

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet**

**IRC198621**

**Communications Officer (Staff Officer)**

**Public Prosecution Service for  
Northern Ireland (PPS)**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be returned to HRConnect  
no later than 12 noon (UK time)**

**on**

***Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015***

**Public Prosecution Service for  
Northern Ireland**

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**Independent, Fair and Effective**

**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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## **FOREWORD**

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) was established in 2005 and is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police in Northern Ireland, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs

The PPS has recently embarked on a major transformational change programme to improve the delivery of its services to all communities across Northern Ireland.

As part of this programme, the PPS is strengthening its communications capacity with the development of a Communications Unit which will be responsible for all internal and external communications.

The Communications Officer will support the Communications Manager in the implementation of a revised communications strategy. The Communications Officer will be an experienced communications professional who will play a key role in ensuring the delivery of a high quality communications service to the organisation.

I am grateful to you for the interest you have shown in the post of Communications Officer. I hope that the information in this pack is helpful and encourages you to apply for this vital senior position. If you wish to learn more about the post before deciding to apply, please contact Diana McIntyre, Human Resources, Tel, 02871 340654 or by email: [diana.mcintyre@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diana.mcintyre@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

**BARRA McGRORY QC**  
**DIRECTOR**

## **BACKGROUND**

The PPS is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland (the Director).

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the Service has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and, as Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director is responsible for ensuring that public monies provided are used effectively and efficiently, having regard to the principles of value for money and affordability.

The PPS works in partnership with a number of criminal justice organisations and agencies as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland (CJSNI). These include the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Department of Justice (DOJ), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and the Youth Justice Agency (YJA). The PPS sits at the heart of the criminal justice system, with the Director being one of the most important legal figures in Northern Ireland. Devolution has also raised expectations in terms of the transparency and accountability of the PPS and the justice system as a whole. In order to ensure that the PPS operates effectively, and acts as a catalyst for improvement throughout the criminal justice system, a key role for the organisation now and in the future is to influence change within the system.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **APPLICATIONS**

There is currently one permanent, full time position for Communications Officer (Staff Officer) within PPS.

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

### **LOCATION**

The post is located in Belfast Chambers, Belfast.

### **SALARY SCALE**

The salary will be in the band range £28,500 - £31,135 within which progression will be determined by performance. The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the pay scale. If the successful candidate is an existing NICS employee, normal pay on promotion / re-grading arrangements will apply.

### **HOURS OF WORK**

The standard working week is 37 hours (excluding meal breaks). Successful candidates will be expected to undertake duties outside normal working hours, when required. They may also be required to participate in an out of hours rota system for which the appropriate allowance will apply.

### **LEAVE**

In addition to the 12 public and privilege holidays, the annual leave entitlement will be 25 days rising to 30 days after 5 years satisfactory service.

### **PENSION**

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details of this can be found on page 17 of this booklet. If the successful candidate is currently a member of PCSPS (NI) and transfers to the new post without break of service their current civil service pension status will still apply.

### **TRAVEL/MOBILITY**

Successful candidates will be required to travel on official duty throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. They must be prepared to visit all manner of establishments, both government and private in the course of their work, not all of which can be reached or served by public transport. Appointees must have access to a form of transport, which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities within Northern Ireland.

(As this includes the requirement to move between multiple sites, reliance on public transport will not be sufficient.)

### **VETTING**

The appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the Counter Terrorist Check security vetting requirements for the post.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact Diana McIntyre by telephoning 02871 340 654 or by email: [Diana.McIntyre@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Diana.McIntyre@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

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

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Communications Officer (Staff Officer) will work under the supervision of the PPS Communications Manager (Deputy Principal). He/she is expected to contribute to the PPS's communication processes by:

- Contributing to the implementation, review and evaluation of the PPS Communications Strategy and associated plans.
- Assisting the Communications Manager in the delivery of effective media and stakeholder engagement.
- Managing the provision of a timely and relevant media monitoring service to the Director and the PPS senior management team.
- Managing a communications planning system, to include a calendar for promotional activity and media handling.
- Managing the PPS website and other digital platforms, to include the creation and presentation of engaging content
- Producing press releases, articles, speeches and e-zines.
- Dealing with media enquiries, including responding directly to journalists.
- Researching legal cases in order to draft articles for proactive placement or reactive media responses as appropriate
- Assisting the Communications Manager in the planning and management of corporate events and community outreach activities.
- Developing, managing, publishing and reviewing relevant content for the PPS's internal communications channels, including the PPS Intranet.
- Developing and implementing communication plans, utilising all relevant channels, for internal and external audiences
- Managing the design and procurement of promotional materials and corporate publications
- Providing an out of hours service where necessary.
- Managing the administrative support staff within the Communications Unit.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive but to give a good indication of the main duties relating to a typical range of posts. The emphasis on specific duties will vary over time according to business needs and as directed by Line Management.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications:

1. 1 year's practical experience, gained within the last 5 years, in a communications role, such as public relations, marketing, digital communications or journalism.

AND

2. Experience, gained within the last 5 years, of production of media materials such as press releases, web content, reports and speeches.

## SHORTLISTING CRITERION

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 following shortlisting criterion will be used:

1. Experience, gained within the last 5 years, of delivering a communication project or plan.

**Please note:**

- **You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The Selection Panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **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 Selection Panel 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 Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk)**



## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### CORE COMPETENCES

The Core Competence Framework, which is grade specific, 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.

Communications Officer is analogous to Staff Officer in the NICS. Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk).

### INTERVIEW PROCESS

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility (and if appropriate shortlisting) criterion, applicants will also be expected to demonstrate the following competences at interview:

### SCENARIO BASED ASSESSMENT

Immediately prior to the interview, candidates will be provided with a scenario, the response to which will form part of the interview. The scenario will be provided to candidates when they report for interview and they will be given 30 minutes to read through and prepare their response (responses will **not** be in the form of a presentation but will be considered by the panel in the absence of the candidate before the interview commences). Candidates will be questioned on their response by the panel.

Paper and writing materials will be provided with for candidates' use in the preparation room. The only material candidates will be permitted to bring to the interview room will be written material prepared in the pre-interview room. No other materials or visual aids will be permitted.

Marks for the response will form part of the Information and Communication competency and Marks for the question on the response will form part of the Professional / Specialist / Technical Knowledge and Skills competency.

#### **1. Information and Communication**

Identify, organise, evaluate and communicate information to meet customer needs. Analyse information to solve problems and make decisions. Identify and adopt communication style and methods to influence and gain the commitment of others.

**Marks available: 40**

**Minimum standard: 24**

## **2. Professional / Specialist / Technical Knowledge and Skills**

Have a good knowledge/experience of Internal and External Communications channels/ tools and be able to apply that knowledge/ experience to communicate and engage with stakeholders and build organisational insight.

**Marks available: 40**

**Minimum standard: 24**

## **3. People**

Develop teams and individuals to encourage innovation, improve performance and meet business objectives. Plan, allocate, monitor and evaluate work carried out by teams, individuals and self. Create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships. Assess own development needs and develop self to improve job performance and fulfil future potential. Contribute to the selection of personnel.

**Marks available: 20**

## **4. Services**

Maintain and improve service delivery. Contribute to the planning and implementation of changes in services and systems to meet customer needs.

**Marks available: 10**

## **5. Resources**

Contribute to the assessment of resource needs. Recommend, plan, monitor, evaluate and control the use of resources.

**Marks available: 10**

## **6. Policy/Strategy**

Contribute to the implementation of policy. Contribute to the formulation of strategy to guide the work of the organisation. Develop plans which contribute to the implementation of the organisation's strategy. Contribute to the review and evaluation of the organisation's performance.

**Marks available: 20**

## **7. Programme and Project Management**

Supports the delivery of projects. Supports the evaluation of the success of a Project.

**Marks available: 20**

**Total Marks Available: 160**  
**Overall Pass Mark: 96**  
**COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS**

A selection panel will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the areas and award marks accordingly.

### **INTERVIEW DATES**

It is intended that interviews will take place in Belfast during February 2015.

### **AVAILABILITY**

Precise dates for the interviews will be arranged shortly.

Please note that this competition is being run to a very tight schedule and changes to the timetable will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

## **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.

## SELECTION PROCESS

### **The Merit Principle**

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

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at [www.nicscommissioners.org](http://www.nicscommissioners.org).

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## **Transgender Requirements**

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable

you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

### **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 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 17.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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 (if applicable)* 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 Communications Officer 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](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).

### **Vetting Procedures**

#### 1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For Communications Officer posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Personnel Security Standard plus Counter Terrorist Check. 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](http://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;

#### **Counter Terrorist Check (CTC)**

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

- 2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.

### **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](mailto: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  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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:

Austria	Finland	Latvia	Portugal
Belgium	France	Liechtenstein	Romania
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
**Croatia	Greece	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Cyprus	Hungary	Malta	Spain
Czech Republic	Iceland	Netherlands	Sweden
Denmark	Ireland	Norway	United Kingdom
Estonia	Italy	Poland	

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

'Family member of an EEA or swiss 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.

\*\*Croatian nationals who want to work in the UK must obtain authorisation prior to commencing employment. They require a certificate of sponsorship and must also apply for an accession worker card before they can commence employment. There are no provisions for Croatian nationals to take up low-skilled work. Further guidance on nationality can be obtained at [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).

**ANNEX B**  
**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS**

**CSC      NI**  
**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS**  
**FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**AN INTRODUCTION**

**Ensuring appointment on merit**  
**And safeguarding ethics**

**WHO ARE WE?**

**Brian Rowntree, CBE (Chairperson)**  
**Vilma Patterson, MBE**  
**Dr Raymond Mullan, OBE**  
**Marian Matchett, CBE**  
**James Scholes**

**LOCATION**

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

**Stormont House**  
**Room 105**  
**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 90523599****
- **visit us at [www.nicscommissioners.org](http://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](http://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.