

Deputy Departmental Solicitor Departmental Solicitor's Office Department of Finance (Grade 3)

£96,170 - £107,566 per annum

IRC281925

Completed application forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than **12 noon (UK time) on Friday 27th January 2023.**

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

Candidate Information Booklet



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FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the role of Deputy Departmental Solicitor in the Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO).

DSO is the in-house legal office servicing the Northern Ireland Executive departments. We are a critical part of the machinery of government in Northern Ireland. We are at the heart of the most difficult governmental decisions about the exercise of Executive power in Northern Ireland.

We are looking for a motivated, innovative leader who will play a pivotal role and work collaboratively across all departments, and advise on a wide range of significant and complex issues. With economic, social, constitutional and political developments all happening at pace, this will be a challenging time for a unique role.

To be successful, you will need to be an exceptional senior solicitor or barrister with a strong track record of leading the delivery of high-quality legal services and improving a business. You will be confident in building strong professional relationships internally and

externally at the most senior levels. You will also have experience in delivering timely and accurate legal advice and solutions on complex issues in high profile, often fast-moving situations.

We offer a fantastic reward package, and you will get to lead in an office that is on the cutting edge of designing new law to deliver Northern Ireland's future; advises on some of the largest commercial and property transactions in Northern Ireland; and conducts some of its most challenging and contentious of litigation. You will get to work directly with Ministers and with the most senior of civil servants and other stakeholders. You will get to make a difference.

If you are looking for a new challenge, I welcome your interest and wish you well in your application.

Hugh Widdis
Departmental Solicitor

CONTEXT

Departmental Solicitor's Office

The purpose of DSO is to provide excellent legal advice, counsel and representation so as to serve, enable and empower government bodies in Northern Ireland to achieve their objectives within the rule of law. It has six legal Divisions, supported by a Corporate Services Division:

- Commercial and Property Division;
- Litigation Division; and
- Four Advisory Divisions.

DSO assists and supports Northern Ireland Ministers and departments, their agencies and some non-departmental public bodies in the formation and delivery of the Executive's Programme for Government; and in the performance of their functions in the devolved sphere of government in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for advising departments across a huge range of serious and complex issues, for example:

- defending departments' interests in a wide range of litigation including judicial review, and initiating cases on their behalf;

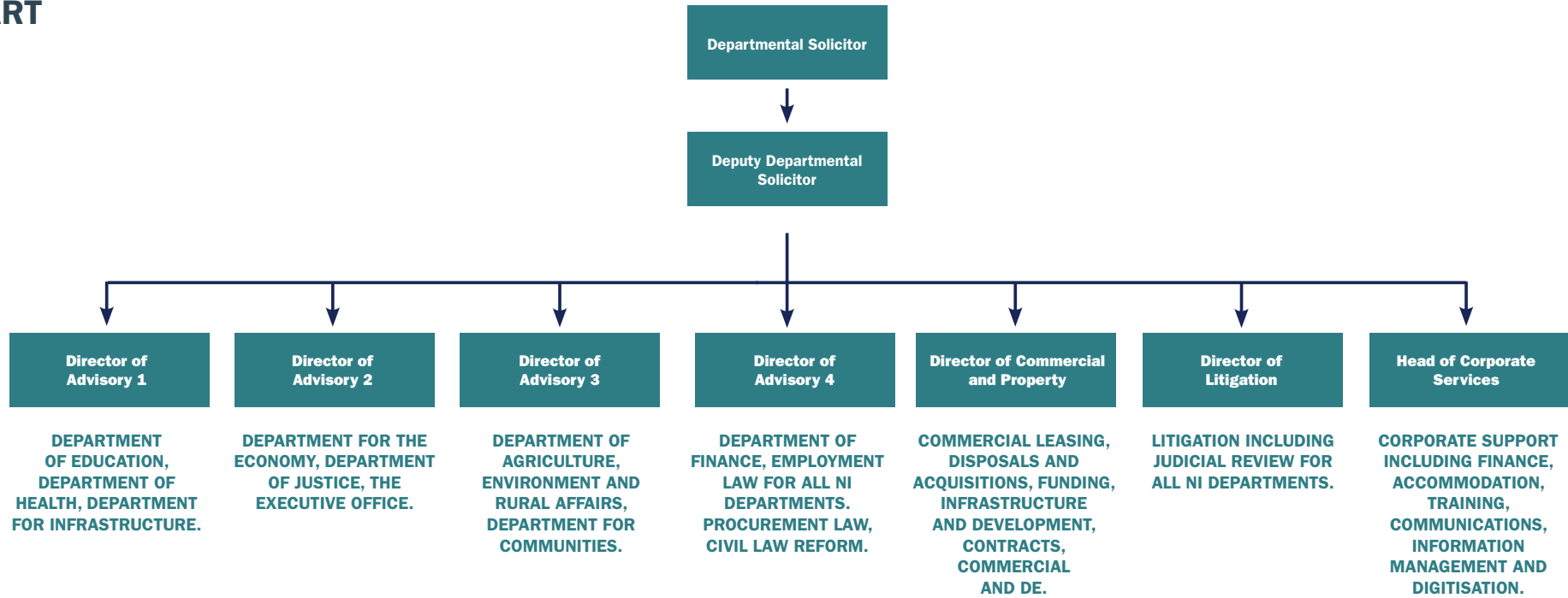
- advising on the development of departmental policies and legislation, and on the exercise of departmental functions;
- advising on the departments' very substantial property and commercial interests;
- advising on complex governmental issues such as human rights, the changing constitution, and EU exit.

DSO also has policy responsibility for civil law reform.

DSO is currently headquartered at Lanyon Plaza, Lanyon Place, Belfast.

ORGANISATION CHART

DSO MANAGEMENT BOARD



CONTEXT

The Role

This is a critical role operating across all of Northern Ireland government. The postholder will be counsellor to the most senior clients in government. You will also be a leader of delivery, excellence and improvement in one of Northern Ireland's largest and busiest legal practices.

Central

The role makes a significant contribution to the delivery and continuous improvement of high quality legal services for the Executive and departments. Everything we do assists and guides the rest of government in our relentless pursuit of better outcomes for the people of Northern Ireland.

This role is at the very centre of government. It is one of the top 40 posts in the NI Civil Service. It reports directly to the Departmental Solicitor who is, at Permanent Secretary grade, a member of the NI Civil Service Board. It is currently an executive member of the DSO Management Board, as well as an executive member of the Management Board of the Department of Finance.

Substantial

The role has line management responsibility for six Legal Director Reports. Together they lead teams of over

150 legal and administrative staff, making us one of Northern Ireland's largest legal offices. Our clients have an asset base of over £38bn, spend approximately £3bn under contract every year, and employ over 23,000 staff. They exercise substantial powers every day and are challenged in thousands of cases every year.

The postholder will have a substantial level of autonomy in both delivering personal legal advice and services at the highest level, and in overall coordination of the legal delivery divisions inside DSO.

Exceptional

This role requires exceptional characteristics of legal excellence, judgment, diplomacy, collaboration, and influencing. You will be a superb lawyer; but the ability to establish and maintain effective and productive working relationships with senior civil servants, policy-makers, lawyers, managers, stakeholders and delivery partners is also essential.

Beyond DSO, the role is expected to contribute and collaborate widely across government, as part of the Senior Civil Service as a shared resource.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Leadership

- Supporting the Departmental Solicitor in leading and managing DSO to achieving its vision and secure its objectives;
- Supporting the Departmental Solicitor in enhancing the capability of the senior teams to provide leadership and direction to DSO;
- Strategic lead on the development and capability of professional legal staff, supported by NICSHR and People and Organisational Development;
- Representing DSO on the Management Boards of Department of Finance (DoF) and the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland (GLSNI).

Clients and advice

- Personally providing authoritative legal advice and services at the most senior levels (SCS/Ministerial) on complex matters;
- Engage and have positive influence with a diverse range of stakeholders including the Attorney

General, Ministers, Judiciary, Crown Solicitor, the professional bodies, Permanent Secretaries, Crown Counsel, NIO and others;

- Providing engaged line-management to the Divisional Directors in delivery of DSO objectives and supporting them as required in providing handling and legal advice in complex and important issues.

Management

- Overseeing and co-ordinating the activities of the DSO Legal Divisions;
- Promoting a strong culture of performance, subsidiarity, quality and pace;
- Representing DSO or deputising for the Departmental Solicitor as required;
- Strategic cross-DSO responsibility in relation to developing and delivering EU Exit response and Legislative Drafting response;

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Contributing and collaborating in wider government outside DSO as part of the SCS as a shared resource;
- Lead on internal and external communications, quality standards, employee relations, engagement and TUS issues inside DSO.

Policy and operation of government

- Assist the Departmental Solicitor and DoF in advice to Minister of Finance including Civil Law Reform and other policy briefing, Assembly Questions and correspondence;
- Such other work as may be required from time to time, including leading for DSO in any specific professional legal specialism of the post holder, supported as necessary by lawyers in relevant Divisions.

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.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Eligibility Criteria

1. Have at least seven years' post qualification experience, in the successful delivery of legal advice in at least one of the following areas:
 - Constitutional/Public/Administrative law.
 - EU/EU Exit law.
 - Litigation.
 - Commercial/property law.
2. Have a minimum of five years' senior management* experience of successfully leading a team of lawyers in delivering high quality professional legal services, and of leading and governing a team.
3. Demonstrable evidence at a senior management level* of successfully improving the delivery of legal services.
4. Be a solicitor or barrister entitled to practise in Northern Ireland.

Application Sift

Only the employment history and eligibility sections will be made available to the selection panel. Applicants should note that if a large number of applications are received, the panel may carry out an **initial** sift, assessing **only** information provided against **eligibility criterion 1**. For each of those applications sufficiently satisfying **eligibility criterion 1**, the panel will then consider the written evidence provided against the other criteria, taking forward only those candidates that best meet all criteria. Applicants should therefore provide the necessary relevant evidence against each specific criterion; the panel will not “read across” application forms to determine eligibility from evidence detailed under another criterion.

Shortlisting Criteria

In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the information

*Outside the NICS this would be equivalent to head of an in-house legal service, or a partner in a substantial firm. In a NICS context this would usually be at Grade 5 level.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

provided by candidates in response to **eligibility criteria 1, 2 and 3**. This will be completed on a scored basis and only the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

The panel will complete this assessment against the information provided by applicants in the application form only.

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 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 at [**Information for Disabled Applicants**](#)

If you wish to apply under the GIS, you must declare this on your application form. Shortlisting criteria will not apply to GIS applicants.

If you do not wish to apply under the GIS, but do require us to make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, you should provide details on your application form. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process. Details of any disability are only used for these purposes and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be asked to outline any reasonable 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.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The Merit Principle

In accordance with 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.

Selection Panel

Deirdre Toner	Civil Service Commissioner (Chair)
Hugh Widdis	Departmental Solicitor, DSO
Helen Lentle	Director of Legal Services, Welsh Government
Colum Boyle	Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities

Date	Stage
9th January 2023	Advertise
27th January 2023	Closing date for applications
8th February 2023	Eligibility sift
w/c 27th March 2023	Interview

SELECTION PROCESS

Throughout the process, candidates will be assessed against the skills and experience set out under Person Specification and will be expected to demonstrate the leadership behaviours of the NICS competency framework: Setting Direction, Engaging People and Delivering Results.

Information on the NICS leadership behaviours and competences (skills, knowledge and behaviours) can be found [here](#). These indicators are not designed to be comprehensive, rather to give an understanding of what is expected of NICS leaders.

Eligibility Sift

After the closing date, all applications will be carefully considered and evaluated by the selection panel on the basis of the written evidence provided against the eligibility criteria. Only the employment history and eligibility sections will be made available to the panel. The selection panel will assess the applications in response to the criteria, taking forward those candidates that best meet the criteria.

Scenario Based Presentation

As part of the selection process candidates will be required to make a presentation lasting 7 minutes. The presentation topic will be provided on the day of interview and 30 minutes preparation time will be given. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 45 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview appointment to allow time to prepare their presentation.

A flipchart and writing materials will be provided for candidates' use. No personal documentation may be brought into the pre-interview room. Candidates will be allowed to bring any flipchart sheets and some short speaking notes into the interview room for assistance during the presentation (but note that use of the flipchart is not mandatory). No other materials or visual aids will be permitted. The presentation will be used to assess the **Leading and Communicating and Building Capability for All competences**.

SELECTION PROCESS

In the interview which follows the presentation, the panel will further assess candidates against the skills and experience set out in the Person Specification, assessing the leadership behaviours of the following competences:

Setting Direction: Seeing the Big Picture, Changing and Improving, Making Effective Decisions.

Delivering Results: Managing a Quality Service.

The panel will score and list those suitable for appointment in order of merit. Candidates need to reach the minimum standard across all competences in the assessment process in order to achieve the pass mark.

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is one full time vacancy. This is a permanent appointment to the Senior Civil Service (SCS), the NICS top leadership and management resource.

Secondment

Consideration will be given to the secondment of the successful candidate from their 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.

All parties will agree the duration 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 is based in Lanyon Plaza, 7 Lanyon Place, Belfast. Potential for remote working will be considered in line with the NICS Hybrid Working policy.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £96,170 - £107,566 (under review).

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

In order to comply with the disclosure requirements in our Annual Accounts, we may be required to disclose details of the total remuneration, including any taxable benefits in kind and pension benefits for this post in our annual accounts. Further information

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

may be disclosed in line with any future disclosure requirements relating to the senior management of departments. It is a condition attaching to the appointment to any SCS post in Northern Ireland that appointees agree to these disclosure requirements.

A successful candidate will, on appointment, become a member of the SCS. As a member of the SCS the post holder may be transferred to other posts at the same level.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package providing a range of valuable benefits both for the member and their dependants, providing peace of mind when it comes to planning for future retirement. Provisions also include generous ill-health, death and dependants' benefits and scope to boost pensions through paying Additional Voluntary Contributions.

For 2022-23 the current employer contribution is 34.2% of salary and the employee contribution is 7.35% of salary between £56,400.00 and £153,299.99.

More details can be obtained from the website www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni or if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions at Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Londonderry, BT47 6FP

Tel: 02871 319000

Email: cspensions@finance-ni.gov.uk

Holidays

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

Hours of Work

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

Travel

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required for this post is Counter Terrorism Check (CTC).

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. 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.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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.

To ensure openness and transparency, registers of interests of senior officials will be made available/published – for further details see below:

[Dear Accounting Officer letters \(DAOs\) 2021 | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Claire Archbold on 02890520713 or email Claire at **Claire.archbold@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk**

If you or require any documentation in an alternative format, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: **recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net**

HOW TO APPLY

Please register to this vacancy and complete an online application form www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE:

- 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:

If you require any documentation in an alternative format, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1300 330 or email recruitment@hrconnect.ni.gov.uk

Should you require it, you can 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

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 12 noon on Friday 27th January 2023.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

HRConnect will issue electronic competition communications. Please check your email account regularly, including junk mail folder, to make sure that you do not miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Please ensure you inform HRConnect immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. You should ensure that the required documents are readily available. Guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

We 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 re below:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iv) EEA national with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or

(v) Relevant EEA or Turkish national working in the Civil Service; or

(vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish national who has built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or

(vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals.

ALL candidates are required to state their nationality in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form.

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.**

FURTHER INFORMATION

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](#). 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.

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

Security

For this post in the NICS the level of vetting is Counter Terrorism Check (CTC). For this check you will be required to provide the following:

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard
 - 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. Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.

HRConnect will contact you and organise for CTC to be carried out by Defence Business Services, National Security Vetting should this be required before the conclusion of the recruitment process.

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.

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Feedback

The NICS 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 at each stage of the recruitment process.

**THIS CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET DOES NOT
FORM PART OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

