

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC210297

**Communication & Stakeholder
Engagement Manager**

**Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
Northern Ireland (AFBI)**

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

Friday 24th June 2016

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBI)

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.

Contents

	Page
Background	3
Job Description	6
Person Specification	13
Selection Process	17
General Information	22

BACKGROUND

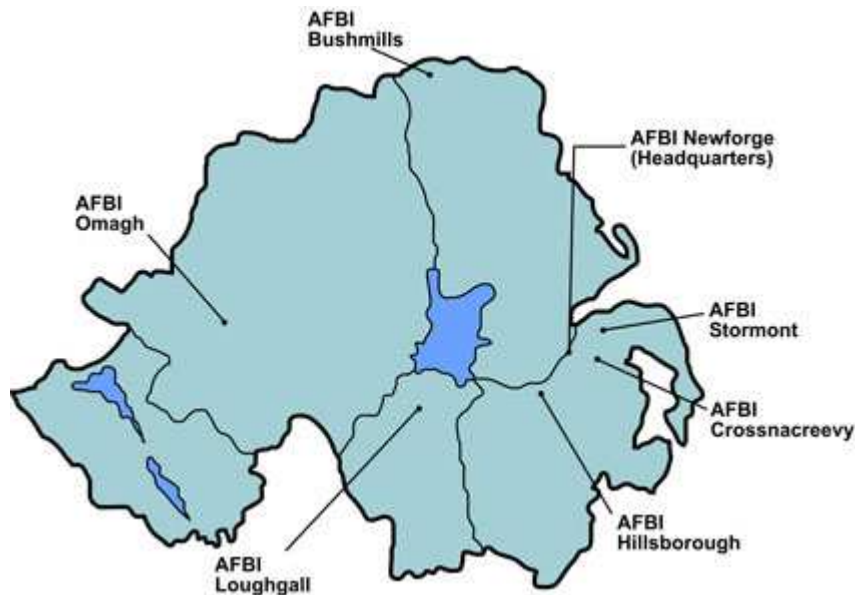
AFBI, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, is one of the world's leading providers of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental and commercial organisations.

AFBI was established on 1 April 2006 as a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). It is responsible mainly for the provision of statutory and scientific programmes in the areas of agri-food, animal and plant health, fisheries and the environment, providing access to specialist expertise and providing facilities to Industry and Public Sector bodies for contracted scientific services. AFBI has a staff complement of approximately 650 people, with a budget of approximately £60million across its 7 specialised sites throughout Northern Ireland.

Location

AFBI is based at seven sites across the province, with its Headquarters at Newforge Lane, Belfast.

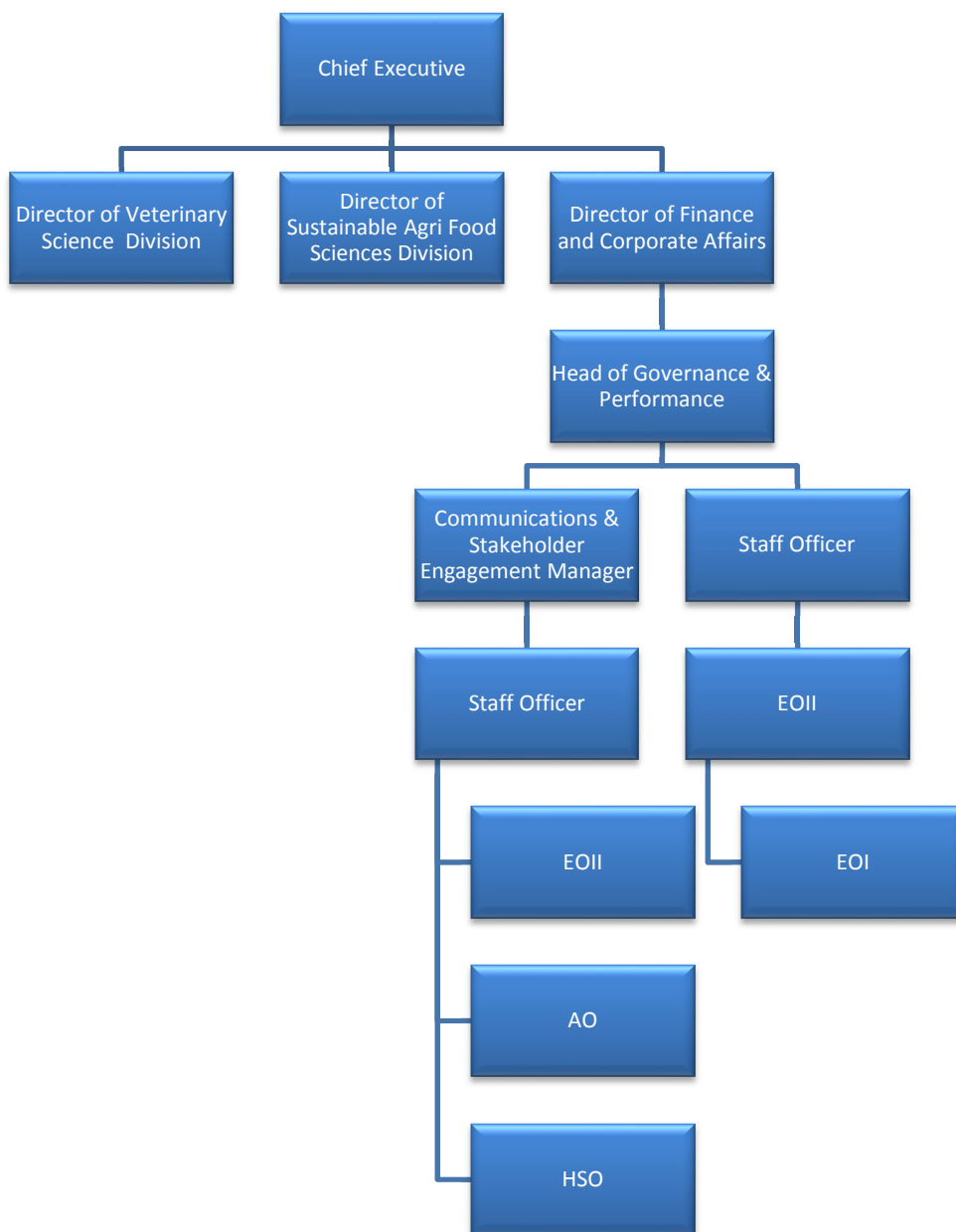
The AFBI sites are located at Newforge Lane, (Belfast), Crossnacreevy, Hillsborough, Stoney Road (Stormont), Loughgall, Bushmills and Omagh.



BACKGROUND

The role of Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Manager will form a key part of AFBI's Governance & Performance Branch (GPB). GPB takes the lead in supporting the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in ensuring that good governance arrangements are in place. The Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Manager will have a key role in developing and implementing an effective integrated communications and stakeholder engagement strategy for AFBI.

Executive Management Team and Governance & Performance Branch Structure



GPB support the Board, Accounting Officer and Executive Management Team (EMT) to deliver their roles effectively within this framework by providing comprehensive and robust advice on:

- governance, accountability and transparency;
- risk management;
- audit and assurance;
- information management; and
- organisational performance management.

A key priority for GPB is to assist in the creation of a strong performance culture based on a culture of transparency, openness, mutual trust and co-operation throughout the organisation in order to help build confidence in the organisation and where everyone understands where they fit in helping to achieve AFBI's objectives.

As part of the GPB, the Secretariat and Coordination Unit also provides support to the AFBI Board, its committees and the EMT. The Unit also provides support to a number of other corporate committees such as the Health and Safety Committee and the Risk Management and Business Planning Group.

As part of the Institute's 2020 Strategy, AFBI is currently reviewing its Organisational Structure therefore the above structure is subject to review. This may also include a review of staff terms and conditions.

JOB DESCRIPTION

There is currently one full-time permanent position to be filled. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any similar vacancies which may arise.

Salary

The salary for the post will be within the range £35,190 - £39,675 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale except for existing AFBI staff for whom starting salary may be determined by either promotion or re-grading terms if these are more favourable.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 after five year's satisfactory service.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend working. AFBI operates a flexi working system.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Newforge, 18a Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX, however, they may, on occasion, also be expected to work at other sites in Northern Ireland as required.

Travel

The post may entail some travel outside Northern Ireland and for this reason the successful applicant will require access to a form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full.

Probationary Period

The post holder will serve 12 months probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted to determine if the posting will be made permanent.

Further Information

Further information about the post may be obtained from Witney Williamson, on 028 9025 5060 or by email at: Witney.Williamson@afbini.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

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation and delivery of AFBI's Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The post holder will play a lead role in the formulation and delivery of internal and external communications strategy to promote understanding and awareness of the work of AFBI among the general public, stakeholders in the agri-food industry, local politicians and staff. These strategies will include a proactive media plan, a 24-hour press service and a crisis communications plan. It will also include the monthly delivery of a Corporate Team Brief, staff and stakeholder e-newsletters and a staff engagement programme across all AFBI sites. The post holder will also play a lead role in the ongoing development of AFBI's website, showcasing the brand globally. The post holder will require strong writing skills and a strategic understanding of all the key elements of the role including media relations, public relations, branding, digital communications and social media.

Support for the Executive Management Team

Post holder will be required to support and work closely with the CEO and EMT and be able to provide specialist communications advice and support for the leadership team.

Improved partnership working and stakeholder engagement

The post holder will be responsible for creating and managing a stakeholder engagement programme (including events such as AFBI Open Day, Balmoral Show, conferences etc), managing relationships and specific issues as agreed with EMT. Key stakeholders include DAERA and other government departments and agencies, universities and research organisations, local politicians and the wider agri-food industry.

Increasing the transparency and accountability of AFBI

The post holder will champion the necessary communication changes, both internal and external, that will be implemented to further embed a culture of transparency, openness, mutual trust and co-operation throughout the organisation in order to help build confidence in the organisation.

Manage the Corporate Communications Team

The post holder will lead and manage the Communications Team which currently consists of a Press Officer and two administrative staff, ensuring the appropriate delegation of work, training and development of staff.

Principal Accountabilities

1. Develop and implement an integrated internal and external communications strategies that are aligned to AFBI's Corporate Plan.
2. Advise and support the CEO, EMT and staff on communication matters, including training and support to undertake media and public engagement.
3. Ensure that the content of all AFBI's internal and external written communications is of a high standard and accurately designed for and targeted to the relevant audience.
4. Internal Communication
 - Develop and manage all available platforms for internal communication, e.g.
 - Team Brief – monthly e-publication.
 - Staff Newsletter – monthly e-publication.
 - Staff events – e.g CEO briefings, EMT Roadshows
 - Intranet – upload content and ensure all information is kept up to date.
 - Provide communications support and advice to all divisions to ensure synergistic communications throughout the organisation.
 - Ensure that all written material submitted for CEO approval is of a high standard.
 - Manage the delivery of an Internal Communications Strategy.
5. External Communication
 - Oversee the provision of proactive and reactive press and social media services.
 - Manage all media relationships including the conduct of media interviews with staff, drafting press statements and issuing approved press statements.
 - Prepare well written articles to communicate the results of AFBI's scientific work to the general public and targeted stakeholder groups.
 - Prepare appropriate briefing material including "lines to take" on a range of issues.
 - Develop and maintain AFBI's crisis communications strategy including the arrangement and management of a 24-hour media response in the event of a major incident/emergency.
 - Lead the development of AFBI's digital communications, including the design of AFBI's website and approach to engaging through social media.
 - Ensure effective monitoring of local and national press, social media, government and news for mention of AFBI.
 - Manage and co-ordinate external public events and represent AFBI at key external events when required.
 - Oversee the design and management of all corporate literature and other marketing materials including the management of the AFBI brand and compliance with AFBI branding guidelines.

- Responsible for ongoing development and management of AFBI website.
- Effectively communicate the results of AFBI scientific work to a public audience.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

- Work closely with EMT, develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to continue to develop AFBI's interaction with key stakeholders and local interest groups.
- Prepare and offer advice to Senior Managers in all matters which are of concern to stakeholders.
- Manage all Community Relations activities including participation in community groups (eg AFBI Omagh Outreach Group) and handle complaints from external stakeholders.
- Champion the necessary communication changes to embrace a culture of transparency, openness, mutual trust and co-operation throughout the organisation in order to help maintain reputation and build confidence in the organisation.
- Measure customer and wider stakeholder perceptions of AFBI through surveys and face-to-face meetings.

This list is not exhaustive and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications provide evidence in their application form which demonstrates that they satisfy the following criteria.

1. Three years' practical working experience, gained within the last 5 years, in a communications role, such as public relations, marketing, digital communications or journalism.
2. Experience of successfully leading the development and implementation of an organisational communications / public relations / stakeholder engagement strategy.
3. Demonstrable experience of effective written and oral communication skills, including in the communication of complex, scientific or technical issues to a lay audience.

*Candidates must provide evidence by submitting a portfolio of their personal written communications work – please refer to information below for details on submission.

4. Experience of taking a lead role in the management of corporate and internal events.
5. Practical experience of management of website content and social media, including working with content management systems.

*Candidates must provide evidence of eligibility criterion 3 by submitting a portfolio of their work. Candidates can provide relevant information within the application form itself including web-links and/or other relevant details.

Separately candidates are required to submit their top 3 pieces of written work. Should you be successful in progressing to interview the panel will question you on these pieces. Your portfolio should be sent by the closing date for applications as a separate attachment to:

E-mail: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

OR

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

The portfolio should be marked with the relevant competition reference number (IRC210297), competition title and your full name.

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 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.**

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at **Level 3** for the purposes of personal and professional development.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results. Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters as set out below. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Manager is analogous to Deputy Principal in the NICS

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk.

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below. You should refer to the behaviours listed under level 3 of the relevant competence areas.

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 7 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 unless required as a reasonable adjustment. 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.

The presentation will be used to assess against the Professional/Specialist/Technical Ability and Leading & Communicating competencies.

Marks available: 20

Pass mark: 12

INTERVIEW CRITERIA

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Essential Criteria and shortlisting criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate competency in Professional Knowledge & Skills pertaining to this post together with the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 4 for the purpose of personal and professional development.

1. Professional/Specialist/Technical Ability

- Understands the importance of digital communications, including the use of social media and the web in delivering effective communications.
- Producing informative and engaging content for a variety of channels and audiences.

Marks available: 30

Pass mark: 18

2. Seeing the Big Picture

Marks available: 20

3. Making effective decisions

Marks available: 20

4. Leading and Communicating

Marks available: 20 Pass mark: 12

5. Collaborating and Partnering

Marks available: 20

6. Delivering at Pace

Marks available: 20

Total Marks Available: 150

Overall pass mark: 90

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 AFBI HQ, Newforge Lane, Belfast during week commencing 8th August 2016.

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

Appointments to AFBI are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

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.
- 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.

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.

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 AFBI 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 to which AFBI adheres please refer to page 24.

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit. Applications are particularly welcomed from Roman Catholics and Females as these groups are currently under-represented within AFBI.

AFBI IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

Assessment Information

It is HRConnect policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment brings 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.

Employment Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

Entry to the United Kingdom is controlled under the Immigration Act 1971. Everyone who does not have the right of abode is subject to immigration control. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post. If you are invited to interview we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

Advice on entitlement to work may be obtained from the Home Office website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality requirements for AFBI posts.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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

New entrants who join the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) are eligible to join the NICS pension scheme.

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

AFBI is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. 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

Please apply online or post your hardcopy completed application form 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 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

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement to which AFBI adheres is set out below.

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. 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 where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in an harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:-

Equality – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

Diversity – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

Inclusion – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

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.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

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 provided in the annual statutory monitoring the, 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 ages and age groups.

Community Background

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This takes the form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS at the 1st January each year.

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

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, and social functioning.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carryout 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; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; 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.

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.

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(s).

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

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended), makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. 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.

Dependants Status

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 dependants and persons without.

Confidentiality of Monitoring Information

The following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:-

- individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) 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 is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

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.