

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## *Job Specification*

### **Legal Adviser** (Assembly Grade 4)

**SALARY RANGE: £47,747 to £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 **23:59 GMT on 6 October 2016**.
- 1.2. **Applicants 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 must 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 current structure chart for the Secretariat is set out at **Annex A**.
- 2.2. Legal Advisers work in the Legal Services Office, part of the Legal and Governance Services Directorate. The function of the Legal Services Office is to provide specialised in-house legal advice and assistance to the Assembly, the Speaker, Assembly Committees, the Commission, the Clerk/Chief Executive and other key Secretariat clients. The Legal Services Office has a critical role in ensuring and maintaining the lawful and effective discharge of the Assembly's parliamentary and corporate functions.

#### **3. LOCATION**

- 3.1. The successful applicant(s) will be based in Parliament Buildings, Belfast.

#### **4. JOB DESCRIPTION**

##### **Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements**

- 4.1. The successful applicant(s) will report directly to the Head of Legal Services.

##### **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

- 4.2. The role of a Legal Adviser is that of in-house counsel. The successful applicant(s) will:
- (i) Provide legal advice and support on constitutional and procedural matters to the Speaker, the Assembly Commission, the Committees, the Clerk/Director General, and other Assembly clients. This may include advice on the legislative competence of the Assembly, the interpretation of all forms of primary and secondary legislation, and advice on matters relating to order and procedure.
  - (ii) Provide legal advice and support on corporate matters to the Assembly Commission, the Clerk/Director General and other Assembly clients. This may include advice on employment and equality law, contract and procurement law, information law, EU law and human rights law.
  - (iii) Manage litigation.
  - (iv) Carry out such other duties as the Director of Legal and Governance or Head of Legal Services may reasonably require.

#### **5. ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

- 5.1. At the closing date for applications, applicants must:

- (i) be a barrister or solicitor who is entitled to practice in Northern Ireland; and
- (ii) have at least 3 years' post-qualification experience ('PQE') in law.

- 5.2. Applicants must also be able to provide evidence within their application form of:

- (i) a knowledge of constitutional and administrative law in Northern Ireland;
- (ii) a knowledge of the role of the Assembly in the political and institutional relationships in Northern Ireland;
- (iii) the ability to interpret legislation and legal documents;
- (iv) the ability to prepare legal opinions to tight deadlines;

- (v) a track record of demonstrating legal analytical ability and sound judgement in the resolution of legal problems; and
- (vi) the ability to communicate with clarity and confidence.

## **6. SHORTLISTING CRITERIA**

6.1. The Commission may decide to shortlist for interview as part of the recruitment process for this post. The following shortlisting criteria will be applied in the order stated:

- a) At least 2 years' PQE in providing legal advice in 3 of the following areas: constitutional law; administrative law; human rights law; procurement and contract law; information law; employment law; EU Law.
- b) At least 4 years' PQE in providing legal advice in 3 of the following areas: constitutional law; administrative law; human rights law; procurement and contract law; information law; employment law; EU Law.

## **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/audience needs and communicate required information.

## **8. CRITERIA BASED INTERVIEW INCLUDING PRESENTATION**

### **Criteria-based interview**

8.1. Final selection of candidates will be based on performance at a criteria-based interview(s) structured around the qualities, skills and experience sought at sections 5.1 & 5.2 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.

### **Presentation**

- 8.2 Candidates will also be expected to prepare for, and present to the interview panel, a short presentation as part of the interview process.

## **9. FURTHER INFORMATION**

- 9.1. There are currently two Legal Adviser vacancies. Offers of appointment will be made in order of merit.
- 9.2. If you require more information on the recruitment process, please contact the Human Resources Office on 90521923.
- 9.3. Further information about the NI Assembly can be obtained on the Internet at website: [www.niassembly.gov.uk](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk).

## **10. COMPLETION OF APPLICATION FORMS**

- 10.1. The selection panel may decide to interview only those candidates 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 candidates have held. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the candidates' posts about the skills and experience gained.
- 10.2. It will be the responsibility of candidates to demonstrate clearly on their application form how they satisfy the essential and shortlisting criteria. **Candidates must use only the application form provided and must not submit additional material in support of their application.**

## **11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

- 11.1. These appointments are permanent and will be made by The Commission. The successful candidate(s) 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. The successful applicant(s) 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.
- 13.2. The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants 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 does not constitute any term or condition of employment.**