



## **Candidate Information Booklet**

**IRC286754**

### **Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division - Grade 5**

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBI)

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## **Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBI)**

### **Communication between HRConnect and you**

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account 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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## Foreword from the Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in this important executive post of Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and is the Northern Ireland government's main research and science provider in the agri-food and marine sectors. In addition to our work for DAERA, AFBI also undertakes a substantial and increasing programme of externally funded research and other scientific work, which is secured from a range of public sector funding organisations, other public sector bodies, industry funders and commercial companies.

We are an internationally recognised multidisciplinary scientific organisation with a broad remit of work which spans across leading improvements in the agri-food industry, protecting animal, plant and human health, and enhancing the natural and marine environment. Our staff undertake scientific research, statutory surveillance, analytical and diagnostic testing in the fields of sustainable agricultural systems, animal health and welfare, plant science, food safety and innovation, environmental protection, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, and agricultural and rural economics.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs is a critical role in the organisation with responsibility for delivery of the effective and efficient financial management and corporate services required to underpin and support overall organisational goals. A key objective of the role is to support the Chief Executive (who is also the Accounting Officer) and other members of the AFBI Executive Management Team in providing clear financial and corporate leadership and to contribute to AFBI's ongoing programme of organisational change. The post holder will report to the Chief Executive, who is in turn responsible to the Board of AFBI.

Candidates for this position should have significant senior finance management experience and a strong track record of leading and managing substantial programmes of work. They will need to have the experience and skills required to operate at executive management and board level and be capable of developing effective internal and external stakeholder networks. The person appointed must be an experienced leader with strong interpersonal skills, and have a pro-active and engaging management style.

Thank you for your interest in this competition.

Dr Stanley McDowell  
Chief Executive

## **ABOUT THE AGRI-FOOD AND BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE**

As the Northern Ireland Government's main research and science provider in the areas of agri-food, fisheries and the environment, AFBI's science plays a crucial role in providing the underpinning statutory and analytical testing, research and development work, emergency response and expert scientific advice required to support the work of the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the wider agri-food industry.

In line with AFBI's vision of "Advancing the local and global agri-food sectors through scientific excellence" the Institute seeks to be an influential, internationally recognised, centre for research and scientific services in the agri-food and marine sectors. AFBI's science is outcome-driven and aimed at solving important practical problems for a wide range of local, national and international funders in the public and private sectors. Our staff carry out world class research, surveillance, and analytic and diagnostic testing for a wide range of funders in the fields of animal health and welfare, sustainable agricultural systems, plant science, food innovation and safety, environmental protection, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, and agricultural and rural economics.

AFBI's current Corporate Plan outlines our strategy and ambitions for the period 2018 to 2022. It sets out the 3 strategic outcomes we aim to deliver for society, the economy and the environment, as well as industry and customers in an ever more efficient and effective manner. The plan, demonstrates the unique multidisciplinary strength of AFBI and how we will work with partners from science, government, industry and farmers to provide a positive impact. These achievements will be underpinned by attracting and developing excellent staff and building fit for purpose physical infrastructure.

AFBI's 'Science Impacts 2020' publication outlines key outcomes from AFBI science. Notably over the past 5 years AFBI have delivered approximately four million animal, plant and food safety tests to support sales from the NI agri-food industry to the value of £3.2 billion. In that period, AFBI have also delivered >90 evidence and innovation projects for DAERA, ~400 peer review scientific publications, over two thousand outreach activities, and have secured £44m of external research grants and contracts working with partners from across 35 countries. We are also actively developing strategic alliances with other research organisation and dissemination partners to facilitate a pipeline of research from fundamental to applied and onward application to ensure the impact of AFBI Science.

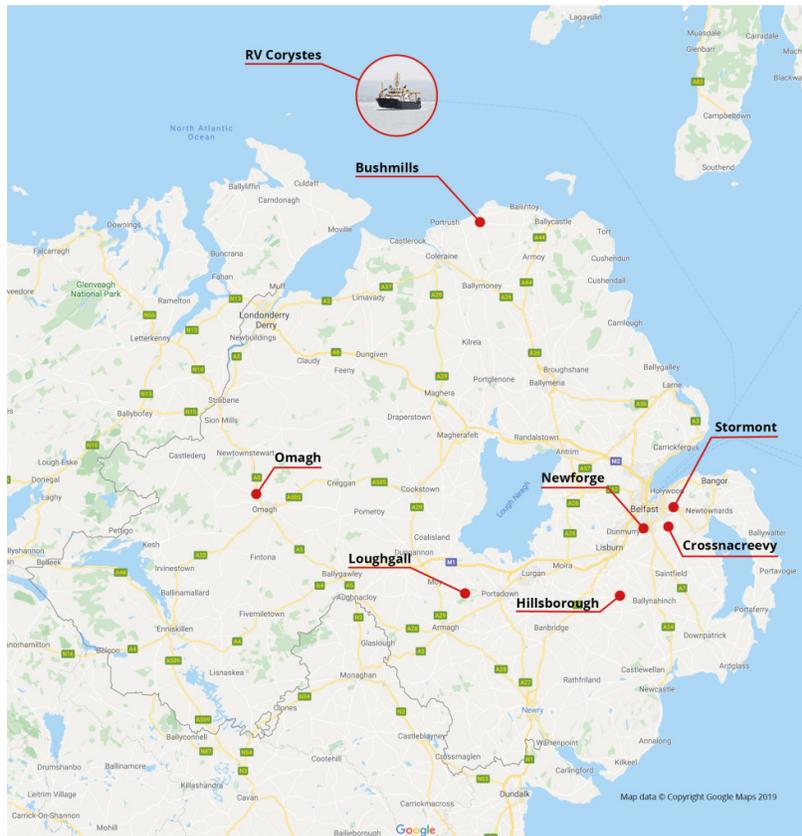
In order to fulfil these outcomes for our funders and stakeholders across society, the economy and the environment, AFBI enjoys access to highly instrumented laboratory, field and ship based scientific platforms. Furthermore, we are working closely with our sponsor department to take forward an ambitious programme of capital investment in AFBI's infrastructure including a new animal health sciences building at AFBI Stormont, enhanced research farm facilities at AFBI Hillsborough and a replacement sea-going research vessel.

AFBI has a current staff complement of approximately 700 people, with an annual turnover of approximately £60 million. We are currently organised across 4 divisions – Environment and Marine Sciences Division (EMSD), Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD), Veterinary Science Division (VSD) and Finance and Corporate Affairs Division (FCAD).

## AFBI SITES

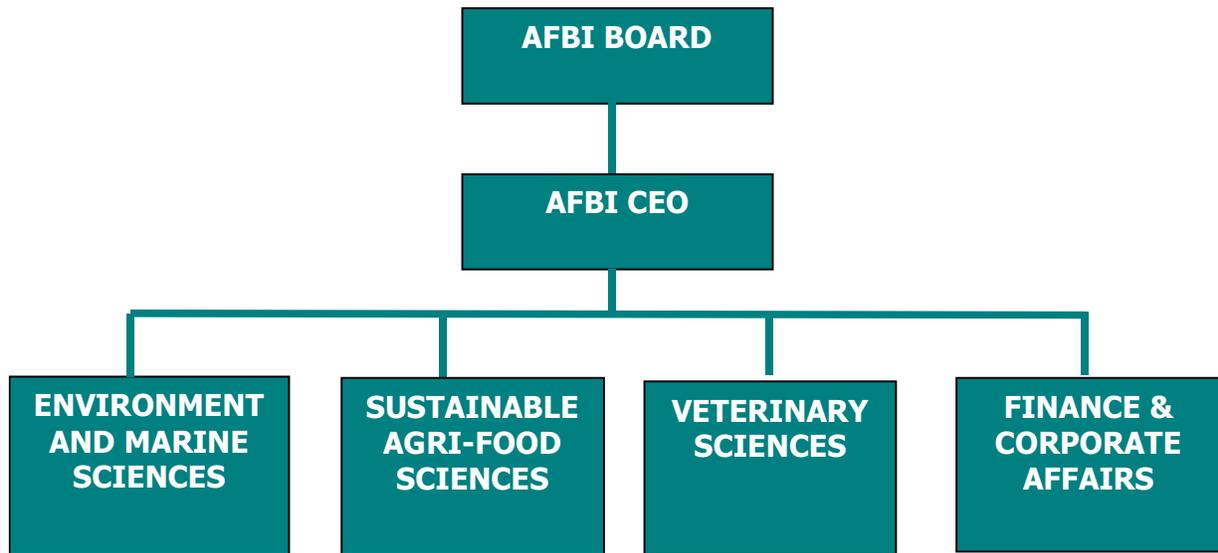
AFBI is located on seven sites across Northern Ireland with its Headquarters at Newforge Lane, Belfast.

In addition AFBI has a dedicated marine research vessel, the RV Corystes, based in Port of Belfast.



1. Newforge Lane (Headquarters)
2. VSD Stormont
3. Hillsborough
4. Crossnacreevy
5. Loughgall
6. Omagh
7. Bushmills

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



## **FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION**

The Finance and Corporate Affairs Division (FCAD) currently employs approximately circa 100 staff across its Branches. The Division is based primarily at AFBI headquarters, Newforge Lane, Belfast but with staff deployed at some of the larger sites.

The Division supports the AFBI Chief Executive and Executive management team (EMT) in securing and deploying the financial, people and infrastructure resources of AFBI. The Division has a key role in ensuring that AFBI is an efficient, effective, sustainable and accountable organisation with high standards of governance

The Division currently has four senior post holders reporting to the Director of Finance & Corporate Affairs namely Head of Finance, Head of Corporate Affairs, Head of Research Support and Head of Human Resources.

### **Finance Branch**

Finance Branch has a complement of approximately 30 staff and manages AFBI's annual budget of approximately £80m. Finance Branch provides support to AFBI's EMT and the wider organisation on financial management and financial governance. This includes financial planning, budgeting and accounting, strategic and business planning, financial systems, procurement and stores.

In addition to Grant-in-Aid (GIA) received from DAERA which supports core work programmes, AFBI has had significant success in securing non-GIA income from a range of public sector and other funders. In an era of constrained public sector finances, Finance Branch play a critical role in supporting AFBI's delivery of both GIA and non-GIA work programmes and ensuring effective financial management of both funding streams.

Finance also has a leading role in supporting a number of corporate investment projects for new buildings, new IT systems as well as the procurement of the new Research Vessel. Senior finance staff are members on Project Boards as well as providing financial support and guidance to colleagues who are leading and delivering on key projects.

### **Corporate Affairs**

Corporate Affairs branch includes responsibility for the following areas: -

#### Estates and Emergency Planning

The Estates and Emergency Planning has responsibility for delivering estate and property management services across the AFBI estate and emergency planning capability for the Institute including business continuity management/incident management.

Included within this remit are the delivery and management of estate maintenance and development, site security, estate related contracts, fire safety, AFBI input to the carbon reduction commitment energy efficiency scheme, estate related overhead budget, incident management & business continuity planning.

## Governance & Performance

The Governance and Performance Branch provides support and advice on a range of corporate and information governance matters. This includes organisational performance management, risk management, business planning, audit and assurance, insurance & indemnities, data protection, freedom of information, environmental information regulations and records management. Governance and Performance Branch takes the lead in supporting the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer in ensuring that good governance arrangements are in place coordinating the Institute's contact with the Board, its sub-committees and internal and external auditors. The Branch also incorporates the AFBI Secretariat and Co-ordination Unit which provides administrative and secretarial support to the AFBI Board, its Sub-Committees, Executive Management Team and various ad-hoc groups.

## Information Systems Branch

AFBI Information Systems Branch provides comprehensive line-of-business IT infrastructure and application support. This service is offered in conjunction with the support for common IT services provided by IT Assist, Department of Finance (DoF) and Enterprise Shared Services (ESS). The Branch also develops bespoke software solutions for internal and external clients to the benefit of the agri-food industry. Through development of these systems, ISB forms quality partnerships which leads to further collaboration between AFBI and industry bodies. ISB's operations are guided by AFBI's IT Strategic Plan which seeks to ensure that IT continues to work as a strategic enabler for the Institute.

## **Research Support**

The Research Support Office (RSO) includes a range of project support functions including horizon scanning, grant application support, legal services and intellectual property management, claims management and research quality and performance. The work also includes seeking ways to assist in the maximisation of the impact of the science undertaken.

It also has a key role in ensuring appropriate governance of external contracts is in place and to assist in the strengthening and development of collaborations with Universities and other science organisations.

The Head of the RSO also currently has line management responsibility for Corporate Communications

## Corporate Communications

Corporate Communications is responsible for communicating the work, values and mission of the Institute internally to staff and externally to stakeholders and to the public locally, nationally and internationally. The corporate communication function includes running a press office (including social media and photography), events management, print and digital publishing to the AFBI intranet and internet, and communications work packages in support of EU and other funded projects.

## **Human Resources**

The Human Resources Branch deliver a range of services to support the Institute in the functions of Learning & Development, Equality, Performance Management, Workforce Planning and Employee Relations. The team are extremely focused on providing support to staff and line managers in ensuring they have what they need to meet wider business plan objectives.

AFBI's science divisions are as follows:-

### **ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE SCIENCES DIVISION (EMSD)**

The Environment and Marine Sciences Division (EMSD) was established as a separate science division in late 2020 following a review of AFBI's organisational structure. It is comprised of two areas, which had previously been part of the Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division.

The decision to establish EMSD as a separate division reflects the increasing importance and amount of scientific work undertaken by AFBI in the agri-environment, marine and aquatic ecosystems areas. The division is focused on evidence based science, which is key to addressing the significant environmental challenges whilst ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the future prosperity of the agri-food sector. A particular strength of the division is its unique position to deliver on a high impact integrated programme of research and other science spanning from the "soil to the sea".

There are two branches within EMSD. They are:-

**Agri-Environment Branch** – interfaces with intensive livestock production and environmental management and regulation which includes the impacts of agricultural land use practices on soil, water and air and identifies methods of optimising land-based livestock production.

**Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems Branch** – conducts research and development, monitoring and technology transfer in marine fisheries stock assessment, coastal zone science, biological oceanography, marine ecosystem health, and freshwater fisheries stock assessment.

### **SUSTAINABLE AGRIFOOD SCIENCES DIVISION (SAFSD)**

SAFSD is a highly multidisciplinary division with a focus on livestock, plant and in general agriculture production, its impact on the environment and the economy. This multi-disciplinary team of over 200 staff are sited across AFBI Newforge, Hillsborough, Loughgall and Crossnacreevy and conducts science across all aspects of the food supply chain taking research from the soil through to the plant, the animal and the resultant food quality and nutritional value, while also working with colleagues at VSD to ensure animal health and food safety is optimised. A key element of the work also examines quantitative and qualitative socio-economic impacts.

SAFSD utilises a highly instrumented platform across livestock and land management to service its main deliverables of research and innovation and monitoring and surveillance. SAFSD also collaborates extensively with other research organisations, industry and government departments locally, nationally and internationally. A key drive within SAFSD is to produce high quality peer review publications while also ensuring the research conducted has impact through an active dissemination programme.

## **VETERINARY SCIENCES DIVISION (VSD)**

VSD currently employs approximately 260 veterinary, scientific, technical and support staff and is predominantly based at Stoney Road, Belfast with a smaller disease surveillance centre based at Omagh, Co. Tyrone.

The Division undertakes an integrated programme of statutory, disease surveillance, emergency response and R&D work on the diseases of major animal and human health significance along with significant programmes of work on the chemical and microbiological safety of food. The work supports government policy and disease eradication and control programmes in areas such as bovine tuberculosis, food-borne zoonotic infections and transboundary diseases. One of the key roles of the Division is in delivering a laboratory response to local, national and international emergencies involving animal diseases, and food and feed contamination incidents.

VSD also provides a disease investigation service covering all of the major farm animal species and fish, and provides commercial laboratory services in support of industry led disease eradication and control programmes. The work of the Division is underpinned by research and development (R&D) on animal diseases and food safety issues relevant to the local industry.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division will be responsible for the effective leadership and management of AFBI's finance and corporate affairs functions. The primary objective of the role is to support the Chief Executive (who is also the Accounting Officer) and other members of the AFBI Executive Management Team in providing clear and effective financial and corporate management and contribute to AFBI's ongoing programme of organisational change.

As a member of AFBI's Executive Management Team, which is responsible for the corporate management of the organisation, the appointee will be expected to play a key corporate leadership role assisting in AFBI's strategic development and corporate management. They will help ensure that AFBI is an efficient, effective and accountable organisation with high standards of corporate governance.

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, with proven ability to develop effective relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders. This will include fostering an environment and culture that delivers excellence in all activities and that is inspiring, creative and rewarding for staff.

The Director of FCAD is required to ensure that the finance and corporate affairs services operate effectively and economically and in a way which is responsive to the changing needs of the organisation. The successful candidate will be expected to develop a clear understanding of AFBI's role and the challenges which it faces and be capable of successfully leading a range of specialist corporate support functions.

The appointee will act as the key adviser to the Chief Executive in the deployment of all resources financial, human and physical. They will ensure that the successful delivery of AFBI's business targets is underpinned by sound financial planning and monitoring, effective management systems and by the highest standards of corporate excellence.

The post-holder will be accountable for the management of AFBI's budget of £80m, after deployment of resources (on which they will advise) has been agreed by the Executive Management Team and the Board. They will act as the Chief Executive's key financial adviser in his Accounting Officer role and will make regular presentations to the Board on corporate performance and budget. The person appointed will ensure that the successful delivery of AFBI's business plan targets are underpinned by sound financial planning, monitoring, control and reporting.

They must have proven leadership and change management capabilities, and possess the drive and vision necessary to ensure that AFBI further develops its role as an internationally recognized scientific organisation. Providing strong and comprehensive financial and change management leadership and bringing an added-value dimension to the Institute in terms of operating efficiencies, organisational development and corporate governance will be essential elements of the post.

In providing financial direction to the organisation they must be capable of adopting a strategic approach; and ensuring that the implications for AFBI of changes in the internal or external environments are anticipated and risk assessed, and that alternative courses of action are recommended to the Chief Executive and the Board in a timely fashion.

The person appointed must be a dynamic leader with strong interpersonal skills, and have a creative and highly pro-active management style. They must be capable of dealing effectively with a wide range of functions and managing competing priorities.

Key responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division include:

### **Finance**

- Develop and implement agreed financial strategy, plans, systems and processes with effective management of income and expenditure and accurate forecasting based on appropriate assumptions.
- Act as the key financial adviser to the Board through the Chief Executive, and to the Chief Executive and Executive Management Team on a range of strategic and operational issues.
- Be accountable for the management of the budget, including ensuring that appropriate financial systems are maintained to support the organisation in the achievement of its business objectives.
- Lead, manage, motivate and develop a team of qualified and part-qualified accountants, accounting technicians and support staff, in continuously developing the service they provide to their customers.
- Ensure all budgeting and accounting functions, including the preparation of the Institute's Annual Accounts, are carried out to best practice standards and meet the timetables set.
- Ensure that AFBI's finance and workforce planning systems are adequately integrated and efficient.
- Direct the delivery of a procurement service for AFBI which ensures value for money and is compliant with public sector purchasing standards and protocols.
- Ensure effective management of AFBI's capital and other assets

### **Corporate Planning and Strategy**

- Active participation as a member of the Executive Management Team of AFBI with collective responsibility for corporate analysis and decision-making by that team.
- Support and contribute to the development of AFBI's vision, strategies, policies and have a leading role in corporate and operational planning to enable AFBI to deliver its statutory and other functions effectively and efficiently.
- Direct and take responsibility for the timely development of the strategic corporate and annual business planning process in AFBI.

- Contribute to the identification of key strategic priorities that will impact on the organisation within the corporate governance and risk management framework.
- Ensure the development of an effective framework to support staff in the scientific divisions in applying for research grants and other funding from a range of funding bodies and for providing progress reports to those funders.

### **Corporate Governance**

- Ensure the maintenance of a sound system of internal control and accountability within the organisation.
- Ensure AFBI maintains a best practice corporate governance framework to provide assurance to the Accounting Officer in accordance with all relevant requirements.
- Promote high standards of accountability, integrity and probity throughout the organisation and provide professional advice to support executive decision making.
- Maintain an effective organisational risk management strategy.
- Ensure that effective business continuity and contingency plans are in place and reviewed according to agreed schedules in full accordance with equality standards and developed as required.
- Promote effective working relationships with DAERA and NIAO.

### **Leadership and People Management**

- Lead, manage and motivate the staff of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Division and ensure they contribute effectively to the achievement of AFBI's objectives.
- Ensure that the business is supported by a well-trained and flexible workforce, and promote investment in staff to ensure effective staffing structures are in place with the appropriate levels of skills and expertise.
- Ensure that AFBI has in place effective people management systems e.g. staff performance appraisal, succession planning, absence management etc to enable it to achieve its business targets.
- Maintain good staff relations including participation in the consulting/negotiation process with trade(s) union and staff representatives as required.
- Negotiate effectively on behalf of AFBI with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

- Ensure the implementation of good employment practice and compliance with Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures in the organisation.
- Direct the provision of a secretariat to the AFBI Board and its sub-committees, Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team.

### **Change Management**

- Collectively as part of EMT, be proactive in promoting continuous improvement to meet AFBI's vision.
- Prioritise and lead on change management initiative programmes aimed at delivering fit for purpose, cost effective, efficient services that provide a comprehensive and integrated organisation capable of delivering on its future goals.
- Build relationships with appropriate stakeholders to enable effective working relationships and enhance the reputation of AFBI.

### **Customer Service**

- Ensure that continuous improvement proposals and programmes are in place with regard to the core values of excellence, integrity and customer focus.
- Ensure effective interaction with a wide range of customers, including government departments and agencies, the agri-food industry, and a range of research funders to promote the scientific excellence of AFBI and win new business.
- Support the Directors of AFBI's Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division and Veterinary Sciences Division by ensuring that effective corporate systems and processes are in place for managing AFBI's portfolio of research projects.

### **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement**

- Promote positive internal and external communications with staff and a range of stakeholders to enhance the reputation and achievements of AFBI alongside staff and the Chief Executive in the management of communications and public relations.

Please note that the above is not an exhaustive list of duties and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties from time to time as directed by the Chief Executive and according to business needs.

Occasional out-of-hours working may be required, particularly in relation to emergency situations.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

There is currently one full-time permanent position to be filled. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any further vacancies which may arise.

### **Grade**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division post is analogous to a Grade 5 post in the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service grade

### **Reporting to**

The post holder reports to the Chief Executive on all strategic and operational activities.

### **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.

### **Salary**

The salary will be within the band range of £71,932 - £82,464 (under review) which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale except for existing AFBI staff for whom starting salary may be determined by either promotion or re-grading terms if these are more favourable.

Consideration may be given to starting at a higher point on the salary scale for applicants with additional relevant experience and/or qualifications. The relevance and extent of the additional experience will be determined by AFBI at the time of offer of appointment.

### **Pension**

AFBI offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details of this can be found at the following link: [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni)

## **Annual Leave**

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 30 days.

## **Working Hours**

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. However, the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division will be required to work such additional hours as may be required and is reasonable and necessary for the efficient performance of the duties.

The job requires a considerable degree of commitment, flexibility and adaptability on the part of the post holder to meet quality standards and work deadlines. He/she will maintain at all times such availability, flexibility and mobility as is necessary to the pursuance of the job. Working outside normal office hours may be required from time to time.

## **Location**

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Headquarters, Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX but will be expected to work at other AFBI sites in Northern Ireland as required.

## **Hybrid Working**

AFBI is currently finalising its hybrid working policy which will provide staff with the opportunity to work on a hybrid basis for those posts where it is appropriate to do so.

## **Travel**

The post may entail some travel throughout the UK, Ireland and internationally and for this reason the successful applicant will require access to a form of transport that will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full.

## **Vetting Procedures**

The successful applicant will be required to be cleared to Standard level.

## **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 appointment may be terminated. An appointee will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

## **Further Information**

Further Information about the post may be obtained from Fiona Campbell, AFBI Head of Human Resources on 028 9025 5657.

If you have any queries about the recruitment process you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330, or email [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net).

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must by the closing date provide evidence which demonstrates that they satisfy the following essential criteria.

1. Have successfully completed the professional examinations and be a full, current member of one of the following bodies:
  - Chartered Accountants Ireland
  - The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland
  - The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
  - The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
  - The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
  - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy
  - The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland

### AND

2. Have a minimum of 5 years relevant post qualification experience and evidence of successful financial management gained at senior management\* level in one or more of the following areas:
  - a. Management accounting and cost analysis
  - b. Planning and budgeting
  - c. Financial accounting

### AND

3. At least 5 years' senior management experience, of successfully leading, managing and delivering substantial, complex and multi-dimensional programmes of work or projects against demanding deadlines in a large and complex\*\* public, private or voluntary sector organisation.

### AND

4. Demonstrable experience of effective leadership and management of staff to successfully deliver organisational outcomes.

The following additional clarification is provided:

\* **Senior management** is defined a manager who reports to the Chief Executive, Board or a Director and, in the case of existing Civil Servants or other public sector employees, be at least Grade 6 or 7 or equivalent.

\*\* **Large and complex** organisation is defined as an organisation with professional and technical disciplines, having a customer base with diverse requirements and a budget of at least £20m.

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: 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.

## **SHORTLISTING**

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

1. The Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the breadth and depth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 2.
2. The Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the breadth and depth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 3 and 4.

This will be completed on a scored basis. Only the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

The Panel will complete this assessment against the information provided in the application form in response to the eligibility criterion 2, 3 and 4.

### **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 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.**
- **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.**
- **Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk).**

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk). Candidates are expected to demonstrate skills and competencies at Level 5 in this document.

**It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.**

### **What is the NICS competency framework?**

The competency framework sets out how all Northern Ireland Civil Service 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.

## INTERVIEW CRITERIA

The selection process will include a presentation and a competence based interview. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following selection criteria/competences at interview:

### **Presentation**

Candidates will be required to deliver a presentation, lasting no more than 7 minutes, the subject of which will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter.

Candidates should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview and no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Your presentation should be delivered via PowerPoint and you will be asked to submit it to HRConnect by a specific date prior to your interview. Full details will be provided should you be invited to interview.

Following the presentation, the panel may elect to ask questions on the presentation.

The presentation will be used to partly assess the ‘**Seeing the Big Picture**’ competence.

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. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive’s priorities.

**Marks available: 20      Minimum standard: 12**

### **1. Professional Knowledge & Skills**

Develops and updates professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills to meet objectives and improve performance; demonstrates an in-depth knowledge and understanding of current developments in the area.

**Marks available: 30      Minimum Standard: 18**

## **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. 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. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

**Marks available: 10**

## **3. Delivering Value for Money**

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve a good mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay, thus reducing the risk of fraud and error. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. At senior levels, effective people embed a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the NICS maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

**Marks available: 10**

## **4. Changing and Improving**

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks.

**Marks available: 10**

## **5. Leading & Communicating**

At all levels, 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. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the organisation.

**Marks available: 20      Minimum Standard: 12**

## **6. 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 organisation, 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. At senior levels, it is about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration which may cut across departmental, organisational and wider boundaries.

**Marks available: 10**

**Total marks available: 110**

**Overall pass mark: 66**

## **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.

Please note that no interpreters will be permitted in the interview room.

## **INTERVIEWS**

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place during Week Commencing 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at AFBI Newforge.

## **INTERVIEW EXPENSES**

For candidates travelling from outside Northern Ireland, reasonable travel costs may be re-imbursed up to a maximum of £250.

## 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 in relation to each of the competences. 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.

## SELECTION PROCESS

### The Merit Principle

Appointments to AFBI are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

### 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

- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed 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.
- 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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out 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.

### Application Form Submission

You can apply online at [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk).

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **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.
- 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.
- 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.

### **Communication between HRConnect and you**

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account 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.

### **Further appointments from this competition**

Where a further position in AFBI 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. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

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

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement to which AFBI adheres please refer to page 32.

Applications are particularly welcomed from Roman Catholics and Females as these groups are currently under-represented within AFBI.

### **AFBI is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**

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

## **Assessment Information**

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

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

## **Employment Requirements**

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

Entry to the United Kingdom is controlled under the Immigration Act 1971. Everyone who does not have the right of abode is subject to immigration control. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post. If you are invited to interview we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

Advice on entitlement to work may be obtained from the Home Office website, [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).

## **Nationality Requirements**

There are no nationality requirements for AFBI posts.

## **Vetting Procedures**

### 1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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) Other acceptable documents are listed on [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk).
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI through Experian. HRConnect will provide your details to Experian who will undertake this check. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is:

## **Standard Disclosure Certificate**

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made. Further information regarding policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders and the vetting process is available at [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) in Recruitment Policy and Procedures manual.

Security Policy for AccessNI Disclosure Information is available at [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) under Useful Information.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni)

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/>. Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

### **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 order of merit is valid for one year.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Pensions**

New entrants who join the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) are eligible to join the NICS pension scheme.

Further details can be found on the Civil Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) website at:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/civil-service-pensions-ni>

or

if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions  
Waterside House  
75 Duke Street  
Londonderry  
BT47 6FP  
Tel: 02871 319000  
Email: [cspensions.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:cspensions.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk)

### **Feedback**

AFBI is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. 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

**Contact details:**

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect by;

**Email:** [Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net)

**Tel:** 0800 1 300 330

**Fax:** 028 9024 1665

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

### **Policy Statement**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement to which AFBI adheres is set out below:

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in an harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:-

**Equality** – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

**Diversity** – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

**Inclusion** – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.

## **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

### **Legislative Context**

This section explains the reasons for gathering this information by setting out the legislative background.

#### **Gender**

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also provided in the annual statutory monitoring return, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

#### **Age**

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ages and age groups.

#### **Community Background**

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This takes the form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS at the 1st January each year.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality Commission for NI the NICS has decided to use “community background” information as a proxy for political opinion.

#### **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

This definition is interpreted as follows:-

**Physical Impairment:** this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs etc) caused through illness by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

**Mental Impairment:** this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability, and social functioning.

**Substantial:** put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day to day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

**Long-term adverse effect:** the effect has to have lasted or be likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

**A normal day to day activity:** this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

***What sort of effect must there be?***

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

***What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?***

Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

***Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?***

Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:

Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;

Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out

normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and  
People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

***Are any conditions not covered?***

Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:  
Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);  
Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;  
Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;  
Exhibitionism and voyeurism;  
Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

***What if someone has recovered from a disability?***

Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

**Race**

The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group(s).

**Sexual Orientation**

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

**Marital Status**

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended), makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status.

**Dependants Status**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions in NI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without.

## **Confidentiality of Monitoring Information**

The following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:-

- individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained, or is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of HRConnect and Trade Union officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.