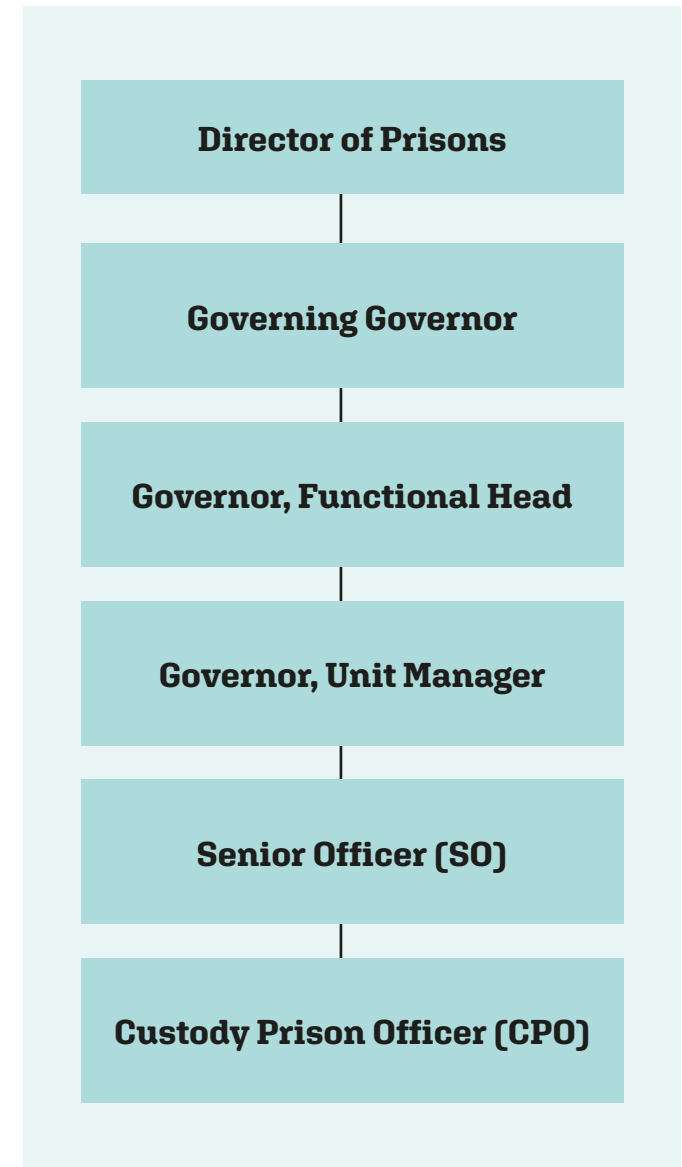
"I joined the Prison Service in 2007 as a Night Custody Officer and became a Custody Prison Officer in 2012. As a woman I didn't know what to expect – I just knew I wanted to make a difference. Since 2012 I haven't looked back and have worked my way through the grades being promoted three times. I have also worked in all the prisons and I am currently the acting Deputy Governor in our biggest prison, Maghaberry.

While you can have some really challenging days, I can honestly say the good days far outweigh the bad. Changing someone's life for the better gives you a real sense of achievement because you not only change theirs – you also change their family's lives and the community they come from.

"If I was asked what makes a really good Prison Officer I would say – resilience, compassion and having the ability to never give up on people – even when other people do. I love working in prisons and I'd encourage anyone to join us."

Governor Claire Graham

Acting Deputy Governor, Maghaberry Prison



Terms and Conditions

There are currently a number of permanent vacancies available at the CPO grade. This includes operational CPO vacancies and CPO vacancies within the Trades Departments at each establishment for qualified Plumbers, Electricians and Joiners. **Further appointments will be made from this competition as positions become vacant.**

CPO Terms and Conditions

Location

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

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

CPO Salary and Allowances (at time of advertising)

£29,773 - £39,273 per annum (under review).

The position attracts a supplementary risk allowance which is currently £3,924 per annum and a boot allowance of £92.80 per annum. Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. Pay progression will be as per current NIPS pay policy.

Working Pattern

The shift pattern for a CPO is based on a 39 hour week. The actual hours worked per week will vary as they will be calculated across your assigned shift cycle, which will include evenings, weekends, nights and public / privilege holidays.

A shift will start when you are on post and will end when you leave your post. Time spent travelling to and from your post is not included as part of your shift. No additional payments or premiums will be paid for working weekends or public and privilege holidays. Shift patterns will change from time to time.

Annual Leave

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

Successful candidates will be entitled to the equivalent of 288.6 hrs rising to 327.6 hrs (this includes 25 days annual leave rising to 30 days after 5 years satisfactory service and 12 days public / privilege holidays).



Certificate of Competence

CPOs serving a probationary period will be required to complete a development programme accredited through Ulster University and attain the Certificate of Competence.

This is designed to reflect the high level of professionalism expected from this role. The Certificate of Competence comprises the 12 week induction training programme followed by a period of further study and development. The programme combines formal study with practical assessments, job simulation and written work including examinations, work-based assignment and reflective statements.

CPOs will be required to undertake home study in order to meet the required professional standards. Attainment of the qualification is mandatory to ensure continued employment and as a means of pay progression.

It is expected that staff will complete their Certificate of Competence within 15 months. Attaining the Certificate of Competence is mandatory to ensure continued employment and as a means of pay progression.

You will be required to make sufficient progress towards the qualification before the end of your CPO probationary period.

You will also be expected to maintain the level of competence once qualified and will be assessed on a regular basis.

CPO Terms and Conditions

Travel

CPOs are classified as a mobile grade and can be required to transfer to a location anywhere within the NIPS Estate, both on a permanent basis or for a period of time on detached duty in order to meet operational needs.

It is your responsibility to bear the cost of daily travel between home and your permanent work place. When you travel to a temporary work place mileage is payable for travel in excess of your normal home to permanent work place commute.

When you travel to a temporary work place, the mileage you may be entitled to receive is limited to the lesser of either (a) your home to the place visited or (b) the mileage you would have incurred if your journey had begun from your permanent workplace, to the place visited, by the shortest practicable route.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. [Click Here](#) for further details, which can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website.

Vetting Requirements

Successful candidates will require security clearance to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level and an Enhanced AccessNI check.

Outside employment including in the Reserve Forces & Voluntary Work

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

Probation

Confirmation of appointment is 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.

CPO Terms and Conditions

Tattoos

The NIPS recognises that having a tattoo does not necessarily prevent you from serving in or joining the NIPS. However, **certain tattoos and their visibility may not be acceptable.**

All CPOs are required to adhere with the Corporate Uniform Standard. Therefore, **careful consideration will be given by the organisation to any tattoos on the head, face, neck and hands** or tattoos which cannot be covered by uniform. This includes the size, nature and prominence of the tattoos in question.

Tattoos will be unacceptable if they are **contrary to any of the equality areas** identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or are in contravention of the NICS Standards of Conduct.

The NIPS regularly engages with some of the most vulnerable members of society. Therefore, tattoos which conceal the identity of a CPO to the extent where it would potentially inhibit their ability as a CPO to undertake their duties or which may make a member of the public feel uncomfortable, intimidated or threatened will be unacceptable. All tattoos must be described giving size, location and nature.

A verifiable translation must accompany any tattoos containing non-English words, characters or representations. Whether visible or not, tattoos will be unacceptable where they could be **interpreted as offensive to members of the public**, those in our care or colleagues due to their content or alignment with a particular group. Applicants to the NIPS may be required to supply photographs of tattoos as a condition of the recruitment process.

Uniform

A uniform is provided for all new staff which you must wear at all times whilst on duty and when required to do so. Each establishment has a set of Governor's Orders pertaining to the standard of dress for staff and you will be expected to maintain a clean, neat and tidy appearance at all times.

Staff uniforms are not currently worn at Hydebank Wood College which currently attracts a clothing allowance.

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

Diversity and Inclusion

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The NICS values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace. Diversity and inclusion are reflected in and embedded across the entire range of NICS employment policies and practices.

Diversity and Inclusion

Applications from Roman Catholics, women, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcome for these posts. **All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.**

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note that 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

Disability

The NIPS is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. If you have a disability **you may request a reasonable adjustment to ensure you are given as much support as possible** throughout the recruitment process (and this includes for the Online Aptitude Tests, Physical Fitness Test and the Skills & Behaviours Assessment Centre).

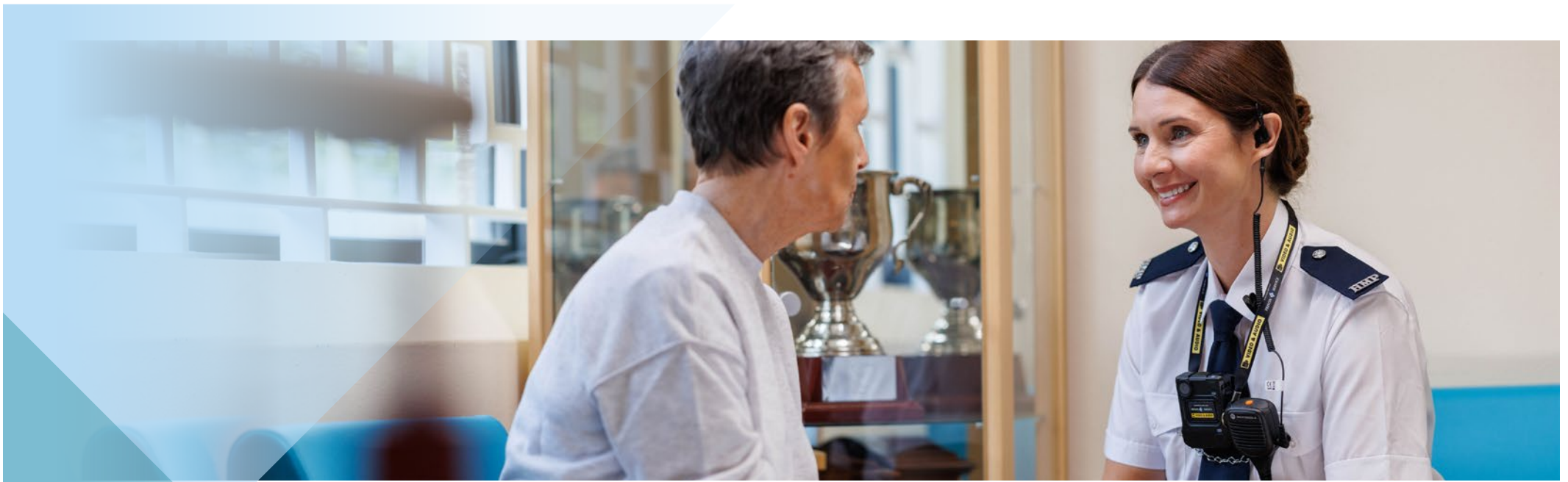
It is essential that you request any reasonable adjustment(s) required **in advance of starting any of the assessments** as retrospective arrangements cannot be made after you have started these.

You will need to provide relevant evidence to support your request for a reasonable adjustment, for example, an occupational psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

Evidence to support these requests should be sent to HR Connect at recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net as soon as possible following submission of your application.

Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number IRC308341 and title it 'Supporting evidence for reasonable adjustment request'.

We may contact you directly to discuss your requirements.



Guaranteed Interview Scheme

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an invite to stage 4 of the assessment process for this competition (Physical Fitness Test).

Further information on the GIS can be found on the NICS Recruitment website under the section 'Information for Disabled Applicants.'

[Click Here](#)

In assessing whether applicants meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria, they are required to undertake a test/assessment. All applicants must achieve the required minimum score in order to be invited to stage 4 of the assessment process. Should a large number of candidates achieve the required score, we may limit the overall numbers of invites to stage 4 offered and those applicants who demonstrate that they best meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the job (i.e. the highest scoring) will be invited to this stage of the assessment process. In this scenario, we will take positive action to ensure that the number of GIS applicants invited to stage 4 will be in proportion to those who pass the test/assessment.

Selection and Assessment Process



Selection & Assessment Process

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

1. Online Application Form
2. Formal Screening of Applications
3. Online Aptitude Tests & Questionnaire
4. Physical Fitness Test
5. Attendance at Skills & Behaviours Assessment Centre
6. New Entrant Prison Officer (NEPO) Induction Training

Following completion of the assessments above a merit list will be produced.

1. Completing the Application Form

Please read this Candidate Information Booklet (CIB) carefully before completing your application form.

Candidates should specify on their application form which CPO roles they wish to apply for eg: CPO (Operational) and/or CPO within Trades Departments (Plumber/Electrician/Joiner).

You are advised to keep a copy of the CIB for your reference throughout the recruitment process. The application form is designed to help you provide the necessary information to show how you meet the competition requirements.

Only online applications will be accepted. If you wish to apply, complete your online application at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Please ensure that you supply a valid email address when completing your application form and please advise HR Connect of any change to your contact details (particularly email address) throughout the competition process.

All parts of the application form must be completed by the applicant before an application can be considered. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

Completing the Application Form

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 and Continue” button.

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 then receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HR Connect if you do not receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours.

Once you click “submit” on your application form no further changes can be made.

The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered. Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.



Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.

Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted.

Information in support of your application form will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.

HR Connect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline; if you have asked for a reasonable adjustment, you must send your supporting evidence as soon as possible to recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net quoting IRC308341, to enable sufficient time for the adjustment to be put in place in advance of you beginning the online aptitude tests.

2. Formal Screening of Applications

Formal screening of applications will take place to ensure that you meet the statutory requirements for working within the NIPS (nationality, age, etc.).

Only detail included in the application form will be considered. Further clarification will not be sought. Applications deemed invalid at this stage will be withdrawn from the competition and these candidates will be notified accordingly.

CPO Trades Roles - Eligibility Criteria

Candidates who wish to be considered for a NIPS CPO Trades roles (Electrician, Plumber or Joiner) should tick which role(s) they are interested in when completing the application form.

Candidates interested in these roles must have undertaken and passed the full selection and assessment process (stages 1 to 6) before they can be considered for these roles.

Those who pass all stages of the selection process will be invited to provide details of their relevant trade experience/qualifications held. NIPS will review this information and confirm if a candidate meets the eligibility criteria and if they can be placed in one of the CPO Trades roles for their requested specialism.

Please note that all CPO Trades staff must take on the operational CPO key responsibilities as and when required.

Essential Criteria

Applicants must be a time-served qualified construction trades person (Electrician, Plumber or Joiner) in a construction related discipline.

Desirable Experience

Working knowledge of a broad range of mechanical, electrical & building installations.

CPO Trades - Electrician Criteria

1. a) City & Guilds NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Electro-technical Technology or equivalent; *and*
b) NVQ Level 3 Certificate in the requirements for Electrical Installation to BS7671 (2382) at either 16th, 17th or 18th Edition*.
2. Have a minimum of 2 year's post qualification experience, as a qualified electrician;
3. Health & Safety literate with a sound working knowledge of electrical systems;
4. Hold or be willing to obtain an appropriate CSR/CSCS Safe Pass Card.

*If not already held at the time of application Trades Electricians will be required to have obtained the latest 18th Edition Electrical Certification within 12 months of appointment.

CPO Trades - Plumber Criteria

1. Be a fully qualified plumber accredited with the following qualifications: City & Guilds Advanced Craft or NVQ 3 (Plumbing & Heating).
2. Have a minimum of 2 year's post qualification experience, working as a qualified plumber;
3. Health & Safety literate with a sound working knowledge of mechanical systems and an understanding of electrical systems;
4. Hold or be willing to obtain an appropriate CSR/CSCS/Safe Pass Card.

CPO Trades - Joiner Criteria

1. Be a fully qualified joiner accredited with the following qualifications: City & Guilds Advanced Craft or NVQ 3 (Carpentry & Joinery).
2. Have a minimum of 2 years' post qualification experience, working as a qualified joiner;
3. Health & Safety literate with a sound working knowledge of mechanical systems and an understanding of electrical systems;
4. Hold or be willing to obtain an appropriate CSR/CSCS/Safe Pass Card.

3. Online Aptitude Tests & Questionnaire

There are 2 aptitude tests and 1 questionnaire.

During this stage of the selection process you will be required to undertake and pass the 2 online aptitude tests (Verbal Comprehension and Following Procedures & Basic Calculations) to progress to the next stage of the competition.

The online aptitude tests and questionnaire can be done in your own time and at a place that suits you.

You cannot stop an individual test or the questionnaire once started but you can take the three assessments at different times.

You should receive an invitation email (sent to the email address you provided) with a link to the online assessment site by **5pm on Monday 2 December 2024**. If you do not receive an email by Monday 2 December 2024 please e-mail: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net inserting 'Custody Prison Officer Test link not received' in the subject line.

The final deadline for completing the online tests is 5pm on Monday 9 December 2024.

NOTE: This assessment is proctored. Proctoring means that your identity will be verified in advance of you starting the tests and that you will be monitored via your webcam during the tests.

You need to complete the following steps to complete the online aptitude tests.

Please note that all of these steps are done via the assessment site which you access using the link in your invitation email.

You should access the assessment site as soon as possible. Everything is done through the assessment site and everything is explained on the assessment site:

1. Check your Webcam;
2. Verify your Identity;
3. Study the Familiarisation & Practice Material; *and*
4. Take Online Aptitude Tests & Questionnaire.

Preparing for the online aptitude tests

You will need a computer, a working webcam and a reliable internet connection. You will need to use an up to date Chrome or Microsoft Edge browser on your PC. If you are using a MAC, you **MUST** use Chrome or Edge. **Do not use Safari. Do not use a tablet, phone or Chromebook.**

Step 1 – Check your Webcam

NOTE: You will need a working webcam to enable the proctoring to take place.

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

Click the 'Webcam Test' button. This will check if your webcam is working within the program. Also make sure that you are clearly visible and front on the image and be aware that you need to remain clearly visible throughout the live assessment. Do this well in advance of taking the online tests.

Step 2 – Verify your ID

IMPORTANT: Do not send any photos of yourself or your ID by email. You must do this through the assessment webiste.

Before starting the ID Verification process, you should click the yellow-highlighted link at the top of the main menu page ['ID Verification and Proctoring - instructions, common issues and resolutions.pdf'] and read the document.

If you encounter a problem with your ID verification or starting a live aptitude test or questionnaire, please consult it before emailing support.

NOTE: You cannot start the live aptitude tests unless your ID has been verified. For this you will need to have a valid photo ID (Passports, driving licenses and electoral cards are acceptable photo IDs).

Using the webcam, you will need to take a webcam image of yourself and image photo ID (e.g. passport). You will be informed by email of the verification outcome using the email you provided at application. We will check your ID and you will receive an email from admin@assessmentintelligence.com informing you of the outcome (but do check your junk/spam folder and do log on to check your ID verification status if you feel you are waiting too long).

You may be asked to re-take the photos and this is not uncommon, so please start the verification process early to ensure you have enough time to complete the process.

You can check your ID Verification Status by logging in. If you have not been notified within 24 hours of submitting images AND your online verification status is still showing as 'Submitted waiting approval', then you should email: support@assessmentintelligence.com including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC308341' in the subject line.

We advise you to submit your webcam images as soon as possible.

You are advised to have submitted your images for identity verification before 6pm on Saturday 7 December 2024 otherwise we cannot guarantee that the identity verification process will be completed in time for you to take the live tests before the final deadline.

NOTE: If the name on your photo ID will differ significantly from your name on your application, you MUST inform HR Connect by emailing: Recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC308341' in the subject line. Your email should explain the reason and include any supporting document (e.g. marriage certificate).

NOTE: You MUST complete the identity verification process online. Under no circumstances send any images by email to the 'support@' address – unless we specifically request it.

NOTE: It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your images in good time.



Step 3: Study the Familiarisation & Practice material for the online aptitude tests

It is **ESSENTIAL** that you use the online Familiarisation and Practice materials using the computer and internet connection that you intend to take the live aptitude tests on well in advance of starting the tests.

Note that some network firewalls may block access to the test site, prevent images from showing or cause delays.

The Familiarisation and Practice material will give you a detailed description of the aptitude tests, include full instructions for completing these and provide examples and practice questions so that you know how to record your answers and navigate your way around the tests.

You should be fully familiar with these things before taking the live aptitude tests in order to perform at your best.

Step 4: Taking the online aptitude tests

There will be two separate tests and a questionnaire to complete:

Test 1: Verbal Comprehension

Assesses your ability to organise written material in the way that makes sense. You will have **25 minutes** to complete this.

Test 2: Following Procedures & Basic Calculations

Assesses your ability to follow rules, apply criteria, and to do calculations correctly. You will have **20 minutes** to complete this.

Skills, Preferences and Experience Questionnaire

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

- **Section A** contains a series of statements and you are asked to indicate how well each of the statements describe you.
- **Section B** contains a series of statements about what you want from a job and you are asked to rate the extent to which these are important.
- **Section C** contains a series of tasks and skills and you are asked to rate yourself against these in comparison to others.
- **Section D** contains a series of work areas and you are asked to rate your experience in relation to these. **This section of the assessment is not timed**, however you should work quickly and not deliberate over each statement.

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

Concentration is needed throughout the assessments, so when completing each test, ensure other people are aware that they should not disturb you until you are finished.



No responsibility can be accepted for any issues arising from where you choose to sit the tests. Before starting a live online aptitude test you should close all other browsers and browser tabs.

You should not take the test on a computer that is remotely connected to a work network as the link may be unstable.

Once you log into the test platform and complete the honesty and privacy statements you will see a menu showing (i) the Identity Verification, (ii) Webcam Test and (iii) the Familiarisation and Practice material.

The links to the live aptitude tests will appear on the menu once your identity has been verified by a human verifier.

Immediately before you click the start button to begin a live test, there will be an image of you at the bottom of the page.

This should be a front-on view of you as you take the tests. You need to make sure that you are clearly seen in this image before starting the assessment and that you will remain visible in the image during the assessment.

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

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



Technical Issues

If you **lose internet connection** while in the live test, you should immediately close your browser.

You will be able to continue the test without losing time and your previous answers will have been saved (except possibly on the last page you were on before losing connection).

If you experience any other issue while taking the live aptitude tests, you should immediately close your browser and email: support@assessmentintelligence.com including your **Candidate Reference Number** and **'IRC308341'** in the subject line.

If you do need to close your browser or your computer crashes and restarts, you must start up a fresh browser and paste in the test link again.

If your browser starts up and reloads the test again automatically, you must close it down immediately and start from a fresh browser.

If your browser starts up and asks if you want to restore sessions or pages, you **MUST decline.**

Final Deadline

IMPORTANT: You must complete all of the online tests by **Monday 9 December 2024** and we strongly advise that you complete them well in advance of the deadline.

If you leave it towards the end of the assessment window and find you have a problem (e.g., with your computer or internet) you may not have time to resolve your problem and complete the tests before the deadline.

You are advised to have submitted your images for ID Verification by **6pm on Saturday 7 December 2024** and preferably well before then.

4. Physical Fitness Test



Candidates who pass the online aptitude tests will be invited to attend a Physical Fitness Test. **It is intended that these will commence in January 2025.** The Physical Fitness Test is designed to measure candidate's physical capabilities to determine suitability for the CPO role. It includes a series of physical tasks that replicate the duties of the CPO role.

The physical duties of a CPO include:

- Ability to escort prisoners from one location to another;
- Use of Control & Restraint Techniques;
- Ability to respond as a first responder to alarms or emergencies, hastily but safely;
- Ability to carry out fire intervention (cell rescue/run out a fire hose);
- Ability to work on your feet for large periods of your shift;
- Ability to climb stairs.

Strength Tests

These evaluate an individual's ability to exert force and perform tasks that require physical strength, such as lifting, carrying, or pushing heavy objects.

Endurance Tests

These assess an individual's stamina and ability to sustain physical effort over an extended period. They often involve tasks that require repetitive movements or prolonged exertion.

Testing Methods:

- Ten minute incremental walk test;
- Sit to stand test;
- Kneel to stand test;
- Grip test;
- Mannequin drag;
- Core flexibility test.

Candidates will be advised of the outcome before they leave the assessment centre.

Successful candidates will be invited to attend the next stage of the assessment process (Skills & Behaviours Assessment Centre).

5. Attendance at Skills & Behaviours Assessment Centre

1. People

Group discussion assessment to assess **leading and communicating and collaborating and partnering** competences; Candidates will engage in a group discussion where they must advocate for a prison-based outcome (which they will be provided with on the day).

2. Performance

Written assessment to assess **managing a quality service and delivering at pace** competences; Candidates will prepare a written response to a prison-based scenario.

3. Strategic

Interactive assessment to assess **making effective decisions and seeing the big picture** competences. Candidates will be required to interact with a role player dealing with a prison based issue.

Each of the 3 cluster areas above will be scored out of 20 and candidates will be required to score a minimum of 12 in each area (60%) in order to pass and progress to the next stage of the selection process - New Entrant Prison Officer Induction Training.

Assessment Availability

It is intended that these assessments will follow the Physical Fitness Tests (for candidates who pass that element) and commence in January 2025.

Requests to reschedule will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

You should ensure that you make HR Connect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition.

If having received your invitation to Physical Fitness Test or Skills & Behaviours Assessment Centre, you decide to withdraw from the competition, please inform HR Connect as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of receiving your invitation.

This will assist us in the timely rescheduling of assessment panels.

Any reasonable adjustments required due to disability should be conveyed to HR Connect at recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net



NICS Competency Framework

Candidates will be **assessed against the NICS competency framework at level 1.**

The NICS competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: **Strategic - Set Direction; People - Engage People and Performance - 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 HR Connect.

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

1. Leading & Communicating

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

Effective Behaviours

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



2. Collaborating & Partnering

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

Effective Behaviours

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

3. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives, 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.

Effective Behaviours

- Communicate in a way that meets and anticipates the customer's requirements and gives a favourable impression of the NICS;
- Actively seek information from customers to understand their needs and expectations;
- Act to prevent problems, reporting issues where necessary;
- Gain the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job;
- Encourage customers to access relevant information or support that will help them understand and use services more effectively;
- Take ownership of issues, focus on providing the right solution and keep customers and delivery partners up to date with progress.



4. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focussing 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.

Effective Behaviours

- Work in an organised manner using own knowledge and expertise to deliver on time and to standard;
- Work with enthusiasm to get the job done;
- Take responsibility for the quality of own work and keep manager informed of how the work is progressing;
- Remain focussed on delivery;
- Maintain consistent performance;
- Participate in quality assurance of products or services.

5. 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.

Effective Behaviours

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

6. 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.

Effective Behaviours

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

6. New Entrant Prison Officer Induction Training

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

You will enter induction training as a New Entrant Prison Officer (NEPO) and throughout training there will be continuous assessment of your ability to be deployed to an operational role.

This stage of the assessment process requires all candidates to complete the mandatory 12 weeks induction training at the Prison Service College. The College is based at Hydebank Wood and there is a requirement to attend training sessions across the prison estate. Starting time on the 1st day will be 08.30; thereafter start / finish times will be 08.00 – 16.45 but there will be occasions during job-shadowing when these will be subject to change.

Occasional evening and weekend working may be required to complement and embed the learning. This will be delivered within the normal training hours – in the unlikely event that additional hours are required you will be paid the normal overtime hourly rate.

The 12 week induction training will form part of the overall Certificate of Competence that CPOs are required to complete and attain to the required standard.

The induction training includes use of Control and Restraint (C&R) Techniques. You will be required to achieve a high level of occupational competence during the training assessment by demonstrating your ability, level of knowledge and understanding through practical application. This will be assessed through on-going observation, practical assessment, written exams and ongoing performance review.

If the ongoing performance reviews confirm that you have not achieved the acceptable standard (particularly in the 5 core skill areas which includes the use of C&R techniques) you will be offered one to one support to assist you. However, it will be expected that you will undertake any additional studies or assessment in your own time; to be able to demonstrate that you meet the required standard at the end of the 12 week assessment period.

At the end of this period candidates will be provided with detailed feedback on their performance. **Those who do not meet the required standard will not be made a formal offer of appointment.**

The training schedule is demanding and full attendance is mandatory. There will also be personal study requirements outside of timetabled hours.

7. Merit List

The merit list for this competition will be used to fill CPO (Operational) and CPO Trades vacancies within NIPS that arise during the lifetime of this competition.

Candidates who pass all elements 1 to 6 of the assessment process will be deemed suitable for appointment to the role and will be made a formal offer of appointment as a CPO.

HR Connect will list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first and allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed.

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

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

Please note that candidates can be placed at any location therefore if you are offered and do not accept a post due to its location no further offers will be made.



The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at:
www.nicscommissioners.org

General Information

General Information

Changes in Personal Circumstances

Please ensure HR Connect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances such as new contact details (e.g. email address changes). It is important that HR Connect have up to date contact details for each applicant.

Communication between HR Connect & You

HR Connect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible (either via email or SMS), you should therefore check your email account (including junk mail and spam) and SMS messages to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Transgender Requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HR Connect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment.

If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HR Connect where your requirements will be discussed in strictest confidence.

NICSHR Privacy Notice

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



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 assessments.

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.

Eligibility and Nationality Vetting

It is HR Connect policy that all candidates invited to attend to assessments bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend the Skills & Behaviours assessment.

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

National of a Commonwealth country;

- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland;
- (iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme;
- (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service;
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service;
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals.

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

Category iv: Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here.

Category v: Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your 'share code' here. You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;



Category vi: Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ['share code'](#) here. Alternatively please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii : Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ['share code'](#) here.

In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation.

Further documentary evidence may be request from HR Connect to support this; 'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' means:

- (i) That nationals spouse*; or
- (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
- (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc.) of the EEA national or his/her spouse.

***Note:** 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students' family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only.

Where a candidate has a right to work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the right to work is maintained. Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Security Clearance Requirements

Counter Terrorism Check (CTC)

For CPO posts in NICS, the level of vetting is CTC. To facilitate this you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport; OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version);
- c) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice@gov.uk;
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form.

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

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



For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: www.accessni.gov.uk/ Those candidates who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HR Connect and asked to complete the AccessNI application form. This can be downloaded from the AccessNI website.

Guidance notes of the completion of the form are also included on the website. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Failure to complete the above form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

The AccessNI code of practice can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

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

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exception) Order (NI) 1979 applies to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

You should therefore not withhold information about previous conviction, caution or fixed penalty ticket on the grounds that it is for other purposes spent under the Order. You should therefore declare **ALL** previous convictions, whether spent or otherwise.

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



Health Requirements

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

Activities that place a high demand on physical fitness are generally infrequent but when required they are often critical to success. The failure of a CPO to perform a given duty because of a lack of mental and/or physical capacity could have serious, even fatal consequences for the officer, his or her colleagues, prisoners and the public. Certain conditions may be incompatible with work within NIPS for example those causing sudden and unexpected loss of consciousness or dizziness or significant restriction of physical fitness or mobility.

Candidates should note that a history of a significant medical condition which interferes with the functional ability to undertake the duties of the post or has the potential to put the candidate or anyone else at significant risk may be a cause for rejection but that cases will be assessed individually in compliance with relevant disability legislation.

All candidates must be physically and psychologically capable of undertaking the work of a CPO.

Fitness testing may be carried out by NIPS after recruitment on a periodic / regular and ongoing basis.

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

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

- Custody Prison Officers need to be physically fit and have a standard of health such that neither their safety, the safety of their colleagues nor the safety of prisoners should be compromised.
- Candidates should have a body mass index (BMI) within the range of 19-30. A BMI outside the 19-30 range may not in itself be a bar to employment unless there is an impairment of functional capacity.
- Blood pressure must be within acceptable limits.



- Where a candidate indicates on their health declaration that they suffer from an ongoing medical condition they are required to include with their health declaration a medical report from their GP/Consultant indicating the nature of the condition and any likely impact on functional ability to work as a CPO.
- Insulin dependent diabetics may be accepted if their GP/ Specialist confirms that they can demonstrate long-term stability of their diabetic control without significant hypoglycaemic episodes. An individual with a history of significant hypoglycaemic episodes may be rejected. An individual with a history of impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia may be rejected. Candidates must ask their GP/Specialist to complete a diabetic form and return this with their health declaration.
- Tuberculosis (TB) immunity and Hepatitis B (HEP B) will be assessed as part of the pre-employment assessment, candidates must submit a completed TB and HEP B immunity letter with their health declaration, candidates must also comply with any additional tests required to establish TB and HEP B immunity.

Eyesight Requirements

No corrective lenses required; uncorrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

- Corrective spectacles worn; uncorrected minimum 6/24 - 6/24 corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12
- Contact lenses worn; corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

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

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

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

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

Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HR Connect at the address below or by:

E: recruitment@hrconnect.ni.gov.net

T: 0800 1 300 330

HR Connect PO Box 1089
Beacon House, 27 Clarendon Road,
Belfast, BT1 9EX

THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART
OF THE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT