

Recruitment Service

Northern Ireland Civil Service

Charter Statement

November 2005

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Foreword

This Charter provides a brief guide to the work of Recruitment Service and the services we provide. It explains the standards you can expect and what to do if things go wrong.

Through our work in providing a recruitment and selection service for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, we deal with the majority of people who want to join the Service - an average of over 10,000 applications each year.

Our aim is to ensure that the service you receive meets the standards you would expect of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Most importantly we are committed to making appointments in line with the principles set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code. The practical application of these principles are outlined in our Recruitment Policy and Procedures Manual, a copy of which is included on our website. Our appointment processes will be based on merit, in fair and open competition, and without unlawful discrimination of any kind. Recruitment Service is fully committed to developing and maintaining the best possible standard of service to all our customers.

This charter sets out the standards you can expect from us, explains what you can do if you are dissatisfied with the service you have received and what we will do to address the concerns you have raised.

John McKervill

Deputy Director of Personnel (Resourcing Division)

Our service

The Departments and Agencies within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) to whom we provide a service offer a diverse range of opportunities to work in the creation and delivery of government services to the people of Northern Ireland. The working environment for the vast majority of civil servants is challenging, modern, hi-tech and offers a great deal of job satisfaction, not at all like the stereotypical image of the Civil Service. Large numbers of civil servants work together in teams in a business-focused and happy working environment. Each year there is a requirement to appoint new staff to either fill existing posts or to fill new positions arising from newly developed government policies.

Job opportunities in the NICS include work in administrative, middle and senior management, scientific, technological, information technology, legal, support grades as well as many other professional areas. Our latest annual report, which you can access on our website, will give you a good appreciation of the range of posts which have been recently filled across the eleven Departments.

Our main office is in Orchard House, Londonderry and we hold most of our interviews at our interview suite in central Belfast (see “useful contact details” on page 12). These locations provide easy access for people in wheelchairs.

We aim to:

- fill vacancies in departments and agencies with the most suitable applicants;
- make our customers confident that we are dealing with their applications in a fair and professional way.

By taking part in Careers Conventions organised by schools, further education colleges, universities and business/education partnerships, we

hope to make people aware of the wide range of career opportunities which the Northern Ireland Civil Service can offer.

Our standards..... on advertising

We advertise all permanent and fixed-term vacancies in the Belfast Telegraph on Tuesday and in the Irish News and Newsletter on Thursday. In addition we advertise all vacancies on our website **www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk** with each week's new vacancies being added on Monday. When advertising jobs, we provide a candidate application pack which provides full details of the duties and responsibilities of each post as well as the selection criteria to be used in filling the post. We have placed a copy of our policy and procedures manual on our website which provides detailed information on the recruitment and selection processes used by our service. In addition we have included on our website the core competencies against which staff in the various grades in the NICS are assessed and which new appointees must also satisfy.

Our standards.....for job applications

Issuing applications:

- hard copy application packs will only be issued when we receive a written request. You may post, fax or e-mail us, by 12 noon on the day before the closing date and we will send you the application pack by first class post on the same day. We cannot guarantee that you will receive the application pack to enable you to meet the closing time/date deadline.
- excepting requests received the day before the closing date for applications, application packs are sent out by 1st class post, within 2 working days;
- in most circumstances you may collect an application pack from our Orchard House office at any time up to the closing time and date,

but it will be your responsibility to have the form completed to meet the closing time/date deadline.

- you may complete an application online through our website at www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk or download a hard copy to reach us by the closing time/date for applications.
- the only acceptable applications will be either (a) hard copies downloaded from our site or received from our office or (b) online applications completed through our website. Electronic applications completed in other software and emailed to our website will not be accepted.
- where application packs are being issued by another party acting on behalf of Recruitment Service this will be clearly stated on the advertisement.
- the application package will include a detailed candidate information pack which provides full details about the post to be filled and the selection criteria to be used.

Receiving applications:

- we will accept all fully completed applications sent by post or fax, or handed in to the return address for applications which arrive by 12 noon on the closing date of the competition;
- where an application has been faxed, we must receive the complete, signed original application form within 5 working days of the closing date;
- it will be the responsibility of applicants to ensure that hard copy applications forwarded to Recruitment Service meet the deadline for receipt. Evidence of having posted the form in good time by first class postage or by courier service will not be accepted where an application is received after the deadline.
- we will not accept additional information received after the closing date for applications.
- we will let you know we have received your application within one week, unless there are other arrangements which are included in

the application pack. An automatic response will be issued in respect of applications received through our online facility.

Our standards.....selection process

Eligibility/shortlisting:

We are committed to ensuring that:

- each application is given a unique reference number and anonymised;
- eligibility/shortlisting is assessed using only the agreed criteria as described in the application package;
- only that information provided by you against each eligibility/shortlisting requirement will be used in determining if you satisfy that criterion. Panels will not cross reference information provided against one criterion to determine if you satisfy other criteria.
- you will be advised if your application has met the eligibility/shortlisting criteria agreed by the panel. If your application has not satisfied the eligibility/shortlisting criteria, you will be given a clear written explanation in the letter issued to you by us immediately following the eligibility/shortlisting sift.
- Any request for a review of a panel decision is carried out within 15 working days.

Conducting Aptitude/Psychometric Tests:

We are committed to ensuring that:

- you are given an opportunity to provide any information which you consider relevant to the establishment of adjustments which may be necessary whilst undertaking a test
- tests used in determining the suitability of candidates are 'fit for purpose' and related to testing those competences which will be required of the appointee/s.

- aptitude tests will be administered in a fair way with reasonable adjustments made for those candidates with disabilities;
- all those staff involved in test administration are trained to undertake such work.

Conducting Interviews:

We are committed to ensuring that:

- your name will only be made available to the selection panel in the event of you being invited to interview;
- you receive at least one week's notice of your interview;
- the interview panel will see you within 10 minutes of your appointment time;
- all interviewees are asked the same lead questions and given the same amount of time in testing their competence for posts;
- all panel members are trained in equal opportunities policies and in the management of criterion based interviews;
- if you are invited to interview, you will be provided with the names of the selection panel members and the organisation they work for;
- interview results will be issued within 1 week of the date on which all interviews have been completed. Where there are extenuating circumstances and results cannot be issued we will advise you of this along with an indication of when results will be issued;
- copies of interview assessment forms will be copied to you following receipt of a request for feedback on interview performance.

Candidate enquiries

If you have any questions about your application, contact the officer responsible using the direct line quoted in the letter you will have received. If the officer is not available your call will be passed on to someone else who can deal with it. If you have a question about any of our other services you should either ring the following contact telephone number:

Customer contact manager (028) 7131 9732;

or email us at recruitment.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk

We are committed to meeting the following standards for enquiries:

If you phone us, we will:

- aim to answer phone calls during office hours (9 am - 5 pm) within 5 rings;
- identify ourselves by name in a friendly and polite manner;
- try to answer your questions. If we cannot answer your question straight away, we will get back to you within 48 hours.

If you write to, fax, or e-mail us, we will:

- acknowledge your communication within one working day;
- send you a full reply within 15 working days. If this is not possible we will contact you providing as much information as possible explaining when you can expect a full reply.

Putting things right – Informal complaints

We are committed to providing the highest standard of service to all our customers. Our aim is to get things right first time. However, if something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our service, please tell us about it. Problems can often be sorted out quickly by telephoning the person you have been dealing with. Any complaints should be made as early as possible. Please first contact the supervisor responsible for the post you are interested in. If a complaint cannot be solved at this level, senior staff in the branch will consider it. If we have made a mistake we will put the matter right without delay and apologise.

If you want to comment, or complain about us, you can contact us by telephone, fax, e-mail or in writing. All of our contact details are at the end of this document.

We are committed to meeting the following standards for complaints from candidates:

- we will send you a full response to complaints within 15 working days. If we cannot provide a full response in this time, we will give a part response and an explanation for the delay. We will say when you can expect a full response.

We are committed to making sure that our practices and procedures comply with all relevant legislation and observe recommended best practice. However, if you are not satisfied with any aspect of our treatment of you, you may wish to seek independent advice.

Our work may be investigated by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) to whom you can complain about anything which you consider to be bad administration. However, before you raise any issue at this level, you should refer the matter to our Head of Branch or in her absence the Head of Appointments Division. Contact details for both individuals are included in the Annex at the end of this document.

If you believe you have suffered unlawful discrimination, you can obtain advice from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The addresses of these organisations are shown in the annex at the end of this document.

Improving our service

We are continually trying to improve the service we provide.

If you have any comments on the treatment you have received, suggestion for improvements or if you would like a copy of our latest annual report, please let our Customer Contact Manager know by ringing **(028) 7131 9712** or faxing us at **(028) 7131 9919**.

Alternatively, you can write to us at:

*Recruitment Service
Orchard House
40 Foyle Street
Londonderry
BT48 6AT*

or contact us by e-mail at: recruitment.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk

Annex - Useful contact details

Name	Address	Telephone/Fax
Caitriona Hughes Head of Recruitment Service	Orchard House 40 Foyle Street LONDONDERRY BT46 6AT	Tel: 028 7129 9056 email: Caitriona.Hughes@dfpni.gov.uk
John McKervill Head of Appointments Division	Central Personnel Group Royston House Upper Queen Street BELFAST BT1 6FD	Tel: 028 90 547439 email: john.mckervill@dfpni.gov.uk
The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	Equality House Shaftsbury Square BELFAST BT2 7DP	Tel: 028 9050 0600 Email: information@equalityni.org
Northern Ireland Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)	Progressive House 33 Wellington Place Belfast BT1 6HN	Tel: 0800 343424 Fax: 028 9023 4912 email: ombudsman@niombudsman.org.uk
Recruitment Service (Interview Suite)	Avenue House Rosemary Street BELFAST BT1 1QE	Tel: 028 9040 8075 Fax: 028 9040 8080