

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC260795

**Senior Occupational Psychologist,
Work Psychology Services**

Department for Communities (DfC)

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 21st May 2021***

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

Department of Communities (DfC)

Communication between HRConnect and you

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

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BACKGROUND

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

DfC is the largest of the nine NICS Departments and works with 21 Arm's Length Bodies. Around 8,500 people are employed by the Department, accounting for one third of NICS employees. It has an annual budget of almost £7 billion, including expenditure of £5.9 billion on social security and pension payments.

Groups

The Department is presently made up of five Business Groups:

- Engaged Communities Group;
- Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government Group;
- Strategic Policy & Professional Services Group;
- Work & Health Group; and
- Supporting People Group

Role of the Department

The Department's main functions include:

- A social welfare system including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas;
- Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity by reducing poverty, promoting and protecting interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, and other socially excluded groups, addressing inequality and disadvantage;
- Providing training and support to jobseekers and employers;
- The promotion of a healthy housing market and the provision of decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support services;
- Bringing divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace;
- Supporting local government to deliver effective public services; and
- Maximising public benefits from the culture, arts and leisure sectors.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The post holder will be employed within the **Work Psychology Service (WPS)**, a branch within the Work & Wellbeing Division, part of the Work & Health Group of the Department for Communities.

The post holder's key responsibilities will be to:

- Provide strong, engaging and visible leadership to a team of practitioner Occupational Psychologists responsible for building the capability and capacity of Work Coaches in Jobs & Benefits offices across Northern Ireland;
- Oversee the supervision of the Occupational Psychologists working in the WPS who help to develop the knowledge and skills of Work Coaches who provide early, intensive employment related support and work solutions to people with health conditions, disabilities and others who may experience employment challenges;
- Play a key role in business planning, performance measurement, monitoring and control, to evidence the impact the Work Psychology Service has on improving work outcomes in Northern Ireland;
- Support the design, development and evaluation of employment and health related and other employability programmes;
- Deliver organisational development and human resource solutions to assist and help improve performance across the Department and wider NICS;
- Engage with a wide range of external partners within the health and work sector to build good working relationships and develop signposting routes for customers to enhance the prospects of employment and health outcomes;
- Lead work to identify and source learning and development opportunities that builds the capability and capacity of the Work Psychology Team in accordance with the standards set by the Health and Care Professions Council and British Psychological Society;
- Support the Work & Wellbeing Division to develop and implement policy initiatives to reduce economic inactivity and improve health and disability employment outcomes;
- Represent the branch at a number of divisional, departmental and external working groups;
- Establish and manage business partner relationships at local and district level with operational (Universal Credit) colleagues across Northern Ireland.

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is currently one permanent, full time Senior Occupational Psychologist 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.

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 be based at Design Centre, 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA. Please refer to the travel section for further information.

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.

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. 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.

Travel

As the role will involve regular travel throughout Northern Ireland the successful candidate must have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. The post holder may also be required to travel nationally and internationally to attend meetings and events. This may involve overnight stays.

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 Standard.

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

Further Information Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Deirdre Ward on 028 90726780 or email deirdre.ward@communities-ni.gov.uk.

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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

- 1) Have a Master's degree in Occupational Psychology from a course recognised by the British Psychological Society, or equivalent body;

AND

- 2) Hold registration with the Health and Care Professions Council;

AND

- 3) Have full membership of the Division of Occupational Psychology, British Psychological Society, or equivalent body;

AND

- 4) Be a qualified Stage 2 supervisor or demonstrate a commitment to qualify as a professional supervisor, for the BPS Stage 2 Qualification in Occupational Psychology;

AND

- 5) Have at least 2 years' experience and evidenced within last 5 years, of achieving business results by applying the principles of good corporate governance.

***Please note that the successful candidate, if not already registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, will be required to obtain registration by closing date of applications and must remain on the register while in the post. Failure to obtain registration by this date may result in exclusion from this competition.**

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications and professional membership 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, the awarding body and where necessary translation to the English language so that an informed decision can be made.

Equivalent professional membership: give details of the professional membership held and reasons why you consider it to be equivalent to the membership required for this post. The onus is on the applicant to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that an informed decision can be made.

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 working as an Occupational Psychologist.

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.**
- **State clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. State "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 competence based interview.

1. Leading and Communicating

People who are good in this area lead from the front and communicate 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. It is about engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 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

Minimum Standard: 12

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.

Marks available: 15

4. Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is having a strong focus on continuous learning for oneself, others and the organisation. For all staff, it is about being open to learning and keeping their knowledge and skill set current and evolving.

Marks available: 15

5. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive,

responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 15

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.

Marks available: 15

Total Marks Available: 100

Overall Pass Mark: 60 (60%)

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

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

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in via Webex video conferencing during week commencing 21st June 2021. However this is dependent on the current circumstances.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

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

You can apply online at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

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:

- 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 submitted 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. State 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 will be required to bring documentary evidence of your qualifications and professional membership to assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

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

- (i) UK national; or
 - (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
 - (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
 - (iv) EEA nationals with (or eligible for) status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or
 - (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or
 - (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
 - (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals
- (i) A UK national; or

(ii) an Irish or non-UK Commonwealth citizen who was in post in the NICS on 31 May 1996, or was appointed from a competition with a closing date on or before 31 May 1996, and who has remained in the NICS since that time.

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;

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**