

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Job Specification

Legal Adviser (Assembly Grade 4)

SALARY RANGE: £47,747 - £54,123

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Application forms are available on the Northern Ireland Assembly website and should be completed online. Completed application forms, which demonstrate the skills and experience sought, must be submitted by the closing date of Friday 28th February 2014.
- 1.2 **Candidates are reminded that the application form must be fully completed. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. CVs or other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Commission) is a corporate body established by section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It is required to provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Commission employs a Secretariat to serve the Assembly. The Assembly Secretariat comprises of the Office of the Clerk and Director General, and five Directorates – Legal and Governance Services, Clerking and Reporting, Corporate Services, Facilities and Information and Outreach. The management structure of the Assembly Secretariat is illustrated in the attached chart.
- 2.2 The Commission's vision is to be at the forefront of providing outstanding and progressive parliamentary services.
- 2.3 The Legal Services Office is within the Directorate of Legal and Governance Services and forms an integral part of the Secretariat. Its role is to provide such in-house legal advice and assistance as is required by the Assembly, the Speaker, the Committees, the Assembly Commission, the Clerk and Director General to the Assembly and other clients. The Legal Services Office seeks to provide excellent service to these clients. It has a critical role in ensuring and maintaining the efficient operation of Assembly business and the Commission's affairs.

- 2.4 All legal staff are expected to be fully integrated into the affairs of the Assembly and the Commission. Successful candidates should expect to work closely with political representatives, clerking and procedural staff, and corporate staff.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1 The successful candidates should expect to be based in accommodation in Parliament Buildings.
- 3.2 There are currently two full-time posts available.

4. JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements

- 4.1 The postholders will report directly to the Head of Legal Services Office.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- 4.2 The role is one of in-house counsel.

The main duties of the post are providing and ensuring the provision of:

- (i) legal advice and support on constitutional and procedural matters for the Speaker, the Assembly Commission, the Committees, the Clerk/Director General, and other clients. This encompasses a varied range of legal issues including:
- whether Bills are within the legislative competence of the Assembly;
 - interpretation of all forms of primary and secondary legislation, particularly the provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and other constitutional and human rights legislation;
 - matters relating to order and procedure; and
 - such other matters as may arise.
- (ii) legal advice and support on corporate legal matters for the Assembly Commission, the Clerk and Director General and other clients. This encompasses a varied range of legal issues including:
- human rights law;
 - discrimination law;
 - public and administrative law;
 - employment law;
 - contract and procurement law;

- information law;
 - data protection law;
 - EU law;
 - general corporate law issues;
 - the conduct of litigation; and
 - such other matters as may arise.
- (iii) legal advice and support for Committees of the Assembly, which may encompass any matter of law within the legislative competence of the Assembly; and
- (iv) such other reasonable duties as the Director of Legal and Governance Services or the Head of Legal Services Office may require.

5. Essential Criteria

5.1 At the closing date for applications, applicants must have:

- (i) be a barrister or solicitor who is entitled to practice in Northern Ireland;

and

- (ii) at least two years of post-qualification professional legal experience of providing advice on law.

5.2 In addition, applicants must also be able to provide evidence within their application form, and demonstrate at interview: -

- a knowledge of constitutional and administrative law in Northern Ireland;
 - the ability to interpret legislation and legal documents;
 - the ability to prepare legal opinions to tight deadlines;
 - a track record of demonstrating legal analytical ability and exercising sound judgement in the resolution of legal problems;
- and**
- the ability to communicate with clarity and confidence.

6. Shortlisting Criteria

The Assembly Commission reserves the right to use shortlisting as part of the recruitment process for this post. Should shortlisting be required, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied in the order stated:

(a) At least two years post qualification experience of providing legal advice in three or more of the following areas: constitutional law; administrative law; human rights law; contract law; information law or data protection law; procurement law; discrimination law; employment law; European Union law or legislative drafting.

(b) At least four years post qualification experience of providing legal advice in three or more of the areas listed in paragraph 6 (a) above.

7. Core Competences

In addition to the essential criteria outlined above the following competences will be tested at interview:

People

The ability to create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships, assess your own developmental needs and develop yourself to improve job performance and fulfil future potential.

Information and Communication

The ability to analyse information, make critical decisions, influence and gain the commitment of others, identify customer/client needs and communicate required information.

8. Further Information

- 8.1 If you require more information on the recruitment process please contact the Human Resources Office on 90521923.
- 8.2 Further information about the NI Assembly can be obtained on the Internet at website: www.niassembly.gov.uk.

9. INTERVIEW

Criteria-based Interview

Final selection of candidates will be based on performance at criteria-based interview(s) structured around the qualities, skills and experience sought in the essential criteria section of the job specification as well as the core competencies listed above. All candidates will be expected to display an acceptable level of competence in each of these areas. Offers of appointment will be made in order of merit.

10. COMPLETION OF APPLICATION FORMS

- 10.1 **The selection panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability. It is therefore essential that applicants describe fully in the application form the extent to**

which they satisfy the above criteria. It is not appropriate simply to list the various posts that the applicants have held. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicants' posts about the skills and experience gained.

- 10.2 It will be the responsibility of applicants to demonstrate clearly on their application form how they satisfy the essential and shortlisting criteria. **Applicants must use only the application forms provided and must not submit additional material in support of their application forms.**

11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

- 11.1 These appointments are permanent and will be made by The Commission. The successful applicants will be employees of the Commission. All appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.
- 11.2 The standard working week is 37 hours, excluding meal breaks (42 hours gross). Working hours will be dictated by the mode of operation of the NI Assembly and may involve work into late evenings, at weekends and on public holidays.
- 11.3 The salary scale for this post is £47,747 to £54,123 and your starting salary will be £47,747 per annum.
- 11.4 In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 26 days after 4 years of service and to 30 days after 5 years of service. Applicants should be aware that a major influence in determining when leave can be taken will be the parliamentary timetable.
- 11.5 Subject to eligibility, a childcare allowance scheme is available.
- 11.6 Successful applicants will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.

12 PENSIONS

- 12.1 The NI Assembly offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/index/new-members.htm>

If you are unable to access the website or require the information in another format please contact:

The Pensions Manager

Human Resources Office
Room 402
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1685

- 12.2 Please note that the NI Assembly does not use HR Connect.

13. APPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Under fair employment legislation, the Commission is required to monitor the community background of those applying to fill vacancies. Applicants must, therefore, complete the equal opportunities monitoring section of the application form.
- 13.3 The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of gender, marital or family status, religious belief, political opinion, disability, age, race, nationality or sexual orientation. **All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit.**

This job specification should not be taken as constituting conditions of employment and should be read in conjunction with "Guidance for Applicants".

Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Organisation Structure

