

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC270354

Higher Occupational Psychologist

Department for Communities (DfC)

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 14th January 2022***

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

Department for Communities (DfC)

**supporting people, building communities and
shaping places**

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:

- Build the capability and capacity of Work Coaches in Jobs & Benefits offices across Northern Ireland;
- 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;
- Provide specialist training and coaching to Work Coaches, Team Leaders and Managers;
- Conduct employment assessments with customers to provide employment related support and work solutions to people with health conditions and/or disabilities who may experience employment challenges;
- Contribute to the quality and effectiveness of customer engagement;
- Design and pilot projects in areas of disability and employment provision and other areas;
- Monitoring and evaluation of employment programmes and services;
- Conduct research locally, nationally and internationally to inform best practice in the field of work and health;
- Conduct project management consultancy to assist operation of employment programme provision;
- Deliver organisational development and human resource related solutions to assist performance across the Department;
- Support the wellbeing of staff across the group.

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 are currently 3 permanent, full time vacancies. The successful candidate will be an employee of the Department for Communities. Although the appointment will be to the Work Psychology Service, the post holder may work across the Work and Health Group. The Higher Occupational Psychologist will report to the Senior Occupational Psychologist in the Work Psychology Team.

Alternative working patterns may be considered subject to business needs.

Further appointments may be made from this competition should NICS positions become vacant which 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 in Greater Belfast area. Please refer to the travel section for further information. This will be subject to Covid-19 restrictions. Due to the current situation with Covid-19, the post holders may work from home.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £32,328 to £33,459 within which pay progression will be performance related.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 25 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: net hours of 37 per week excluding meal breaks 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 to attend meetings and events. This will be subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

Training

The successful candidate must be agreeable to commit to undertaking the Qualification in Occupational Psychology (Stage 2), if not already chartered.

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 Enhanced security.

Probation

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

Career Development

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

Conflict of Interest

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

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

As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Sarah McCann by email sarah.mccann@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 have:

1. At least a second class honours degree in Psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society or Psychological Society of Ireland;

AND

2. A Master's degree in Occupational Psychology.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: Applicants are asked to give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Please note:

- **You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.**
- **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 presentation and a competence based interview.

PRESENTATION

As part of the selection process, candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes, the title of which will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter. The panel will also ask follow up questions after the presentation.

Applicants should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview as no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Applicants may bring prepared speaking notes and prepared flipchart into the interview to deliver the presentation.

The presentation will be used to assess the **Leading and Communicating** competence.

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

1. 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

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 the Causeway Exchange, 1 Bedford Street, Belfast during week commencing 14th February 2022.

Candidates should note that due to current circumstances with COVID-19, social distancing measures will be put in place in accordance with current Public Health Advice. If it is not possible, the use of video technology may be

used as an alternative.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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

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 should ensure that the required documents are readily available. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation when requested will result in your application being rejected.

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. Please note **ALL** applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check.

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 settled 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

For candidates applying under categories iv – vii you are required to provide the following information in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form. Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

Category iv – Please provide your ‘Share code’ in the ‘Share code’ field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your [‘share code’](#) here

Category v - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;

Category vi - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. Alternatively please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation. Further documentary evidence may be request from HRConnect to support this;

'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' means:

- (i) That national's spouse*; or
- (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
- (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc.) of the EEA national or his/her spouse.

*Note: 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only

Where a candidate has a right to work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the right to work is maintained.

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

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

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;

Enhanced Disclosure Certificate

Barred List Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service keeps two barred lists:

- people who are unsuitable for working with children
- people who are unsuitable for working with vulnerable adults

People on these lists are barred from regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity. Candidates should be aware that by submitting an application form for this post, they are confirming there is no reason why they cannot work in regulated activity.

Must inform candidate if one or both barred lists are to be checked.

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**