Candidate Information Booklet

IRC250083

Temporary Public Prosecutor

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS)

Completed Application Forms must be submitted to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 28th February 2020

Please retain a copy of this booklet for your reference throughout the selection process.
Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account, 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

I would like to thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Temporary Public Prosecutor within the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS).

I believe that the PPS offers an interesting and dynamic career where your experience and knowledge as a legal professional will be recognised and where you can immediately contribute to the future success of the PPS. In the months and years ahead, there will be significant change within the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland, and the PPS is at the forefront of many of the key reform initiatives.

Individuals will often be asked to work on difficult or complex issues in keeping with the core principles of providing an efficient, fair and effective prosecution service.

I hope you find the information contained in this pack useful, and that you are encouraged by what you read to apply for this role.

Further information on the PPS can be found on our website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

Stephen Herron
Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland
BACKGROUND

The PPS is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in all cases initiated or investigated by the police, it also considers cases initiated or investigated by other statutory authorities, for example HM Revenue and Customs.

The PPS sits at the heart of the criminal justice system. The PPS works in partnership with the Department of Justice; the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service; the Northern Ireland Prison Service; the Police Service of Northern Ireland; the Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and the Youth Justice Agency, as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland.

Accountability and Governance Arrangements

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the PPS has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and, as Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is responsible for ensuring that the public monies provided are used efficiently and effectively. The PPs budget for 2019/20 year is approximately £34 million.

The PPS Management Board supports the Director in his leadership of the PPS and in reaching decisions on the strategic direction of the PPS, the development and implementation of appropriate strategy and in meeting his corporate governance responsibilities. The Board comprises the Director (as Chair), Deputy Director, two Senior Assistant Directors and two independent Non-Executive Directors.

PPS Services

In addition to the PPS’s primary role in reaching decisions as to prosecution and for the conduct of criminal proceedings in Northern Ireland, a range of other services are available. These include:

- Provision of prosecutorial advice and pre-charge advice to police;
- Review of all charges prior to submission to court;
- An enhanced service to victims and witnesses;
- Production and issue of summonses;
- PPS lawyers conducting prosecutions in Courts; and
- The development of a number of diversionary options for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These include restorative cautioning, informed warnings, youth conferences and referrals to the National Driver Alertness Course.
Organisational Structure

The PPS is a regionally based organisation. There are two regions:

- Belfast and Eastern; and
- Western and Southern.

Each region is headed by an Assistant Director (AD). The AD is responsible for working with the courts and the police to provide a high quality prosecution service in their area. The regions deal with a wide range of cases, from the less serious summary cases, which are heard in the Magistrates’ Courts, through to more serious indictable cases which are heard in the Crown Court.

In addition there are four legal sections, based in PPS Headquarters, which are also headed at AD level. These sections are as follows:

- **Serious Crime Unit** deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and other serious sexual offences, human trafficking, prostitution and related offences.
- **Central Casework Section** deals with some of the most high profile and difficult cases in Northern Ireland, including files relating to terrorism and organised crime.
- **Fraud and Departmental Section** deals with serious and complex fraud files submitted by the police, as well as files from Government Departments and agencies.
- **Appeals and International Section** deals with a range of specialist legal matters, including High Court bail applications, restraint and confiscation orders, extradition, internal letters of request, judicial reviews, appeal to the Court of Appeal and cases referred by the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

The PPS also has a Policy and Information Unit headed at Grade 6 Level which provides the PPS’s legal guidance and advice and quality assurance functions. Corporate Services is responsible for the organisation’s support services such as Finance, Resource Management Team and ICT, as well as the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU).

An Organisation Chart for the PPS is presented at Annex C.

PPS Staffing

All members of staff are Northern Ireland Civil Servants (NICS).

The current staff complement of the PPS is 513, which includes approximately 150 legal posts.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The main duties of a Public Prosecutor will include:-

- Consideration of files submitted by police and government departments with a view to deciding, or advising, as to prosecution in cases alleging the commission of an offence which can be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court;

- Preparation of papers for prosecution, where appropriate, and directing such charges and evidence as is appropriate in each case;

- Prosecution of cases anywhere in Northern Ireland, in the Magistrates' Courts and, on occasion in the County Court;

- Carrying out such other duties as are required of a Public Prosecutor by the business needs of the PPS.

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

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

This competition may also be used to fill temporary Public Prosecutor vacancies which may arise during the lifetime of this competition which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities. The order of merit is valid for one year. Offers of appointment in respect of temporary vacancies will be for a maximum period of 51 weeks and will not be extended beyond this period.

These appointments offer an exciting opportunity for professionally qualified Barristers and Solicitors to become a part of an organisation which values all its people, performs to a high standard and works in partnership with colleagues and criminal justice partners.

The successful candidate(s) will work alongside highly experienced legal professionals with considerable expertise in criminal law and practice and a genuine commitment to personal and professional integrity and public service.

Location

The Public Prosecution Service has regional offices in Belfast, Londonderry and Newry as well as a satellite office in Omagh.

You will be asked in your application form to indicate which Regional area you wish to be considered for. If you are prepared to work in more than one location, you may indicate if one location is your preference. It may, in some instances be possible to accommodate such preferences. However, successful candidate(s) must be prepared to work in any PPS location and will be regarded as mobile.

Please note: Applicants can select more than one location in which they would be willing to work. Candidates should therefore be sure that they are content to travel to and work in all areas they select on their application form.

Please Note: An offer of a post will be made to successful candidates based on the locations as indicated on their application form (where possible).

Salary

Salary will be within the range £37,272 - £40,979 (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.
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](http://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 (pro rata).

Hours of Work

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 37 hours each week and will be required to work outside normal working hours, when necessary to facilitate business needs. The successful candidates may be required to participate in a rota for attendance at court on Saturdays and Bank/Public Holidays which may be Time Off In Lieu (TOIL).

The terms and conditions of service of these appointments will be the same as those attached to a post of Deputy Principal in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Travel

The successful candidate must have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.

Vetting

The successful candidates will be required to be security cleared to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level.

Probation

If performance, conduct or attendance during this period of employment 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 contact Diana McIntyre by email at Diana.McIntyre@ppsni.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants will be required to provide evidence against the eligibility criteria on their application form.

The Director will designate the successful applicants as Public Prosecutors in pursuance of section 29(5) of Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

Applicants must, prior to taking up appointment:

1. Be a Barrister or Solicitor who is entitled to practise either at the Bar of Northern Ireland or as a Solicitor of the Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland.

AND

Applicants must, at the closing date for applications:

2. Have at least one year’s post qualification advocacy experience in criminal cases, gained within the last 6 years, in a Magistrates’ court environment.

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. Candidates must effectively demonstrate and provide details of personal advocacy in criminal cases in the Magistrates’ and / or County Courts, this could include; representing the prosecution, representing the defence, conducting contested applications and trials, appearing in bail applications, adjournment applications and pleas of guilty, drafting skeleton arguments, bad character, hearsay and special measures applications, and consulting with witnesses.

This shortlisting criterion will be assessed on a scored basis, and in the case of a high volume of applicants PPS may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. In this instance all applicants will be listed in merit order according to their total score and the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.
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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)
ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applicants will be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

Scenario Based Assessment

As part of the interview you will be expected under the competence **Making Effective Decisions** to answer questions from the panel based on a pre-prepared scenario.

On arrival for interview you will be given a scenario to read and will be given 20 minutes to prepare. You will then be asked questions on this by the panel at the start of the interview. You will be provided with paper and writing materials in the preparation room, which you may use to make notes. No other materials will be permitted in the preparation room and the only notes available to you during the interview will be those prepared in the preparation room. Candidates will therefore be required to report for interview at least 35 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview time to allow time to prepare for the scenario questions.

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: 25**

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.

**Marks Available: 15**

2. **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.

**Marks Available: 15**
3. 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. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.

Marks Available: 15

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.

Marks Available: 15

Total Marks Available: 100

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.

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 week commencing 30th March 2020.
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](http://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](http://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](http://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 Public Prosecutor posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Counter Terrorist Check. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

a) Your passport **OR**
b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) **AND** your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
c) 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](http://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;

People on these lists are barred from regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity. Candidates should be aware that by submitting an application form for this post, they are confirming there is no reason why they cannot work in regulated activity.

Must inform candidate if one or both barred lists are to be checked.


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.

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

**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](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk).

As young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are currently under
represented in the 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