



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Application forms and further information can be obtained by contacting recruit@headstogether.com or telephone 028 90 424030.

Applications close at 12:00 noon
on 20th February 2023.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Thank you for your interest in this unique opportunity.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is looking for an exceptional leader to be its new Chief Executive. This person will work alongside the Board of Commissioners as we help to create a more equal Northern Ireland, ultimately making a difference and improving the lives of everyone living here.

As Northern Ireland's equality body, established by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we have a central role in the architecture of the protections against unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

The Commission is an independent, expert and trusted public body. It has an important remit with a range of powers and duties.

As Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, you will be responsible for the success of the Commission with delegated responsibility from the Board for leadership, management, and day-to-day operations.

You will be leading an organisation with an exceptional record where good governance underpins all we do. It is an organisation that is highly regarded for its expertise, where staff are committed, motivated and experts in their respective fields.

The new Chief Executive must share our passion and drive for promoting equality of opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland and for building good relations across our society.

As Chief Executive, you will be a dynamic and impactful leader with a focus on outcomes and a proven record of working collaboratively, building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders.

If you care deeply about an equal Northern Ireland, we would welcome your application.

Good luck!



Geraldine McGahey OBE
Chief Commissioner



JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORTING TO: THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER AND COMMISSION

The Chief Executive is responsible for providing strategic and operational leadership to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, supporting the Commission to fulfil its statutory duties, and ensuring that professional and expert advice is provided to the Commission and its Committees when making decisions.

The main duties of the post are:

1. Act as Accounting Officer for the Commission's budget, have personal responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public funds allocated to the Commission, maintaining robust governance systems, including assurance and financial controls.
2. Act as principal advisor to the Commission and its Committees, providing expert strategic and operational guidance and advice on matters relating to the Commission's remit.
3. Support the Commission in developing and implementing its Corporate Plans and annual Business Plans.
4. Lead and manage the Commission's staff team to ensure that corporate objectives are delivered, embedding a culture of high performance, outcome focused, continuous improvement and collaborative working within and beyond the organisation.
5. Implementing corporate and annual business plans to ensure the delivery of the Commission's statutory remit and strategic objectives of the Commission.
6. Build trusted relationships and work collaboratively at the most senior levels with all key stakeholders of the Commission, including the Commission's Sponsor Department, The Executive Office.
7. Represent and advocate on behalf of the Commission on relevant equality matters, building toward a shared understanding of equality in Northern Ireland and promoting equality across the breadth of the Commission's remit.
8. Support the Chief Commissioner in improving board effectiveness and establishing high standards of corporate governance, regularly reviewing systems to deliver continuous improvement.
9. Other relevant duties appropriate for the proper functioning of the Commission.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential qualifications, skills and experience

1. A degree or third level qualification and at least 3 years senior management experience* in a multi-disciplinary organisation that deals with complex issues requiring regular interaction with other external agencies.

Alternatively, in the absence of a degree or third level qualification, at least 5 years senior management experience* in a multi-disciplinary organisation that deals with complex issues requiring regular interaction with other external agencies.

2. Demonstrable evidence of an understanding of equality issues and the wider policy and political context relevant to delivering change in Northern Ireland.
3. Proven experience of an ability to reach out and to develop and maintain professional relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders to achieve strategic organisational goals.
4. Evidence of effective leadership in the delivery of challenging outcomes, including proven ability to analyse risks and identify opportunities at a strategic level.
5. Evidence of strong contribution to the setting of an organisational vision and development and delivery of strategic plans.
6. Demonstrable evidence of effective governance and financial accountability, including delivering controls and value for money in relation to resource allocation and expenditure at a strategic level.

Desirable skills, qualification and experience

1. A track record of commitment in a senior management role to equality or advocacy for a particular group or groups of people.

* *Senior management is defined as having lead responsibility for an organisational functional area in the public, private or voluntary sector with regular interaction with and accountability to the most senior decision-making level.*

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The post of Chief Executive is permanent and full-time.

The post has terms and conditions that are similar but not necessarily identical to those which apply to the NICS. Staff are direct employees of the Commission and are not Civil Servants.

A reserve list of suitable candidates may exist for 12 months from the date of the final panel decision.

At present, members of the Protestant community and men are under-represented and consequently applications from members of these groups would be particularly welcome.

Location

Although, the post holder will be based in Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP, the Commission is transitioning to hybrid working. Staff operate a mix of workplace, home and remote working organised in line with business needs. A Hybrid Working Policy is being developed to support these new ways of working.

Salary and Reward Package

The salary for this post will be within the range £74,912 - £84,122 (under review).

Annual Leave

In addition to public and privilege holidays (currently 12 days), the annual leave entitlement attached to this position is initially 25 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Pensions

The Commission offers all new employees an attractive pension package. New employees are eligible to join the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension scheme.

Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/civil-service-pensions-ni>

Hours of Work

The standard working hours for the post are 37 per week exclusive of a lunch break. On occasion, the duties may include some evening and weekend working.

Travel

The post may entail some travel, mainly throughout Northern Ireland and further afield on occasions.

Probation

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of one year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory, the appointment may be terminated either during or at the end of the probationary period.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the Essential Requirements and the Desirable Requirements.

All parts of the application form must be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

All applicants with a disability who meet the essential requirements will be shortlisted.

If an application form is received after the closing date/time, it will not be considered.

Applicants should read the job description and person specification carefully. Applicants will be shortlisted according to their responses to the essential criteria and, if necessary desirable criteria, as stated in the person specification. The shortlisting panel reserve the right to only progress those individuals, who in its view most clearly match the criteria.

Applicants should ensure that they provide evidence of their experience, skills and qualifications, giving length of experience, examples of relevant work and dates as required. It is not sufficient to simply list duties and responsibilities.

Applicants should not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc and should write for a reader who may not know their employer or their job.

The shortlisting panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.

Applicants should write down clearly their personal involvement in any experience quoted. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how applicants actually carried out a piece of work and what they did and what were the outcomes that the shortlisting panel will be interested in.

Throughout the recruitment process, candidates will be assessed against the skills and experience in this Person Specification, consistent with the leadership behaviours of the [NICS competency framework](#) at level 5.

ONLY the details provided by candidates in the employment history and shortlisting criteria sections will be provided to the selection panel.

Monitoring Questionnaire

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all our employees and job applicants, irrespective of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Sex;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marital or civil partnership status;
- Maternity and Pregnancy;
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller);
- Religious or similar philosophical belief;
- Political opinion;
- Sexual orientation;
- union membership or non- membership; and
- Having or not having dependants.

We do not discriminate against our job applicants or employees on any of the grounds listed above. We aim to select the best person for the job and all recruitment decisions will be made objectively. In this questionnaire, we will ask you to provide us with some personal information about yourself. We are doing this for two reasons. First, we are doing this to demonstrate our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in employment. The information that you provide us will assist us to measure the effectiveness of our equal opportunity policies and to develop affirmative or positive action policies. Secondly, we also monitor the community background and sex of our job applicants and employees in order to comply with our duties under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

You are not obliged to answer the questions on this form and you will not suffer any penalty if you choose not to do so.

Nevertheless, we encourage you to answer the questions below. Your identity will be kept anonymous and your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence. We assure you that your answers will not be used by us to make any unlawful decisions affecting you, whether in a recruitment exercise or during the course of any employment with us. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence and protected from misuse. It will not form part of your application.

THIS CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Any queries about this recruitment process should be directed to Angela Barratt of Headstogether Consulting Ltd in the first instance on 028 90 424030 or via email recruit@headstogether.co.uk

TIMETABLE

The timetable which follows provides the proposed dates for the selection and assessment process. These dates are provisional and may need to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances, in which case alternative dates will be provided. Unfortunately for logistical reasons it is very unlikely that alternative dates will be possible in the event candidates are not available during the dates set out below.

Date

Applications close at 12:00 noon on 20th February 2023.

w/c 20th February 2023 Shortlisting takes place and candidates notified of results.

w/c 6th March 2023 Initial assessment centre takes place

w/c 20th March 2023 Final presentation and interview with Appointment Panel

If you are called for interview, please contact Angela Barratt of Headstogether Consulting Ltd if you require any special facilities on **028 90 424030** or recruit@headstogether.com.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Appointment Panel

The information provided within the application form will be used to determine which candidates meet the required criteria to be brought forward to the first stage in the assessment process.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their responses in their application adequately address the criteria specified and to ensure that relevant examples are provided, as appropriate. The essential and desirable experience criteria will be used for shortlisting purposes.

Applications will be considered by the Appointment Panel which will be chaired by Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner. The panel will also include Neil Anderson, Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioners Jarlath Kearney, Carmel McKinney and Preeti Yellamaty. The Appointment Panel will be assisted throughout the process by Headstogether Consulting Ltd.

Reasonable Adjustments

Applications from disabled candidates are welcome. All applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria will be shortlisted. Any applicants who would like to discuss reasonable adjustments to any stage of the recruitment and selection process in light of a recognised disability should contact: Angela Barratt of HeadsTogether Consulting Ltd

Telephone: 028 90424030

E-mail: recruit@headstogether.com

Transgender Requirements

Candidates who are currently going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be known in confidence, to enable them to attend any part of the selection process should contact Joanne Kane, Director at HeadsTogether Consulting Ltd on 02890 424030. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and will not form any part of the selection process.

Assessment Process

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in an assessment centre run by Headstogether Consulting Ltd which will involve a number of different exercises (further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates at the time). Following the review of the scores at the assessment centre, a final shortlist of suitable candidates will be invited to participate in a final presentation and a criterion and competency based interview with the Appointment Panel (further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates at the time).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Conflict of Interest

It is a basic requirement of all Commission employees that their private activities should not bring them in to conflict with their official duties.

Conflict of Interest is not limited to the employee's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Commission's business directly or indirectly. Therefore, to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an employee must provide information about any possible conflicts of interest in their application form. If appointed candidates must not, without prior approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

By completing an application form for the role of Chief Executive at the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland candidates are consenting to their personal information, as specified on the application form, being used by Headstogether Consulting Ltd and by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for the purposes of assessing their suitability for the position applied for. The information provided will be used for this sole purpose and the viewing of the information will be confined to those who have a legitimate reason for doing so. In the event that a candidate is successful, their application form will be transferred to their personnel file at the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and may be stored confidentially in hard or soft copy format for the duration of their employment. Other applications will be retained in hard and/or soft copy format by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for a period of 12 months after which they will be destroyed.

Appointment

If recommended for appointment candidates **should not tender their resignation from their current employment** (if applicable) until the Commission has informed them that all relevant pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

The information contained in this candidate information booklet does not form part of any future contract of employment.

THE EQUALITY COMMISSION

The Equality Commission is Northern Ireland's statutory equality body. Our work has been vital to creating a more equal Northern Ireland. We have a continuing role to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity to make a difference and improve people's lives.

We are a statutory non-Departmental public body, whilst funded by the Executive Office, we operate independently of Government.

Our current budget is just over 5 million pounds. The Commission is an Investor in People organisation, with an expert and dedicated staff team. We have impeccable standards of governance and a long record of clean annual audits, and a good level of attendance.

We have delivered an ever-increasing range of statutory powers and duties, most recently taking up a role as the 'dedicated mechanism' to oversee the implantation of the UK Government's commitment to no diminution of rights under Article 2 of the Ireland/NI Protocol.

We use a combination of our powers to encourage and to enforce changes to policy, practices and procedures in favour of greater equality.

Underpinning all these activities are communications and awareness raising, engagement with our stakeholders, working in partnership with other organisations and a high standard of corporate governance.

Our services include:

- giving advice and support to individuals with potential complaints under the anti-discrimination legislation;
- giving guidance to employers and service providers about their obligations under the law and good practice advice;
- encouraging public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and address inequalities in fulfilling their equality and good relations duties; and
- ensuring that equality considerations are central to decision making by focusing particular attention in a number of key public policy areas.

Providing leadership on equality issues

We provide leadership on equality issues, including on some of the most divisive issues facing NI including on such as special recruitment measures to make the police service more representative of the community it serves; on the regulations of flying of flags and providing advice on creating harmonious workplaces.

We have both support and challenge Government and public bodies to mainstream equality and good relations in public policy and service delivery work, providing expert equality advice and recommendations across employment, education, housing, health, participation in public life and justice.

Working with employers and service providers to promote equality

We have been instrumental in achieving fair participation in the Northern Ireland workforce through expert advice and guidance over decades. This work has been vital in securing inward investment and confidence in fair employment practices in NI, internationally as well as locally.

We have contributed to improved working and employment practices across the public and private sector by providing expert advice and guidance to those with responsibilities under equality law.

Every year, we work with more than 3,000 employers to make them aware of the duties the law imposes on them and help them comply. Survey data show this is highly valued by employers with

- 84% saying that the Commission is an expert source of advice;
- 90% employers would come to us if they had an equality problem;
- 92% agreed that the information we gave them met their needs; and
- 99% employers comply with the fair employment regulations.

Working to challenge discrimination

We provide advice on their rights to around 3000 people every year and considering nearly 300 applications for legal assistance and providing assistance to approximately 20% of these every year. This legal work has defined the scope of protections provided by anti-discrimination law and highlighted the importance of these protections, including new areas of protection.

Promoting benefits of equality and changing attitudes

The Commission has a high public profile, and there is awareness and support for equality and rights. Some recent survey findings include

- 90% agreed that equality and anti-discrimination laws are necessary;
- 87% agreed that there are benefits of having an equal society in NI; and
- 80% are aware that the Commission provides equality advice and assistance to individuals.

Our work has contributed to more positive attitudes to minority groups and groups vulnerable to discrimination in NI over the years, through public debate and awareness raising activities. For example -

- favourable attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people increased from 57% in 2008 to 84% in 2016; and
- negative attitudes towards those from minority ethnic reduced from 28% to 19% in relation to Travellers and from 13% to 10% for all minority ethnic groups.

Working internationally

The Commission has international recognition for equality law and practice, influencing law and practice in other countries, incl. Israel and North Macedonia. We have also shared our experiences with a number of EU countries through our membership of Equinet, the European network of equality bodies. We host international visits to NI, to share learning and promote the experiences of working to advance equality in Northern Ireland as part of our wider public sector role.

Our Structure

The Commission is governed by a board of Commissioners - a Chief Commissioner, a Deputy Chief Commissioner and up to 18 other Commissioners, all appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Commissioners set the overall strategic direction for the organisation, set the policy framework and oversee the delivery of the planned work. With the exception of the Chief Commissioner, all Commissioners are part time appointed for a three-year term.

Our values

Our values, set out below, seek to reflect the culture of the Commission.

Committed – we actively challenge discrimination and inequalities and promote equality, care about delivering high standards of public service, we are courageous, dedicated and passionate about our work.

Open – we are honest, trustworthy, inclusive, accountable, approachable and responsive.

Respectful – we treat people as equals and respect diversity, act fairly, appreciate and support our colleagues' efforts, care for ourselves, colleagues and others and we listen.

Enterprising – we are innovative, forward- thinking, outward looking, adaptable and continuously improving how we work.

Further information is available on our website www.equalityni.org



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