

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

**IRC254245
Coroner's Investigator
(Deputy Principal)
Coroners Service of Northern Ireland (CSNI)
Department of Justice (DoJ)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 25th September 2020***

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

Department of Justice (DoJ)

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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BACKGROUND

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS)

NICTS is responsible for providing administrative support for the Northern Ireland courts, including the coroner's court, along with the majority of Northern Ireland tribunals. NICTS sits within the Department of Justice's Access to Justice Directorate and employs over 700 people across 24 sites.

The Coroner's Investigator role sits within the NICTS Legacy Inquest Unit which provides support to coroners in their investigations into deaths in the group of inquests known as 'legacy inquests'. These inquests include some of the most sensitive, complex and high profile deaths which occurred during 'the Troubles'.

The Legacy Inquest Unit (LIU)

The LIU was established in 2019 to support delivery of the Lord Chief Justice's Five Year Plan for Legacy Inquests which is due to begin in 2020-21. The Unit provides legal, investigative and administrative support to coroners in legacy inquest investigations and to the Presiding Coroner, currently Mr Justice Huddleston.

To support the Coroner in pursuing appropriate lines of inquiry it is necessary to recruit an additional Coroner's Investigator. Further appointments may be made from this competition should further positions become vacant which have similar duties and responsibilities. Once recruitment is complete, LIU will comprise 32 staff to include investigators, legal officers and administrative and finance support.

LIU sits within the NICTS structure currently however, it is intended that the Unit will be reassigned to the Office of the Lord Chief Justice (OLCJ) in the near future. As is the case with existing OLCJ staff, LIU staff will be continue to be designated as NICTS staff when LIU becomes part of OLCJ.

Coroner's investigations

Coroners are independent judicial office holders whose role is to inquire into deaths reported to them that appear to be:

- unexpected or unexplained;
- as a result of violence;
- an accident;
- as a result of negligence;
- from any cause other than natural illness or disease; or
- in circumstances that require investigation.

The coroner seeks to establish the cause of death and makes whatever inquiries are necessary to do this, such as ordering a post mortem examination, obtaining witness statements and medical records or holding an inquest.

Coroners' inquiries in legacy inquests may involve investigation of allegations of possible involvement of state agents in a death, state collusion contributing to a death or a failure by the state to take measures to prevent a death.

Disposal of legacy inquests through the coronial process is an essential part of dealing with Northern Ireland's past and of fulfilling the UK's obligations, including any under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Independence of investigation

The Coroner's Investigator is a civil servant and therefore is appointed after recruitment processes that are in accordance with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) recruitment policy and procedures and the NICS Commissioners Recruitment Code. The NICS is an equal opportunities employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

While the requirement to maintain hierarchical structural independence is met by the independence of the coronial system, there is an additional requirement to ensure the practical independence of LIU staff. Therefore, **any member of LIU staff** who formerly served in any capacity in any organisation that may have been concerned in, or linked to, a death which is the subject of any legacy inquest or who has provided representation to any organisations or persons involved in any legacy inquest must be capable of demonstrating that they are institutionally independent from that organisation or person.

Additionally, all staff appointed must consider and keep under review any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in a particular case.

Further information on legacy inquests is available on the Judiciary NI website: <https://judiciaryni.uk/legacy-inquests-general>

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of a Coroner's Investigator

The main role is to provide advice and guidance on appropriate and effective investigative opportunities, practice and procedures in relation to legacy inquests and other inquests as required by the Coroners and to conduct and/or, as appropriate, supervise inquiries and investigations as directed by the Coroners, in preparation for the holding of inquests, in a manner compliant with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The post holder shall also be required to attend and give evidence at inquests, as required by the Coroners.

Main Job Activities

Provide advice and assistance on policy and practical matters relating to investigative practice and procedure, bearing in mind at all times, the implications of the necessity for inquests to comply procedurally and substantively with the Coroner's Law and obligations arising from Article 2 ECHR.

Work closely with the Coroner's legal representatives in conducting analysis of disclosure provided from a number of data sources, with a view to conducting further lines of inquiry.

Provide advice and assistance to the Coroner and his/her legal representatives as to the investigation of deaths in preparation for inquests and undertake investigation at the direction of the Coroner and his/her legal representatives. This will involve:

- the review of complex information;
- the management of both witness and suspect interview strategies;
- the deployment of family liaison; and
- production of reports to inform coronial investigation by the Coroner.

Plan investigative phases with built in objectives and target attainment dates and prepare a plan for agreement with the Coroner and Coroner's representatives for the purposes of discussion prior to finalisation.

Review, as necessary, any documentation generated by previous investigations, review and provide advice on both the interpretation and completeness of same as well as highlighting any potential need for further access to intelligence and other information and securing or supervising the securing of such information in an appropriate and timely manner.

Liaise with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Security Services, the Historical Investigation Unit (HIU) once established, the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI), Forensic Science NI (FSNI), State Pathologist's Department (SPD) and any other individuals and agencies deemed relevant in relation to any aspect of the investigation, including disclosure issues.

Identify and ascertain the whereabouts and status of witnesses and where appropriate, contact witnesses, take witness statements, audit exhibits. In addition, this may include assisting legal colleagues in the commission of forensic tests and investigations, conducting site visits and any other process of inquiry deemed warranted by the Coroner.

Assist with inquest planning, case reviews and where appropriate, consultations with counsel.

Key skills required

- A high level of analytical ability and experience of analysing complex and sensitive issues;
- Problem solving including analysis, evaluation and effective resolution of issues;
- Making effective decisions using sound judgement and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice;
- Excellent communicator with a wide spectrum of people using oral, written and other communication methods;
- Development and maintenance of effective and co-operative working relationships at all levels both within and outside the organisation;
- Delivery of timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes;
- Embracing change and being responsive, innovative and seeking out opportunities to create effective change;
- Awareness of need for independence, sensitivity and confidentiality;
- An understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity and how it applies to this role.

APPOINTMENT / TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is currently one permanent, full time vacancy.

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

This post will be based at Laganside House, Belfast.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £38,017 - £41,799 (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

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. The successful candidate may occasionally be required to work outside normal office hours.

Travel

Travel throughout Northern Ireland will be required and travel nationally and internationally may be required on an occasional basis.

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

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 **Developed Vetting**

Probation

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

Career Development

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

Conflict of Interest

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

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

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 Ellie Thompson on 028 90446863 or email: ellie.thompson@courtsni.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, have:

1. At least 2 years' experience of participating in complex / serious crime investigations as an Investigating Officer; (*Criminal investigation experience is required due to the complexity of many of the cases involved.*)
2. A qualification in advanced investigative practice such as PIP2 or equivalent;
3. Demonstrable experience of contributing to and managing issues of strategy and policy on policing, criminal justice or national security matters;
4. Demonstrable experience in the use of up-to-date IT equipment and packages, such as investigation and intelligence or casework management systems, and understanding of work in secure, IT and information security intensive environments.

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' experience of managing complex / serious crime investigations within the context of Northern Ireland.

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.

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

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEW

The selection panel will design questions to test the applicants' knowledge and experience in each of the following areas below and award marks accordingly.

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

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: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

2. 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: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

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.

Marks available: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

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.

Marks available: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

5. 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.

Marks available: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

6. 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: 20 Minimum Standard: 12

Total Marks Available: 120

Overall Pass Mark: 72

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing Monday 19th October 2020.

Candidates should note that due to current circumstances with COVID 19, social distancing measures will be put in place. If this is not possible the use of video technology may be used as an alternative.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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

Coroner's Investigator is analogous to Deputy Principal Grade in the NICS.

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 to assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

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

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) A Commonwealth citizen; or
- (iii) A British Protected Person; or
- (iv) An EEA national; or
- (v) A Swiss National; or
- (vi) A person who is not an EEA or Swiss national, but is a family member of an EEA national who has moved to the UK from another EEA Member State for an approved purpose.

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

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

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

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.
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.

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**