

Candidate Information Booklet

IRC281117

**Night Custody Officer (NCO)
(Full-time)**

**Northern Ireland Prison Service
(NIPS)**

**Completed Application Forms must be returned to
HRConnect no later than:
12 noon (UK time) Friday 8th July 2022**

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible (**either via email or SMS**), you should therefore check your email account (including junk mail folder) /SMS messages 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. You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition

Contents:

	Page
Foreword	3
Background	4
Job Specification	5
Key Responsibilities	9
Assessment Process	12
NICS Competency Framework	18
Interview Criteria	19
Interview Guidance	23
Application Process Guidance	24
Security/Vetting	28
Health Criteria/Requirements	29

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Night Custody Officer in the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Prison is a complex working environment and the role of a Night Custody Officer is both challenging and rewarding.

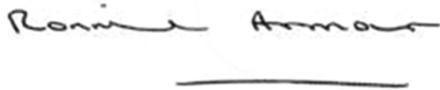
Challenging, in terms of the individuals who will be in your care; rewarding, because you will have the opportunity to make a difference as you challenge and support them and to play your part in building a safer community.

We are looking for individuals from all parts of our community who are motivated, courageous, respectful, resilient and compassionate; people who want to work as part of a professional team in a dynamic environment.

If you believe you have what it takes to be a Night Custody Officer, then I would encourage you to apply. Successful candidates will undergo extensive training and will receive support and guidance as they begin working with prisoners.

The role of a Night Custody Officer is about much more than “locking people up,” it is about keeping individuals safe and secure, while supporting them through the night should they need help.

If you want a challenging and rewarding job working in a unique environment, then join us and make a real difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie Armour". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Ronnie Armour
Director General,
Northern Ireland Prison Service

BACKGROUND

About the Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is part of the Department of Justice (DoJ) and plays a vital role in helping to build a safer community in Northern Ireland. Their core purpose is to keep people safe and secure while they are in prison and to work with them so they can address their offending behaviour and play a positive role when they are released.

NIPS Statement of Purpose and Strategic Priorities

NIPS core Statement of Purpose is: *Building a safer community by challenging and supporting people in our care to change.*

Organisational Structure and Staffing

NIPS is an executive agency of the Department of Justice (DOJ) which is a part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). It is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system. The NIPS operates under the direction and control of the DoJ, within a statutory framework based on the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 and the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995.

NIPS comprises the three main prison establishments and the Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services (PECCS).

Maghaberry Prison – a high security prison, housing adult male long-term sentenced and remand prisoners in separated and integrated conditions.

Magilligan Prison – a medium security prison, housing shorter-term sentenced adult male prisoners. This establishment also has low security accommodation for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison – a medium to low security establishment accommodating remand and sentenced young men between the ages of 18 and 21 and all female prisoners.

Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services (PECCS) – PECCS staff have responsibility for the safe operation of the cell holding areas in each Courthouse throughout Northern Ireland and for producing prisoners in court rooms when required. Additional PECCS are a prisoner transport and escorting service for adult males, adult females, young people and children within the Criminal Justice System. Driver/Escort staff use cellular vehicles which hold and deploy, mainly, from Maghaberry Prison.

The main administrative centre for NIPS, Prison Service Headquarters, is located on the Stormont Estate, Belfast, Prison Service College (PSC) is currently located at Hydebank Wood.

Further details on the Northern Ireland Prison Service are available at www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons

JOB SPECIFICATION

There are currently a number of permanent vacancies available at the NCO grade.

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

Location

NCOs are required to serve in any Prison Establishment in Northern Ireland throughout their career in the NIPS. Currently these are:

- Maghaberry Prison – near Moira
- Magilligan Prison – near Limavady
- Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison – near Belfast

Salary and Allowances (at time of advertising)

Night Custody Officer

£24,211 - £27,359 per annum (under review).

The position also attracts a supplementary risk allowance which is currently £3,492 per annum (under review) and a boot allowance of £92.80 per annum. Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. Pay progression will be as per current NIPS pay policy.

Working Pattern

The shift pattern for an NCO is based on an **average 44 hour week**. Normally this will mean seven days on shift, followed by seven days off.

The actual hours worked per week will vary and will include weekends and public/privilege holidays. Some shifts may be designated as standby periods where you must attend for work or training if required. Although the majority of your working hours will be covering night time periods, training will be ongoing and will require some day time attendance. A shift will start when you are on post and will end when you leave your post. Time spent travelling to and from your post is not included as part of your shift. No additional payments or premiums will be paid for working weekends or public and privilege holidays. Shift patterns will change from time to time.

Please note that your rostered hours will on occasions include weekends and public / privilege holidays for which you will receive your normal rate of pay.

Annual Leave

The annual leave year starts on 1 February and ends on 31 January of the following year. For staff joining NIPS after the leave year has started, entitlement for the remainder of the year will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Annual leave entitlement for NCOs is calculated in hours (hrs). The successful candidate will be entitled to the equivalent of 325.6 hrs rising to 369.6 hrs (25 days annual leave rising to 30 days after 5 years satisfactory service and 12 days public/privilege holidays allocated in hours).

Travel

NCOs are currently classified as a non-mobile grade. It is your responsibility to bear the cost of daily travel between home and your permanent work place. You may however, be asked to transfer from one prison establishment to another to accommodate business needs and terms and conditions provide for transfer of such non-mobile grades. When you travel to a temporary work place, the mileage you may be entitled to receive is limited to the lesser of either (a) your home to the place visited or (b) the mileage you would have incurred if your journey had begun from your permanent workplace, to the place visited, by the shortest practicable route.

Training

All candidates are required to possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to effectively and efficiently perform the duties of an NCO prior to being deployed within their located Prison.

All candidates successful in this competition will be required to complete an initial 9 weeks training programme at the Prison Service College at Hydebank Wood and undertake any other training as required to perform the duties of the post they have been assigned to. Starting time on the 1st day will be 09.00; thereafter start/finish times will be 08.00 – 16.45 but there will be occasions during job-shadowing when these will be subject to change.

You will be required to attend an extensive training programme on appointment this will include training in Use of Force and Control and Restraint Techniques. At the end of this initial training an assessment of your capability to fulfill your role in the NIPS will be carried out. If the assessment confirms that you have not achieved the acceptable standard your appointment may be terminated.

As well as a high level of occupational competence, successful candidates will be required to conduct themselves in line with the standards required for the conduct of NIPS employees. Should you display unacceptable behaviour, or a conduct issue arises, this may result in dismissal.

At the end of the initial training an assessment of your capability to fulfil your role in the NIPS will be carried out. If the assessment confirms you have not achieved the acceptable standard your appointment may be terminated.

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

Vetting Requirements

Those successful at interview will require clearance to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), and an Enhanced AccessNI check which includes checked against the barred list. Please refer to page 28 for further information.

You will be required to complete these questionnaires within two weeks of receiving them (or you risk your application being discontinued).

Health Requirements

Those successful at interview for the role of an NCO in NIPS should be aware that the role is both physically and psychologically challenging, requiring a level of physical fitness that ensures duties are carried out effectively and safely, without undue stress or risk of injury. Successful candidates may be required to undergo and pass extensive medical checks (details of which can be found at **Annex A** on page 29) before being offered a position.

Outside employment in the Reserve Forces & Voluntary Work

While employed by NIPS you must seek permission from NIPS to undertake Secondary Employment or to join the Emergency or Voluntary Rescue Services.

Tattoos

The NIPS recognises that having a tattoo does not necessarily prevent you from serving in or joining the NIPS. However, certain tattoos and their visibility may not be acceptable.

All NCOs are required to adhere with the Corporate Uniform Standard. Therefore, careful consideration will be given by the organisation to any tattoos on the head, face, neck and hands or tattoos which cannot be covered by uniform. This includes the size, nature and prominence of the tattoos in question.

- Tattoos will be unacceptable if they are contrary to any of the equality areas identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or are in contravention of the NICS Standards of Conduct.
- Whether visible or not, tattoos will be unacceptable where they could reasonably be interpreted as offensive to members of the public, those in our care or colleagues due to their content or alignment with a particular group.

- The NIPS regularly engages with some of the most vulnerable members of society. Therefore, tattoos which conceal the identity of an NCO to the extent where it would potentially inhibit their ability as an NCO to undertake their duties or which may make a member of the public feel uncomfortable, intimidated or threatened will be unacceptable.

All tattoos must be described giving size, location and nature. A verifiable translation must accompany any tattoos containing non-English words, characters or representations. Applicants to the NIPS may be required to supply photographs of tattoos as a condition of the recruitment process.

Probationary

Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. All appointees will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

Uniform

A uniform is provided for all new staff which you must wear at all times whilst on duty and when required to do so. Each establishment has a set of Governor's Orders pertaining to the standard of dress for staff and you will be expected to maintain a clean, neat and tidy appearance at all times. Staff uniforms are not currently worn at Hydebank Wood College which currently attracts a clothing allowance.

Further Information / Contact

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

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Purpose

To be accountable for the security and safe custody of all prisoners during night duty periods.

Main duties and responsibilities

1. Providing a safe & secure environment

- Ensuring that all areas at location, both within the accommodation and around the perimeter, are patrolled at frequent but irregular intervals throughout time of duty.
- Ensuring that any requests from prisoners are forwarded to the Night Manager immediately for appropriate action.
- Regularly reviewing prisoners who are subject to a “Prisoner at Risk” (SPAR) form and following any instruction contained therein and to record observations as necessary.
- Identify prisoners showing signs of distress or under the influence of illicit substances and take appropriate action in the situation including unlocking prisoners in the event of an emergency.
- Participating in cell relocation, using Control & Restraint (C&R) techniques if necessary.
- Applying fire, evacuation and night sanitation procedures, including the proper use of cell keys as required.
- Adherence to Governor’s Orders and Special Instructions as they apply to area of operation (including the maintenance of the Night Guard Journal).

2. Promoting decent custody

- Promotes the aims and values of the NIPS.
- Treat prisoners humanely, taking account of their human rights and dignity within the framework of Human Rights and Equality legislation.
- Ensuring that all prisoners are observed at frequent regular intervals during time of duty.

3. Prisoner engagement

- Supporting prisoners as required and ensuring that any irregularities or unusual occurrences are reported immediately to the Night Manager.
- Escorting prisoners outside the establishments as required during night duty.
- Completion of Progressive Regimes Earned Privileges reports on adverse prisoner behaviour and attitude during night duty.
- Undertake full Emergency Control Room duties as required.

4. General

- Receiving and signing for night guard equipment and where necessary for keys including Home Office keys, pegging key, fire key(s), Hoffman knife and radio transmitter at the commencement of each shift and returning same at end of shift.
- Carrying out all necessary head counts, identifying each prisoner on commencing duty, prior to terminating duty and at any other times as laid down in Governors Orders or on the instruction of the Night Manager.
- Ensuring that the recording clock system is pegged at his/her location on commencing duty, at the end of duty and at intervals of not more than 60 minutes throughout the night.
- Maintaining constant radio contact with Emergency Control Room throughout time of duty.
- Operation of official computer equipment for work purposes.
- Remaining on duty until properly relieved and a handover is complete before going off post.
- Implementing the prison disciplinary process as appropriate including attendance at adjudications during daytime hours.
- Giving evidence at court and at other hearings.

The above list is not exhaustive 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.

Before you apply, ask yourself ... Can you commit?

Working Hours / Location

- NIPS operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year therefore you may be asked to volunteer to work overtime/additional hours at short notice.
- The operational requirements also mean that you will be needed to work during seasonal holiday periods and bank holidays.

Uniform Requirements

- You will be expected to wear a uniform at all times whilst on duty, with the exception of Hydebank Wood College and Female Prison.

Training and Skills

- You must successfully complete a challenging training programme with regular and ongoing assessment.

Professional Standards

- You will be required to deal with individuals who are volatile and often unpredictable.
- You will be required to work in challenging environments and deal with complex and difficult situations.
- You will be required to display a high degree of motivation, be conscientious, resilient and act with a high degree of integrity.
- You will be responsible and accountable for your own actions or omissions.
- NIPS expect all staff to act professionally both on and off duty at all times. It is expected that you maintain the highest standards of integrity at all times and throughout your service.
- NIPS expect all staff to treat colleagues, and those in their custody with respect recognising the need for fairness, impartiality and confidentiality.
- NIPS expects all staff to respect plurality and diversity and not to discriminate against any prisoner on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, political or other opinion, disability or, in the case of a prisoner, the type of offence alleged or committed by that prisoner.
- NIPS require all staff to respect human rights of those in your care and ensure compliance with Human Rights legislation.
- NIPS require all staff to manage resources efficiently and effectively at all times.

Employment within the NIPS is probationary for a period of one year.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment for this competition will comprise of several stages as outlined below:

1. Online Application Form;
2. Formal Screening of Applications;
3. Online Assessment;
4. Interview; and
5. Merit List.

1. ONLINE APPLICATION

- Read the Candidate Information Booklet and fully consider and ensure you meet the eligibility requirements and commitment needed.
- If you wish to apply, complete your online application at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk
- **Please note that candidates can be placed at any location therefore if you are offered and do not accept a post due to its location no other offers will be made.**

2. FORMAL SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS

- Formal screening of applications will take place to ensure that you meet the statutory requirements for working within the NIPS (nationality, age, etc). **Only detail included in the application form will be considered. Further clarification will not be sought.**
- Applications deemed invalid at this stage will be withdrawn from the competition and these candidates will be notified accordingly.

3. ONLINE ASSESSMENT

During this stage of the selection process you will be required to complete an online assessment to determine your suitability for the Night Custody Officer role. The online assessment consists of 2 Tests.

Test 1: Verbal - assesses your ability to organise written material in the way that makes the most sense.

Test 2: Following Procedures and Basic Calculations - assesses your ability to follow rules and apply criteria, and to do calculations correctly.

- The time allowed for these tests is;
 - **Verbal – 25 minutes**
 - **Following Procedures and Basic Calculations – 20 minutes**
- You will be able to complete a familiarisation test in advance of the 'live' test and you are strongly encouraged to acquaint yourself with this.
- You should receive an email (sent to the email address you provided) with a link to the online test on **Tuesday 2nd August 2022 by 5pm**. You

will have until **5pm on Tuesday 9th August 2022** to complete the tests. The link will take you to a website where you will find the test and the familiarisation materials. The online test can be completed in your own time and at a place that suits you.

- If you do not receive an email on **Tuesday 2nd August 2022 by 5pm**, please e-mail recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net inserting **'Night Custody Officer test link not received'** in the subject line.

Preparing for your online assessment

You will need a computer, a working webcam and a reliable internet connection. You will need to use an up to date **Chrome** or **Microsoft Edge** browser on your PC. If you are using a Mac, **you MUST use Chrome**.

Do not use a tablet, phone or Chromebook. Safari is not supported.

Once you have accessed the assessment website **you MUST do the following before you can take the live tests** – and you need to do these things well in advance of taking the live tests. **We recommend that you access the site and start the process straight away.**

NOTE – the final deadline for completing of the live tests is by **5pm on Tuesday 9th August 2022**.

- 1. Verify your identity**
- 2. Check your webcam**
- 3. Study the Familiarisation material**

1. Verify your ID

Before starting the ID Verification process, you should click the yellow-highlighted link at the top of the main menu page ('ID Verification and Proctoring – instructions, common issues and resolutions.pdf') and read the document. If you encounter a problem with your ID verification or starting a live test, please consult it before emailing support.

NOTE – you cannot start the live tests unless your ID has been verified.

For this you will need to have a valid photo ID (Passports, driving licenses and electoral cards are acceptable photo IDs). The process is straightforward and is explained at the time. Using the webcam, you will need to take a webcam image of yourself and image photo ID (e.g. passport). You will be asked to enter your email after taking the photos so that we can inform you of the verification by email.

We will check your ID and you will receive an email from **ProctorSupport@assessmentintelligence.com** informing you of the outcome (**but do check your junk/spam folder and do log on to check your ID verification status if you feel you are waiting too long**). You may be asked to re-take the photos and this is not uncommon, so please start the

verification process early to ensure you have enough time to complete the process. You can check your ID Verification Status by logging in. If you have not been notified within 24 hours of submitting images AND your online verification status is still 'Submitted waiting approval', email support@assessmentintelligence.com including your **Candidate Reference Number** and 'IRC281117' in the subject line.

We advise you to submit your webcam images as soon as possible. You should have submitted your images for identity verification by 6pm, on Sunday 7th August 2022 otherwise we cannot guarantee that the identity verification process will be completed in time for you to take the live tests before the final deadline.

NOTE – if the name on your photo ID will differ significantly from your name on your application, you MUST inform HR Connect by emailing Recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC281117' in the subject line. Your email should explain the reason and include any supporting document (e.g. marriage certificate).

NOTE – you MUST complete the identity verification process online.

Under no circumstances send any images by email – unless we specifically request it.

Please note, it is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your images in good time.

2. Check your webcam

NOTE – you will need a working webcam to enable the proctoring to take place. The onus is on candidates to ensure they have access to a webcam, regrettably no alternatives are available.

You can check your webcam by clicking the 'Webcam test' button on the test site. You will see your image being shown. As well as running the webcam check, make sure that your face is clearly visible and be aware that that is how you should be throughout the live tests.

Do this well in advance of taking the live tests and do it **immediately before taking the live tests** in case something has changed.

3. Study the Familiarisation material

It is ESSENTIAL that you use the online familiarisation material to check that your browser and the internet connection that you intend to take the live test on are compatible with the online tests. Note that some network firewalls may block access to the test site or prevent images from showing. If you can

complete the Verification of ID process, your Webcam check is successful and the Familiarisation material works well on your IT equipment, this is a good indication that the live tests will work also. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you access the Familiarisation materials using the computer and internet connection that you intend to take the live test on well in advance of the tests.

The familiarisation material will give you a detailed description of the tests, include full instructions for completing the tests and provide example questions so that you know how to record your answers and navigate your way around the tests. You should be fully familiar with these things before taking the live tests in order to perform at your best.

Taking the Live Assessment

For best results we recommend completing the online assessments in a test-like environment. Any possible distractions should be turned off, for example mobile phones, TV and music. Concentration is needed throughout the assessments, so when completing each test, ensure other people are aware that they should not disturb you until you are finished. No responsibility can be accepted for any issues arising from where you choose to sit the tests.

Before starting a live test you should close all other browsers and browser tabs. You should not take the test on a computer that is remotely connected to a work network as the link may be unstable.

Once you log into the test platform and complete the honesty and privacy statements you will see a menu showing (i) the Identity Verification, (ii) Webcam check and (iii) the Familiarisation material. The links to the live assessments will appear on the menu once your identity has been verified.

Immediately before you click the start button to begin a live assessment, there will be an image of you at the bottom of the page. This should be a front-on view of you as you take the assessment. You need to make sure that you are clearly seen in this image before starting the assessment and that you will remain visible in the image during the assessment. Another photo of you will be taken by the webcam for a last automated check before starting each assessment.

During the assessment, you will see a small video stream from your webcam in the top left corner. Images from this stream will be monitored.

We take great care with your webcam images and retain them for as short a time as possible. The image of your photo ID is deleted as soon as your identity has been verified.

Technical issues

If you lose internet connection while in the live test, you should immediately close your browser.

You will be able to continue the test without losing time and your previous answers will have been saved (except possibly on the last page you were on before losing connection).

If you experience any other issue while taking the live test, you should immediately close your browser and email support@assessmentintelligence.com including your **Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC281117' in the subject line.**

If you do need to close your browser or your computer crashes and restarts, you must start up a fresh browser and paste in the test link again. **If your browser starts up and reloads the test again automatically, you must close it down immediately and start from a fresh browser. If your browser starts up and asks if you want to restore sessions or pages, you MUST decline.**

Final deadline

IMPORTANT – you must complete all the live tests by **Tuesday 9th August 2022 at 5pm** and we strongly advise that you complete them well in advance of the deadline. If you leave it towards the end of the assessment window and find you have a problem (e.g., with your computer or internet) you may not have time to resolve your problem and complete the tests before the deadline. You must have submitted your images for ID Verification before **6pm on Sunday 7th August 2022** and preferably well before then.

Disability Requirements: Reasonable Adjustment Requests

The NIPS is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. If you have a disability you may request a reasonable adjustment to ensure you are given as much support as possible throughout the recruitment process.

It is essential that you do this in advance of starting the live test. You will need to provide relevant evidence to support your request for a reasonable adjustment, for example, an occupational psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

Evidence to support your request should be sent to HRConnect at recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net as soon as possible following submission of your application.

Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number IRC281117 and title it 'Supporting evidence for reasonable adjustment request'. We may contact you directly to discuss your requirements.

It is essential that special arrangements concerning any adjustment requests are made in advance of starting the live test, as retrospective arrangements cannot be made after you have started.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information on the GIS can be found on the NICS Recruitment website under the section 'Information for Disabled Applicants' -

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/pages/content.aspx?Page=Information-for-Disabled-Applicants->

In assessing whether applicants meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria, they are required to undertake a test/assessment. All applicants must achieve the required minimum score in order to be invited to interview.

Should a large number of candidates achieve the required score, we may limit the overall numbers of interviews offered and those applicants who demonstrate they best meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the job (i.e. the highest scoring) will be invited to interview. In this scenario, we will take positive action to ensure that the number of GIS applicants invited to interview will be in proportion to those who pass the test/assessment.

4. INTERVIEW

- Candidates who are successful in Stage 3 of the assessment process will be invited to interview in phases based on Test score order and the number of vacancies to be filled.
- **Further phases of interviews will be conducted as additional vacancies arise during the lifetime of this competition. You should therefore check your e-mails (and junk mail folder) /SMS messages on a regular basis in the event that you are notified of an interview.**
- **You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition.**
- The interview will be conducted remotely online via Cisco WebEx. Further guidance for online interviews can be found on www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk
- **Please be advised that while it is anticipated that interviews will continue to take place via the Webex platform, other delivery methods may be considered in line with the relevant government health advice.**
- The interview will be based on NICS Competency Framework for the NCO grade as outlined below.
- **Candidates must present appropriate photographic identification (passport or driving licence) at the start of the interview for the WebEx interview to proceed.**
- If you pass the interview you will be placed on an order of merit list.
- The top scoring candidates will start the security clearance including self-disclosure and medical processes.
- As vacancies arise candidates will be offered these in merit order based on business need.

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.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 1.

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.

The NIPS has a Core Competence Framework, which is grade specific and describes what people need to do in order to be effective at work. It is not enough to just have the knowledge and skills to do our jobs. Competence is about what people actually do, it is about how you apply or demonstrate the knowledge and skills whilst carrying out your tasks. Demonstrated competence is observable and measurable.

The competency requirements for the role of NCO are categorised under:

- 1. Seeing the Big Picture;**
- 2. Making Effective Decisions;**
- 3. Leading and Communicating; and**
- 4. Collaborating and Partnering.**

Interview questions will be designed to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in the above areas and award marks accordingly. The evidence you use may relate to your achievements and/or experiences in any kind of setting, for example, work, education or leisure and must, of course be factual.

Further guidance on preparing for the interview can be found on page 23. It is important that candidates being invited for interview read the guidance and prepare appropriately for attending interview.

INTERVIEW CRITERIA

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility criteria applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

1. 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. It is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet NIPS goals and deliver the greatest value.

Effective Behaviours

- Gather information from a range of relevant sources inside and outside their Department to inform own work.
- Understand what is required of them in their role, and how this contributes to team and departmental priorities.

- Consider how their own job links with, and impacts on, colleagues and others in partner organisations.

Marks available: 20

2. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. It means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Effective Behaviours

- Make and record effective decisions following the appropriate decision making criteria, framework or guidance.
- Ask questions when unsure what to do.
- Undertake appropriate analysis to support decisions or recommendations.
- Investigate and respond to gaps, errors and irregularities in information.
- Speak up to clarify decisions and query those constructively.
- Think through the implications of own decisions before confirming how to approach a problem/issue.

Marks available: 20

3. Leading and Communicating

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.

Effective Behaviours

- Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method e.g. email / telephone / face to face.
- Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others.
- Write clearly in plain, simple language and check work for spelling and grammar, learning from previous inaccuracies.
- Ask open questions to appreciate the point of view of others.

Marks available: 20

4. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NIPS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Effective Behaviour

- Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team.
- Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences.
- Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively.
- Be open to taking on different roles.
- Try to see issues from others' perspectives and check understanding.
- Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others.

Marks available: 20

Candidates will be required to achieve an overall score of 40/80 in order to pass the interview.

INTERVIEWS DATES & AVAILABILITY

It is intended that the first phase of interviews for this post will take place via WebEx from week commencing Monday 29th August 2022.

Please note that further phases of interviews will be conducted at a later date as vacancies arise. If you are therefore not called for interview during the first phase you may be called during subsequent phases (which may take place up to 18 months following advertisement) and should therefore check your e-mails/SMS messages on a regular basis in the event that you are notified of an interview. You should also ensure that you make HRConnect aware of any change to your contact details during the lifetime of this competition.

Please be advised that while it is anticipated that interviews will continue to take place via the Webex platform, other delivery methods may be considered in line with the relevant government health advice.

Reschedule requests will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

If having received your invitation, you decide to withdraw from the competition, please inform HRConnect as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of receiving your invitation. This time frame will assist us in the timely rescheduling of panels.

Key Dates

Closing date for applications	12 noon Friday 8 th July 2022
Closing date for ID verification	6pm Sunday 7 th August 2022
Live test available	5pm Tuesday 2 nd August 2022
Final deadline for completion of live test	5pm Tuesday 9 th August 2022

Order of Merit

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

Candidates will normally only receive one offer of appointment from this competition unless there are exceptional individual circumstances which would require a further offer to be made.

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

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in NIPS is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition.

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.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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

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

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

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

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

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

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience 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.

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

Making your application

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.

Application Form Submission

- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before an application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted.
- Only online applications will be accepted.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- Please note - the session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances such as new contact details. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details for each applicant.

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible (**either via email or SMS**), you should therefore check your email account (including junk mail and spam) and SMS messages 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 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.

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

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

Applications from Roman Catholics, women, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcomed for this post.

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

Eligibility and Nationality Vetting Requirements

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

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.

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. Counter Terrorism Check (CTC)

For NCO posts in NICS, the level of vetting is CTC. To facilitate this you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport; OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g.P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version);
- c) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice@gov.uk;
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Please note that this role requires CTC clearance, which would normally require 3 years' UK residency in the past 3. This is not an absolute requirement but supplementary checks may be required where individuals have not lived in the UK for the required period. This may mean that your security clearance (and therefore your appointment) will take longer or, in some cases, not be possible.

We will carry out a Criminal Record Check on all candidates through AccessNI.

The category of AccessNI check required for these posts is an Enhanced Disclosure.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/>. Those candidates who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview and, will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. This can be downloaded from the AccessNI website. Guidance notes of the completion of the form are also included on the website. 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 above form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.**

The AccessNI code of practice can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni. Criminal Record information is subject to the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exception) Order (NI) 1979 applies to the Northern Ireland Prison Service. You should therefore not withhold information about previous conviction, caution or fixed penalty ticket on the grounds that it is for other purposes spent under the Order. You should therefore declare ALL previous convictions, whether spent or otherwise. Please note that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The role of an NCO in NIPS is both physically and psychologically challenging, requiring a level of mental and physical capacity that ensures duties are carried out effectively and safely, without undue stress or risk of injury.

Activities that place a high demand on physical fitness are generally infrequent but when required they are often critical to success. The failure of an NCO to perform a given duty because of a lack of mental and/or physical capacity could have serious, even fatal consequences for the officer, his or her colleagues, prisoners and the public. Certain conditions may be incompatible with work within NIPS for example those causing sudden and unexpected loss of consciousness or dizziness or significant restriction of physical fitness or mobility. Candidates should note that a history of a significant medical condition which interferes with the functional ability to undertake the duties of the post or has the potential to put the candidate or anyone else at significant risk may be a cause for rejection but that cases will be assessed individually in compliance with relevant disability legislation.

All candidates must be physically and psychologically capable of undertaking the work of an NCO. Fitness testing may be carried out by NIPS after recruitment on a periodic/regular and ongoing basis.

Please note that the candidate is responsible for any costs incurred obtaining any medical reports or contact lenses if required (detailed below at Annex A). Failure to enclose the necessary reports will result in applications being returned.

The following health standards must be met by all candidates in order for them to be deemed fit to work as an NCO:

Night Custody Officers need to be physically fit and have a standard of health such that neither their safety, the safety of their colleagues nor the safety of prisoners should be compromised.

Candidates should have a body mass index (BMI) within the range of 19-30. A BMI outside the 19-30 range may not in itself be a bar to employment unless there is an impairment of functional capacity.

Blood pressure must be within acceptable limits.

Where a candidate indicates on their health declaration that they suffer from an ongoing medical condition they are required to include with their health declaration a medical report from their GP/Consultant indicating the nature of the condition and any likely impact on functional ability to work as an NCO.

Insulin dependent diabetics may be accepted if their GP/Specialist confirms that they can demonstrate long-term stability of their diabetic control without significant hypoglycaemic episodes. An individual with a history of significant hypoglycaemic episodes may be rejected. An individual with a history of impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia may be rejected. Candidates must ask

their GP/Specialist to complete a diabetic form and return this with their health declaration.

Tuberculosis (TB) immunity will be assessed at pre-employment assessment, candidates must submit a completed TB immunity letter with their health declaration, candidates must also comply with any additional tests required to establish TB immunity.

Eyesight requirements:-

a. (i) No corrective lenses required; uncorrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

**(ii) Corrective spectacles worn; uncorrected minimum 6/24 - 6/24
corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12**

(iii) Contact lenses worn; corrected minimum 6/12 - 6/12

If contact lenses are needed to meet the visual acuity standard, a certificate from the applicant's Optometrist / Ophthalmic medical practitioner will be required. The certificate should indicate that the lenses are appropriate, well tolerated, without adverse effect and can be worn for at least 14 hours continuously per day.

The uncorrected visual acuity (i.e. without contact lenses) must also be stated.

They should also have alternative corrective lenses in the form of glasses, in the event of inability for any reason to wear contact lenses at work

b Candidates must have a normal test of colour vision.

c If you have any doubt that your eyesight does not meet the relevant standard, you are advised to consult a qualified optician before completing the application form.