

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

**IRC257267
Deputy Secretary (Grade3)
Management Services & Regulation
Group
Department for the Economy**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 17th July 2020***

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

Department for the Economy

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 the position of Deputy Secretary, Management Services and Regulation Group in the Department for the Economy.

The successful candidate will work at the highest level in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and will have a proven and successful track record of leading and managing a large organisation(s) in accordance with the highest standards of corporate governance and accountability. He / she will act as the principal adviser to the Permanent Secretary / Departmental Accounting Officer and the Minister for the Economy on the day to day operations of the Department, including corporate and annual business planning, financial and workforce management, risk management, corporate governance, corporate services and machinery of government, as well as policy responsibility for employment law and business regulation.

The successful candidate will assume a sponsorship responsibility for a number of Arms-Length Bodies. Specifically, he / she will provide overall strategic direction and support to the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI), Consumer Council NI (CCNI), Labour Relations Agency (LRA), Office of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal (OITFET), and the Industrial Court.

The post is highly loaded and carries considerable responsibility. In return it offers excellent career development opportunities. It is a key leadership role and will be attractive to engaged leaders who wish to make a positive impact.

If you think you have the experience, enthusiasm and energy to lead the work of this directorate we would be pleased to hear from you.

MIKE BRENNAN
PERMANENT SECRETARY

BACKGROUND

Our vision – A globally competitive economy that works for everyone

Our mission is to develop and implement agile policies and programmes which promote a competitive, sustainable and inclusive economy through investment in: skills; economic infrastructure; research and innovation; and business development.

Our mission is underpinned by seven strategic objectives:

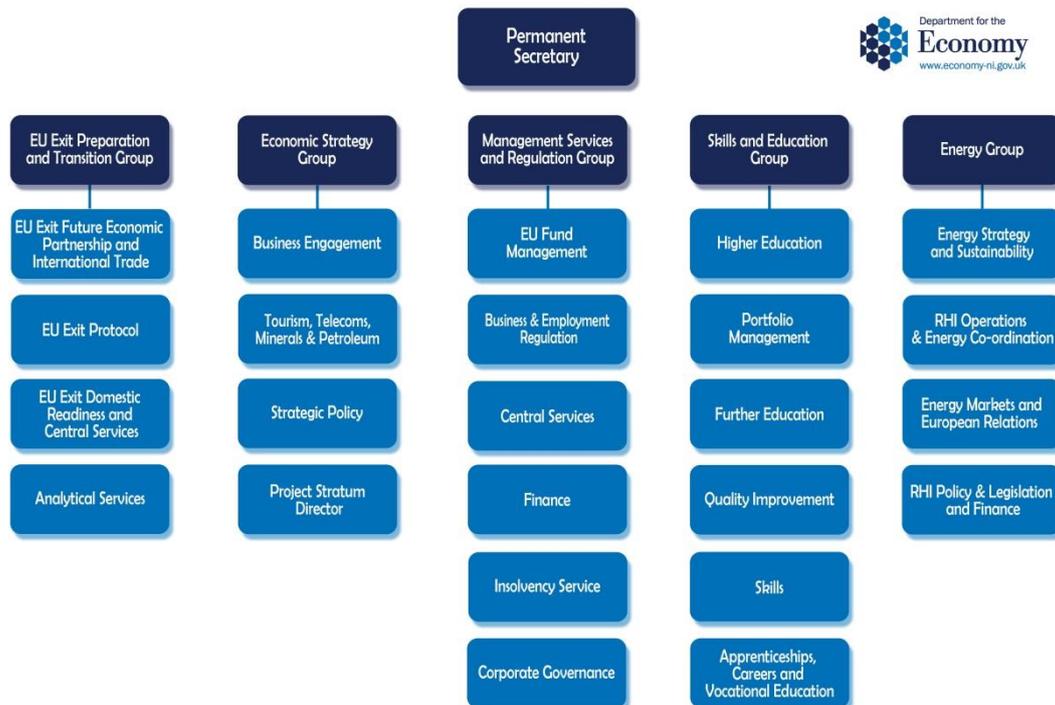
1. Accelerate innovation and research.
2. Enhance education, skills and employability.
3. Drive inclusive, sustainable growth.
4. Succeed in global markets.
5. Build the best economic infrastructure.
6. Deliver a regulatory environment that optimises economic opportunities for business and commerce, while also protecting consumers and workers.
7. Ensure the Department has effective governance, including programme and project management arrangements, and manages its resources, both financial and staff.

The Department for the Economy (DfE) was established in May 2016 and its responsibilities include:

- economic policy, including specific areas like Energy, Tourism and Telecoms;
- the operation of a range of employment and skills programmes;
- oversight and funding of the further and higher education sectors;
- various aspects of employment law; and
- the management and operation of various EU funding programmes.

DfE has over 1,000 staff at various different grades working across Northern Ireland who work under one of five distinct Groups each led by a Deputy Secretary. These Groups, in turn, manage a wide range of Arms Length Bodies. The Top Management Team comprises of:

- Management Services and Regulation Group
- EU Exit Preparation and Transition Group
- Economic Strategy Group
- Skills and Education Group
- Energy Group



MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND REGULATION GROUP

The Department is seeking to recruit a senior professional to a key leadership role in Management Services and Regulation Group. This Group is responsible for delivering high quality corporate services to the Department. It plays a key role in ensuring the good governance of the Department, developing the capacity of DfE and promoting engaged leadership at all levels and in all parts of the Department.

The Group employs around 450 staff and consists of 6 business areas:

- Business and Employment Regulations
- EU Fund Management
- Central Services
- Insolvency Services
- Finance
- Corporate Governance

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Overall Job Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of the job is to effectively lead and manage the day to day operations of the Department in support of the Departmental Accounting Officer / Permanent Secretary, and to facilitate the delivery the policy objectives of the Minister for the Economy.

In undertaking this role, the post holder has a number of key responsibilities, which include:

- Acting as principal Departmental adviser on resource management, both budgetary and financial management and staff management. This post is responsible for 450 staff and some £1 billion of expenditure;
- Providing assurance on all aspects of public expenditure control and the management of risk through an agreed programme of internal audit;
- Maintaining an effective and robust assurance regime;
- The timely development of strategic and annual business plans in an outcomes-based environment, including the Department's contribution to the Executive's Programme for Government;
- The efficient and effective deployment of resources in alignment with policy objectives and priorities;
- Development and implementation of an annual People Plan with a focus on driving up employee engagement and promoting diversity and inclusion;
- Chairing key Departmental Board Committees covering Resourcing & People, Delivery (Business Planning and Corporate Risk Management), and Casework;
- Policy lead with respect to Employment Law;
- Strategic direction and support to the Department's regulatory bodies¹; and
- Management of an efficient Ministerial Private Office.

¹ Health & Safety Executive, Labour Relations Agency, Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, The Industrial Court, Office of Industrial Tribunal and Fair Employment Tribunal, and Trading Standards Service

LEADERSHIP

The successful candidate will be required to be a strategic and engaged leader for their own Group while also promoting engaged leadership across the Department. Specifically they will need to provide strategic direction through effective communication so that: (1) the Group is highly effective and staff engagement levels increase further; (2) good governance and engaged leadership is promoted across the Department; (3) there is strategic alignment between our people, our customers and stakeholders so that everyone understands what we are trying to achieve and contributes to those efforts.

The post holder has line management responsibility for approximately 450 staff (Full Time Equivalent). The post holder has direct line management responsibility for 5 Grade 5s, 1 Grade 6 Head of Business Area and a Personal Secretary.

A key management challenge is the development and integration of 'joined up' working practices across the Group and wider department. This challenge comes following a series of significant organisational changes over recent years right across the Northern Ireland Civil Service; changes that have seen a reduction in staffing levels by almost 18%, the reduction in the number of departments, and the centralisation of HR functions and ongoing development and embedding of other critical centralised shared services.

These 'joined up' working practices require the use of multi-disciplinary teams and alternative management structures, including the use of task and finish groups, when addressing departmental/NICS-wide issues. The post holder needs to be flexible when working with and through others, supportive and sensitive when providing 'mentoring', as part of development staff and building new skills, experience and working practices.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The post holder has lead role responsibility for a broad range of departmental activities including:-

- the acquisition of, and probity in the use of resources;
- acting as the principal adviser to the Accounting Officer / Permanent Secretary and the Minister on resource management;
- providing assurance to the Accounting Officer / Permanent Secretary and senior management on all aspects of public expenditure control and the management of risk through an agreed programme of internal audit;
- ensuring a consistent approach to the good governance of the department's ALBs, and developing a framework to hold them to account for governance and performance against Ministerial priorities and statutory responsibilities;

- ensuring that the necessary human resources and corporate services are in place to enable the department to operate efficiently and effectively, including contributing to the overall management of the department and the development of key policy areas;
- providing leadership and management, in respect of the department's Capital Investment Programme, by providing professional financial advice to the Minister and the Accounting Officer on issues such as prioritising, allocating and monitoring of expenditure, in line with business needs and DoF accounting requirements;
- co-ordinating action in response to a range of statutory and policy areas; and
- Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), for the Department.

In discharging these responsibilities the post holder is required to:-

- take lead responsibility for financial advice to the Permanent Secretary (the Accounting Officer) and the Minister, and is accountable for maintaining the necessary financial systems and procedures to support annual expenditure of approximately £1 billion (inclusive of EU funds). The post holder supports the Accounting Officer in the acquisition of, and monitoring of the use and performance of these funds;
- ensure that timely, accurate and relevant management information (including service performance, as well as financial performance information), is available for use by the Minister, Permanent Secretary and colleagues within the senior team, in order to facilitate the making and reviewing of strategic decisions;
- advise on the prioritisation and allocation of resources alongside commenting on the potential to either maximise the utilisation of funds, or under utilise and/or fail to realise opportunities. This would involve taking the lead in providing advice on resolving priorities, including any necessary remedial action;
- be accountable for the provision, delivery and enhancement of professional, personnel and corporate services, which meet both statutory requirements and the business needs of the Department;
- take responsibility for contributing towards the effective operation of the Department through the development and review of key policy areas, ensuring adherence to statutory commitments, and managing the Department's contribution to the delivery of Programme for Government (PfG) commitments;
- ensure that recommendations and objectives arising from the Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) reports are monitored on a regular basis, and

Memorandum of Reply (MOR)/progress reports/implementation plans are prepared and submitted to the Permanent Secretary, the Minister and the PAC.

JUDGEMENT

Judgements made by the post holder impact across the whole Department and ALBs, not least, because of the effect of changes to resourcing priorities and financial allocations.

The post holder has to ensure exceptional acumen and governance in the stewardship and application of the annual budget of approximately £1 billion (inclusive of EU funds).

On many occasions, detailed information is not available in regard to either commitments or needs, and the post holder is required to exercise judgement when determining how resources should be allocated and financial decisions made. These judgements can occur in circumstances where there are high expectations (from the public, media and politicians).

Given the ongoing financial constraints within Government, where there is a need to achieve efficiencies, whilst still delivering a more effective service, the post holder will often have to make decisions on diverse and complex areas of responsibility.

Such decisions have the potential to impact on the ability/or otherwise, of the Department to fund new strategic approaches to service delivery. In such circumstances, the post holder is expected to assess the financial implications of change, so as to inform the Minister's final decision on how to progress.

Having oversight of the entire Departmental budget, the post holder has the opportunity to identify financial issues and take the necessary corrective action. This can include identifying and implementing opportunities to reduce spend in some areas, in order to address additional pressures elsewhere.

When considering the financial aspects of policies, the post holder's financial analysis and recommendations can often be a key factor in the advice over one approach over another alongside reputational issues and legal advice.

Likewise, the post holder, when undertaking specialist casework, has to arrive at definitive decisions. In considering such matters, the post holder must examine the available information, assess the situation, develop recommendations and ensure that any changes are implemented. Whilst Government Accounting provides a framework for financial decision making, and legislation and policies exist in respect of a number of other areas (eg employment matters), it is the application of these standards to the most complex cases that requires the post holder to exercise judgements at the highest level. In reaching decisions, it is often the case that the post holder has to balance competing priorities against finite resources.

Judgements often need to be made within tight timescales in order to meet DoF deadlines for estimates, monitoring and public expenditure processes, and require the post holder to use both their experience and insight into the demands and needs of the Department.

In addition, the post holder has to make decisions across a diverse range of subject areas, for example:-

- determining how to address issues identified as part of the internal Audit function and/or those arising from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC);
- the interpretation and use of strategic data to determine how performance can be improved;
- corporate service issues, ranging from Accommodation, Private Office, Press Office, Information Management, Public Appointments, Staff Engagement etc
- how the Department should comply with issues such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

The post holder, as a member of the Departmental Board, is also required to contribute to collective decision making, which address issues of a corporate nature. In these circumstances, short-term compromises might have to be balanced against longer term goals, for the common good.

INFLUENCING

When representing the Department's interests and promoting its objectives, the post holder has to exercise influence across the Department, ALBs Departmental colleagues and those from the Department of Finance (DoF).

In undertaking this role, the post holder often needs to build a consensus so as to achieve agreed outcomes which are also affordable and sustainable.

During the development of business cases (including financial projections), changes to a project may be required that must be delivered within the original funding allocation. Often the emphasis can be on either reaching compromises, and/or in the timing and phasing of issues, which although not ideal, largely address the primary purpose of the project. In such circumstances, it is essential not to jeopardise future relationships, and therefore to avoid alienation of key stakeholders, the post holder has to build a rapport that is sustainable for the whole term of the project.

In a number of cases, the issues under consideration may involve other professions or Departments with differing aspirations/views, where the problems can be complex and 'cross cutting' in nature. In such

circumstances, the post holder is required to adopt a creative and innovative approach and explain the financial commitment/constraints of the Department.

On all occasions, the post holder needs to secure the trust and confidence of all parties, as often there can be conflicting interests, and the chosen way forward might not always align with everyone's expectations (or indeed perception), of any given set of circumstances.

Likewise, on many occasions, as part of discharging their responsibility to provide an assurance to the Accounting Officer, the post holder will have to explain complex accounting procedures and constraints to non-financial professionals.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

The post holder has specific responsibility for providing financial assurance to the Minister, the Permanent Secretary (Accounting Officer), senior officials and Departmental Board members.

Given the size of the annual budget, the post holder is required to apply their expertise on a range of complex matters on a daily basis. The post holder also leads other professional disciplines, accountability, and Internal Audit teams.

In overall terms the successful candidate will need to be an engaged and engaging leader, with well-developed interpersonal, negotiation and influencing skills. They will need to be effective in the management of policy and operational functions involving large numbers of staff. They will also need a high degree of analytical skills to ensure that they are in a position to influence at every level using an evidence base and sound rationale.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is currently 1 permanent, full time vacancy.

This is a permanent appointment to the Senior Civil Service (SCS), the Northern Ireland Civil Service top leadership and management resource.

Further appointments may be made from this competition should NICS positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities.

SECONDMENT

This post may be filled by secondment of the successful candidate from his/her current employer. "Secondment" means a voluntary transfer from a permanent employer for a fixed period which does not sever the employment relationship of the person seconded with the permanent employer.

The duration will be agreed by all parties prior to the start of any secondment. A secondment would be on a candidate's current terms and conditions of service.

It is advisable that candidates interested in a secondment option make their employers aware that, under NICS secondment arrangements, the successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer. The necessary administration arrangements will be agreed with the Department and the employer before a secondment arrangement commences.

Location

This post will ordinarily be based in Belfast.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £92,413 to £105,447 within which pay progression will be performance related.

The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the payscale, although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if he/she has exceptionally relevant skills/experience. If the successful candidate is an existing NICS civil servant, starting pay on transfer to a new substantive grade will apply.

In order to comply with the disclosure requirements in our Annual Accounts, we will be required to disclose details of the total remuneration, including any taxable benefits in kind and pension benefits for this post in our annual accounts. Further information may be disclosed in line with any future disclosure requirements relating to the senior management of departments. It is a condition attaching to the appointment to any SCS post in Northern Ireland that appointees agree to these disclosure requirements.

A successful candidate will, on appointment, become a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the Civil Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 30 days.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 37 hours net per week Monday to Friday. In common with all SCS appointments, the postholder will be required to work outside of their normal conditioned hours, where necessary, to fulfil the demands of the post.

Travel

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

Travel throughout Northern Ireland will be required on a regular basis and travel nationally and internationally may also be required.

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 CTC clearance.

The post will involve duties comparable with Accounting Officer positions. Should a successful candidate have any issues which would prevent them from being considered suitable to hold an Accounting Officer designation, such as imposition of an insolvency order or making an arrangement with creditors, or other issues connected with financial probity, they may not be considered suitable for appointment.

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 contact Colin Lewis at Colin.Lewis@economy-ni.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, or require any documentation in an alternative format, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications, be able to demonstrate that they have **ALL** of the following:

1. A minimum of 5 years' senior management* experience and evidence of significant achievement, working at Board Level** in the public, private or voluntary sector in a complex and diverse organisational environment*** with the associated corporate governance and accountability requirements. This includes current best practice accountability, business planning, risk management, audit and financial management and maintaining a focus on delivering value for money;

AND

2. A minimum of 3 years' experience and demonstrable evidence of successful strategic resource management, gained at senior management* level including managing a minimum budget of £100 million. The individual should have an awareness of the application of current best practice in relation to governance, setting and managing complex budgets in line with policy priorities in the public sector;

AND

3. A minimum of 5 years' senior management* experience of demonstrating strong people management, engagement and leadership skills and the ability to lead teams to deliver against business objectives.

Please note:

***Senior management level** includes taking decisions personally on strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation within which the individual is working. In a Civil Service context this would be expected to involve engagement with Ministers, Senior Officials and Departmental Boards.

****Working at Board level** is defined as having responsibility for decision-making in respect of corporate strategic issues concerning the organisation for which you are either an employee or an advisor.

*****Complex and diverse organisation** is defined as a multi-disciplinary organisation having a customer base with diverse requirements and a minimum budget of £100 million.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to the next stage of selection, the following shortlisting criteria will be used:

- The strength and breadth of evidence provided in response to eligibility criterion 2 (above).

This will be completed on a scored basis. All applicants will be listed in merit order 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

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The selection process will include a presentation and a competence based interview.

PRESENTATION

As part of the interview candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes. This will be followed by questions from the Panel. Candidates will be advised of presentation topic within their invitation to attend interview letter.

Candidates should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview and no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Candidates will be allowed to bring prepared speaking notes or cue cards to the interview for assistance only during the presentation part of the assessment. No other materials, visual aids or handouts will be permitted.

The presentation will be used to assess the **Seeing the Big Picture** competence.

Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEW

1. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve a good mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay, thus reducing the risk of fraud and error. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. At senior levels, effective people embed a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the NICS maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

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

Marks available: 20

3. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned, justifiable decisions. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

Marks available: 20

4. Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy development and implementation and building a more flexible and responsive NICS. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches where possible.

Marks available: 20

5. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a

persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

Marks available: 20

Total Marks Available: 140

Overall Pass Mark: 84

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.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place during week commencing 24th August 2020.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 6.

The NICS competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

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

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of selection process. Should you require assistance in accessing the competency framework please contact HRConnect.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

APPLICATION FORM

Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before making your application and retain a copy for your reference. The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria. **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

Please note:

- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, hard copy application packs are available on request. All applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date and time.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- The session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- You must click SUBMIT once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within 24 hrs.

Help with making your application

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office - contact details are available on NIDirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices>

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, email info@niuse.org.uk, tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

For professional and technical posts, questions may be framed in the context of professional elements of the post

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org.

NICSHR Privacy Notice

NICSHR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICSHR, in line with the NICSHR privacy notice available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Offers of Employment

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details.

Transgender Requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration, in confidence, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

Merit List

HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However you should be aware that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process.

Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

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

Applicants must be either:

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

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

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

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

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

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

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is Basic Disclosure Certificate

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni.

Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

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.

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

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.
All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit

Feedback

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of

the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**