



Executive Personal Assistant (Executive Officer II)

IRC254975

**Completed Application Forms must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on
*Friday 27th November 2020***

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

Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account, including junk mail folder, to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

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FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in this competition to fill the position of Executive Personal Assistant at the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland.

This challenging and rewarding role will offer the appointee a unique opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of victims and survivors.

The successful candidate will have an important role in supporting the Commission and Chief Executive to the Commission in our work, and in supporting the organisation to deliver our vision to improve the lives of all victims and survivors.

I would encourage you to carefully consider the information outlined in the following pages, and if you feel you meet all the requirements for this post, make an application.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dash at the end.

Andrew Sloan
Chief Executive

THE COMMISSION FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS (THE COMMISSION)

The Commission was established in May 2008 under the Victims and Survivors Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act 2008.

The Commission is a Non-departmental Public Body of The Executive Office (formerly OFMDFM). The principal aim of the Commission is to promote the interests of victims and survivors of the Troubles/Conflict.

The Commission is unique in its construction and remit. Founded in May 2008 in the aftermath of 40 years of conflict in Northern Ireland and ten years after it was first recommended in the Good Friday Agreement, which states:

“The participants believe that it is essential to acknowledge and address the suffering of the victims of violence as a necessary element of reconciliation. They look forward to the results of the work of the Northern Ireland Victims Commission.

It is recognised that victims have a right to remember as well as to contribute to a changed society. The achievement of a peaceful and just society would be the true memorial to the victims of violence.”

This aim is the central reference point for all of The Commission’s work.

The Commissioner

The Commissioner for Victims and Survivors is appointed by the First and deputy First Minister for an initial period of four years. Judith Thompson currently holds the post of Commissioner. The Commissioner also fulfils the role of the Board to The Commission and acts as a corporate sole.

Article 6 of the 2006 Order outlines the duties of the Commissioner as:

- (i) Promoting an awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors and of the need to safeguard those interests;
- (ii) Keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors;
- (iii) Keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for the victims and survivors by bodies or persons;
- (iv) Advising the Secretary of State, the Executive Committee of the Assembly and anybody or person providing services for victims and survivors on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- (v) Taking reasonable steps to ensure that the views of victims and survivors are sought; and
- (vi) Making arrangements for a Forum for consultation and discussion with victims and survivors.

Article 7 of the 2006 Order outlines the general powers of the Commissioner as:

- (i) To undertake, commission or provide financial or other assistance for research or educational activities concerning the interests of victims and survivors or the exercise of its functions;
- (ii) After consultation with such bodies or persons as it thinks fit, issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- (iii) To compile information concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- (iv) To provide advice or information on any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- (v) To publish any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors, including the outcome of any research or activities mentioned above and any advice provided by the Commission; and
- (vi) To make representations or recommendations to anybody or person concerning the interests of victims and survivors.

Vision

The Commission's vision is to improve the overall wellbeing of victims and survivors.

Mission

The Commission's vision is to address the needs of victims and survivors by addressing the legacy of the past, ensuring excellent service provision and building for a better future.

Values

The Commission's core values guide how each of us work in our individual day-to-day job:

- **TRUST** - Working confidentially, impartially and respectfully with victims and survivors and others to develop and sustain an open and honest relationship;
- **UNDERSTANDING** - Listening to and learning from victims and survivors and others;
- **RESPONSIVE** - Continually developing our people and raising service standards through growth and innovation;
- **ACCOUNTABLE** – Applying the highest level of corporate governance and professional standards to all that we do; and
- **INDEPENDENCE** - Upholding our statutory duties and maintaining a critical distance to challenge government and relevant authorities on behalf of victims and survivors.

The Commission has a staff compliment of 12 and an annual budget of c£900,000.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This is a permanent full-time appointment. You are an employee of The Commission and not an employee of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

Reports to

You will report to the Chief Executive of The Commission.

Salary

The salary will be within the range £25,299 - £26,051 (NICS Executive Officer II scale currently under review). Pay progression will be in accordance with NICS pay policy.

Starting salary is normally the minimum of the pay scale. Consideration may be given to a higher starting salary for applicants who demonstrate exceptional experience.

Location

The Commission is currently located at Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

Working Hours

The Executive Personal Assistant will normally be required to work 5 days a week, totalling 37 ½ hours. Duties will include some evening and weekend working for which you will get time off in Lieu (TOIL).

The Commission operates a flexible working policy.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, currently 12 per annum, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 days after 5 years of service.

Travel and Transport

The Executive Personal Assistant will be required to travel to various meetings and events locally and on occasion within Great Britain, and therefore, must have access to a form of transport which permits them to meet the requirements of this post in full.

Pension

New entrants who join the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland are eligible to join the NICS pension scheme. Further details can be

found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Probation Period

The probationary period for this post is one year.

Further Information

Applicants who wish to learn more about the post may contact Holly Taylor by telephone at 02890 311 000 or email to holly.taylor@cvsni.org.

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

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Personal Assistant is required to provide a high quality confidential professional secretarial and administrative support service to the Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer and provide administrative support to other staff in the Commission.

The Executive Personal Assistant acts as a key Commission interface, ensuring that communications and information from internal and external contacts are disseminated, controlled and managed effectively. The post holder must apply initiative and have the ability to take informed decisions and to plan, organise and re-prioritise tasks to meet competing demands in a constantly changing environment.

The post holder will establish close working relationships with the Commissioner, Chief Executive, and other colleagues to facilitate effective communication and achieve targets and deadlines. The post holder will also develop effective working relationships with a wide range of sponsoring department staff and external stakeholders to ensure that information requirements are effectively addressed and deadlines met.

Specific duties of the post are as follows:

Commissioner and Chief Executive

- Diary management and workload management including organisation of internal and external meeting and making travel and accommodation arrangements;
- Proactive time management to ensure the effective use the Commissioner and Chief Executive's time;
- Creation of processes, as appropriate, to improve the smooth running of the Commissioner and Chief Executive's diaries.
- Maintain and when required assist with the development of the engagement database
- Meeting preparation including ensuring all relevant reference material is available;
- Reviewing incoming correspondence (including emails) and prioritising what needs to be dealt with;
- Engage with victims and survivors both in person and over the telephone in an appropriate and empathic manner
- Deal with correspondence, emails and telephone calls;
- Communicate and engage with diverse internal and external stakeholders, building organisational relationships, representing the CVS values and aims.
- Attending meetings and capturing actions/notes and proactively follow up of actions to ensure timely delivery;
- Draft correspondence ensuring that it is presented in the corporate format in terms of style and presentation;
- Preparing reports using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; and

- Preparation of Commissioner and Chief Executive's monthly expenses.

Organisational Secretariat

- Drafting in agendas for meetings including Board, Senior Management Team and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee;
- Collating and preparing papers for meetings in a timely manner, including coordinating and preparation of papers, providing advice on paper content and format, reviewing drafts and issuing papers;
- Ensuring the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive has all information in a timely manner, preparing briefing notes as appropriate;
- Produce accurate and timely minutes and action list of meeting;
- Maintain a clear and organised file of all correspondence, papers, minutes, agendas;
- Track and follow up actions raised at meetings;
- Maintain the organisation's register of gifts and hospitality; and
- Maintain the organisation's register of interests;

Administration Support

- Reception duties including call handling, managing post, and other ad-hoc tasks;
- Ensuring all necessary Databases, File Notes and Records of Meeting are finalised collated and filed;
- Event management including sourcing venues, catering, speakers and logistics for events;
- Creating, developing, and managing a range of databases to aid the storage and retrieval of electronic documents; and
- Proof reading of corporate documents and publications.

Additional Responsibilities

- To be fully committed to organisation's vision, mission and values;
- To treat all victims and survivors in a courteous and respectful manner;
- To ensure the ongoing confidence of the public in the organisation, staff must ensure they maintain the highest standards of personal accountability.
- To comply with the organisation's code of conduct;
- To observe all health and safety requirements; and
- To work within and promote policies in relation to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.

The above is given as a broad range of the post holder's responsibilities and is not intended to be exhaustive. It is important to note that the responsibilities may change to meet the evolving needs of the organisation.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications have:

1. 5 GCSE's including English and Maths, grade C or above, or equivalent.
2. At least 3 years demonstrable, practical experience of working in a Personal Assistant role to Senior Management* to include all of the following;
 - a) Overseeing diary management and co-ordination of meetings
 - b) Working with those at a Senior Management level
 - c) Drafting correspondence for Senior management
 - d) Taking minutes and notes of meetings
 - e) Planning and organisation of meetings/events/conferences
3. Demonstrable, practical experience in the use of the following MS Office applications - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Outlook.

*Senior management includes members of the Board or staff taking decisions affecting strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation within which an individual is working.

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. 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, level of qualification, subject area, etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

SHORTLISTING

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. A level 3 diploma in Secretarial Administration.

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 Commission 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.
- ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history, eligibility/shortlisting criteria) will be provided to the selection panel.
- Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

PERSON SPECIFICATION

CVS follow the NICS Competency Framework and candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 2 for the purposes of personal and professional development.

Executive Personal Assistant is analogous to Executive Officer II in the NICS.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The 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.

How does the NICS framework look?

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

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will include a competence based interview.

Competence based interview

The following competencies will be assessed at interview with questions designed to test your knowledge and experience in each area and award marks accordingly.

1. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. 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

Pass Mark: 12

2. 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.

Marks available: 20

Pass Mark: 12

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.

Marks available: 20

Pass Mark: 12

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: 20

Pass Mark: 12

Total marks available: 80

Overall pass mark: 48

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing 11th January 2021. Candidates should make themselves available on these dates. Candidates should be aware that the interview room will be set up to accommodate social distancing during the current COVID-19 situation. Alternative ways to facilitate remote interviews may also be considered.

Requests for reschedules will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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 in relation to each of the competences. 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Merit Principle

The Commission follows NICS standard guidelines. Appointments to the Commission are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Making your application:

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.

Guidance for Applicants

- 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.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- 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.
- 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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out 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.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **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.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does

not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.

- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- 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.
- Please note - 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.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

Communication between HRConnect and you

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

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the Commission for Victims and Survivors is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

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.

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.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

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

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Assessment Information

It is HRConnect policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility/shortlisting criteria and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality restrictions on this post: however, before an offer of appointment can be made to an overseas candidate, The Commission will need to ensure that all UK visa and immigration requirements are met.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post the level of vetting is a Basic 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) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

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;

Standard 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.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.

Feedback

The Commission for Victims and Survivors is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. 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