

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC232940

**Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Grade 5**

Department of Health (DoH)

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 11th January 2019***

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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Improving health and social well-being

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account, including junk mail folder, 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
Foreword	3
Background	5
Job Description	11
Terms and Conditions	14
Eligibility Criteria	17
Assessment Process	20
General Information	27

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in this competition to fill the position of Deputy Chief Social Work Officer in the Department of Health.

This is a highly stimulating post and offers exceptional personal and professional rewards for the successful candidate. The post-holder will have high-profile responsibilities and a substantial breadth of influence, ranging from opportunity for high-level cross-Government influence, to the ability to influence our daily lives through social care policy, to having a direct impact on the most vulnerable in society. This is a post that provides an opportunity to deliver results that will make a real difference to people's lives and, in tandem with significant responsibility, offers significant job-satisfaction.

The Department in its wider role ensures the provision of appropriate health and social care services, both in clinical settings such as hospitals and GP surgeries, and in the community through nursing, social work and other professional services. It also leads a major programme of cross-government action to improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce health inequalities. This includes interventions involving health promotion and education to encourage people to adopt activities, behaviours and attitudes which lead to better health and well-being.

Improvements and reform in social care are at the heart of our commitment to improving the wellbeing, safety and social inclusion of all in our society. Responsibility for all of the Department's social care functions sit together in one group, led at Deputy Secretary level, by a social work professional. The post-holder has an important role in supporting the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer) with the provision of strategic support to the Minister on these important functions, and will help lead and champion social care improvements and reforms in DOH and across Government and with the key stakeholders in the wider public, voluntary and private sector. The post-holder will build capacity and capability in relation to social care across the Department and will have responsibility for ensuring that there is an integrated approach to policy development, legislation and the setting of standards within social care. This will include assisting in leading the Department's contribution to relevant initiatives and projects across government that impact on more than one Department. The individual will contribute to the development of the draft Programme for Government, Corporate and Business plans for the Department and the setting of priorities for action across the Health and Social Care system. Central to success will be the effective and efficient delivery of Social Care and Social Work Services. This will involve building relationships with other jurisdictions within the United Kingdom and Ireland, and internationally, to secure knowledge and application of good practice in all the relevant fields of work.

The post is located in Belfast, but involves occasional travel throughout Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as required by the role, to facilitate cooperation and work with others in related fields.

If, after reading this candidate information pack, you would like to speak to someone before making an application, I would encourage you to contact Kieran Downey on 02871611191 or via email Kieran.downey@westerntrust.hscni.net

Thanks again for your interest in this competition.

Richard Pengelly
Permanent Secretary, DoH
and HSC Chief Executive

Sean Holland
Deputy Secretary/
Chief Social Work officer, DoH

BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Department of Health is one of the nine Departments of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Department leads and manages the business of:

- Health and Social Care, which includes policy and legislation for hospitals, family practitioner services, community health and personal social services;
- Public Health, which covers responsibility for policy and legislation to promote and protect the health and well-being of the population of the north of Ireland; and
- Public Safety, which encompasses responsibility for the policy and legislation for the Ambulance Service, Fire and Rescue Service, food safety and emergency planning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Department's mission is to improve the health and social well-being of the local population. It endeavours to do so by ensuring the provision of appropriate health and social care services, both in clinical settings, such as hospitals and GP surgeries, and in the community, through nursing, social work and other professional services. It also supports programmes of health promotion and education to encourage the community to adopt activities, behaviours and attitudes which will lead to better health and well-being.

The Department is currently responsible for a budget of some £5 billion a year and a capital investment programme of over £200 million a year. The Department's core functions include healthcare policy, social policy, public health, safety and quality, professional advice, capital investment and project management, and resources and performance management.

The functions within the Department may be subject to review and change in the future.

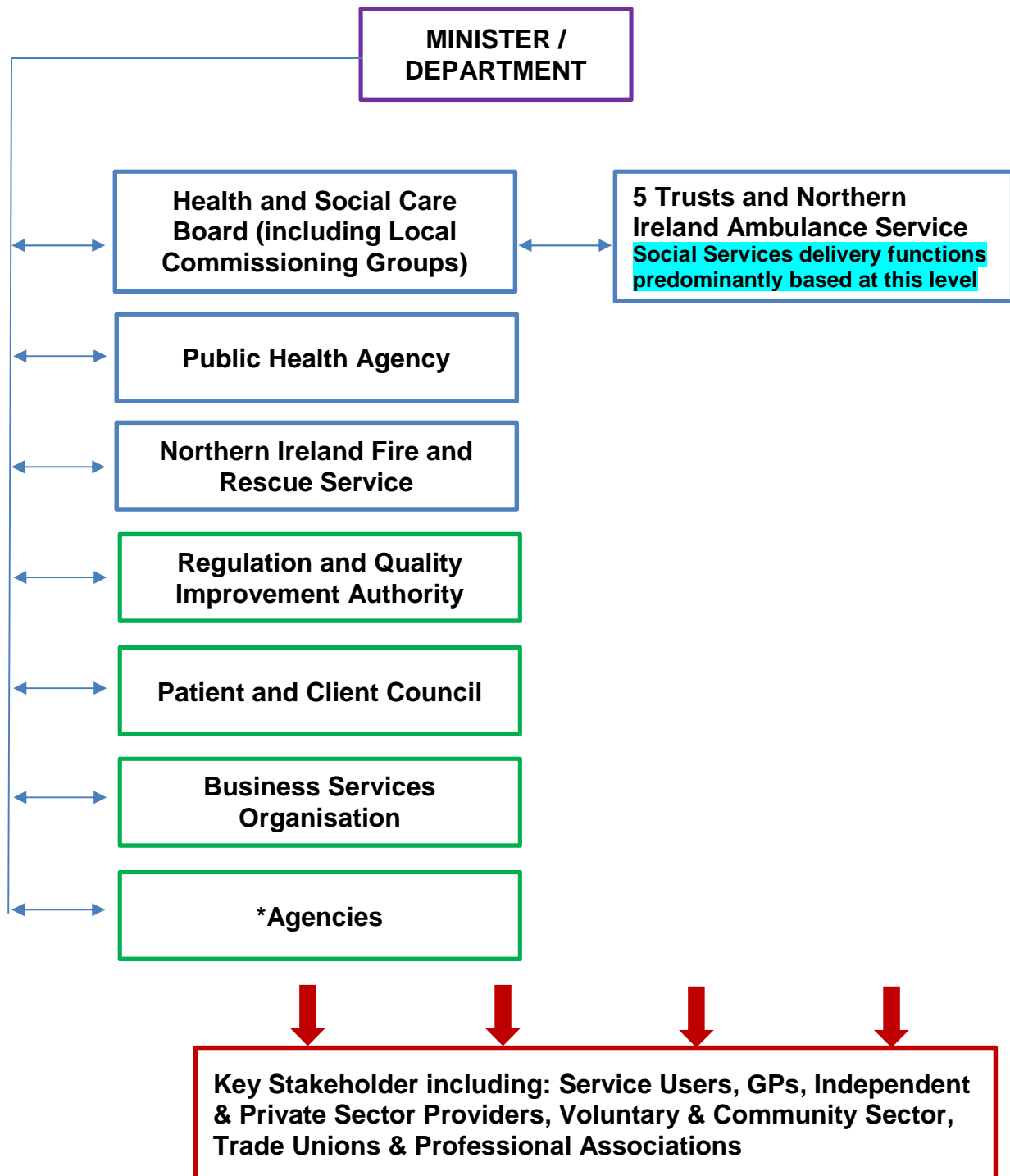
NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

In the Northern Ireland context, social care (including children's and adult social care services) is fully integrated with healthcare at all levels (policy, strategy, legislation and funding at Departmental level, commissioning and performance management by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), delivery by the Trusts, and regulation and inspection by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority).

The Northern Ireland health and social care structure has undergone substantive restructuring over a number of years. Through the Department's Transformation Programme this will be subject to further change. The existing model retains strategic direction, policy setting and legislation in the Department with the Health and Social Care Board, working with the Public Health Agency, and tasked with commissioning modern and effective health and social care services for the 1.8 million people who live in Northern Ireland. This involves deploying and managing its annual funding from the Northern Ireland Executive - currently £5.4 billion - to ensure that services are safe, effective and sustainable.

The Board also works with the provider organisations – predominantly the 5 Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts, and the Ambulance Service, which are responsible for the delivery of all health and social care services. The Public Health Agency is the major regional organisation for health protection, and for the promotion and improvement of health and social wellbeing, with a commitment to addressing the causes and associated inequalities of preventable ill-health and lack of well-being. As indicated, it works closely with the HSCB to ensure a comprehensive range of services and commissioning from Trusts and other providers.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES



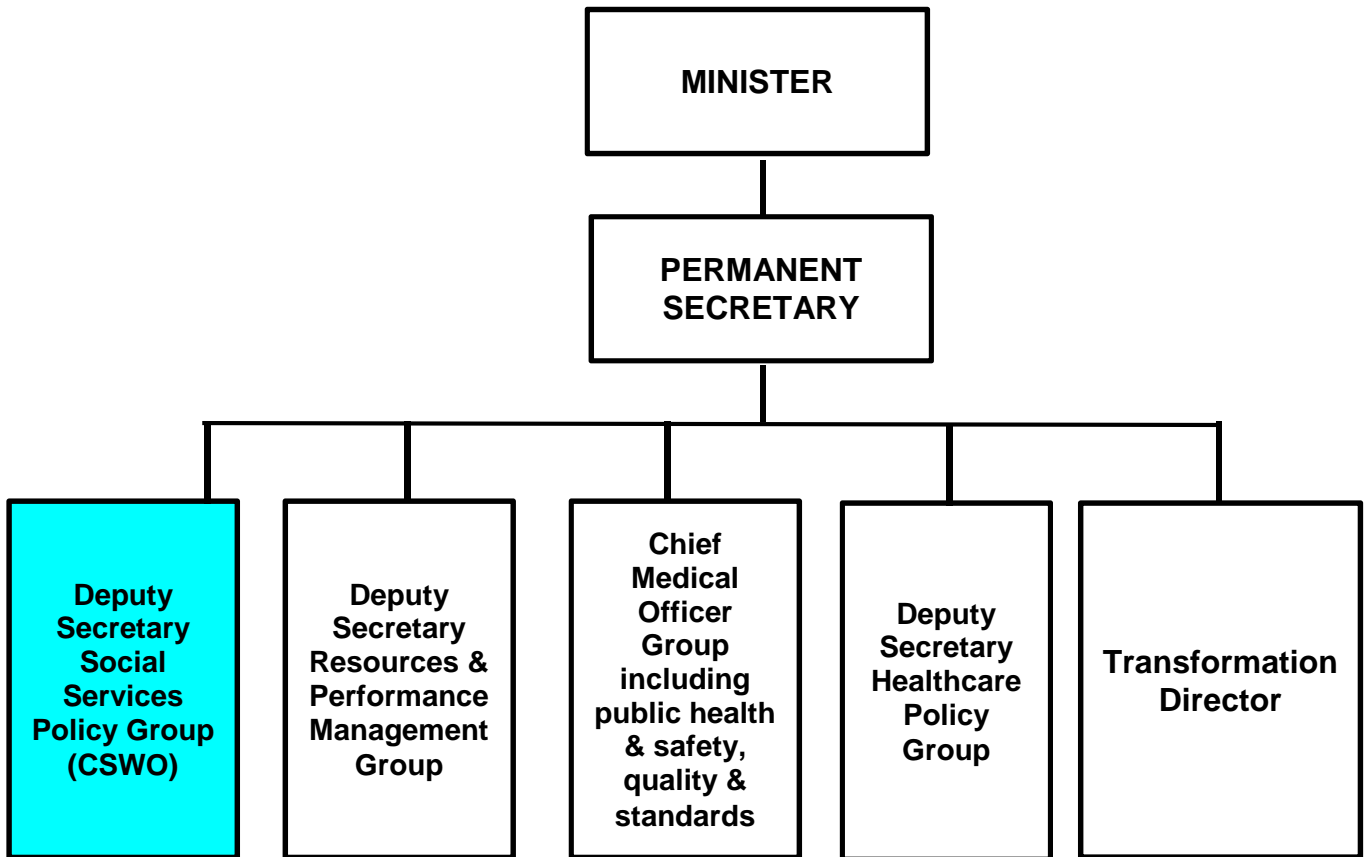
***Agencies (Special Agencies) includes the following:**

Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service
 Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
 Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency

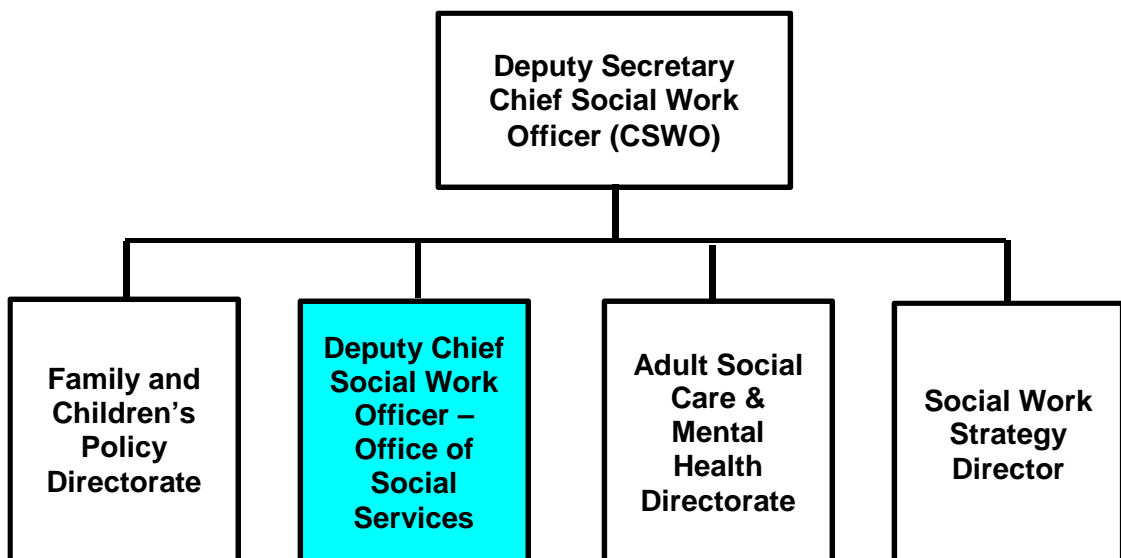
And Non-Departmental Public Bodies:

Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
 Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC)

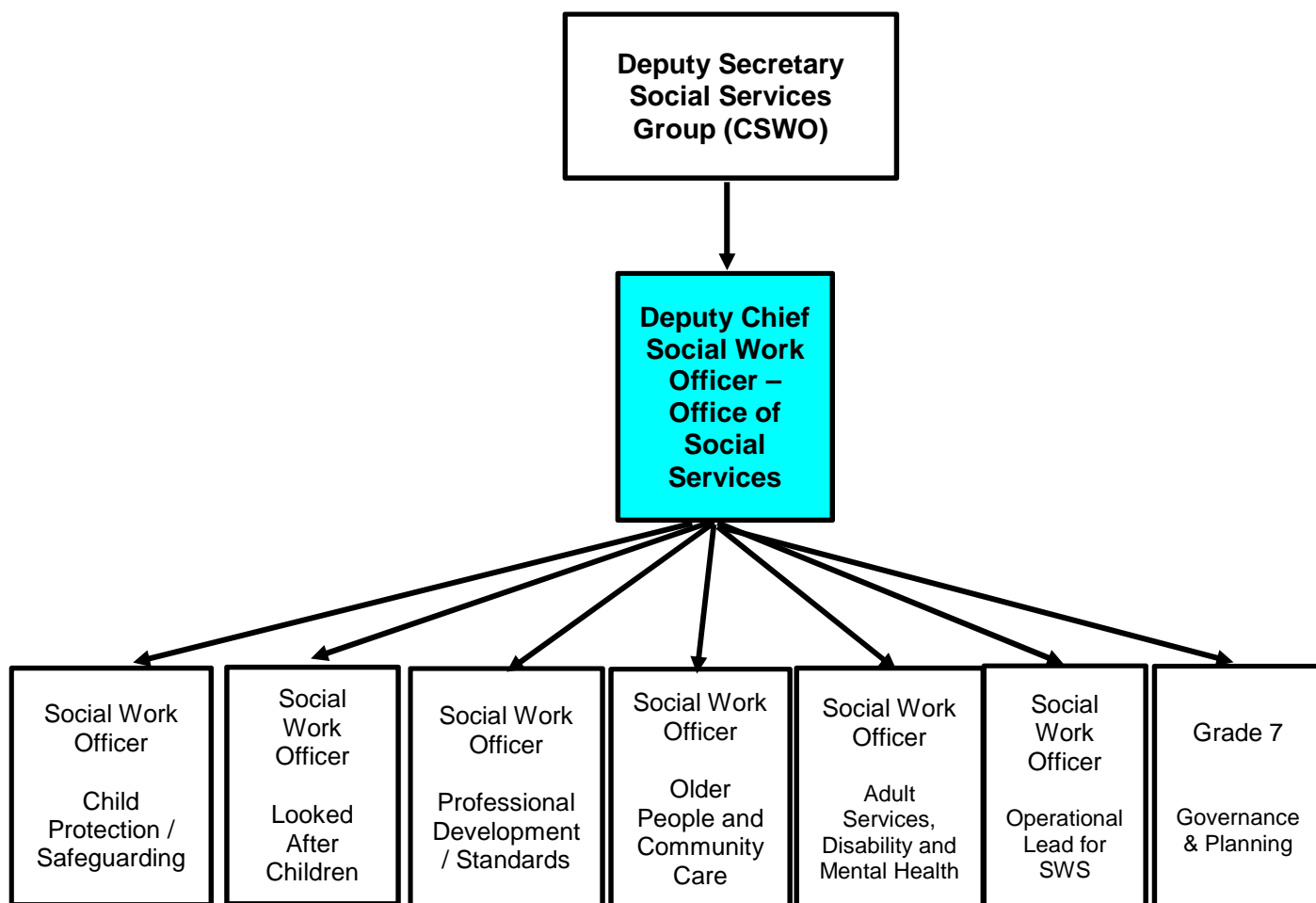
DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURES



GROUP STRUCTURE



OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES STRUCTURE



SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY GROUP

The Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer) has responsibility for bringing together, within a single Group command, three key areas/directorates one of which is the OSS.

OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Deputy Chief Social Work Officer is directly accountable to the Deputy Secretary/Chief Social Work Officer for the provision of professional advice, and reporting on relevant statutory functions across the range of children's and adult social services. The jobholder is responsible for all Policy matters associated with:-

- The HPSS Act (NI) 2001;
- Social Work and Social Care Workforce Regulation;
- Professional Standards;

- Social Work and Social Care Education & Learning;
- Professional Training;
- Qualification Requirements;
- Social Care Governance;
- For contributing strategic and professional advice on legislation, policy and regulation; and
- Including the implications of the Northern Ireland Social Work Strategy.

The post-holder also has responsibilities which involve close working with other Departments, notably DOJ, DE and TEO.

The post-holder will manage the Office of Social Services (OSS), which provides a professional contribution to the formulation and implementation of the policies of the Government Departments in respect of Social Work and Social Care Services and related social policy matters. They will contribute strategic and professional input on key matters and developments such as the Reform of Adult Social Care, Mental Health Legislative and the Department's Transformation Programme, as appropriate. The OSS also has a key role in the implementation of the Social Work Strategy. It leads on Regulation Policy for social work and social care and has oversight and sponsorship of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). The OSS manages a range of funding programmes including the Student Incentive Scheme and the Training Support Programme.

The OSS contributes, through advice, to the full range of social care services, including family and child care, older people, mental health, learning and disability services. It also provides organisations and agencies with advice and guidance in order to promote best practice, standards and the provision of safe and effective services

The OSS also carries lead responsibility for the discharge of statutory functions including the endorsement of the Board/Trust schemes of delegation of these functions. .

The structure of the Department is kept under review. As with other areas of the Department, the OSS Directorate may be affected by any changes on an ongoing basis.

JOB DESCRIPTION

KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main duties of the post will include:

Social Work and Social Care

1. responsibility for providing resolved, and substantially resolved, input to legislation, policy development, policy implementation, assessment and monitoring, relating to social work and social care;
2. providing the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer) with resolved professional advice and support (including on specific cases of a complex or high profile nature), including providing briefings and support to Senior Officers and the Minister for meetings, oral and written Assembly Questions, Correspondence cases etc;
3. providing authoritative advice and professional expertise to the HSC, other Departments (for example, to the Department of Justice on professional social work issues relevant to the Probation Board NI, and to the Department of Education on professional social work issues relevant to the Education and Welfare Service), and to the public, regarding professional social services including the discharge of relevant statutory functions;
4. providing [through the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer)] where appropriate, accurate and relevant briefing to the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee, other Assembly Committees (including possibly the Public Accounts Committee) and the media;
5. contributing to the review and formal approving of the schemes of delegation of statutory functions operated by the HSC, and analysing and providing reports on the operation of the schemes of delegation by the HSC in accordance with the Departmental accountability function;
6. responsibility for leading, under the direction of the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer) all professional tasks associated with the governance arrangements for the discharge of all relevant statutory functions;
7. providing professional guidance to the social work community in Northern Ireland, including the implementation of the Social Work Strategy for NI;
8. providing (under the direction of the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer) professional leadership to the social care community in Northern Ireland;
9. promoting a skilled and competent social care workforce through regulation of their education and training and through workforce reviews;

and agreement regarding numbers of social work student places to be commissioned.

10. promoting public protection and high standards of conduct and practice in the social care workforce through professional regulation and governance and oversight of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
11. contributing to and where appropriate, leading the Department's Transformation Programme and in particular areas relating to social work and social care and taking account of key strategic developments including the Reform of Adult Social Care and Mental Health Capacity Legislation in particular.
12. providing Departmental sponsorship of relevant Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) specifically the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC);
13. responsibility for managing the student incentive scheme, supporting social work students in Northern Ireland;
14. representing the Department on professional issues in contacts with Scottish, Welsh and English governments, as well as with the Republic of Ireland in relation to the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) work plan, the social care workforce and professional education agenda;
15. deputising, as and when required, for the Chief Social Work Officer on all professional matters relating to social work and social care;
16. managing the discharging of Departmental responsibilities, having regard to the endorsement/clearance of Intercountry Adoptions in accordance with the Adoption (NI Aspects) Bill 2002;
17. any other duties deemed appropriate by the Chief Social Work Officer.

Management Responsibilities

1. playing a key role in helping to maintain management and working arrangements that best meet the needs of the Social Services Group and within the Directorate, ensuring that the highest priority work is adequately resourced with staff who have the necessary skills and experience to ensure successful outcomes.
2. having management responsibility for approximately xx staff. That includes 5 social work officers and 1 Grade 7.
3. direct responsibility for an Administrative Budget of £800,000, a Professional Training Budget of £7.2 million and the Voluntary and Community Core Grant Funding Programme amounting to £4.7 million;

4. managing reviews and project work as required.

Corporate

1. co-ordinating Business Planning for the wider Social Services Policy Group;
2. helping to represent the Department at a local and national level, e.g. representing DOH at professional fora and with Professional Bodies.

Relationships

The post holder will be required to build strong and positive relationships with key stakeholders, both internal and external, including

- Minister/Permanent Secretary/Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer);
- Departmental colleagues, including chief professional officers;
- the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committees for Health and, as required, for Education, and Justice;
- the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), the Northern Ireland Guardian At Litem Agency (NIGALA), and the Children Order Advisory Committee (COAC);
- Directors of Social Work and Children's Services/Chief Executives of the Department's Arms Length Bodies;
- Recognised Trade Unions and relevant professional bodies for social care matters;
- other Departments, in particular, the Departments of Education and Justice;
- PSNI;
- key community and voluntary sector stakeholders and independent care providers.

The above list is not exhaustive but gives an indication of some of the areas the role may involve. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time and according to business needs.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

APPOINTMENT

This is a permanent full-time appointment, and the successful candidate will be an employee of the Department of Health although secondment from a current employer will be considered.

The successful candidate will report to the Deputy Secretary (Chief Social Work Officer).

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

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

SALARY

Salary will be within the range £69,651 - £79,849 (under review) within which pay progression will be performance related.

The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the payscale, although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if he/she has exceptionally relevant skills/experience. If the successful candidate is an existing NICS civil servant, starting pay on transfer to a new substantive grade will apply.

In order to comply with the disclosure requirements in our Annual Accounts, we will be required to disclose details of the total remuneration, including any taxable benefits in kind and pension benefits for this post in our annual accounts. Further information may be disclosed in line with any future disclosure requirements relating to the senior management of departments. It is a condition attaching to the appointment to some SCS posts in Northern Ireland that appointees agree to these disclosure requirements.

A successful candidate will, on appointment, become a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service.

SECONDMENT

This post may be filled by secondment of the successful candidate from his/her current employer. "Secondment" means a voluntary transfer from a permanent employer for a fixed period which does not sever the employment relationship of the person seconded with the permanent employer.

The duration will be agreed by all parties at a later stage, prior to the start of any secondment, with the possibility of extension. A secondment would be on

a candidate's current terms and conditions of service with limited scope for the Department to consider offering an enhanced salary.

It is advisable that candidates interested in the secondment option make their employers aware that under the NICS secondment arrangements, the successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer. The necessary administration arrangements will be agreed between DoH and the employer before secondment commences.

LOCATION

The successful candidate will be based at Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, but will be required to travel throughout Northern Ireland and beyond to attend meetings/conferences as necessary. 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, which may include overnight stays.

PENSIONS

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

HOLIDAYS

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 30 days.

HOURS OF WORK

This post may from time to time require work outside normal conditioned hours, to fulfil the demands of the post.

PROBATION

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The NICS is committed to career development and offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. Career development is an integral part of the performance management system. Personal Development Plans identify learning and development needs with a view to enhancing skills and capabilities. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external

organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them in to conflict with their official duties.

Conflict of Interest is not limited to the individual's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Department's business directly or indirectly. Therefore to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an officer must not, without prior approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact Kieran Downey on 02871611191 or email Kieran.downey@westerntrust.hscni.net

If you have any questions about the competition process, or require any documentation in an alternative format, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications, have:-

1. a professional qualification in social work recognised by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC);

AND

2. at least 8 years' post professional qualification experience in the management and delivery of social work or social care services, which must include at least 5 years' experience of social services work at **'senior level'**.*.

NOTES

***'senior level'** is defined as at least:

- (i) Director or Assistant Director level in an HSC Board or Trust in Northern Ireland or equivalent in Great Britain; or
- (ii) Social Services Officer level (Grade 7) in the DOH or equivalent; or
- (iii) Equivalent level in the independent sector or agencies, deemed relevant by the Department; or
- (iv) Equivalent level in another jurisdiction deemed relevant by the Department.

In respect of experience gained in the independent sector, in agencies, or in another jurisdiction, or should there be any question of interpretation of equivalence under categories (i) or (ii) above, the panel will judge whether, on the basis of the evidence presented, the level meets the necessary level of seniority.

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, in this part of your application form, the selection panel will reject your application.

Evidence should be provided for all of the elements of each criterion in your application form giving specific length of experience, examples and dates as required. It is not sufficient simply to list your duties and responsibilities.

NISCC Registration

Please note that the successful candidate if not already registered with the NISCC, will be required to obtain registration in a timescale deemed reasonable by the Department and prior to taking up appointment, and must remain on the register while in the post.

Before appointment, the successful candidate will be required to provide information about any previous history of registration they may have with a professional social work regulator, in relation to any refusals, suspensions, removals of, or refusals to restore, such registration. The Department will consider the relevance of such information to the post and reserves the right to refuse appointment if it considers this appropriate.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your qualifications at assessment/interview so please ensure you have these readily available.

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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored 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.
- 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.
- 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. Please do not include your name in the employment history or eligibility criteria sections.
- The NICS Competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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

PRESENTATION

As part of the selection process, candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes, the title of which will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter. The panel will also ask follow up questions after the presentation.

Applicants should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview as no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Applicants may bring prepared flip chart paper and speaking notes into the interview to deliver the presentation. No other visual aids or handouts are permitted.

The presentation will be used to assess the Seeing the Big Picture and Changing and Improving competences.

Please note: Notes must not be used during the interview stage of the assessment.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

INTERVIEW PROCESS

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

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

2. Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy development and implementation and building a more flexible and responsive NICS. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches where possible.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

3. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned, justifiable decisions. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

4. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. At senior levels, it is about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration which may cut across departmental, organisational and wider boundaries. It requires the ability to build constructive partnerships and effective relationships with Ministers and their Special Advisers.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

5. Achieving Outcomes through Delivery Partners

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities involving delivery partners (whether from the private, public or voluntary sectors). For all, it is about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added

value and working to stimulate economic growth. At senior levels, it is about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, delivery partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 10

Total marks available: 120

Overall Pass mark: 60

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 on the 5th February 2019.

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.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 5.

The NICS competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: 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. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of selection process. Should you require assistance in accessing the competency framework please contact HRConnect.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

APPLICATION FORM

Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before making your application and retain a copy for your reference. 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. **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.

Please note:

- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, hard copy application packs are available on request. All applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- 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.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date and time.
- 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.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- 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.
- The session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- You must click SUBMIT once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgement email within 24 hrs.

Help with making your application

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office - contact details are available on NIDirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices>

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, email info@niuse.org.uk, tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

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 to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. 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.

For professional and technical posts, questions may be framed in the context of professional elements of the post.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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.

NICSHR Privacy Notice

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

Offers of Employment

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details.

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.

Merit List

HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However you should be aware that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise.

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.

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You will be required to bring documentary evidence of your qualifications / professional membership to assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. 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.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via www.gov.uk.

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.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni.

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. 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 application 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.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note the Equal Opportunities monitoring section of the application form is mandatory in order to submit an application.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the DoF website www.finance-ni.gov.uk.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.
All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit

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**