

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC239878

CSO, Legal Assistant

Department of Finance

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 24th May 2019***

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

Department of Finance

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.

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FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in our vacant Deputy Principal/ Legal Officer posts in the Crown Solicitors Office. These posts arise following a recent reorganisation of the office. The posts are in busy legal divisions working on a range of legal issues and cases in Northern Ireland for the UK Government and other non governmental public bodies and public officers. These are exciting and interesting posts providing the opportunity to gain experience in various areas of legal work including employment, insolvency, inquests, civil high court and county court litigation. I encourage you to consider applying for these exciting opportunities in this office.

Fiona Chamberlain
Crown Solicitor

BACKGROUND

Department of Finance – Crown Solicitor’s Office

The Crown Solicitor’s Office is engaged exclusively in legal work for the public service. The office provides a service to ministers and departments of the UK Government, to agencies of UK departments and to some non departmental public bodies and public officers.

Section 35 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 (as amended) provides for a Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland to be appointed by the Advocate General for Northern Ireland. Under Section 35 (as amended) the Crown Solicitor “must make his services available to any Minister or department of the Government of the United Kingdom and may make his services available to any Northern Ireland Minister or Northern Ireland department or any other public body or holder of public office.”

The Office provides a service to ministers and departments of the UK Government, to agencies of UK departments, to some non-departmental public bodies and public officers (such as the Chief Constable of the Police Service for Northern Ireland) and undertakes some debt recoveries for the NI Administration. Since the completion of devolution on 12 April 2010 the Crown Solicitor also supports the Advocate General for Northern Ireland in the discharge of his functions.

The work of the Office is litigation orientated. The range of litigation is wide and includes: employer’s liability cases, legacy inquests, claims involving allegations of unlawful conduct by the police and security forces, industrial tribunal and fair employment cases, judicial review, commercial and chancery cases, debt recovery and condemnation proceedings.

In addition, the office carries out a certain amount of non contentious work such as ‘Bona Vacantia’, which involves the administration of the estates of persons who have died intestate and without known relatives and the collection of assets of dissolved companies and failed trusts.

The legal work of the office is carried out in two divisions each with a Legal Clerical Unit. In addition there is an office wide administrative division. The Crown Solicitor’s Office is funded by the Northern Ireland Office and is required to recover its full running costs. The Office is located in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful candidates will be allocated to any of the roles described below. The balance of the functions described here will differ from post to post.

Generally

- To provide accurate and timely legal advice and counsel to client departments and agencies on all areas of law that impacts, or may impact, on the work of the client organisation.
- To provide advice to client departments and agencies on legal issues arising from the departments and agencies.
- To work collaboratively with client departments and agencies in the identification and management of legal risks to the organisation.
- To undertake legally complex operational, policy or litigation casework including inquests and inquiries in which client departments and agencies have an interest or for which they are responsible.
- To manage a range of legal projects using proven methods and techniques.
- To manage resources ensuring these are used effectively in order to maximize benefits, including value for money and efficiency.
- Such other duties as line management may direct.

Litigation role

- To advise on litigation in which client departments and agencies are involved; working collaboratively with the client and Counsel drafting pleadings and other documents; assembling instructions to Counsel, and instructing Counsel at consultations and in hearings; and for advocacy (subject to rights of audience).
- To liaise with witnesses and Legal representatives, assist with disclosure in cases including unredacted and redacted material, working collaboratively as part of a team and attending hearings.
- This includes litigation at all levels of courts and tribunals in relation to, for example: employer's liability cases; claims involving allegations of unlawful conduct by the police and security forces¹; industrial tribunal and fair employment tribunal cases; judicial review; commercial and chancery cases; debt recovery and condemnation proceedings; and prosecution of offences under the Insolvency and Companies regimes, including bankruptcy offences and departmental prosecutions.

- To provide advice and represent clients in inquests, applications for habeas corpus and applications for extensions of detention under the Terrorism Act 2000.
- To support negotiations and ADR.

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently a number of permanent, full time vacancies.

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.

Regardless of the post to which successful applicants are initially appointed, staff may be required to rotate between posts within a business area or to a post in another business area as business or development needs require from time to time.

Location

These posts are in the Greater Belfast area.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £36,812 - £40,473 (under review) within which pay progression will be performance related.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

Practising certificates

The annual cost of the Law Society / Bar practicing certificate will be met by the legal office to which the successful candidate is placed.

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 25 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 42 hours per week which includes a 1 hour meal break (37 hours net) Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time.

Postholders will be required to participate in an out of hours and emergency cover rota if one is in place at any time within the business area.

Travel

Access to a form of transport will be required in order to fulfil the responsibilities of this post.

Vetting

The vetting requirement for successful candidates will depend on the work area. As a minimum it is clearance to Counter Terrorist level (CTC). In some work areas the vetting clearance requirement is Security Check (SC) or Developed Vetting (DV).

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.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact Chris Hogg on 02890546055 or email Christopher.Hogg@csoni.gov.uk or Anthony Martin on 028 90546289 or email Anthony.Martin@csoni.gov.uk

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:

1. Be qualified as a barrister or solicitor entitled to practise in Northern Ireland and hold a practising certificate or be in a position to do so by 30th June 2019.

AND

2. Have a minimum of 2 years' post qualification* experience in Civil Litigation and in at least one of the following:

- A) Public law,
- B) Insolvency,
- C) Employment law,
- D) High court and county court litigation.

AND

3. Demonstrate evidence of experience of working as part of a team providing sound legal advice, and representation to clients.

AND

4. Demonstrable experience of making effective decisions leading to positive outcomes for clients.

AND

5. Demonstrable evidence of providing cost effective legal advice or representation that delivered a practical benefit to the client.

*** Qualification : From date of admission to the roll of solicitors / 1 year post call to the Bar.**

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 interview so please ensure you have these readily available.

SHORTLISTING CRITERION

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criterion will be used:

1. The Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the depth and breadth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 2. The shortlisting criterion will be scored with only the top scoring candidates progressing to interview.

The Panel will complete this assessment against the information provided by applicants in response to the eligibility criteria.

Should it be required, the panel reserves the right to interview further candidates after an initial round of interviews.

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 interview candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes. This may be followed by questions from the panel. Candidates will be advised of presentation topic when they report for interview and will be given a maximum of 30 minutes to prepare for their presentation. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 45 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview appointment to allow time to prepare their presentation.

A flipchart and writing materials will be provided for candidates' use. No personal documentation may be brought in to the pre-interview room. Candidates will be allowed to bring any flipchart sheets and some short speaking notes into the interview room for assistance during the presentation (but note that use of the flipchart is not mandatory). No other materials or visual aids will be permitted.

The presentation will be used to assess the '**Seeing the Big Picture**' and '**Leading and Communicating**' competences.

Marks available: 40

1. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve a good mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay, thus reducing the risk of fraud and error. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money.

Marks available: 30

2. 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.

Marks available: 40 Minimum standard: 24

3. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches to support service delivery.

Marks available: 30

4. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

Marks available: 30

5. 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.

Marks available: 30

Total Marks Available: 200

Overall Pass Mark: 120

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.

No notes or personal documentation may be brought into the interview room.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during weeks commencing 24th June and 1st July 2019.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 3.

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 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 these posts 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.

The vetting requirement for successful candidates will depend on the work area. As a minimum it is clearance to Counter Terrorist level (CTC). In some work areas the vetting clearance requirement is Security Check (SC) or Developed Vetting (DV).

- 2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.
- 3. Security Check (SC): as point 2 plus credit reference check.
- 4. Developed Vetting (DV): as point 3 plus subject interview and field investigation.

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**