

CSC NI

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

20-21

ANNUAL REPORT

Ensuring appointment on merit and supporting ethical standards

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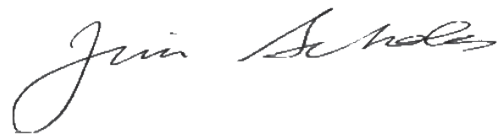
We, Your Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners
for Northern Ireland, present to Your Majesty
this Report on our work during the period
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021



Deirdre Toner
Chairperson



Sinéad Burns



Jim Scholes

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CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Jim Scholes, Commissioner Deirdre Toner, Chairperson Sinéad Burns, Commissioner

As guardians of merit, we uphold the principle that selection for appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) should be on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition. Our Recruitment Code interprets the Merit Principle and applies it to the NICS recruitment process.

Our auditing of this process encourages confidence in recruitment procedures and helps ensure the most suitable candidate is appointed. We also have an independent role in hearing appeals from civil servants under the Code of Ethics to support the Civil Service core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am delighted to present this Annual Report on behalf of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland. At the outset, I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners, Jim Scholes and Sinead Burns, for their continued support and assistance during 2020/21. Thanks also go to the Secretariat who, like many others across Northern Ireland, have responded well to the imposed changes to their usual way of working and who embraced technology to continue to provide us with effective, efficient support services.

Looking back on 2020/21 it is staggering to recall the events which have taken place across the globe, with the Covid-19 pandemic impacting on every facet of life for the entire population.

In Northern Ireland, more than 2000 people lost their lives to Covid-19, families have been left bereaved and many continue to suffer long-term physical and mental health issues as a result of the virus. Northern Ireland's Healthcare providers came under immense pressure and responded admirably. International and even local travel ceased, many businesses and the economy generally faced the threat of collapse, schools closed and academic examinations were cancelled. Government Departments had to make difficult decisions, while many employees worked from home and the NI Executive introduced rules to restrict the movement, freedoms and human interaction of its people in order to save lives. It changed the way we live and work and altered priorities dramatically, introducing words like "lockdown", "furlough" and "social distancing" into our everyday vocabulary. Meanwhile, and at great pace, scientists developed a vaccine against the virus and a vaccination programme is in the throes of being successfully rolled out across Northern Ireland.

As I write this Foreword, the Pandemic still rages globally, and there remains the risk that potential variants of the virus may develop and spread within the UK but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

The Northern Ireland Assembly and the NICS had to refocus their priorities, while also seamlessly delivering public services. The pressure on Northern Ireland's public services was immeasurable and the most amazing feats have been achieved by our public servants, not least in the health sector.

Even without a pandemic to manage, the landscape for the work of the NICS and Commissioners was already challenging. The NI Executive was restored in January 2020 after three years. The "New Decade New Approach" deal, which enabled the return of the NI Assembly, aspired to transform public services and restore public confidence by introducing an "*ambitious package of measures to strengthen transparency and governance arrangements*".

The Report on the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme, published in March 2020, set the scene for improvements to governance and good practice reforms across the NICS. The Report included recommendations in relation to measures to strengthen Ministerial, Civil Service and Special Adviser Codes and identified the need for *“a fundamental shift... in the approach used within the Northern Ireland Civil Service... to recruitment and selection for Government jobs...”* which would lead towards *“more job-specific recruitment and selection which must, of course, be fair, transparent and consistent with relevant employment legislation”*.

The UK left the European Union (EU) at the end of January 2020 and, since then, the NICS has faced the challenges of charting a new post EU exit course and responding to the introduction of the NI Protocol.

This has also been an interesting year for the Senior Civil Service (SCS). Commissioners formally approved the appointment of David Sterling as Head of the Civil Service in August 2020, prior to his retirement. Mr Sterling had been selected on merit in 2017, however, the Deputy First Minister resigned and the Assembly collapsed before he could be formally installed and so he was the Interim Head of the Civil Service (HOCS) until after the Executive was restored. The NICS was temporarily without a leader until the appointment of an Interim HOCS in December 2020. Commissioners approved that appointment under Regulation 3(d) of the Recruitment Code. By the time that this Report is published, Northern Ireland will have a new HOCS. New Permanent Secretaries were appointed to the Department of the Economy and the Department of Education and the recruitment process has commenced to fill the posts of Permanent Secretary in the Department of Finance.

Change is a constant and flexibility, resilience and innovation (which have all been witnessed in abundance in the past year) are key to success in our “new normal” where strong and effective leadership is critical.

In the NICS generally, 2020-21 saw changes within the NICS, not least the fact that a high percentage of its employees worked from home, in line with the Government’s Covid-19 restrictions, and many may continue to do so.

The pandemic had a significant impact on recruitment and Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICSHR) was forced to put recruitment competitions on hold for a short time while new ways of working, including virtual testing and video interviewing, could be established.

Circumstances arose whereby a small number of employees left the NICS to take up job offers which were then rescinded because of the pandemic, leading to a request for a new time-bound exception to merit to be introduced enabling their reinstatement to the NICS. Commissioners sought and received the approval of the Secretary of State to introduce a Covid-19 Direction enabling this unusual exception to come into effect.

The publication of a revised NICS Code of Ethics, recently prepared by the Department of Finance, is due imminently. Commissioners were consulted on the Code and provided constructive feedback. The revised Code will require Commissioners to revise its guidance on their statutory role in hearing appeals made under the NICS Code of Ethics by existing Civil Servants.

In November 2020, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) published its report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS. Commissioners' role in recruitment and selection was mentioned in the recommendations contained in the Report, which was then scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee. The Committee's findings were published on 20 May 2021, recommending that Commissioners "explore with the NICS how best they can support the delivery of change and transformation in recruitment and selection processes and other related areas" and suggesting that "Commissioners should exercise their role more strategically" which may require changes to be made to the legislative framework which governs Commissioners' work. Commissioners look forward to developing closer working relationships with the NICS in the year ahead and contributing, in whatever way possible within their statutory remit, to the transformation agenda of the NICS.

During the year, and despite never meeting up in person, my fellow Commissioners and I have continued to effectively undertake our statutory duties upholding the principle that selection to appointments for posts in the NICS are made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition.

Commissioners continue to focus on their Strategic Priorities for the 2020-25 period – *Commissioner Functions, Governance and People* – and they recently agreed their Business Plan and Learning and Development Plan 2021-22 which are available on our website.

The Recruitment Code was revised in October 2019, further revisions were made in 2020-21 and the Code is currently under review yet again to take account of Commissioners' statutory function in the chairing of SCS Competitions; to reflect the changes to the authorisation process; and to update Commissioners' approach to secondments, following consultation with NICS HR and Departments, and in acknowledgement of the changing needs of the NICS.

Other activity included the authorisation of 16 appointments and 7 supplementary appointments to the SCS under the 4-Stage Authorisation Process, together with three appointments under the Article 6 Approval Process. A further 31 SCS recruitment competitions had been initiated as at 31 March 2021.

A new more streamlined Article 6 Approval Process was implemented on 1 September 2020, with a view to providing good governance and accountability. This has been kept under review and adjusted as required to ensure that it is user friendly and fit for purpose. A bespoke process was agreed for use during the HOCS competition.

Commissioners chaired 29 competitions in total during the year to appoint the best talent to the SCS. Most of the competitions included interviews on virtual platforms which, despite the occasional technical hitch, proved successful. The year was of course rounded off with the recruitment competition for the HOCS.

Commissioners continue to implement their Audit and Review Plan and, through ongoing engagement with NICS colleagues, continue to ensure that the standards laid out in the revised Commissioners' Recruitment Code are upheld. The small number of complaints received under the NICS Code of Ethics were fairly and objectively dealt with in an independent, honest, confidential and impartial manner.

During the year, my Commissioner colleagues and I met, mostly virtually, with key stakeholders including the Interim HOCS, Permanent Secretaries, representatives of the Civil Service Commission (UK Civil Service), NICSHR Officials and others to promote Commissioners' strategic priorities and to build meaningful and productive relationships.

The Secretariat has had several meetings with its counterpart in the Civil Service Commission to benchmark, share best practice and discuss a wide range of issues of mutual interest, while also developing relationships which will be mutually beneficial to the growth of both organisations.

Meanwhile, Commissioners and staff have continued to stay up-to-date with policy developments and case law by engaging with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Disability Action. The insights and learning gained from these interactions equip us to set and influence policy and practice and to better understand the diverse characteristics and needs of our community while we strive to uphold the Merit Principle in NICS recruitment.

As we move into 2021-22, Northern Ireland's centenary year, I would like to thank the Secretariat, including former Secretary, Sarah Teer, who moved on to pastures new in June 2020, for their ongoing professional support, advice and guidance.

Commissioners appreciate the support they received this year from the Interim HOCS. We are also grateful to enjoy such positive relationships with all of the Departmental Permanent Secretaries and NICSHR and look forward to strengthening those relationships in the year ahead.

I hope you find this Annual Report useful and informative. For more information on the work of Commissioners, please visit our website at www.nicscommissioners.org or contact the Secretariat who will be happy to assist.



DEIRDRE TONER
CHAIRPERSON

THE ROLE OF COMMISSIONERS

Who are the Civil Service Commissioners?

The first Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland were appointed in 1923 by His Majesty King George V. Commissioners themselves are appointed on merit following public advertisement and by fair and open competition. All Commissioners are independent of the NICS and this is fundamental to their role. They bring to the job wide experience from different backgrounds, careers and interests.

What do Commissioners do?

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland were first appointed by Royal Warrant in 1923. Commissioners are appointed under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 which requires them to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the NICS should be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition (this principle is known as the Merit Principle). The Commissioners' primary concern is to regulate appointments made to the NICS by way of open competition, at all levels, to ensure that the Merit Principle is adhered to. Additionally, Commissioners may consider and determine appeals made by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

While internal transfer and/or promotion are outside the remit of Commissioners, the broad principles set out in this Code reflect good practice and Commissioners consider they are applicable equally to internal appointments in order to safeguard the Merit Principle.

Discharging of Commissioners' Roles and Responsibilities

Commissioners discharge their statutory responsibilities by:

- maintaining the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in relation to selection for appointment;
- making General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply;
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle;
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the Civil Service to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed; and
- requiring the publication of such information as they may specify relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.

Commissioners contribute to the development of an effective and impartial Civil Service by carrying out the duties imposed on them by the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. This contribution provides assurance to the public that appointments

to the NICS are made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition. If appointments are made on merit, it should follow that the Civil Service has selected, from those available, the best persons for the jobs and the duties of the posts should therefore be carried out more effectively.

Commissioners' Strategic Priorities

Over the past year Commissioners have continued to focus on delivering on four strategic priorities:

- Safeguard an impartial and independent Civil Service by providing assurance that civil servants are recruited on the basis of fair and open competition.
- Comply with Sponsor Department's governance requirements and fulfil our obligations as a public body.
- Support the appointment and development of Commissioners and members of the Secretariat.
- Secure, deploy and account effectively for the use of financial and other resources.

Delivering on these strategic priorities is at the core of Commissioners' work, and despite the end of the 2020/21 year being one of unprecedented change, Commissioners remained resolute in their focus. Further detail is provided throughout this Report on some of the actions undertaken by Commissioners to ensure the targets set in the 2020/21 Business Plan, which feeds into delivery of the strategic priorities, were met.

Commissioners in Post since April 2020



Deirdre Toner

Chairperson,
appointed 1 June 2018
for a five year period.



Sinéad Burns

Commissioner,
appointed 8 March
2016 for a five year
period. Extended
for 5 years, until 7
March 2026.



Jim Scholes

Commissioner,
appointed 1 July
2012 for a five a year
period. Extended for
5 years, until 30 June
2022.

COMMISSIONERS' STATUTORY AUDIT FUNCTION

Commissioners' Approach to Audit and Review

Commissioners, in discharging their statutory duty to audit, seek to strike a balance between ensuring compliance with the Recruitment Code and delivering a proportionate and effective approach to their scrutiny role. Commissioners employ a range of approaches to support them in the delivery of their oversight role.

Commissioners undertake independent reviews of NICS recruitment and selection policies and practices relating to appointments to the NICS to assess if these are in keeping with the principles of the Recruitment Code. Commissioners identify and prioritise areas of recruitment they wish to examine and these are progressed through Annual Audit and Review Plans. Additionally, Commissioners' reviews also provide information, observations and recommendations for the purpose of promoting improvement in performance and outcomes.

In addition to the schedule of audits and reviews, Commissioners undertake regular structured engagement with the NICS in support of their statutory audit function to influence improvements to NICS recruitment policies and practices and secure progress on audit outcomes.

Formal reviews and structured audit engagement are further underpinned by an evidence-based assurance framework, mandated monitoring and reporting requirements for the NICS, compliance checks via Commissioners' SCS 4-Stage Authorisation Process (for competitions which launched prior to 31 August 2020) and, for competitions which launched from 1 September 2020 onwards, Commissioners' Article 6 Approval Process.

Assurance Framework and Monitoring Requirements

Article 4(5) of the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, provides that information relating to recruitment must be published in accordance with any requirements which the Commissioners may specify. On an annual basis, Department of Finance (DoF) are required to publish information on all recruitment competitions which have been held to appoint staff to the NICS. The information to be published, and the publication period, are matters for determination and scrutiny by Commissioners and may change over time in response to changing circumstances and requirements.

Under Appendix C of the Recruitment Code, Commissioners require:

- (a) evidence to provide assurance that systems are in place in the NICS to ensure that selection for appointment is made in accordance with the Recruitment Code;

- (b) evidence to provide assurance that recruitment policies and practices in the NICS are subject to regular internal monitoring;
- (c) details of the appointments made under Regulation 3 (Exceptions) of the Commissioners' General Regulations 2007;
- (d) statistical summaries, in a format which the Commissioners may specify, of all recruitment activity during the publication period, including analyses by all categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- (e) any actions or initiatives undertaken in the reporting year to attract candidates, and advance a recruitment-related agenda for diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity and which specifically target areas of under-representation;
- (f) a report on the outcomes as a result of any such actions or initiatives referred to at (e) above; and
- (g) any other relevant information in a specified format regarding recruitment and selection as Commissioners may require.

NICS Annual Statement of Compliance on Recruitment

Commissioners require the DoF Permanent Secretary to sign off the annual '*Permanent Secretary Statement of Compliance on Recruitment*'. This confirms adherence to the Commissioners' Recruitment Code for all appointments made to NICS Departments during the annual reporting period, bolstering the evidence-based assurance framework and strengthening formal accountability at the most senior levels within the NICS.

The assurance framework is managed by the NICS and is comprised of the following key components:

- regular reviews of external competitions;
- monitoring of exceptional appointments and extensions to merit lists;
- assurance statements signed by HRConnect and Competition Leads when running an external competition;
- annual assurances from all Grade 7s within the Vacancy Management Team;
- annual confirmation from Permanent Secretaries/Accounting Officers that all appointments have been managed by NICSHR Resourcing; and
- the above evidence is collated by NICSHR and provided to the DoF Permanent Secretary for consideration and, if satisfied, issue of the annual Statement of Compliance to Commissioners.

Commissioners' 2020/21 Audit & Review Opinion

Commissioners use a range of oversight options and methodologies to obtain assurance and influence improvements to NICS recruitment policies and practices under their statutory audit function.

It is Commissioners' opinion that based on the information available, the NICS selection and recruitment practices are in keeping with the requirements set out in the Recruitment Code.

In reaching this conclusion Commissioners examined a range of evidence gathered throughout 2020/21 relating to our statutory functions. This included scrutiny of the Appendix C data provided by the NICS and requests made under Commissioners' 4-Stage Authorisation Process for SCS appointments (for competitions launched up until 31 August 2020) and the operation of Commissioners Article 6 Approval Process (for competitions launched from 1 September 2020 onwards). Commissioners also welcomed the assurance provided in the 2020 Statement of Compliance by the DoF Permanent Secretary that all appointments made to the NICS during the 2020 reporting period complied with the Commissioners' Recruitment Code.

Commissioners' 2020/21 Audit and Review Plan

Audit is a key part of Commissioners' Strategic Plan 2020-25, serving to help establish whether or not the Recruitment Code is being observed. The Annual Audit and Review Plan sets out the scheduled audit topics for the year ahead. The 2020/21 Audit and Review Plan covered the following reviews:

2020/21 Review of Evidence which underpins the DoF Permanent Secretary Statement of Compliance

Commissioners carried out a review of the suite of supporting evidence which is provided to the DoF Permanent Secretary to determine if it provides an appropriate level of assurance for the Statement of Compliance. Details of the NICS Statement of Compliance are provided on page 13.

Commissioners were pleased to find a satisfactory level of assurance. Commissioners made two minor recommendations following this review, which have since been implemented by NICS.

2020/21 Review of competitions below SCS

Commissioners carried out a desk-top compliance review of a sample of nine competitions (one from each department). This review was based on the application of the Recruitment Code to ensure that the selection processes used and the manner in which they were deployed in practice were consistent with upholding the Merit Principle.

Overall the competitions reviewed provided Commissioners with a satisfactory level of assurance of NICS compliance with the principles set out in Commissioners' Recruitment Code.

The review found evidence of a structured approach to recruitment and the use of standardised documentation, which ensures consistency with procedures. Some findings

indicated areas where improvement could be made. Commissioners therefore made a number of recommendations which are currently being considered by NICS.

2020/21 Pilot audit of the Article 6 Approval Process

As detailed in our 2019/20 Annual Report, Commissioners' agreed a revised approach to their 4-stage Authorisation Process for SCS appointments, which reflects the fact that they now chair all SCS recruitment competitions. This new 'Article 6 Approval Process' took effect for all new competitions launching from 1 September 2020. As part of the implementation process, a review of how it was working was carried out, along with a pilot audit of a competition which had completed the process. The pilot audit found that the new process was working well. No areas of non-compliance nor areas for improvement were identified.

Internal Review of the management of the 4-Stage Authorisation Process

An annual internal audit of the management of the 4-Stage Authorisation Process by the Commissioners' Secretariat was undertaken. They found that procedures were satisfactorily applied and the process is operating in line with the Recruitment Code.

Audit Engagement with the NICS during 2020/21

Commissioners also exercise their statutory audit role through structured engagement meetings with NICS HR to examine a range of recruitment issues. This is supported by dedicated audit and review meetings for Commissioners, allowing for detailed consideration of audit matters and operational meetings between the Secretariat and NICS resourcing staff, to progress and monitor audit and review action points.

Commissioners examined a range of recruitment issues under the engagement process with the NICS, including a number of ongoing and outstanding action points from Commissioners' previous audits and reviews. Further details on these areas are included below:

NICS Recruitment

2020/21 has been an unprecedented year for NICS recruitment and the Commissioners have been supportive of the need to adjust the management of competitions throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lock-downs. Whilst the management of competitions is a matter for NICS to determine, Commissioners were glad to be kept informed of NICS plans in relation to video interviews and volume competitions, and for the opportunity to provide comment on these plans.

Exception to Merit – Covid Direction

Commissioners responded sympathetically to NICSHR’s request for a potential exception to Merit for those individuals who had resigned their NICS position to take up alternative employment but found their job offer rescinded due to the impact of the unforeseen national lockdown in March 2020 and were ineligible to be furloughed. As a result, Commissioners, in exercise of their powers under Articles 4(2) and 6 of the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (as amended) (“the Order”), and with the approval of the Secretary of State, made a Direction that the Merit Principle should not apply to an appointment to a situation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (“the NICS”) when the following circumstances apply:

- (a) the person had been previously employed by the NICS on 28 February 2020 and left their employment with the NICS voluntarily prior to 19 March 2020;
- (b) the person’s offer of new employment outside the NICS has been rescinded or postponed and written evidence of this has been provided;
- (c) the person is not receiving furlough from any new employer;
- (d) written confirmation has been provided from the NICS to the effect that there is a suitable position for them, either within their previous Department or elsewhere in the Civil Service; and
- (e) the appointment is at their previous grade at the same pay scale.

The Direction further provided that, in so far as is practicable, the appointment should be permanent for those staff who were permanent when they resigned and fixed term for those staff who were fixed term when they resigned. The end date of the fixed term contract will be the date the contract would have ended had they not resigned.

Secondment Policy

Commissioners are pleased that NICSHR have reviewed the Secondment Policy to provide a clear definition of an inward secondment and a secondee’s role within the NICS, and have also ensured that a standardised process can be successfully implemented across the NICS with associated relevant recording and monitoring mechanisms.

Commissioners are keen to support the NICS Board’s desire to make greater use of both inward and outward secondments as a means of bringing fresh insights and thinking into the NICS. Commissioners have engaged with NICSHR over the duration of secondments and are supportive of permitting longer secondments where needed to ensure continuity over the lifetime of projects/programmes and to encourage knowledge transfer over the extended period. Commissioners will therefore be amending their Recruitment Code in this area and an amended NICS Secondment Policy will be published to reflect these changes.

HOCS Competition

Following the 2020 competition for Head of the Civil Service (HOCS), which did not result in a successful appointment, Commissioners engaged with NICSHR on both the process for appointing an Interim HOCS and the process for a new competition.

Code of Ethics

Commissioners have also engaged with DoF officials on a revised NICS Code of Ethics.

Progress of Audit and Review Outcomes

Commissioners are cognisant of the recommendations which stemmed from the RHI Inquiry report and the NIAO report into Capacity and Capability in the NICS. The out-workings of these will impact on the NICS strategic review of resourcing and Commissioners will work with NICS as plans are developed. Commissioners note that during the year a number of audit actions have been closed and will continue to monitor the progress of outstanding work in relation to training and recruitment data, engaging with NICSHR as necessary.

Commissioners' 2021/22 Audit and Review Plan

Annual Audit Plans set out the scheduled audit topics for the year ahead and will be reported on each year in the Commissioners' Annual Report. For 2021/22 Commissioners' audit and review will cover:

- Article 6 Approval Process audits; and
- Review of NICS processes for managing and monitoring tenure of secondments.

SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE AUTHORISATION PROCESS

All appointments to the SCS through open competition require the approval of Commissioners.

In support of the request for approval, relevant recruitment information is provided by HRConnect, or Departments, to Commissioners at four key stages of the SCS recruitment process. The process also requires a number of assurances from HRConnect in relation to the competition process.

During this year Commissioners approved 26 appointments, 23 under the 4-Stage Authorisation Process for SCS external recruitment competitions and three under the Article 6 Approval Process. These are listed in **Table 1** below.

It should be noted that some of the competitions included below have been detailed in previous Annual Reports. However, authorisation and/or approval was granted for appointments from these competitions during the reporting period.

In the spirit of good governance and to ensure robust delivery of the Secretariat's management of the 4-Stage Authorisation Process, on behalf of Commissioners, an annual internal audit of the process was undertaken to ensure that it is being operated in line with procedure. The audit found that procedures were satisfactorily applied by the Secretariat at each stage of the process and Commissioners were reassured that the 4-Stage Authorisation Process operated in line with the Recruitment Code.

As detailed on page 15, a pilot audit was carried out on a competition which completed the Article 6 Approval Process. This found that the new process is working well. Regular Article 6 audits will be completed each year as part of Commissioners' annual audit plans.

Table 1: Senior Civil Service Competitions dealt with during 2020/21

POST	LEAD NICS DEPARTMENT
Chief Operating Officer, Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunal Service (NICTS) (Grade 5)	Department of Justice
Deputy Director, Corporate Engagement & Communication (Grade 5)	Department of Justice
Corporate Services & Governance (Grade 5)	Department of Education
Director Corporate Policy & Planning Division (Grade 5)	Department for Infrastructure
Head of Information Services Division (Grade 5)	Department of Justice
Director of Digital Services (Grade 5)	Department of Finance
Deputy Chief Medical Officer (Safety, Quality Standard & Medical Policy) (Grade 5)	Department of Health
DOJ Head of Legacy Inquest Unit & Senior Legal Advisor to the Coroners (Grade 5)	Department of Justice
Director of Policy & Legislation (Grade 5)	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
Animal Disease Control BK Assistant Secretary (Grade 5)	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
Chief Inspector, Education & Training Inspectorate (Grade 3)	Department of Education
Permanent Secretary*	Department for the Economy
Chief Executive DVA (Grade 5)	Department for Infrastructure
Finance Director (Grade 5)	Department for the Economy
Interim Chief Executive of HSCB/Deputy Secretary (Designate) Health Service Operations Group Grade 3)	Department of Health
Work & Health Supporting People Finance Director (Grade 5)	Department for Communities
Under Secretary Management Services & Regulation Group (Grade 3)	Department for Education
Strategic Policy & Resources Deputy Secretary (Grade 3)	Department for Communities

POST	LEAD NICS DEPARTMENT
Director of Corporate Policy & Planning Division (Grade 5)	Department for Infrastructure
Under Secretary Energy Group (Grade 3)	Department for the Economy
Deputy Secretary Economic Strategy Group (Grade 3)	Department for the Economy
Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service*	The Executive Office
Under Secretary, EU Preparation & Transition Group (Grade 3)	Department for the Economy
Permanent Secretary* **	Department of Education
Director of Policy & Support (Grade 5)**	Department of Finance
Director of Property Services Division (CPD) (Grade 5)**	Department of Finance

* Denotes that there was Ministerial involvement in these competitions in accordance with the Recruitment Code.

**SCS competitions dealt with under the Article 6 Process.

APPOINTMENTS MADE BY WAY OF EXCEPTION TO MERIT

Regulation 3 of Commissioners' General Regulations 2007 permits appointments to be made other than in accordance with the Merit Principle.

The Commissioners' General Regulations and Recruitment Code outline the particular circumstances in which the principle of selection on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition, shall not apply. The Commissioners' objective in permitting exceptions is to provide flexibility where it can be justified as necessary and appropriate to meet the business needs of the NICS. Commissioners scrutinise and challenge NICS requests for appointments to be made by way of exception to the Merit Principle on a case-by-case basis. Departments must justify to Commissioners why it is not reasonably practicable to make the appointment in accordance with the Merit Principle, in order that Commissioners may be satisfied that appointment by exception is warranted.

While specific approval of Commissioners is required for some appointments by way of exception to merit, the Recruitment Code permits Departments to make appointments via exception to merit in certain limited circumstances at grades below SCS level for a period of up to two years. However, any extension beyond two years requires Commissioners' approval.

Appointments under Regulation 3(a) Secondment

During 2020/2021, Commissioners approved one appointment and the extension of three appointments to the NICS at SCS level.

As mentioned above, under Regulation 3(a) Departments can make appointments below SCS level for period of up to two years. In line with the Code, Commissioners' approval was sought, and granted, for extensions to secondments for one post at Deputy Principal level and three posts at Staff Officer grade.

Appointments under Regulation 3(d) Exceptional needs of the NICS

During 2020/2021, Commissioners approved two appointments at SCS level and four appointments at below SCS level. Commissioners approved the extension of two appointments at below SCS level.

Table 2: Appointments made by the NICS by way of Exception to Merit: January 2018 – December 2020¹

Exception Category	Appointments 2018	Appointments 2019	Appointments 2020
(a) Secondment	11	13	17
(b) Transfer from another civil service of the Crown	1	0	0
(c) Transfer of persons employed on functions being transferred	0	0	0
(d) Exceptional needs of the NICS	0	2	5
(e) Appointments made under Government initiatives/ programmes	0	0	0
(f) Reinstatement	0	0	0
Total	12	15	22

¹ This information is sourced from the NICS Annual Reports 2018 – 2020

NICS CODE OF ETHICS

One of the Commissioners' statutory roles is to hear appeals under the NICS Code of Ethics.

During 2020/2021, Commissioners considered one new concern and determined that there were no grounds for Commissioners to accept an appeal under the Code of Ethics.

Commissioners consider that it is not their role to act as a substitute for an appeal in respect of internal Civil Service procedures and, as such, issues regarding internal human resource issues should properly be pursued through the established NICS human resources management procedures, recruitment complaints mechanisms and/or if appropriate pursued through an external employment tribunal.

It is the expectation and practice of Commissioners that a potential appellant will have exhausted the internal Departmental procedures, and that any ongoing investigation will be completed and the outcome known before Commissioners would make a determination on whether any Code of Ethics appeal will be accepted for investigation.

The NICS is required to provide, annually, the number of concerns dealt with by Departments under the Code of Ethics.

During the 2020 calendar year, the NICS reported that nine complaints were received under the NICS Code of Ethics with six being accepted by the relevant Department as complaints under the Code of Ethics, two complaints being re-directed to be dealt with under the Department's Dignity at Work Policy and one complaint being re-directed to be dealt with under the Department's Internal Audit process. The outcomes of each case are as follows:

Table 3: Code of Ethics related complaints made to the NICS: January 2020 – December 2020

1	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated.
2	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated.
3	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated.
4	Investigation ongoing.
5	Investigation did not proceed due to lack of information from complainant.
6	Investigation did not proceed due to lack of information from complainant.
7	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated as a Code of Ethics complaint and passed to DoF to be dealt with under Dignity at Work.
8	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated as a Code of Ethics complaint and passed to DoF to be dealt with under Internal Audit.
9	Investigation concluded that the allegation was not substantiated as a Code of Ethics complaint and passed to DoF to be dealt with under Dignity at Work.

At the time of writing, the NICS is due to publish a revised Code of Ethics and in response to this, the Commissioners have reviewed their Code of Ethics guidance document to take account of the amendments to the Code and to streamline the document from three guidance documents into one. This new guidance document clearly sets out the process that the Commissioners will follow when considering appeals from existing Civil Servants.

MONITORING NICS RECRUITMENT

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 and the Commissioners' Recruitment Code require NICS Departments and Agencies to publish a wide range of information and statistical summaries in relation to recruitment to the NICS.

In order to discharge our statutory duties, Commissioners rely on a range of recruitment-related information and statistical data collated and analysed by the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency (NISRA).

The NICS publishes its recruitment-related information for the calendar year of 2020² in the [Recruitment to the NICS Annual Report 2020](#) and the [NISRA Analysis of NICS Competitions 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020](#) published by DoF.

Each year Commissioners determine how the information published in these reports fulfils Article 4(5) of the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as set out in Appendix C of the Recruitment Code. Data quoted below is taken from the both reports.

NICS Recruitment during 2020

The number of recruitment competitions, applications and appointments for 2018-2020 reporting periods are included in **Table 4**.

Table 4: NICS Open Recruitment Competitions, Applicants and Updated Appointment Figures for 2018 to 2020³

Detail	2018	2019	2020
Open Competitions	109	110	90
Total Applicants	6,282	28,904	14,707
Eligible Applicants*	4,006	23,995	12,388
Appointees**	543	1,299	135

* Figures as at 1 February 2021, further appointments are expected to be made from 2020 competitions.

** Figures relating to eligible applicants may differ from previously published figures as the eligibility sift may not have taken place by the time of publication..

² NICS recruitment-related data has been reported on a calendar-year basis to bring the reporting period into line with other reports on equality information.

³ Data includes both permanent and temporary competitions.

There were 90 NICS recruitment competitions in 2020, compared with 110 in 2019 and 109 in 2018. These competitions attracted 14,707 valid applications, lower than the 28,904 valid applications in 2019, but higher than the 2018 figure of 6,282. Nineteen of these competitions were for SCS positions.

Commissioners note that the competition which attracted the highest volume of applicants was for Work Coach (Executive Officer 2), which attracted 9,495 valid applications. Commissioners note that this competition accounted for approximately 65% of all applications during the reporting period.

Commissioners note that 100 complaints were received in respect of these 90 open competitions and that the percentage of complaints (0.6%) remains the same as the last two years. Commissioners also note that 53% of these complaints related to the volume Staff Officer and Deputy Principal competitions.

While Commissioners have no regulatory role in relation to internal competitions, we consider that it provides context and a helpful comparative perspective to publish this information alongside the open recruitment data. NICS internal recruitment competitions and appointment figures for 2018 to 2020 are therefore detailed in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: NICS Internal Recruitment Competitions and Appointment Figures 2018 to 2020

Detail	2018	2019	2020
Internal Competitions	86	89	67
Internal Appointments*	635	345	245

* Figures as at 1 February 2021.

Internal recruitment activity decreased in 2020. Four of the 67 internal competitions during 2020 were for SCS positions and seven appointments to the SCS had been made by 1 February 2021. Commissioners continue to encourage the NICS to address diversity issues within the NICS through open competition wherever possible.

Commissioners welcome the stated aspiration of the NICS to move towards external recruitment and selection as a default position for the SCS.

In this context, it should be noted that during 2020/21, Commissioners wrote to NICS HR expressing disappointment at proposals to fill SCS posts via an internal trawl and subsequently in relation to the use of merit lists compiled from those trawls to fill other posts.

It remains the position of Commissioners that increased external recruitment at all levels will help attract a wider and more diverse pool of candidates, leading to the right person being appointed to the right job at the right time.

Updated Summary of NICS Appointments

The NICS Annual Report presents recruitment data for NICS competitions with a closing date in a particular calendar year, currently 2020. The appointment figures are for all appointments made from these competitions by early the following year, for 2020 this date was 1 February. The figure reported may not be the final number of appointments which will be made. NICS competition merit lists usually remain live for a period of one year, with the possibility of extension where there are cogent and practical reasons for this.

Following a recommendation from Commissioners, the NICS publish updated appointment figures for the three prior reporting periods in order to address the issue of unreported appointments. The [Recruitment to the NICS Annual Report 2020](#) therefore provides updated NICS appointment figures for 2017, 2018 and 2019, taken from the [NISRA Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions 2020](#).

Commissioners note the following with regard to the NISRA Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions 2020. In doing so, Commissioners acknowledge that disparities in terms of equality categories between the actual and expected numbers of appointees, on an individual competition basis, are generally small (typically less than three), so the appointment of one candidate from a different category could change the outcome of the competition. They also note that further appointments may be made from these competitions, which could change the profile of appointees.

Competitions held in 2020 for permanent NICS jobs

Of the 90 recruitment competitions which closed for applications during 2020, 85 were for permanent NICS jobs and attracted 14,427 valid applications. By 1 February 2021, a total of 104 appointments had been made from 42 of these 85 competitions, while no appointments had yet been made from the remaining 43 competitions. Analysis of appointments from these 42 competitions reveals some disparities between the actual number of appointees and the number expected if applicants within each category had been equal in merit across a number of equality groups.⁴

- Just over half of applicants were male (53.6%), with females representing 46.4% of applicants. The gender profile of appointees was broadly in line with what would be expected if male and female applicants were equal in merit.
- In terms of community background, 43.1% of applications were from Protestants, with a larger proportion from Catholics (46.5%) and 10.4% from applicants whose community background was not determined. The analysis in terms of community background shows that more Protestants (54 rather than 41) and fewer Catholics (38 rather than 47) than expected were appointed.

⁴ In analysing the outcomes of recruitment competitions, it is important to ensure that any comparison is made on a 'like with like' basis. For each competition, the profile of applicants has been used to calculate the composition of appointees that would have been expected if the groups of applicants within each equality category (e.g. males and females) had been equal in merit. These results were then added together to obtain the overall 'expected' compositions.

- The proportion of applications from minority ethnic groups was 2.5%. The ethnicity profile of appointees was broadly in line with what would be expected if white and minority applicants were equal in merit.
- The proportion of applicants who declared a disability was 5.7%. The profile of appointees in terms of declared disability was in line with the expected profile.
- In terms of age, over half (52.2%) of applicants were aged 25-39, with 21.4% aged 16-24 and 16.4% aged 40-49. One in ten applicants were aged 50 or over (10.0%). The profile of appointees in terms of age was in line with the expected profile.
- In terms of sexual orientation, 93.6% of applicants stated their orientation was towards someone of a different sex, with 3.9% reporting orientation towards someone of the same sex and 2.5% reporting orientation towards both sexes.
- For those applicants who provided their NICS employment history, just over one eighth (12.0%) reported they were a current NICS employee, 7.3% of applicants reported that they had previously been an NICS employee and 80.7% reported no NICS employment history. The number of appointees with NICS experience was considerably higher than might have been expected (45 rather than 31).

Competitions held in 2020 for temporary NICS jobs

Of the 90 recruitment competitions which closed for applications during 2020, five were for temporary NICS jobs and attracted 280 valid applications. By 1 February 2021, a total of 31 appointments had been made from two of the five competitions for temporary NICS jobs.

- Over three fifths (64.6%) of applications were from males, with 35.4% from females.
- In terms of community background, the largest proportion of applications was from Catholics (49.6%), with 35.7% from Protestants and 14.6% from applicants whose community background was not determined.
- The proportion of applications from minority ethnic groups was 7.5%.
- The proportion of applicants who declared a disability was 5.4%.
- In terms of age, almost four fifths of applicants were aged 16-24 (79.3%).
- In relation to sexual orientation, 92.0% of applicants stated their orientation was towards someone of a different sex, with 2.3% reporting orientation towards someone of the same sex and 5.7% reporting orientation towards both sexes.
- A small proportion of applicants reported they were a current NICS employee (1.1%), or had previously been a NICS employee (1.8%) while 97.1% reported no NICS employment history.

Analysis shows that the profile of appointees across gender, community background, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and NICS employment history is broadly in line with what might be expected if applicants within each equality group were equal in merit.

Competitions held in 2020 for NICS Senior Civil Service jobs

Of the 90 NICS recruitment competitions which closed for applications during 2020, 19 were SCS competitions which attracted 460 applications. By 1 February 2021, a total of 15 appointments had been made from twelve of these competitions.

- Over half of the applications were from males (55.4%), with 44.6% of applications from females.
- In terms of community background, a smaller proportion of applications were from Protestants (39.3%) with 47.0% from Catholics and 13.7% from applicants whose community background was not determined.
- The proportion of applicants from a minority ethnic background was 3.5%.
- Around one in twenty applicants (4.8%) declared a disability.
- In terms of age, around two out of five applicants were aged 40-49 (38.7%) with a larger proportion (43.9%) aged 50 or over and 17.4% aged under 40.
- In terms of sexual orientation, 2.9% of applicants reported orientation to both sexes or to the same sex.
- Just under half of candidates (46.1%) reported that they were a current NICS employee, while 44.3% reported no NICS employment history.

Ten males and five females were appointed, which was in line with what would be expected given the applicant profile of the competitions which made appointments. More current NICS staff were appointed than expected, and fewer candidates with no previous NICS experience.

It has also been noted that, in relation to the key interim stages, Catholic applicants, current NICS employees and candidates aged 50 or over were more likely to be deemed eligible for these SCS competitions. Fewer female candidates passed the interview than would be expected.

NICS Recruitment Developments 2020

Commissioners monitor ongoing developments within the NICS and meet regularly with the NICS to discuss key issues relating to recruitment and selection.

2020 was a challenging year for the NICS and the restrictions, which were imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, necessitated changes to recruitment and selection processes. New approaches to selection methods and appointment verifications had to be considered and introduced very quickly, to meet the urgent requirement in NICS to fill critical posts in numerous business areas.

In response to the the Government's instructions to the public to restrict movement and interaction with others, NICS HR paused all open promotion/recruitment competitions in March 2020. However, as vacancies continued to exist and demands from departments to fill critical posts continued, NICS HR introduced video interviewing across a range of competitions with candidates attending interviews in person, while the interview panel sat remotely in other (separate) locations. NICS HR working with stakeholders, including IT Assist, Capita & Fujitsu as HR service providers, produced guidance and instructions for candidates and panel members on how to carry out a video interview. With careful planning and consideration of social distancing measures, NICS HR successfully commenced video interviewing in April 2020.

The NICS also piloted the use of pre-recorded video interviewing (in the EO2 Fixed Term Work Coach recruitment campaign) and introduced the use of proctored (monitored) online testing.

2020 also saw the publication of two key reports which will impact on NICS recruitment and selection. The Report on the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme, published in March 2020 identified the need for *“a fundamental shift... in the approach used within the Northern Ireland Civil Service... to recruitment and selection for Government jobs...”* which would lead towards *“more job-specific recruitment and selection which must, of course, be fair, transparent and consistent with relevant employment legislation”*.

In November 2020, the Northern Ireland Audit Office published its report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS. This made recommendations in a number of areas, including recruitment and selection. This report was then scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee and the Committee's findings were published on 20 May 2021.

NICS intend to take forward a fundamental review of recruitment and selection as a priority in 2021/22 and Commissioners look forward to engaging with them on this.

COMMISSIONERS' ENGAGEMENT

Commissioners value the opportunity to develop and foster effective relationships with stakeholders as this facilitates the mutual sharing of experience and expertise. In addition to Commissioners' links to the Head of the Civil Service (HOCS) and the NICS Permanent Secretaries, Commissioners also work closely with their counterparts in other jurisdictions to explore issues of mutual interest.

Engagement with Stakeholders

In 2020/21, Commissioners' engagement with its stakeholders looked somewhat different to the usual roundtable meetings held in offices and conference rooms. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in restrictions being placed on meetings and travel.

Commissioners, nevertheless, met virtually with stakeholders and regulatory organisations to deliver their statutory functions and ensure that they remained up-to-date on policy, case law and good practice and equipped with all relevant information in relation to recruitment in the NICS.

Commissioners met with the Interim HOCS and Permanent Secretaries to discuss:

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office's Report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit on the NICS' ability to deliver services, the Programme for Government and its commitments under New Deal, New Approach.

Further meetings with the Interim HOCS focused on matters relating to Commissioners' statutory role in Charing SCS Competitions, required changes to the Recruitment Code and the permanent filling of the HOCS position.



Deirdre Toner at PAC Meeting in March 2021

In 2019, Commissioners met with the Northern Ireland Audit Office on Capacity and Capability in the NICS and on their statutory role. Following publication in November 2020 of the report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS, the Chairperson was called upon by the Northern Ireland Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to give evidence. She duly attended and provided evidence at a meeting of the PAC on 4 March 2021. This was followed up with the submission of further written evidence.

Commissioners also engaged with officials from the Department of Finance on the draft revised NICS Code of Ethics.

Commissioners engaged frequently throughout the year with colleagues in NICSHR on a range of common interests, including:

- Covid-19 – Arrangements for Online Interviews.
- Covid-19 Direction (additional exception to merit).
- Changes to the 4-Stage Authorisation Process, leading to the introduction of the alternative Article 6 Approval Process.

- The NICS' Secondment policy.
- The use of merit lists.
- Interim HOCS appointment and HOCS Recruitment Competition.

A particular area of interest for Commissioners is “Diversity and Inclusion in the NICS”. In April 2020, Commissioners met virtually with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Disability NI to discuss casework relevant to Commissioners’ role, including accessibility to employment in the NICS and positive discrimination initiatives.



Left to right: Sinéad Burns, Ian Watmore (Civil Service Commission), Deirdre Toner, Jim Scholes

Commissioners engaged in discussions with the First Civil Service Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (UK Civil Service) on specific issues throughout the year and the Secretariat, on behalf of Commissioners, engaged with their counterparts in the Commission to compare roles, benchmark and share best practice.

The Secretariat explored with officers in the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI) how best to prepare and format a Retention and Disposal Schedule in advance of laying it before the Minister for Communities for approval.

Commissioners and the Secretariat continue to hold Audit engagement meetings with NICSHR to agree audit priorities and discuss the outcomes of audit activities, with a view to ensuring that the Merit Principle is upheld within the operational delivery of NICSHR processes.

The Secretariat also engaged with HRConnect to effectively implement and review the Article 6 Approval Process and to tweak it to meet the requirements of the HOCS Recruitment competition.

Finally, Commissioners engaged with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to obtain approval for a Direction which allowed a time-limited and Covid-19 specific exception to merit to be included in the Recruitment Code, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the General Regulations 2007. They further engaged with and developed a positive working relationship with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Permanent Secretary who was appointed in February 2020.

In summary, during 2020/21, Commissioners and Secretariat staff engaged with:

- Head/Interim Head of the Civil Service
- Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials
- NICSHR, in DoF
- HRConnect
- Senior officials in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO)
- Crown Solicitor's Office
- Civil Service Commission (UK Civil Service)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Disability Action
- Public Records Office NI (PRONI)
- The NIO's Arm's Length Body (ALB) Forum.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Commissioners attach particular importance to issues of diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity which are central to the Merit Principle and embedded within Commissioners' Recruitment Principles.

Commissioners' Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan set out how their statutory obligations will be fulfilled to promote equality and good relations. Commissioners' Disability Action Plan runs from 2018-2022. Copies are available online at www.nicscommissioners.org.

Commissioners also seek to influence and encourage the NICS to take proactive measures to promote equality of opportunity and target under-representation throughout all stages of the Recruitment Process.

As already referenced elsewhere in this Annual Report, in 2020/21 the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic severely curtailed the opportunity for face-to-face engagement.

However, Secretariat had already arranged an awareness training session on equality and disability for Commissioners and Secretariat staff with experts from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Disability Action before the lockdown of March 2020. All participants agreed to hold the session remotely via video conferencing, and it took place in April 2020.

The session was very useful, covering policy and strategy relating primarily to disability. An interesting discussion took place on the role of "affirmative action", the various forms it can take and its effectiveness in achieving the objectives of having a representative workforce and addressing inequalities.

Commissioners continued to support the engagement between the NICS Disability Working Group and NICSHR and welcomed updates received throughout the year on how the Working Group's recommendations to address barriers to recruitment, career development and retention of staff with disabilities were being implemented.

COMMISSIONERS' SECRETARIAT AND RESOURCES 2020/21

To deliver our statutory responsibilities we receive support from a Secretariat which comprises six members of staff, five of whom are part-time and one is full-time.

2020/21 Budget Expenditure

Item	(£000s)
Commissioners' Fees	62
Staff Salaries	194
Accommodation and Overheads	30
Training (Commissioners and Staff)	0
Total	286

WEBSITES AND RESEARCH MATERIAL

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland www.nicscommissioners.org

NICSHR www.finance-ni.gov.uk/nics-hr

NICS Recruitment <https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/>

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency www.nisra.gov.uk

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland www.equalityni.org

Civil Service Commission www.civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk

Commission for Public Service Appointments www.cpsa.ie

Public Appointments Service www.publicjobs.ie

'Recruitment to the NICS Annual Report 2020'

[https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-recruitment-annual-report-2020---31.08.21\(updated-version\).pdf](https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-recruitment-annual-report-2020---31.08.21(updated-version).pdf)

'Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020'

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/analysis-nics-recruitment-competitions-2020>

GLOSSARY

ALB	Arm's Length Body
CSCNI	Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
DoF	Department of Finance
HOCS	Head of the Civil Service
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICSHR	Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PRONI	Public Records Office Northern Ireland
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive
SCS	Senior Civil Service



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