

Administrative Officer (AO)

North West

Candidate Information Booklet

Please note: If you are on the merit list for the 2024 Administrative Officer competition (IRC303169) and have selected the North West as a preference we are working on allocations. You will be informed if you are being considered for a vacancy before the closing date.



Contents



COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE AND YOU

We will issue as many competition communications as possible by email. Please provide a valid email address for this purpose. Please check your email account and junk folder to make sure you don't miss any important messages from us.

Completed applications must be submitted no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 7 November 2025.

Pg 03
Welcome

Pg 07
Terms and Conditions

Pg 28
Guidance for Applicants

Pg 04
About the NICS

Pg 12
Diversity & Inclusion

Pg 30
General Guidance

Pg 05
**About the Role
and Key Responsibilities**

Pg 15
Selection Process

Welcome

We are delighted you are interested in joining the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

This is a fantastic opportunity.

Whether you are directly serving our customers, assessing benefits claims, processing other types of applications, providing administrative support to teams, or delivering services or projects across the NICS, you will be part of an organisation that touches the lives of citizens in NI and across the UK every day.

This competition will be used to fill a number of current vacancies. It may also be used to fill further vacancies which may arise during the lifetime of this recruitment exercise. Training will be made available to successful candidates on appointment.

All NI Civil Servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

For this competition, merit lists will also reflect location and working pattern preferences.

The closing date for applications is **12 noon (UK time) on Monday 7 November 2025**.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Please read carefully through the information contained within this Candidate Information Booklet and retain it for reference throughout the selection process.

We wish to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments in accordance with our obligations under Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to complete any of the assessments.

If you have any questions, or require any documentation in an alternative format e.g. braille, easy read, large print, audio etc. you should contact nic recruitment@talentdog.com

We wish you every success in your application.

About the NICS



The NICS comprises nine Departments that support the Northern Ireland Executive and Ministers. We do this by developing and implementing government policies and legislation and delivering key public services in areas such as health, public finances, social development, justice, education, regeneration, environment, culture, agriculture, economic development, employment, and transport.

In addition, the Public Prosecution Service is staffed by civil servants.

You can find more information on the government arrangements here, including the [functions of the Departments](#) on the Northern Ireland Executive website (Clicking on this link will open a new window/tab).

All NI civil servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. They are expected to carry out their role with dedication and a commitment to the NI Civil Service's core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

About the role and key responsibilities

Administrative Officer roles are key positions, many of which involve working on the front line, delivering public services to our customers.

The specific duties you undertake will vary depending on which NICS Department you are posted to.

You will be expected to deliver services using modern technology. Administrative Officers, particularly those in customer facing roles, have to be able to cope with pressures faced in a busy front line work environment. You will need to be a good communicator, a good team player and be able to work accurately, while managing your time efficiently.

We're looking for people who can:

- Communicate well both orally (face to face or by telephone) and in writing with a range of diverse people, customers and claimants, providing advice and explaining policies, procedures and decisions taken;
- Handle tricky and difficult situations with people/ customers, including potentially challenging customer situations by telephone, face to face, in writing, and/or using other digital methods;
- Research, understand and interpret information which may sometimes be complex, to make decisions/ recommendations and to provide timely explanations to people/customers; and

- Use a range of computer systems to action tasks, payments and deal with telephone queries.

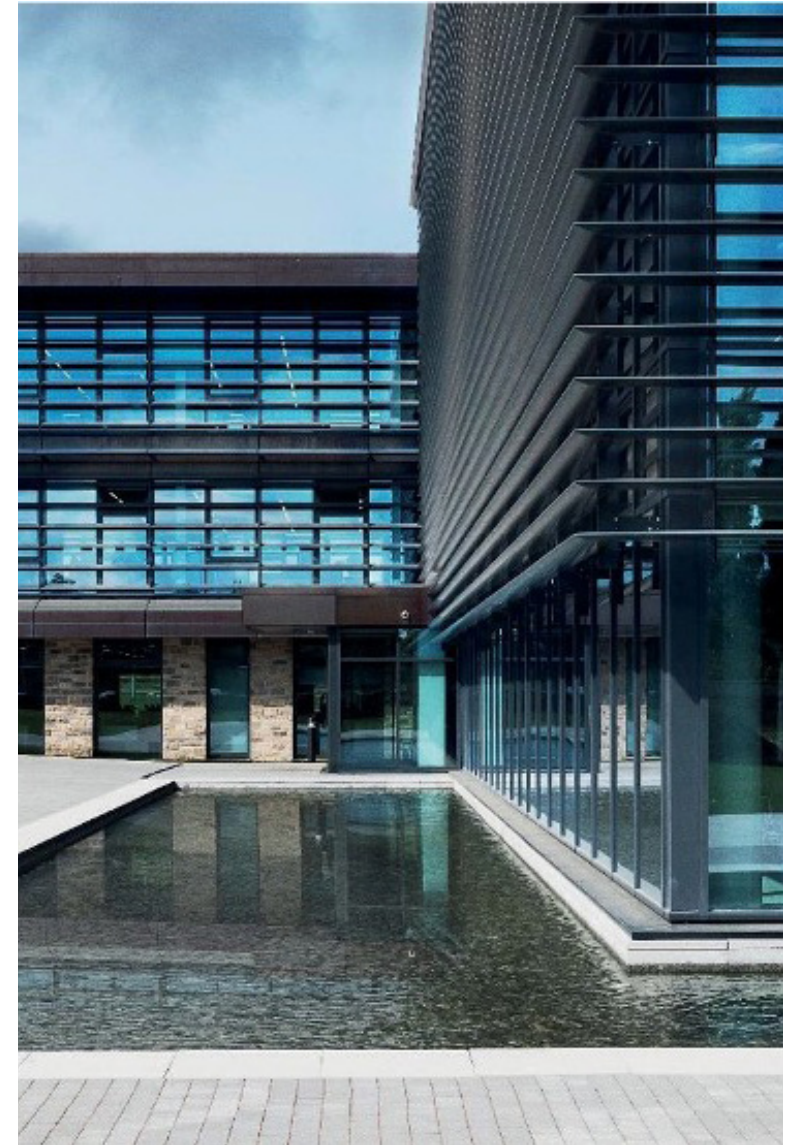
As an Administrative Officer you might be:

- Providing customer service in a telephony or customer facing environment to a diverse range of customers both internal and external, including participating in telephone and/or public office rota duties where the post demands;
- Gathering, checking, assessing and interpreting information to make decisions/recommendations against clearly defined criteria, regulations, procedures and deadlines. For example, benefit claims/rebate applications, processing waste permits, bankruptcy orders, land registration applications, collecting rates, pursuing debt and recovering rates through appropriate legal processes and assisting line management at Court;
- Making decisions regarding benefit or other types of entitlements by examining the facts/information available;
- Assessing claims/applications and dealing with customer enquiries via face to face, telephone, written or electronic means;
- Participating in a team in a target driven, customer facing environment to support the delivery of customer service, quality and performance;

About the role and key responsibilities

(Continued)

- Maintaining relevant recording systems, databases and spreadsheets. Searching and interrogating those systems to produce information to assist decision makers;
- Processing straightforward financial transactions including the lodgement of monies and processing invoices in adherence with Departmental and Account NI procedures;
- Providing general administrative support where required, for example, ordering stationery, organising meetings and taking minutes, booking venues and hospitality, making travel arrangements. Duties may also include management of the branch calendar, diaries, or on-call rotas;
- Handling and communicating personal data in accordance with departmental policies; and
- May at times have a mentoring role for a small number of Administrative Assistant /Administrative Officer staff.



Terms and Conditions

Salary

The salary for these posts will be within the range £26,449 - £28,094. Your starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If you are currently a civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance is 25 days, increasing to 30 days after 5 years.

Security Vetting

The majority of AO posts within the NICS require Baseline Standard. However, some posts in the NICS involve staff having access to sensitive personal information either about citizens or employees. For this reason, employees in these roles are required to obtain a higher level of vetting. You will be required to provide additional personal information for the higher vetting levels.

For example, Enhanced AccessNI clearance will be required for areas working in Regulated Activity or a Counter Terrorist Check may be required for some AO posts.



Terms and Conditions

(Continued)

Hours of Work

The normal hours of work are 37 hours per week (Monday to Friday), excluding meal breaks. Most offices work flexi-time.

A variety of working patterns are available. You should indicate on the form if you wish to be considered for posts with a Standard Working Pattern, Alternative Working Pattern or both.

Standard Working Pattern

Most offices work flexi-time between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

Alternative Working Pattern

Some posts require successful candidates to work a range of specific working patterns between the hours of 8am and 8pm on any day between Monday and Friday and in some business areas 9am to 5pm on one Saturday in four. Once appointed, should this working pattern need to change you will be given 13 weeks' notice.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the [Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme \(Northern Ireland\) website](#).

Terms and Conditions

(Continued)

Location

The NICS has offices across Northern Ireland, the main NICS office locations are outlined in the table. **This opportunity will fill vacancies in Areas 2,4 and 5 ONLY.**

In your Expression of Interest Form, you may **select up to three** travel to work areas where you are prepared to work Area 2, Area 4 and/or Area 5. **You should ensure you can, and are willing to, travel to the location.**

If successful, you will only be considered for a post in **one** of your selected areas and, if appointed, your name will be removed from the list of successful applicants for your other selected areas.

Area	City/Town
Area 1: Belfast	Belfast Lisburn Bangor Antrim Downpatrick
Area 2: Derry/Londonderry	Derry/Londonderry Ballykelly Limavady
Area 3: Craigavon	Craigavon Armagh Portadown
Area 4: Coleraine	Coleraine Ballymoney
Area 5: Omagh and Strabane	Omagh Strabane
Area 6: Newry and Banbridge	Newry Banbridge
Area 7: Ballymena	Ballymena
Area 8: Cookstown and Magherafelt	Cookstown Magherafelt
Area 9: Dungannon	Dungannon
Area 10: Enniskillen	Enniskillen

Terms and Conditions

(Continued)

Hybrid Working

It is envisaged that some element of home working and/or remote working may be possible, in line with the NICS Hybrid Working Policy and subject to business need following a specific training period.

Please note: The majority of posts within NICTS are wholly court based and not suitable for hybrid working.

Probation

Confirmation of appointment is 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 offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations, and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.



Diversity and Inclusion

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer

The NICS values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace. Diversity and inclusion is reflected in and embedded across the entire range of NICS employment policies and practices, such as: Transitioning at Work Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Special Leave, Adoption Leave, Reasonable Adjustment Guidance and Alternative Working Policy.

The following groups are under-represented at this grade in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. We therefore particularly welcome applications from:

- Protestants and men;
- People under the age of 35;
- People with a disability; and;
- People from minority ethnic communities.

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



Diversity and Inclusion

(Continued)

Our vision of the NICS of the future is:

- An organisation where everyone plays an active part in improving the lives of people in NI;
- A well-led, high-performing and outcomes-focused organisation;
- A great place to work, where everyone can reach their full potential; and;
- An inclusive workplace in which diversity is truly valued.

We aim to ensure every individual is valued and accepted for who they truly are. While more work is planned, some examples of our commitment to diversity and inclusion are:

- Establishing Race and Ethnicity, LGBT, Gender and Disability champions. Our Champions are there to support colleagues and encourage a culture of inclusion in the NICS;
- Supporting peer to peer staff networks, such as Women's Network, LGBT Network, Cancer Support Group and Autism Support Group;
- Working with disability charities to become one of the lead partners with Employers for Disability in NI;

- Committing to all of the NICS becoming Just A Minute (JAM) Card friendly;
- Signing up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter
- Taking part in PRIDE as an employer; and
- Taking part in Belfast Mela, the city's annual celebration of global cultures.

Disability Requirements and Reasonable Adjustment Requests

We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments during this recruitment process.

Please contact nicssrecruitment@talentdog.com

Selection Process

Overview of Selection Process

The selection process is as follows:

1. Complete an initial Online Expression of Interest Form
2. Complete an Online Formal Application Form;
3. Invitation to Interview;
4. Merit List;

1. Online Expression of Interest Form

- If you are interested in applying, make sure you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Complete your online Expression of Interest form making sure you supply a valid email address.
- You will be asked for some preferences (including location and working hours).
- You will be asked to complete a short assessment, which helps us understand the level of experience you have in areas that are important for the role. The assessment focuses on key skills such as knowledge of office procedures and confidentiality, ability to meet deadlines, use of computer packages, organisational and time management skills, interpersonal skills, use of initiative, and teamwork and flexibility. There is no right or wrong answer. For each area, you will be asked to rate your level of experience on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means no experience and 5 means excellent or extensive experience. Please answer honestly.

- The assessment is designed to ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly and consistently, helping us rank those whose experience best matches the requirements of the role.

2. Online Formal Application Form

- We will complete a formal screening of your Expression of Interest form to ensure your application is valid. Expressions of Interest deemed invalid will be withdrawn from the competition.
- Candidates who progress following screening will receive an email with a link to an Online Formal Application Form (sent to the email address you provided). Online Formal Application Forms to be completed by **12 noon on 14 November 2025**.

3. Invitation to Interview

Selected candidates will then be invited to attend a recruitment open day in Derry/Londonderry on Thursday 27 November 2025. The format of the day will include an opportunity to speak directly with representatives from each of the Departments currently recruiting as part of this campaign as well as completing a short panel interview.

Overview of Selection Process

(Continued)

4. Merit List

- Candidates who meet the required standard and pass mark for the Interview Stage will be deemed suitable for appointment and will be placed on a list in order of merit, with the highest scoring candidate ranked first. NICS will allocate candidates to vacancies in the order listed to their location preference.
- Candidates will be taken through pre appointment formalities.
- It is intended that the order of merit will remain active for a period of 2 years. However, there is a possibility, although remote, that circumstances may arise where it will be necessary to extend the list for a further period. This will only occur where practical reasons for doing so arise.



Overview of Selection Process

(Continued)

Disability Requirements and Reasonable Adjustment Requests

We wish to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. If you require any form of reasonable adjustment, please note this in the box provided on the Online Formal Application Form. You should include details of your disability and the specific adjustment you need. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process.

Further information on reasonable adjustments.

You will need to provide relevant evidence to support your request for a reasonable adjustment – for example, an Occupational Psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

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

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

Overview of Selection Process

(Continued)

Interview

The interview will be a competency-based interview.

You are **not allowed** to bring notes or other personal documentation into the interview.

The core competencies we will assess are:

Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective using sound judgement and evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Making and recording effective decisions following the appropriate decision-making criteria, framework or guidance;
- Undertaking appropriate analysis to support decisions or recommendations;
- Investigating and responding to gaps, errors and irregularities in information;
- Speaking up to clarify decisions and query those constructively; and
- Thinking through the implications of own decisions.

Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Communicating in a way that meets and anticipates the customer's requirements and gives a favourable impression of the NICS;
- Actively seeking information from customers to understand their needs and expectations;
- Acting to prevent problems and reporting issues where necessary;
- Gaining the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job;
- Encouraging customers to access relevant information or support that will help them understand and use services more effectively;
- Taking ownership of issues, focusing on providing the right solution and keeping customers and delivery partners up to date with progress.

Overview of Selection Process

(Continued)

Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Proactively contributing to the work of the whole team;
- Getting to know fellow team members/colleagues and understanding their viewpoints and;
- Seeking help when needed in order to complete own work effectively;
- Being open to taking on different roles;
- Trying to see issues from others' perspectives and checking understanding; and
- Listening to the views of others and showing sensitivity towards others.

Guidance for Applicants

Guidance for Applicants

Help with Making Your Application

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local **Jobs and Benefits Office** - contact details are available on NIDirect.

The Careers Service provides an impartial, all-age careers information, advice and guidance service, to help young people and adults make informed choices about their future career paths. You can contact one of the Careers Service's professionally qualified Careers Advisors at Careers Service.

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact **Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE)**, an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, (email info@niuse.org.uk, tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709.)



General Guidance for Applicants

Interview Preparation

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind 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? And the Result – what happened? What was the outcome? What did you learn?

The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org. We will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed and in accordance with your preferred working pattern and location preference.

However, you should be aware that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise.

General Guidance for Applicants

(Continued)

NICS HR Privacy Notice

NICS HR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICS HR, in line with the NICS HR privacy notice available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Offers of Employment

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

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 nicsrecruitment@talentdog.com. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and will not form any part of the selection process.

Disability Requirements

We ask on the application form if due to disability you require any reasonable adjustments. Details of any disability are used only 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, 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 nicsrecruitment@talentdog.com where your requirements will be discussed in strictest confidence.

General Guidance for Applicants

(Continued)

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required

Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with the invitation to attend for assessment. You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. Please note that ALL applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check. Applicants must be either: A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or
- (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals.

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.

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.

General Guidance for Applicants

(Continued)

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.

'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.

(Public Service/reserved posts insert)

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) an Irish or non-UK Commonwealth citizen who was in post in the NICS on 31 May 1996, or was appointed from a competition with a closing date on or before 31 May 1996, and who has remained in the NICS since that time.

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

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

General Guidance for Applicants

(Continued)

Security

Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For AO posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- Your passport OR;
- 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);
- A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via www.gov.uk.

We will organise for a Criminal Record Check on all successful applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is a Basic Disclosure Certificate.

You should not be 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.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni.

Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after the interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. A request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Some posts in the NICS involve staff having access to sensitive personal information either about citizens or employees. For this reason, employees in these roles are required to obtain a higher level of vetting. If you are prepared to undertake a higher level clearance, you will be required to provide additional personal information for the higher vetting levels.

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.

For a small number of posts the Counter Terrorist Check may also be required. This includes that at point 1 above plus a check of Security Service records.

General Guidance for Applicants

(Continued)

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note that 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 Department of Finance website www.finance-ni.gov.uk.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

As Protestants and men are currently known to be under-represented in this grade in the NICS, and as young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are currently under represented in the NICS, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

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

Feedback

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview.

Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

