

SUMMONS SERVERS

(Summons Servers are Office Holders but not Employees)

(The employment status of Summons Servers is self-employed)

INFORMATION BOOK

REF – IRC265759

Only Online applications will be accepted

**Completed online application forms must be submitted by 12 noon (UK time)
on Friday 30th July 2021**

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ABOUT US AND THE ROLE

Summons Servers will be appointed as Office Holders but not as employees.

Who we are and what we do:

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice (DOJ) of Northern Ireland. The NICTS is accountable to the Assembly through the Minister of Justice, Naomi Long MLA.

The Agency provides administrative support for all of Northern Ireland's courts and the majority of tribunals. NICTS also provides administrative support to the Coroners Service of Northern Ireland and the Legacy Inquest Unit; has responsibility for enforcing judgments of the civil courts through the Enforcement of Judgments Office; for collecting and enforcing outstanding financial penalties imposed (or registered) by a criminal court; for funds held in court through the Court Funds Office; and the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland. It also sponsors the Planning Appeals Commission and Water Appeals Commission.

What does a Summons Server do?

A Summons Server delivers or 'serves' legal documents on a defendant or person involved in a court case.

In general the service of legal documents in Northern Ireland is performed by Summons Servers' in the Magistrates' Courts and Process Servers' in the County Court. These legal documents are normally prepared by the complainant or applicant/plaintiff and not NICTS. The documents are normally lodged with the Court Office together with a fee. The fee and documents for service are recorded on the NICTS Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS) and allocated to a server to attempt service in a timely and professional manner.

The NICTS wishes to appoint Summons Servers "Servers" to a number of areas throughout Northern Ireland. Those appointed may also perform the role of Process Server in the area/s they are appointed to. Although "Servers" are office holders but not employees, they are managed in accordance a Framework developed by NICTS to ensure effective performance and serving of documents.

An important part of the role is to endorse the original summons with a statement that you have served a copy of the summons on the required individual.

Summons Servers must maintain a record of all summonses provided to you by the NICTS using the **Summons Management Register** (Register).

Summons Servers are responsible for ensuring that legal documents are served in a highly effective and appropriate manner and in accordance with the law.

A typical working week for a Summons Server will include:

- Attending Court Offices to collect legal documents to be served and return unserved documents;

- Plan and schedule service of legal documents within a specific area in line with set targets;
- Serving legal documents at the addresses indicated in the legal documentation;
- Maintain a detailed record about the receipt and service or non-service of legal documents;
- The secure storage of legal documentation provided to you for the purpose of service;
- Notify the appropriate court office in good time of your inability to serve legal documents.

Timescales associated with serving documents

Summonses are required to be served a **reasonable** time before the court hearing. It is imperative that servers return summonses, immediately after service, to the relevant court office. As an approximate guideline, servers should plan their service based on the following timelines:-

- a) Legal documents will normally be available to be collected from a court office a minimum of **15 working days** before the court date;
- b) To serve legal documents at least **10 working days** prior to the court hearing; and
- c) Return the legal documents to the court office **5 working days** before the court hearing.

Where the service of legal documents is challenged a Summons Server may be required to attend court and provide records to prove that legal documents have been properly served to the satisfaction of the court.

Other important information you should know about the roles

Summons Servers will be appointed as Office Holders but not as employees of the NICTS. An office holder means a person holding the office of Summons/Process Server. The employment status of Summons Servers is self-employed.

The office of Summons Server will be offered as a three year renewable appointments subject to performance targets being achieved.

A Summons Server cannot serve legal documents on a Sunday.

Summons Servers are personally responsible for serving summons and court documents. Under no circumstances can a Summons Server ask someone else to serve a document on their behalf or arrange any form of sub-contracting. On

occasion another Summons Server may be asked to assist with service in a particular area but only following the agreement of the NICTS.

Summons Servers are responsible for securing legal documents which may involve purchasing a lockable storage unit to securely store legal documents at home.

All tasks will be carried out in accordance with current PHA guidelines in relation to Covid 19.

LOCATION OF AREAS

This recruitment competition will be used to fill requirements in the following locations:

- Area 1 – Craigavon/Armagh
- Area 2 – Banbridge/Newry
- Area 3 – Londonderry/Magherafelt
- Area 4 – Enniskillen/Co. Fermanagh
- Area 5 – Omagh/Strabane
- Area 6 – Dungannon
- Area 7 – Newtownards/Downpatrick

On your application form you will be asked to identify which location(s) you wish to apply for.

You may apply for up to **two** locations. When selecting locations you should remember that, if successful, you must be prepared to deliver legal documents in line with strict timescales in these areas.

If you apply for more than one location, you will only be required to attend a single interview. Your interview score will carry through for each location you have selected. If successful, you will only be considered for a post within one of your chosen locations, subject to availability.

A merit list will be created for each of the areas listed above. Should further vacancies arise in areas not listed, the nearest location merit list to that area may be used to fill the vacancy.

AM I SUITABLE TO BE A SUMMONS SERVER?

Eligibility Criterion

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Have a full driving licence and access to a car for the purposes of serving summonses;

AND

2. Be available Monday to Saturday 8am to 10pm to serve summonses.

Shortlisting Criterion

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criteria will be used incrementally in the order listed:

1. Demonstrable experience of providing face to face customer service
2. Demonstrable experience of planning and organising to meet targets/deadlines.
3. Demonstrable experience of maintaining accurate written records.
4. Demonstrable experience of diffusing potential conflict and dealing with difficult situations.
5. Demonstrable experience of managing information within the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act and/or General Data Protection Regulation.

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 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.**

AVAILABILITY TO SERVE SUMMONS

Summons Servers are office holders but not employees specifically appointed by NICTS for the service of legal documents and are engaged on a fee-paid basis.

To assist in the planning and allocation of the serving of summons, you are required to attend your specific Court Office(s) a minimum of once a week. It is at the discretion of the Court Administrator to request additional attendance.

Given the nature of the office of Summons Server and the business conditions that NICTS operates under, there is no guaranteed level of summons to serve or guaranteed income being offered for any period, there are no fixed hours of duty, nor are there any fixed number of weeks in which you be engaged to serve summons.

Note: that service of documents cannot be undertaken on Sundays.

The offer of engagement to serve summonses is also conditional on it being completed to certain performance standards.

The role is assignment-based. You will be allocated documents which you are required to serve in line with performance targets.

The nature of the role means that your normal routine may be disrupted by the requirement to be flexible. Please consider this before you submit an application form. If you intend to take extended periods of absence you must notify the Court Administrator in advance.

The times used to serve legal documents should be heavily influenced by the times when people are most likely to be at the addresses to which service is required. For example, it will be more productive to call with people who are at work during the day early morning or late afternoon/evening.

On occasions servers may encounter difficulties in serving a summons. In such cases servers must clearly demonstrate, through retained records that they have attempted service on at least two occasions on differing days and at differing times of the day. After two unsuccessful attempts you must report the matter to your local Court Office as soon as is practicably possible who may then authorise alternative methods of service, including service by a form of registered or recorded post for the specified hearing date in the original summons.

TRAINING

Training on the requirements of this role will be provided by NICTS on appointment. Operational guidance and a Management Framework will also be made available to you by the Court Administrator.

REMUNERATION

The appropriate service fee for each summons will be paid to you monthly in arrears. Fees are as prescribed by the Magistrates Courts Fees Order (Northern Ireland) 1996 and are amended from time to time. The Clerk of Petty Sessions in your district will make the most recent schedule of fees available to you, on request or you can obtain a copy of the fees directly from www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/cfr-magistrates-court-fees-01-10-19.pdf

The current fees (which are subject to change) are:

1. Service of a summons or process or document £14.00
2. Where service of a summons or process is required to be personal £17.00

Note: For the service of a summons or process where there are two or more defendants or witnesses in the same proceedings there shall be a separate fee for each defendant or witness.

3. Where a document relating to a summons is served together with the summons, for each document served £4.00

Note: No other non-pay terms are payable i.e. holiday pay, sick pay, pension entitlement, or any statutory payments normally associated with an employee. This is purely a relationship of serving documents for the given fee and no employer/employee relationship exists.

Please note that mileage is not paid.

Note: The employment status of Summons Servers is self-employed. Summons Servers are responsible for paying their own tax and National Insurance contributions. As a Server you will also need to keep business records and details of your income so you can complete an annual Self-Assessment tax return.

Should you encounter difficulties in serving a summons you may be required to serve the summons by post. Payment of the cost of this service is deemed to be included in the original service fee paid to servers in respect of the original court hearing date. Therefore no expenses will be paid for postage costs.

HOW TO APPLY

If this looks like the role for you, please complete and submit an online application.

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.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Stage 1: From the information available in this booklet, applicants should decide if this role is right for them and if it will fit in with their lifestyle.

Stage 2: Submit an application on the Northern Ireland Civil Service Recruitment Website www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk . Your responses will determine if you are invited to interview.

Stage 3: Eligibility Sift. Panel members will consider candidate applications and sift against the eligibility criterion and subsequent shortlisting criterion (if necessary)

Stage 4: Interview. At interview you will be asked questions to test your knowledge and experience in each of the following areas.

(a) Communication

- Tailors message to suit audience
- Communicates clearly and concisely
- Ability to build and maintain trust with others
- Deals effectively with difficult situations
- Ability to successfully interact with a wide range of people from different backgrounds

(b) Customer Service

- Completes work in a professional and polite manner
- Demonstrates an understanding of the needs of different customers
- Projects positive interpersonal skills e.g. defuses potential conflict situations
- Keeps customer informed of progress against required standards
- Is tactful and shows sensitivity

(c) Planning and Organising

- Demonstrate an ability to prioritise work to meet required standards
- Ability to plan ahead to meet deadlines
- Adjust plans to account for new work
- Seeks and accepts responsibility and takes personal responsibility to make sure results are achieved
- Prioritises work appropriately and delivers work within required standards

(d) Record Keeping

- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of keeping a clear audit trail of work
- Keeps records in a format that can be understood by others
- Uses a clear and concise method of keeping records

(e) Integrity / Confidentiality

- Performs Role in a fair and respectful manner
- Acts ethically
- Builds trust and respect through reliability and honesty
- Admits mistakes, meets commitments and keeps promises
- Accepts responsibility for their own actions

- Maintains beliefs, commitment and effort in spite of setbacks or opposition
- Is discreet about the business being conducted (ie does not tell anyone other than the respondent)
- Handles all information with confidentiality
- Understands the principles of GDPR.

All applicants invited to attend for interview must have sufficient documentation to satisfy the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for interview.

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place remotely via Cisco Webex during week commencing 6th September 2021.

Stage 4: Pre-appointment checks.

As part of the vetting process HRConnect will ask you to provide the following:

- a) Photographic ID.
- b) Nationality verification. You must provide your passport or 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). Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- c) A specimen signature must be provided at interview. This signature will be validated against your passport, driving licence, application form etc.
- d) Proof of address. This may be an official document such as a bank statement or utility bill.
- e) Driving licence.

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 successful applicants which will be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required is a 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.

Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality restrictions for this post. However, before an offer of appointment can be made to an overseas candidate, NICTS will need to ensure that all UK visa and immigration requirements are met. If you are invited to interview we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Merit Principle

All appointments to office of Summons Server are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person is selected in fair and open competition.

Order of Merit

The Selection Panel will only assess applicants based on performance at interview. Those who pass the interview will be placed on an order of merit based on their interview score. A separate order of merit will be formed and held for each location once interviewing in each area has taken place.

If you have applied for more than one location and are successful at shortlisting stage you will only be interviewed once and your score will be held against all your chosen locations. Your merit position for each location may vary as it will depend how well you performed in comparison to other applicants interviewed for that location.

Once an order of merit has been formed for a particular location, there will be no further interviews for that area until the list has been exhausted.

The order of merit will be valid for 24 months from the date it is created.

Changes in personal circumstances

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

Communication between HRConnect and you

During the competition HRConnect will issue as much correspondence as possible via e-mail. You are responsible for ensuring that the e-mail address you provide is correct and kept up-to-date. If your e-mail address changes throughout the lifetime of this competition please ensure you notify HRConnect as soon as possible.

You should check your email account (and junk mail folders) 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.

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.

Disability Requirements

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

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

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

This competition is being administered in accordance with the principles of Equal Opportunities legislation.

All applications will be considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Feedback

We are committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility as well as at interview. All requests for feedback are welcome.

THIS INFORMATION BOOK DOES NOT FORM PART OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Contact Details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address below or by:

Email: Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net

Tel: 0800 1 300 330

Address: HRConnect
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Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Máinnstríe O tha Laa