



Northern Ireland
Public Services
Ombudsman



Corporate Services Executive Officer

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Candidate Information Booklet (NIPSO/CSEO/01-26)

2025

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1. MESSAGE FROM MARGARET KELLY, NI PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

Thank you for your interest in the position of Corporate Services Executive Officer at the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

This is an exciting time to join us to help us deliver our vision of making a positive difference to people and public services in Northern Ireland through impartially and independently investigating complaints of maladministration. We view complaints as an ‘early warning’ system to improve public services and our opportunity to inform public policy. We launched our new Strategic Plan in 2022-23 following consultation both internally and externally with the aim to make sure we have a relevant, modern and inclusive Ombudsman’s Office for the people of Northern Ireland.

We have a unique governance structure which reflects my position as the statutory holder of three offices – Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards. This requires a balance between appropriate controls and oversight, while preserving the independence of my role. I am accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly Audit Committee, and we have an independent Audit and Risk Committee who monitor our corporate governance, risk management and control systems.

As Corporate Services Executive Officer you will support the organisation to achieve its objectives by working as part of a team to ensure effective operation of NIPSO’s office and support functions.

This is a challenging but interesting role. If you are excited about the work that we undertake and believe you have the skills and experience to make a difference, I very much look forward to receiving your application.

Margaret Kelly

Northern Ireland Public
Services Ombudsman



2. WHO WE ARE

The Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) was established in April 2016 in accordance with the [Public Services Ombudsman Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) (“the Act”). The Act replaced and extended the remit of the previous offices of Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. Since 2016, NIPSO’s workload has doubled and the organisation continues to grow.

We are publicly funded but operate independently from all other public bodies in Northern Ireland. We currently employ approximately 60 staff and we are based in Progressive House in central Belfast.

The Ombudsman’s main role is to investigate complaints of maladministration made about public services, including complaints about Government Departments and their agencies, local Councils, health and social care, education bodies, public housing providers and a range of other public service providers. We also play a key role in contributing to broader improvement in public services by sharing the learning from both individual complaints and systemic reports (work that we call ‘Own Initiative’).

The Ombudsman is also the Local Government Commissioner for Standards, and the office investigates and where appropriate adjudicates on complaints where a Councillor is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Ombudsman is also the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman.



3. WHAT WE DO

The Ombudsman’s role is to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are served by a fair and efficient public administration that is committed to accountability, openness, and the provision of high quality public services.

Assessing and investigating complaints of maladministration, including professional judgment in health and social care is the largest single area of our work. During 2023-24 we received 1,173 complaints, an increase of 118% over the period since NIPSO was established in 2016 (when 539 complaints were received). The table below illustrates the trend in new maladministration complaints received over the past five years:

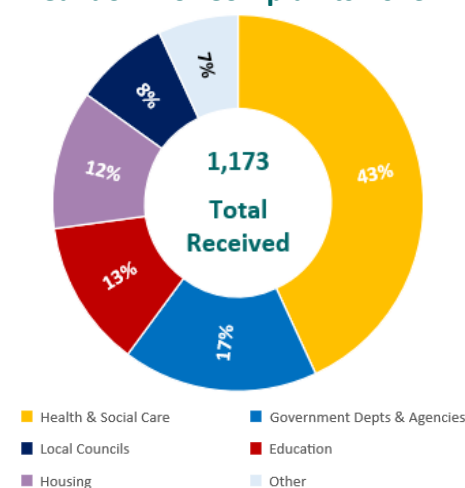
Year	Total	Year on Year % Change	Cumulative change since 2016-17
2019-20	1043	37%	94%
2020-21	927	22%	72%
2021-22	1211	59%	125%
2022-23	1046	37%	94%
2023-24	1173	54%	118%

During 2023-24, 43% of the complaints we received related to Health & Social Care Services in Northern Ireland.

The other 57% of complaints related to Government Departments (17%), Education (13%), Housing (12%) and Councils (8%).

The remaining 7% were categorised as ‘other’ complaints.

Breakdown of Complaints 2023-24¹



In relation to our Local Government Ethical Standards role, during 2023-24 we received 31 allegations that Councillors may have breached the Local Government Code of Conduct. These related to social media posts, disclosure of confidential information and the registration / declaration of interests.

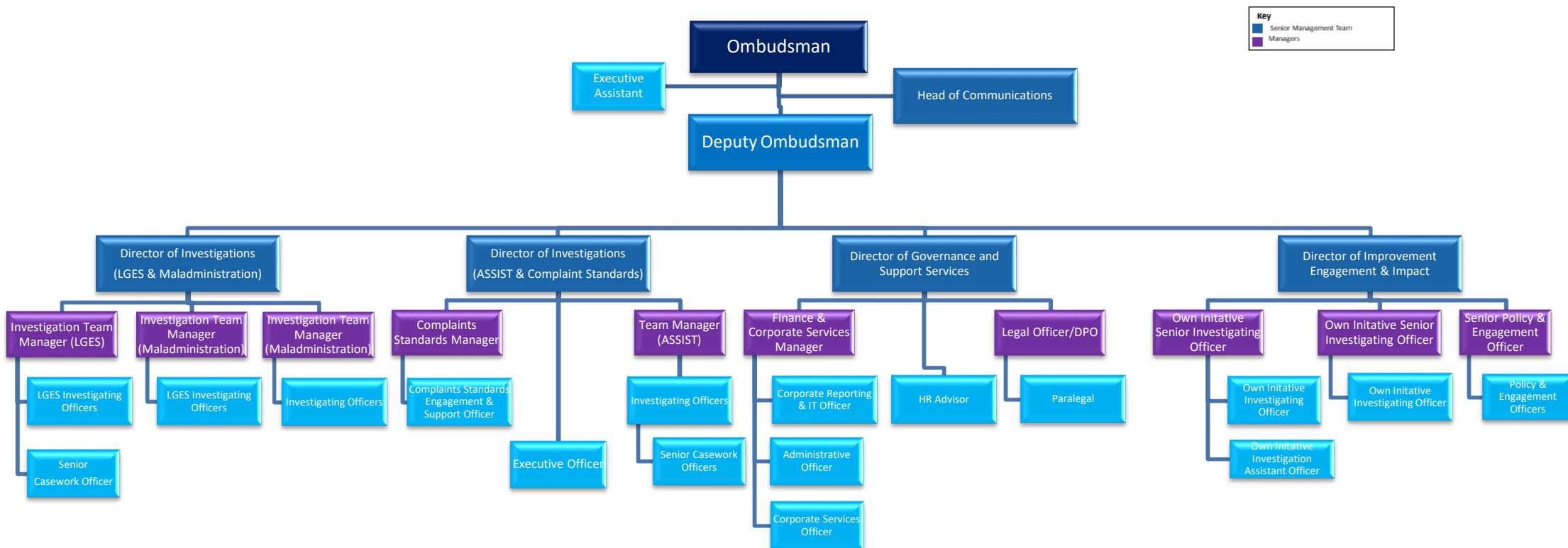
Interested candidates can read more about our future plans in our [Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#) and our annual performance in our latest [Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024](#).

¹ 2023-24 provisional figures

4. OUR STRUCTURE

NIPSO has grown considerably since it was established in 2016 both in terms of functions, budget and staff numbers. As a result, NIPSO has embarked on a programme of improvement of its internal systems including the establishment of a new case handling system, a new finance system, establishment of a new records management system and we are embarking on updating the office human resource management system. The senior management team are focused on ensuring that we have effective systems to support the front-line staff of NIPSO, ensuring that we meet our statutory obligations and bring about improvements in public services through our work.

Our current structure is set out below:



5. OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision and values are very important to us and underpin everything we do as an organisation.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Make a positive difference to people and public services in Northern Ireland by providing individual resolution and improved services through learning from complaints.

OUR PURPOSE

Investigate unresolved complaints about public bodies, uphold standards and ensure accountability for both public bodies and for local Councillors. Contribute to broader improvement by sharing the learning from both individual complaints and systemic reports.

OUR VALUES

Our **values** underpin and drive all our decisions, actions, policies, processes and systems and how we engage internally and externally.

Independence

We are open, non-partisan, unbiased, and we act with integrity.

Fairness

We are honest and impartial, ensure all views are listened to and use an evidence-based approach to our decision making.

People Focused

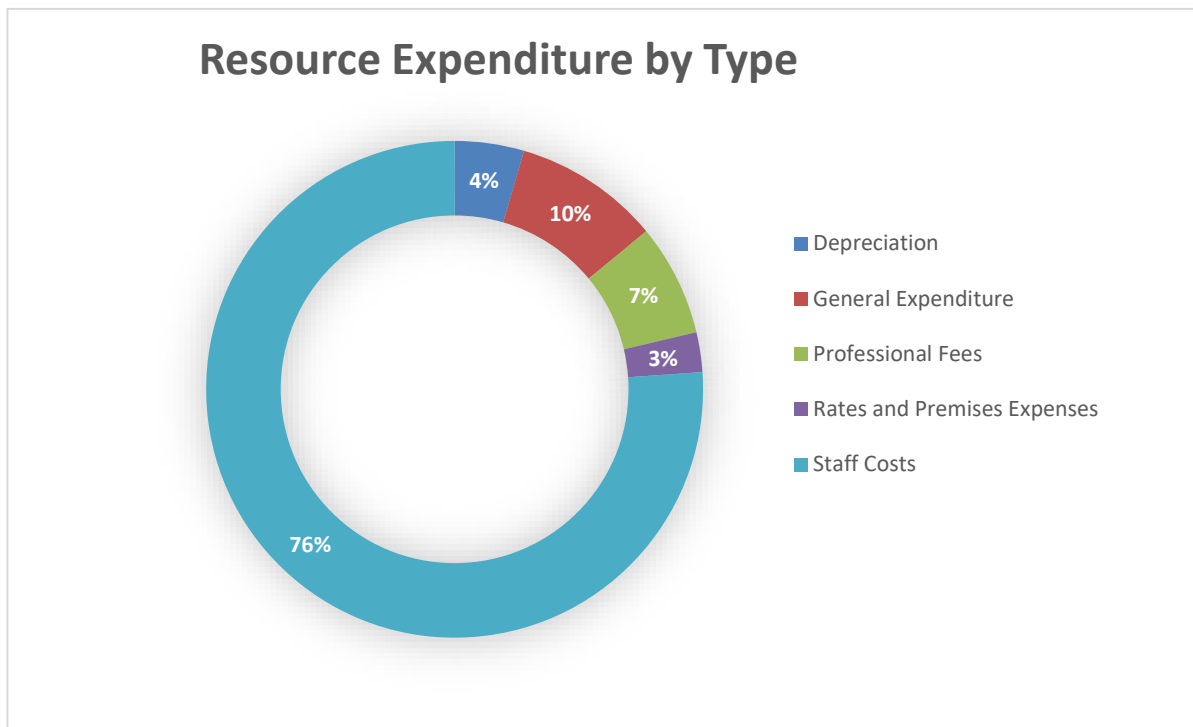
We treat people with respect and empathy and recognise and value individual experience. We are accessible and engage and explain our decision making.

Excellence

We deliver an excellent service, meeting our service standards with high levels of governance and accountability. We have a focus on continuous learning and improvement.

6. OUR FINANCIALS

We have a total annual operating expenditure of approx. £4m, the majority of which relates to our staff costs. The breakdown of our resource expenditure for 2023-24 is summarised below:



You can access our latest accounts in our [Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024](#).

7. JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Corporate Services Executive Officer

Reporting to: Finance & Corporate Services Manager

Grade: Equivalent to NICS EOII

Salary: £28,734 - £29,337 (under review)

Location: Belfast (Fully Office Based)

Main purpose of job

To support NIPSO's Corporate Services team in the delivery of a range of functions including Finance, IT, Health & Safety, information governance and Facilities Management. To support the effective operation of NIPSO's office including ensuring the safety and security of the building.

Summary of principal duties and responsibilities

Records Management

- Identify records due for disposal and arrange for their review of by the relevant information governance lead.
- Arrange the secure disposal of records approved for destruction

Finance

- Complete assurance checks in respect of payments processed.
- Support the Corporate Services Admin Officer with raising of purchase orders on finance system, inputting of invoices and processing payments as required.
- Co-ordination of the asset management procedures within the Office.

Premises and Facilities Management

- Undertake the role of NIPSO premises officer including liaison with contractors and NIPSO's landlord.
- Ensure the schedule of planned, preventative maintenance works is undertaken and arrange / co-ordinate all remedial maintenance works including monitoring of online property maintenance system (AMPS).
- Undertake the role of NIPSO Health and Safety Officer and ensuring compliance with the NIPSO Health and Safety Policy and Fire Safety Procedures, recommending to management changes/updates as appropriate.
- Maintain relevant premises records.
- Ensure housekeeping of office accommodation in accordance with laid down requirements.

Procurement Contract Management and IT

- Oversee the maintenance of a NIPSO contract management database to ensure good practice and control over contract reviews, renewals and expenditure.
- Liaise with NIPSO's nominated Centre of Procurement Excellence (CoPE – CPD) regarding participations in collaborative procurements.
- Assist the Finance, Procurement & Corporate Services Manager where necessary with procurement exercises, tenders and contract management.
- Support the Corporate Reporting and IT Officer with staff IT related queries and assist with resolving problems including liaison with IT ASSIST.

Ad Hoc Duties

- Support the induction process for new staff and completion of related paperwork.
- Test and maintain the NIPSO business continuity plan, recommending to management changes/updates to the relevant policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Contribute to the planning, organisation and delivery of events, conferences, launches, adjudications and other externally focused occasions which take place in NIPSO offices or externally.
- Provision of advice and support to senior management and other teams as required.
- Maintenance of all Corporate Services procedures and records including procurement document and Post Project Evaluations.
- Undertake any other Corporate Services duties appropriate to grade and as directed by line management including ad hoc project work as required.

General Responsibilities & Duties

- Adhere to the NIPSO values of fairness, independence, people focused and excellence.
- Adhere to and promote NIPSO policies on Equality of Opportunity and Dignity at Work, demonstrating a commitment to the principles of equality, fairness and diversity in all aspects of work.
- Have due regard for own safety and that of others, behaving appropriately at all times and recording all accidents no matter how minor.
- Take responsibility for the development of own skills and knowledge through proactive engagement in the internal performance review processes.
- Undertake ad-hoc, cross-functional project work supporting the development of the Office and service provision as reasonably requested by your line manager.

This job description is subject to review and amendment as the demands of the role and the organisation evolve. Therefore the postholder will be required to be flexible and adaptable and aware that they may be asked to perform tasks, duties and responsibilities which are not specifically detailed in the job description but which are commensurate with the role.

8. PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Applicants must, as at the closing date for receipt of applications, be able to demonstrate by providing personal and specific examples on their application form that they have:

Three years' recent relevant experience of:

- (i) Providing administrative support within an office environment
- (ii) Working under pressure to successfully manage competing work priorities.
- (iii) Communicating effectively with internal and external stakeholders.
- (iv) The use of Microsoft Office packages particularly MS Word and Excel, to extract information and produce reports.
- (v) Managing health and safety issues within an office environment.
- (vi) Providing support and guidance to staff to enable them to carry out their duties and ensure efficient operation of the office.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

In addition to the above essential criteria, NIPSO reserves the right to only shortlist those candidates who can also demonstrate, by providing personal and specific examples on the application form that they have:

- Experience of facilities management.
- Experience of finance systems.
- Experience of working in the public sector.
- Experience of providing input for briefing papers, reports and policies.
- A qualification in health and safety.

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Applicants must be able to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, competencies and attributes which will be tested at final interview:

- Organisational and planning skills
- Oral and Written Communication
- Collaborative Working
- Attention to detail
- Initiative and Problem-Solving skills
- Continuous Improvement

9. WORKING FOR US

Remuneration

The salary for this post is currently equivalent to Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Executive Officer II which is £28,734 - £29,337 (under review)

Location

The role will be based at NIPSO, Progressive House, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN.

Working Arrangements

This role is fully office based.

Working Hours

The post is permanent, full-time (37 hours per week), subject to a probationary period of 9 months.

Successful applicants have the opportunity to request Flexible Working from the 1st day of their employment. Management will give full consideration to the flexible working request. However, no employee can be guaranteed flexible working and the needs of the organisation will take priority.

Pension

The successful candidate will be eligible to join the NICS Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme.

Annual Leave

Annual leave entitlement is 25 days annual leave, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service, plus 12 days public holidays.

Other benefits

We have a generous occupational sick pay and maternity, paternity and adoption leave/pay arrangements, as well as a suite of work-life balance policies. Employees also have access to an Employee Assistance Programme.

We provide support for ongoing training and provide development opportunities for all staff. In 2022 we implemented a coaching framework to ensure all employees of NIPSO receive regular support and guidance from their line manager.

10. SELECTION PROCESS

Applications for the post can be made on GetGotJobs Portal through the following link:
[Corporate Services Executive Officer Job](#)

Completed application and monitoring forms are to be completed no later than **12 noon on 20th May 2025**

Applicants who meet the shortlisting criteria will be invited to participate in a selection and assessment process.

In the event of a high volume of applications NIPSO reserves the right to apply additional criteria in order to achieve a manageable shortlist of applicants.

Reasonable Adjustments

NIPSO are committed to ensuring equal access to employment opportunities for all individuals. Applications from disabled applicants are welcome. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment and selection process, please contact us on 0800 34 34 24 or email monitoringofficer@nipso.org.uk and we will work with you to find an accessible method for you to submit your application.

Guidance notes for completing your application form

NIPSO is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all job applicants. The information you supply on this application form will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used solely for assessing your suitability for the post.

A candidate found to have knowingly given false information, or to have wilfully suppressed any material fact will be liable to disqualification from the process, or if appointed, to dismissal. All appointments are made on merit and in accordance with our Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Any canvassing of officers directly or indirectly in connection with an appointment will automatically disqualify the candidate.

Applications will only be accepted on the specific NIPSO application form. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. CVs, letters or any other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms and will not be made available to the shortlisting or interview panel.

Please also note:

- Applications which are received after the closing date or time will not be accepted.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the completed form, together with the completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, is returned by the closing date for applications.

Qualifications

You will be asked to provide original qualification certificates (or, where you have mislaid your original certificates, a certified statement of results from the relevant awarding body) and proof of memberships etc. that are relevant to the post applied for before any offer of employment can be made.

If you believe that your qualification is equivalent to the one required, you must provide specific evidence to demonstrate its equivalency in comparison to the qualification that was specifically detailed in the person specification.

If you possess any professional qualifications, please include the full details and include the date of the award.

If you have membership of a professional body please include the name of the body or organisation, the type of membership you hold (e.g., student, associate, fellow etc.), the date when this grade of membership was obtained and the expiry date (if any). If the membership has lapsed, please state this.

Experience

It is necessary to state your exact dates and periods of employment as at the application closing date (month/year) because this is calculated to the nearest month for shortlisting purposes. The shortlisting panel will only consider the information asked for in each separate box on the application.

You will be required to clearly demonstrate, by giving personal and specific details on your application form, how you meet the experience detailed in the person specification in the relevant box. If you do not supply sufficient information on your application form to clearly demonstrate that you meet the criteria, you will not be shortlisted.

Conflicts of Interest

Given the breadth of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction (namely her roles in investigating complaints about all public service providers in Northern Ireland and in investigating and adjudicating on alleged breaches of the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors), it is important that any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are declared.

On successful appointment, a pre-employment check will need completed to ask to consider and declare whether or not you have any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Any interests that would impact your ability to carry out the role independently may result in not being able to progress your offer of employment.

For further assistance you may wish to consult the Northern Ireland Audit Office good practice guide on conflicts of interest.

Selection and Assessment Process

Shortlisting will take place during **week commencing 21st May 2025**. Candidates who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria and if required, the desirable criteria, will be invited to attend a competency-based interview.

Interviews are envisaged to take place during **week commencing 2nd June 2025**. Further details of the process will be provided to candidates invited to participate in this process.

A reserve list of candidates may be held for a period of twelve months and may be activated on a merit basis if a vacancy arises within that period.

Principles of the Appointment

NIPSO is committed to providing and promoting equality of opportunity and to the principle of recruiting on the basis of merit only. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates regardless of their gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, pregnancy and maternity, religious beliefs, political opinion, race, ethnic origin, colour or nationality, sexual orientation, disability, age, Trade Union membership or non- membership or criminal records.

All NIPSO offers of employment are conditional and subject to successful pre-employment checks and the successful applicant will be required to:

- provide documentation to confirm their identity and their right to work in the UK;
- provide documentation to verify information already provided on the application form, e.g. qualifications, professional registration, driving licence, etc;
- provide a basic AccessNI Check, which the successful candidate must obtain and the cost of which will be reimbursed upon appointment;
- provide satisfactory references, one of which must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer.

Further Information

If you have any further queries regarding the recruitment and selection process, then please contact the Monitoring Officer (monitoringofficer@nipso.org.uk)