Candidate Information Booklet

IRC182981
Deputy Secretary–Unified Grade 3
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 9th August 2013
A thriving and sustainable rural economy, community and environment in Northern Ireland.

Communication between HRConnect and you

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.

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Thank you for your interest in this competition to fill the challenging position of Deputy Secretary (Policy) in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

The Department has an important and wide ranging policy portfolio, including improving the performance of the agri-food industry in the marketplace; strengthening the social and economic infrastructure of rural areas; enhancing animal, fish and plant health, developing a more sustainable environment and promoting social and economic equality.

The Department and the rural communities it serves are facing a number of significant challenges, including on-going reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, changes in rural society and farming culture, local, national and international market developments, ongoing animal health issues and increasing environmental concerns. The postholder will play a key role in leading DARD’s policy formulation to meet these challenges.

As a member of the top management group in the Department, the successful applicant will be on the Department’s Board, and will be expected to lead and contribute proactively to effective corporate governance and change management.

We are keen to attract an individual who combines proven achievement in evidence-based policy-making with the ability to build relationships and work constructively with stakeholders to develop positive solutions to complex problems.

I hope you will read this information pack with interest. If you would like to speak to someone about the post, before deciding whether to apply, please contact Mr Sean Harvey on Belfast 02890 524128 who will answer any queries.

Noel Lavery
Permanent Secretary
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
BACKGROUND

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is one of the largest of the twelve Departments in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. It is a multidisciplinary organisation employing approximately 3,000 people, with a resource and capital allocation of £235 million in 2013/14. It also administers £276 million of European Funds under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

VISION

A thriving and sustainable rural economy, community and environment and to promote social and economic equality.

AIM

To be a Department that works with stakeholders, builds partnerships, tackles disadvantage and values its staff; strives to work efficiently, responds quickly to change and focuses on achieving sustainable outcomes.

STRATEGIC GOALS OF DARD

In pursuit of this aim, DARD has established five strategic goals, namely:-

1. To help the agri-food industry prepare for future market opportunities and economic challenges;
2. To improve the lives of rural dwellers, targeting resources where they are most needed;
3. To enhance, animal, fish and plant health and animal welfare on an all Ireland basis;
4. To help deliver improved sustainable environmental outcomes; and
5. To manage our business and deliver services to our customers in a cost effective way.

DARD’S PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS 2011 – 2015

The Programme for Government (PfG) is a visible commitment by the NI Executive to provide the groundwork for economic and social recovery. There are 82 commitments for NICS and the following 4 relate specifically to DARD:

- To bring forward a £13m package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation in the next 3 years;
- To eradicate brucellosis in cattle by March 2014;
- To develop a strategic plan for the Agri-Food sector; and
- To advance the relocation of the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture to a rural area by 2015.
There are currently four top management groups within DARD – Central Policy Group, Service Delivery Group, Veterinary Service and Central Services Group. The main areas of responsibility are farm, food and environmental policy; sea fisheries; scientific advice to Ministers; veterinary issues; further and higher education and lifelong learning; and management of the rural development programme and of rural payments.

DARD also has responsibility for rivers in Northern Ireland under the management of Rivers Agency, and forests as managed by the Forest Service. The Department also sponsors five Non-Departmental Public Bodies:-

• The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute;
• The Agriculture Wages Board;
• The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbours Authority;
• The Livestock and Meat Commission;
• The Drainage Council,

and one North/South body:-

• The Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission.

Further information on DARD can be found on the DARD website: www.dardni.gov.uk.

ABOUT CENTRAL POLICY GROUP

The Central Policy Group of DARD is responsible for developing and advising on policy in relation to the agri-food sector, sea fisheries, agri-environment, animal health and welfare, and rural development. It works closely with the delivery side of the Department located in Service Delivery Group and Veterinary Service. It also maintains a close working relationship with other Departments, the European Commission, stakeholders and customers on areas of common concern.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The post holder is one of four Deputy Secretaries reporting to the Permanent Secretary. He/she is responsible for the Central Policy Group, which currently comprises in the region of 224 staff, with a budget in excess of £8 million. It is organised in five Divisions, each headed at Senior Civil Service Grade 5 level. These comprise:

• Food, farming and rural policy;
• Animal health and welfare policy;
• Fisheries and environment policy;
• Policy and economics (headed by the Chief Agricultural Economist);
• Scientific evidence and Innovation Policy (headed by the Departmental Scientific Adviser).
Central Policy Group Structure

Grade 3
Deputy Secretary
Central Policy Group

Grade 5
Chief Agricultural Economist &
Director of Policy & Economics Division

Grade 5
Director of Animal Health & Welfare Policy

Grade 5
Director of Farm, Food & Rural Policy

Grade 5
Director of Fisheries & Environment

Grade 5
Director of Science, Evidence and Innovation Policy
JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a permanent appointment at Grade 3 level to the Senior Civil Service (SCS), the Northern Ireland Civil Service top leadership and management resource.

The successful candidate will be an employee of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

A successful candidate who is an existing civil servant and not already a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service will, on appointment, become a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service. As a member of the Senior Civil Service the postholder may be transferred to other posts at the same level.

SALARY SCALE

The salary range for the post will be from £81,600 - £99,100 rising to £82,416 - £100,091 from 1st August 2013.

The successful applicant can expect to be placed at the minimum of the range, although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if they have exceptionally relevant skills/experience. If the successful candidate is an existing NICS civil servant, normal pay on promotion/regrading arrangements will apply.

In order to comply with Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) guidance, we must disclose details of salary, including any taxable benefits in kind, and pension in the Agency’s annual accounts. Additional information may also have to be disclosed should DFP guidance change. It is a condition of appointment to any SCS post that you agree to this disclosure.

PENSIONS

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details of this can be found on page 23 of this booklet.

LOCATION

A Programme for Government commitment to advance the relocation of the DARD headquarters to a rural area by 2015 is being taken forward. This follows the announcement of the Minister’s decision that the new DARD Headquarters will be in Ballykelly. The postholder will, in the interim, be based in Dundonald House and will be expected to travel throughout Northern Ireland, as well as nationally and occasionally internationally.
TRANSPORT

As the post requires the postholder to travel throughout Northern Ireland and elsewhere, the successful candidate must have access to a form of transport to enable them to fulfil their duties.

ANNUAL LEAVE

In addition to the 12 public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 30 days.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

The post holder will be expected to travel throughout Northern Ireland and, on occasion, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere. The successful candidate must therefore have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and be prepared to travel throughout Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as required. This may include overnight stays.

TRAINING

DARD is an accredited Investors in People organisation. We recognise that the skills of our people are our greatest asset and we will continually seek to train and develop them in line with our business goals.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply should contact Sean Harvey via e mail: sean.harvey@dardni.gov.uk, telephone number 02890 524128.

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

Key responsibilities of the post are:

1. To lead the work of the Central Policy Group in providing a comprehensive policy framework which will help deliver the Department’s vision of a thriving and sustainable rural community and environment and to promote social and economic equality.

2. To advance the Department’s policy objectives and support the Minister in interaction with stakeholders, NI, GB and Irish government Departments and the European Commission.

3. To take forward the Department’s broad range of policy responsibilities including in relation to Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, the Agri-Food Strategy Board and relevant policy development on an all Island basis.

4. To oversee and manage the resources of Central Policy Group to ensure that effective internal control is exercised over the full range of the postholder’s responsibilities including oversight of the 5 Arms length bodies and 1 North South body as outlined on Page 5.

5. To contribute proactively to the corporate management of the Department through the Departmental Board and associated structures.

6. To assist in the corporate leadership and implementation of change programmes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.

The post holder’s main duties include:

1. Formulating and recommending strategies and policies in relation to the agri-food sector, sea-fishing, agri-environment and rural development;

2. Supporting the Minister in negotiations within NI, with GB, Ireland and the EU across the full range of policy areas and issues;

3. Representing and presenting the DARD interest in a wide range of meetings, negotiations and consultations with –

   • the main local stakeholders;
   • other NI Departments;
   • the NI Assembly and its committees;
   • government Departments in Ireland;
   • the other UK agriculture departments;
   • directorates of the European Commission;
4. Maintaining effective working relationships between the Central Policy Group and the Department’s Service Delivery Group and Veterinary Service, so that policy formulation and review take account of the delivery perspective and experience;

5. Participating in corporate management structures and activities within the Department to deliver effective management of the Department’s resources in pursuit of its strategic objectives;

6. Maintaining effective corporate governance arrangements for the Department’s Non-Departmental Public Bodies and North/South body.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications, be able to demonstrate that they have;

1. A sound knowledge and understanding of the Minister’s policy priorities and how they are to be delivered.

AND

2. At least 3 years’ experience of having successfully discharged senior management level responsibilities in a large and complex public, private or voluntary sector organisation.

AND

3. At least 3 years’ experience at senior management level of successfully developing and implementing evidence-based policy and strategy.

AND

4. A proven track record, gained at senior management level, of successfully forging, maintaining and managing constructive working relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders to develop positive solutions to contentious issues.

AND

5. The ability, gained at senior management level, to achieve value for money services and challenging objectives within defined budgets.

AND

6. Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills and a track record of successful negotiation, gained at senior management level, with internal and external stakeholders in a complex environment.

The following additional clarification is provided:

“Senior management level” includes providing detailed advice at board level or taking decisions on strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or advisor.

“Large and complex organisation” is defined as having the following features:
• A mix of professional and administrative staff (minimum 50 staff).
• A budget in excess of £3 million.
• An organisation with changing constraints and aspirations affected by
the influence of key stakeholders.
  • An organisation that needs to work with a range of strong interest
groups inside and/or outside the organisation.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

In order to demonstrate working at senior management level applicants
must also provide an organisational chart showing their position and
reporting relationships within that organisation.

The chart should be marked with the relevant competition reference number
and your full name. Please remove the identity of other individuals on the
chart but make sure your role is easily identifiable.

PLEASE NOTE: Where an organisational chart is not provided by the
closing date, the application form will be treated as incomplete, and will
not be forwarded to the selection panel for consideration.

Unfortunately it is not possible to attach your organisation chart via the online
application therefore applicants must submit a copy of their organisational
chart to:

Email: orgcharts@hrconnect.nigov.net

or via post to:

Leanne Cairns
HR Connect,
PO BOX 1089,
2nd Floor, Metro Building,
6-9 Donegal Square South,
Belfast
BT1 9EW

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be
necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to the next stage of selection,
the panel will assess the breadth and depth of the experience provided in
relation to eligibility criterions 3 and 4.
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 Department 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.
- 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.
- The Department may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.
- Further information on the PSfG for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk
PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Northern Ireland Civil Service has adopted the Professional Skills for Government as a framework for the purpose of personal and professional development

What is the PSfG competency framework?

The Professional Skills for Government (PSfG) competency framework is a structured way of thinking about jobs and careers for Senior Civil Service staff.

How does the PSfG framework look?

Leadership qualities sit at the centre of the PSfG framework. The roles the NICS expects leaders to play are to:

- provide/set direction
- deliver results
- develop our people

Leadership is supplemented by six core skills which are applicable at all levels of the Senior Civil Service:

- Analysis and use of evidence
- Financial management
- People management
- Programme and project management
- Communications and marketing
- Strategic thinking

The framework also covers:

- Professional expertise, job specific professional skills. These will be defined in line with the specific requirements of your job;
- Broader experience- depth and breadth of experience are important if you are working in the SCS. Deep professional knowledge accumulated progressively during the course of a career is essential to operate at senior levels. Work is frequently complex in nature and requires a profound understanding of the impacts and interactions with individuals, organisations and other sectors of the economy

Further information on the Professional Skills for Government framework can be accessed on www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk.
ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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

PRESENTATION

Before the competence based interview candidates will be required to deliver a presentation, lasting no more than 8 minutes. Following the presentation the panel may elect to ask clarification questions on the presentation. The presentation topic will be provided on the day of interview and 30 minutes preparation time will be given. A flipchart and writing materials will be provided for candidates’ use. No other materials or visual aids will be permitted. No personal documentation may be brought in to the pre-interview room. The only materials candidates will be permitted to bring into interview will be those prepared in the pre-interview room.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

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

1. Leadership Skills

Evidence of providing direction for the organisation, delivering results, building capacity for the organisation to address current and future challenges and acting with integrity.

2. Programme and Project Management

Evidence of agreeing the definition of a programme’s benefits, defining success criteria to assess performance, ensuring cost-effective measurement processes are in place and managing risks.

3. Analysis and use of Evidence

Evidence of working, guided and informed by robust analysis and evidence and communicating effectively with stakeholders about the evidence base.

4. Strategic Thinking

Evidence of contributing to the organisation’s strategy and priorities and identifying trade-offs, tensions and conflicts that have to be managed.

5. Financial Management

Evidence of setting goals and budgets for your business area that are directly linked to the long- and short-term corporate plan and of managing resources effectively.
6. People Management

Evidence of achieving organisational aims through the engagement, development and leadership of staff and influencing key stakeholders and partners.

7. Communications and Marketing

Evidence of identifying and sharing information on issues affecting stakeholders in a continuous two-way dialogue.

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.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing 23rd September 2013.
INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

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

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

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

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. 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.
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.

Making your application:

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.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet, eg an organisational chart.
- Should an organisational chart be required this must be submitted to HRConnect by the closing date for applications.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- 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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out 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.
Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **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.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- Please note - the session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.
Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

Communication between HRConnect and you

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.

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the NICS is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to page 25.

As women are currently known to be under represented at this grade across the NICS, applications from women would be particularly welcome.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer.

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

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

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. The Deputy Secretary posts are classified as Non-Public Service, therefore certain nationality requirements apply. 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.

For further guidance on Nationality requirements please see Annex A.

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

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For Deputy Secretary 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) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: http://www.accessni.gov.uk/. 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. 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.

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

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Pensions:

The NICS offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/index/new-members.htm

or

if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 02871 319000
Email: cspensions.cpg@dfpni.gov.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 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
Completed application forms should be sent to the HRConnect Recruitment Team:

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

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

Contact Details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address above or by:

Email: Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net
Tel: 0800 1 300 330
Fax: 028 9024 1665
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities Policy statement is set out below.

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to providing equality of opportunity. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which all workers are encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated. This right is protected in many instances by legislation.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to recruit, retain and promote the best available people. Our equal opportunities policy is central to this strategy. We aim to foster a culture which encourages every member of staff to develop his or her full potential and which rewards achievement. Creating a working environment where individual differences are valued and respected enables all staff to give of their best and helps us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve.

The NICS seeks to maintain the confidence of the whole community. It will continue to promote equality of opportunity and fair participation within the framework of the law and will strive to achieve a workforce that is broadly representative of the society which it serves.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.”

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.
Legislative Context
This section explains the reasons for gathering this information by setting out the legislative background.

Gender
The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also necessary to enable the completion of the annual statutory monitoring return, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Age
The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different age.

Community Background
The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The information requested in the Community Background section of the monitoring form is required in connection with the requirements of the above Order and to enable the completion of the annual statutory monitoring return to the Equality Commission for NI.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality Commission for NI the NICS has decided to use “community background” information as a proxy for political opinion.

Disability
Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

This definition is interpreted as follows:-
Physical Impairment: this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs etc) caused through illness by
accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental Impairment: this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day to day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect: the effect has to have lasted or be likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

A normal day to day activity: this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

What sort of effect must there be?
The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or perception of risk of physical danger.

What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?
Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?
Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:
Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;
Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and
People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.
Are any conditions not covered?
Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:
Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);
Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;
Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;
Exhibitionism and voyeurism;
Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

What if someone has recovered from a disability?
Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Race
The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group.

Sexual Orientation
The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

Marital Status & Dependants
Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status and between persons with dependants and persons without.

Use of Monitoring Information
Monitoring information is used to enable the NICS to assess the effectiveness of its EO policies and to determine the impact (if any) of various policies and procedures on different categories of staff. In addition to this internal focus community background and gender information on both staff and applicants is used to complete the annual statutory monitoring return to the Equality Commission.
Confidentiality of Monitoring Information
As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of HRConnect and Trade Union officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The confidentiality of community background information is also protected through regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained or used for the purposes of monitoring under FETO.

The release of an individual's monitoring information is permitted by legislation as part of prospective or actual proceedings under equality legislation, e.g. where another individual has made a complaint of alleged discrimination.

Many people from all backgrounds in Northern Ireland and beyond are interested in the profile of the NICS workforce and the candidates who apply for jobs. For this reason the NICS regularly publishes data in the form of statistical summaries, graphs etc. On occasions it may also be necessary to use monitoring information to answer questions from Assembly Members, MPs and MEPs or to respond to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act. In all cases where information is made public, the format of presentation will be such that it will not be possible to identify any individual's information.
ANNEX A

Nationality

(i) ‘UK National’ means a person who is a British citizen (including persons from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), a British subject under Part IV of the British Nationality Act 1981 having the right of abode in the UK or a British Dependent Territories citizen acquiring his/her citizenship from connection with Gibraltar.

(ii) ‘Commonwealth Citizen’ means any person who has the status of a Commonwealth citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981, not covered by the ‘UK Nationality’ definition above. This includes British Dependent Territories citizens (other than Gibraltarians), British Overseas citizens, and from 1986 those persons in the category British National (Overseas).

(iii) ‘British Protected Person’ means a member of any class of persons declared to be British Protected Persons by Order in Council under the British Nationality Act 1981, or by virtue of the Solomon Islands Act 1978.

(iv) ‘EEA National’ means a national of one of the following countries:

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N.B. nationals from Switzerland also have the same free movement and employment rights.

‘Family member of an EEA national’ means:

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

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

** Non-exempt Bulgarian and Romanian nationals are required to be registered under the Worker Authorisation Scheme prior to appointment. Guidance on this can be obtained from the Home Office website www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
WHO ARE WE?

Mr Brian Rowntree, CBE (Chairperson)
Mrs Vilma Patterson, MBE
Dr Raymond Mullan, OBE
Ms Marion Matchett, CBE
Mr Jim Scholes

LOCATION
Our Office is in Stormont House.
The full address is:

Room 105
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

OPENING HOURS
The Office is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm,
Monday to Friday, except Public and Bank Holidays.

How to contact us

- write to us at the address at the top of the page
- telephone us on 028 9054 9151
- fax us at 028 9054 9414
- visit us at www.nicscommissioners.org
Annex B
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

WHAT ARE WE HERE TO DO?

Civil Service Commissioners are appointed by the Crown to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the Civil Service should be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

WHERE DO WE GET OUR AUTHORITY FROM?

Commissioners derived their responsibilities from prerogative Orders made by the Secretary of State. Our authority currently derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

We do it by:

• making General Regulations.

• publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code setting out the essential principles and procedures on which recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service must be based. Departments and Agencies must follow this Code. A copy is available online at: www.nicscommissioners.org

• it is inevitable that occasions will arise when special circumstances lead to Departments needing to depart from the Merit Principle. The Commissioners have set out the circumstances in which they are prepared to look at requests to depart from the Merit Principle. These ‘exceptions’ must be notified to, and in some instances approved by, the Commissioners before an appointment can be made.

• auditing recruitment policies and practices followed by Departments and Agencies in making appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Each year, the Commissioners decide on a particular aspect of recruitment to examine in detail (an audit) and request management consultants to carry out independent investigations on their behalf. The results of these audits are published in the Commissioners’ Annual Report.

• requiring Departments and Agencies to publish information about their recruitment activity.
• approving procedures for appointment, through open competition, to the Senior Civil Service in Northern Ireland.

• hearing and determining appeals under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics. Under the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999, we have been assigned the role of providing an independent appeals mechanism for Northern Ireland civil servants. The Code of Ethics sets out the constitutional framework within which civil servants work and the values they are expected to uphold. Details of the number and nature of the appeals received by the Commissioners are published each year in our Annual Report.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

If you have ever applied for a post in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, you can be assured that, whether or not you were successful, the Department or Agency was obliged to make that appointment in accordance with directions for good practice set out by the Commissioners.

We are concerned that civil servants are not fully aware of the appeals mechanism under the Code of Ethics. We would strongly encourage any civil servant who believes that he or she has been asked to act in a way which

• is illegal, improper or unethical;

• is in breach of constitutional convention or a professional code;

• may involve a possible maladministration; or

• is otherwise inconsistent with the Code

to report the matter in accordance with procedures laid down in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions Code or Departmental guidance.

Where the matter has been reported in the appropriate manner and a civil servant believes the response does not represent a reasonable response to his or her concerns, s/he may report the matter in writing to the Civil Service Commissioners.