

Candidate Information Booklet

IRC244381
Director of Working Age Services
(Grade 5)
Director of Child Maintenance Service
and Wraparound
(Grade 5)
Department for Communities (DfC)

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 27th September 2019***

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

Department for Communities (DfC)

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

The Department for Communities (DfC) delivers a wide range of services to the public – both directly and through its arm's length bodies – that will impact the lives of most people at some point, **supporting people, building communities and shaping places**. The Work & Inclusion Group, against the backdrop of welfare reform, plays a prominent role in terms of the key services which it provides to people in Northern Ireland. From helping people to get ready for and find work, supporting those who are unable to work, providing a fair and sustainable pension system, through to paying more money to children through our Child Maintenance Service. We do this while protecting public money by reducing fraud and error, as well as delivering a range of similar services to citizens in the rest of the UK on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

These posts which we are seeking to fill are dynamic, challenging and fulfilling, both in terms of their impact through service delivery, but also by developing our talented workforce of over 6,000 staff to continuously improve how we deliver our products and services.

These posts offer significant and exciting senior leadership roles, delivering and managing large scale operations to a wide spectrum of customers, a diverse portfolio of complex change projects and managing a large budget. These are posts which make a real and visible difference to people's lives every single day. They are high profile positions, which require a high degree of collaboration with a range of diverse and engaged stakeholders. More information about DfC and Work & Inclusion is available at www.communities-ni.gov.uk

If you are interested in and wish to find out more about these interesting and challenging posts, please contact David Malcolm at david.malcolm@communities-ni.gov.uk or telephone (028) 2132 6460.

**Colum Boyle
Deputy Secretary**

**Jackie Kerr
Deputy Secretary**

BACKGROUND

The Department for Communities (DfC), established in May 2016, following the restructuring of the NI Departments plays a vital role in Northern Ireland, **by supporting people, building communities and shaping places.**

DfC is the largest of the nine NICS Departments and works with 21 Arm's Length Bodies. Around 8,500 people are employed by the Department, accounting for one third of NICS employees. It has an annual budget of almost £7 billion, including expenditure of £5.9 billion on social security and pension payments. The Department has developed its business plan for 2019-20 and is preparing a Departmental Strategy which will be used to support and advise an incoming Minister.

Groups

The Department is presently made up of four Business Groups:

- Engaged Communities Group (ECG);
- Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government Group (HURLG)
- Strategic Policy & Resources Group (SPRG); and
- Work & Inclusion Group (W&I).*

* *The Department is currently restructuring this Group, which will result in the establishment of a 5th business group.*

Role of the Department

The Department's main functions include:

- the promotion of a healthy housing market and the provision of decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support services.
- a social welfare system including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas.
- providing training and support to jobseekers and employers.
- bringing divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace.
- supporting Local Government to deliver effective public services.
- maximising public benefits from the culture, arts and leisure sectors.
- tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity by, for example, reducing poverty, promoting and protecting interests of children, older people, and people with disabilities.

Work & Inclusion Group (DfC W&I)

The role of DfC Work & Inclusion Group is to make people a priority by promoting work, wellbeing and fairness in our society. The purpose of DfC W&I is to:

- promote work as a way of building people's confidence and improve the wellbeing of people and families;
- care for people and families who need our help, promoting wellbeing across our community; and promote fairness in our society, by ensuring that those who need our services can access them.

This work is currently led by 2 Deputy Secretaries. Colum Boyle has lead responsibility for:

- Social Security Policy and Legislation
- Universal Credit Programme
- Universal Credit Operations
- Work and Wellbeing
- Working Age Services

Jackie Kerr has lead responsibility for:

- Pensions, Disability & Benefit Security
- Child Maintenance Service and Wraparound

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Director of Working Age Services

The Director of Working Age Services will lead the delivery of the Working Age Processing Centres and the delivery of specified performance and efficiency targets as set out in the Groups' Balance Scorecard and Departmental Business Plans. The successful candidate will work closely with senior officers in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Great Britain in ensuring the delivery of efficient and effective services for which the Department for Communities has been contracted to deliver.

Key strategic drivers for the post are the UK Welfare Reform agenda which aims to strike a balance between rights to benefit entitlement and responsibility to seek work, the significant relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions for whom the Department now provides extensive and growing services under contract and the programme of Welfare Reform mitigations agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

As a member of the Work & Inclusion Group Senior Management Team the Director will contribute to strategic issues, ensuring the Directorate is managed efficiently and effectively and that staff are inspired and motivated by a compelling vision of how operational delivery in Working Age Services is changing . The post holder will have a key leadership role for a large operational function and will be expected to make a positive contribution to support the development of a strong leadership cadre across Working Age Services where high performance is delivered through others.

As the Director with current responsibility for Corporate Support Branch in Work & Inclusion, the post holder has responsibility for Business Continuity across the Group. In 2019/20 they will also take the role of Senior Responsible Owner for the Digital Workplace Project, part of a DWP programme to replace desktops, enhance performance and improve productivity across all operational business areas.

A key aspect of this post is the effective management of change, particularly in how services are organised and the consequential impact on staff and the way they deliver services. This change process needs to be taken forward in the context of continuing to deliver business and services to almost 180,000 customers and delivering approximately £1.0 billion worth of benefits to Working Age customers.

The Directorate currently comprises 2,100 staff, with a budget of £78m.

Almost 1,100 of those staff undertake work on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions across 3 sites in Belfast, Ballymena and Lisahally.

The remaining staff are located in:

- Income Support Benefit Processing Centre – Andersonstown Jobs and Benefits office;
- Jobseekers Allowance Benefit Processing Centre – Holywood Road Jobs and Benefits office;
- Employment and Support Allowance Centre – James House, Belfast (moving to Lanyon Place, Belfast in May/June 2019);
- Finance Support – Antrim, Dungannon and Lisburn Jobs and Benefits offices;
- Corporate Support Branch – Design Centre, Belfast.

The Director of Working Age Services will have responsibility for:

- (a) leading and setting the direction and agreeing the operational objectives of Working Age Services Directorate, ensuring that it is well led, high performing and outcomes focused;
- (b) ensuring an economic, efficient and effective service is provided to the highest possible customer service standards within a secure processing environment;
- (c) management and maintenance of the operational delivery of a range of employment related social security benefits that include Employment Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support;
- (d) delivery of benefits and services in Belfast, Ballymena and Lisahally on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions;
- (e) delivery of Discretionary Support (part of Finance Support). This is a unique Northern Ireland only service, helping those who find themselves in a financial crisis through the provision of recoverable interest free loans and non-recoverable grants. Expenditure in 2018/19 was approximately £14 million;
- (f) effectively engaging and influencing in order to ensure business change is well planned and implemented;
- (g) directing, guiding and supporting individual and Directorate performance, through communicating a clear vision and sense of purpose, ensuring that personal objectives are met, that service level and financial targets are achieved across the extensive range of operational activity and that staff are aware of the value attaching to their contribution to results;
- (h) ensuring that senior officials, Deputy Secretary, Permanent Secretary and the Minister receive timely and appropriate advice and information on all issues which are within the responsibility of the Directorate;

- (i) delivering, monitoring and improving operational performance against key targets as specified in both the Working Age Division and the Department for Work and Pensions business plans;
- (j) ensuring effective communications with customers, key stakeholders and staff on day to day operations as well as key changes which will impact on the future business.
- (k) ensuring that benefit expenditure and other financial resources are managed with maximum security;

Director of Child Maintenance Service and Wraparound

The Director of Child Maintenance Service (CMS) and Wraparound Division works closely with senior officers in the Department, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other Northern Ireland Departments.

CMS plays an important role in securing maintenance arrangements for children who do not live with both parents and in supporting parents to make arrangements that best suit their individual circumstances. It delivers child maintenance services to the people of Northern Ireland and, under contract with the Child Maintenance Group, DWP, to the people of England. It is responsible for:

- (a) promoting financial responsibility among parents;
- (b) providing information and support to parents to help them put effective maintenance arrangements in place; and,
- (c) providing the statutory child maintenance scheme.

A reform agenda is currently completing and in recent years has extended the remit of the service to ensure better access to information and support, promoting financial responsibility among parents and meeting the needs of the more vulnerable groups in society. These functions significantly increase the scope of the role and expand the Division's remit beyond operational delivery.

The reform agenda saw the introduction of a new child maintenance system supported by a new IT system. The new system is supported by changes in policy aimed at making the system less complex and more cost effective.

The post holder is a key operational advisor to the Departmental Board, Deputy Secretary, Permanent Secretary and Minister on the delivery of child maintenance services to the people of Northern Ireland and on behalf of the DWP Child Maintenance Group to the people of England.

As head of CMS, the post holder is responsible for leading and setting the strategic direction of the Division and contributes to the Departmental

strategic and Business Plans. The plans seek to match the targets and other activities covered within the resources available. Once agreed, it is for the post holder to determine how the plan is delivered. The post holder operates a close performance monitoring system on the key outputs of the Division, and regularly reports to the Deputy Secretary.

The directorate currently comprises approximately 1,230 staff, with a budget of £40.5 million. This is made up of approximately 1150 staff and a budget of around £38 million to deliver child maintenance services to NI and GB citizens, and approximately 80 staff and a budget of £2.5million to deliver the Make the Call Wraparound Service.

Make the Call / Wraparound

Make the Call / Wraparound (MtC) is part of the Work & Inclusion Group within the Department for Communities (DfC). MtC has a base location in Knockbreda Jobs & Benefits Office, and also has 30 Community Outreach Officers located in Jobs & Benefits offices across Northern Ireland. MtC is structured into two organisational areas, **Operational Delivery** and **Operational Improvement** which work collaboratively to ensure optimum customer service delivery.

MtC plays a key role in helping to deliver **Outcomes 3 and 8 of the NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan: ‘We have a more equal society’ and ‘We care for others and we help those in need’**. It is continuously developing the scope of the services provided to help improve the lives of vulnerable people in our society, in particular those in poverty, older people, and those experiencing illness or disability. MtC’s Wraparound approach in ‘joining up’ services to provide a more streamlined and user friendly customer experience means working increasingly in a collaborative way across government, the wider public sector and the Voluntary and Community Sectors.

The Director of CMS and Wraparound will have responsibility for:

- strategic and business planning, operational and financial planning;
- maintaining a robust Corporate Governance Framework;
- providing strong and energetic leadership and vision;
- ensuring that support operations are carried out to a high standard, providing good quality service;
- ensuring that the significant human resources are managed and developed to meet business needs;
- managing performance – agreeing service and staff targets and ensuring that these are met;

- ensuring that the Minister receives timely and appropriate advice and information on all issues which are within the responsibility of the Division;
- innovatively and effectively leading and managing change;
- ensuring that child maintenance operations are carried out to a high standard, providing good quality services;
- ensuring that financial resources are managed with maximum efficiency and economy with agreed budgets and having responsibility to the Department's Principal Accounting Officer for all expenditure;
- implementing the existing child support reforms and contributing to the further changes arising from the redesign of Child Maintenance;
- delivering day-to-day operational performance and other associated targets as specified in the Divisional Business Plan and the Service Level agreement with the DWP Child Maintenance Group;
- attending regular Accountability meetings with DWP to report achievement against key performance indicators and budget spend;
- developing strong relationships with DWP key personnel to support the continued delivery of services in Belfast;

contributing to the delivery of Outcomes 3 and 8 of the NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan through utilising the people and budget resource within the MTC team.

The above list is not exhaustive but gives a good indication of the main duties of the posts. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently 2 permanent, full time vacancies.

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.

Location

The post holders will be based at:

- Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EG (Director of Working Age Services)
- Great Northern Tower, 17 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AD (Director of CMS and Wraparound)

Salary

Salary will be within the unified Grade 5 pay band range £70,522 - £80,847 (under review). Starting salary on appointment will be determined by promotion, re-grading or downgrading terms.

The maximum salary payable will be the band maximum of the Grade 5 pay band. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements 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 any Senior Civil Service (SCS) post 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.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the Civil Service Pensions (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

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

Travel

As both of these posts deliver services on behalf of DWP, regular travel to meetings and events in GB, which may require an overnight stay, will be an essential part of this role. In addition, successful candidates will need access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities at different locations across Northern Ireland.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required for this post is Basic Access NI level.

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.

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.

As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone David Malcolm on (028) 2132 6460 or email david.malcolm@communities-ni.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. Have at least two years' practical* experience at a senior management level** gained in the last five years of delivering operational results in a significant*** delivery service.

AND

2. Have at least two years' practical* experience at a senior management level** gained in the last five years of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of a significant*** operational service.

AND

3. Have at least two years' practical* experience at a senior management level** gained in the last five years of communicating and engaging with customers and key external and internal stakeholders, to improve operational delivery services.

* **Practical experience is defined as actually having undertaken the work rather than having knowledge and understanding.**

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

*** **A significant delivery service is defined as one which is delivered by more than 150 staff, and impacts across a number of business areas/stakeholders within a Department, and/or across another Department/s or organisation/s.**

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

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 criteria will be used:

1. At least 2 years' practical* experience at a senior management level** gained in the last five years of leading a significant change programme**** while maintaining business as usual service delivery.

**** A significant change programme is one which has its own budget, people and resources to deliver at Divisional/Departmental/Organisational level.

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 will 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. 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 Managing a Quality Service competence.

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 appropriately and effectively to support service delivery. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

Marks available: 40 Minimum standard: 24

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: 30

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: 30

Minimum standard: 18

3. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

Marks available: 40

Minimum standard: 24

4. 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: 30

Minimum standard: 18

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. 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: 25

Total Marks Available: 195

Overall Pass Mark: 117

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 on 5th and 8th November 2019.

This competition is being run to a tight timescale. Changes to the timetable will only be considered 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 acknowledgment 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 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.

As women are currently known to be under-represented in this grade in the NICS, and as young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are currently under represented in NICS, we would particularly welcome applications from these groups.

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**