



Candidate Information Booklet

CCNI005/24/DIS: Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability
Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

Completed Application Forms must be returned to
recruitment@consumercouncil.org.uk no later than
5pm (UK time) on Tuesday 23 July 2024



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Background

We are the consumer representative body of Northern Ireland.

With nearly 60 staff and an annual budget of around £5 million, we champion consumers and put them at the heart of everything we do, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances.

Under our statutory functions, we represent their interests to influence public policy in energy, post, transport, water and sewerage, and food affordability and accessibility.

Through our non-statutory functions, we educate and empower consumers to make informed choices against unfair or discriminatory practices in any market, including financial services. We also investigate consumer complaints for free, deliver research and outreach programmes, and campaign for market reform.

Across all our areas of work, we pay particular regard to consumers who are disabled or with long-term health conditions, are of pensionable age, are on low incomes or live in rural areas.

We work with government, regulators, stakeholders and the advice sector to promote and safeguard consumer protections, by ensuring legislation and regulation works effectively for our citizens.

As an advocate delivering for Northern Ireland consumers, we provide a strong representative voice here and at regional, national and international levels, sharing knowledge and building insights into consumer needs and behaviours, to develop solutions for the benefit of everyone.

We are an award-winning organisation having worked towards Investors in People Gold, People Insight “Outstanding Workplace” award, Diversity Mark Bronze NI award and we are also a Disability Confident Employer. We have achieved the ISO 22458 for Consumer Vulnerability with BSI Kitemark, one of two organisations in Northern Ireland to meet this standard, and we have also improved our Customer Service Excellence standard for the seventh year running.

During 2023-2024, we supported nearly 11,000 consumers across Northern Ireland, returned nearly £260,000 to the consumer purse and maintained a customer satisfaction score of 99% and a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 93 out of 100.




Our ethos

We play a big role in Northern Ireland society and it's economy.

Our vision, mission and values create and reinforce a strong organisational culture and identity, guiding and shaping everything we do when putting consumers first. They inspire our people, reassure our partners, help create a shared vision and ensure we always REACH for the highest standards.

 Vision	 Mission
<p>To protect and empower consumers in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>To be the trusted go-to organisation for consumers in Northern Ireland. To work with governments and stakeholders to inform policy and decision making, using our research, insight and expertise to deliver positive outcomes for consumers.</p>

Values

				
Resolve	Excellence	Ambition	Courage	Honesty
<p>We are committed to achieving outcomes that make a difference to consumers</p>	<p>We will ensure our work and insights are robust, considered and evidence based</p>	<p>We aim to deliver the best possible deal for consumers in Northern Ireland</p>	<p>We will take the steps needed to make a difference for consumers</p>	<p>We act with integrity in an open and transparent way</p>

We expect all of our people to meet the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

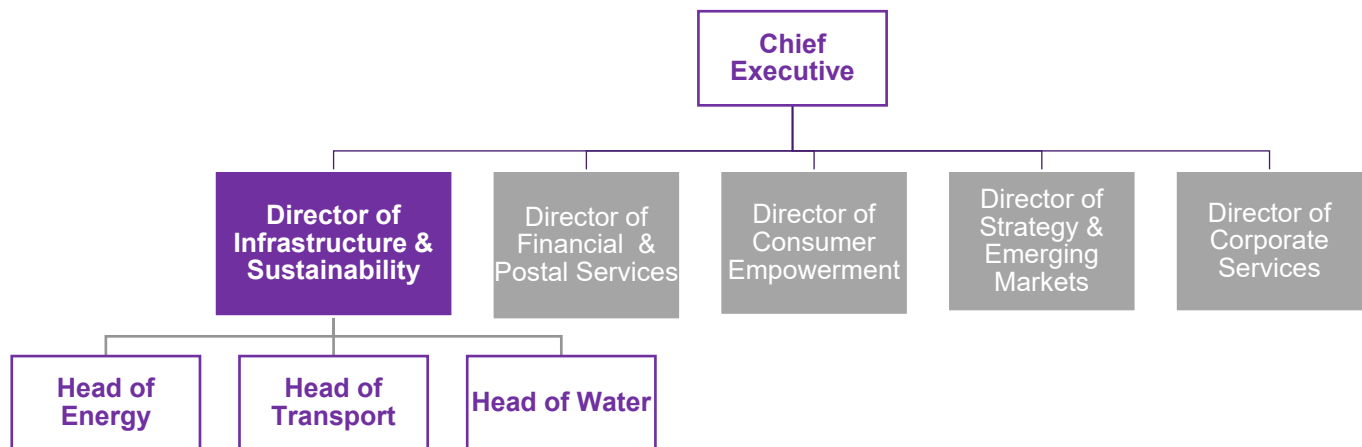
We are committed to being an employer of choice and support our people to do the best job they can with continuous professional development and the right policies, processes, practices and technology.

For more information about the Consumer Council, please visit: www.consumerCouncil.org.uk

If you believe you can make a positive difference to consumers in Northern Ireland, then we want to hear from you.

Job description

The Consumer Council is recruiting for a Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability to sit within our Senior Leadership Team, reporting to the Chief Executive.



You will lead our policy, regulatory and advocacy work in the energy, transport, and water sectors. You will support the delivery of our 2021-2026 Corporate Plan and rolling annual work programmes, to meet our strategic objectives: understand consumers, influence policy, represent consumers, protect consumers and empower consumers. You will collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders, including government, industry, academia and civil society to:

- Strengthen the role and reputation of the Consumer Council.
- Align the current and emerging regulatory and policy framework to the strategic priorities of the Consumer Council.
- Influence public policy to safeguard standards for consumer protection, availability, accessibility and affordability.
- Align resources to contribute to technical debates on the provision of essential services.
- Engage at a regional and national level to ensure that Northern Ireland consumers' needs are understood and protected.



- Monitor legislation and regulation to develop innovative solutions that deliver fair value, access, competition and security.
- Advocate for consumers through building cooperation, collaboration and trust, and empower them by growing their confidence and resilience.
- Deliver on annual business plans as agreed with funding departments and agencies ensuring consumer protection is optimised.
- Work with the Director of Consumer Empowerment and Director of Strategy and Emerging Markets to develop a deep understanding of the issues affecting Northern Ireland consumers, including consumer and economic research and analysis of market structures within policy and regulatory areas.



Key responsibilities

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a Directorate of 11 staff, funded through the Department of the Economy and the Department for Infrastructure. The postholder will hold responsibility for an annual budget of over £1.5 million. Reporting to the Chief Executive, your main duties will be:

- Deliver the Consumer Council's strategic vision and objectives.
- Support delivery of the Corporate Plan through the delivery of annual business plans and forward work programmes.
- Deliver values-based leadership to staff and stakeholders to empower consumers and strengthen advocacy.
- Build cooperation and trust to monitor and influence the legislative, regulatory and public policy agenda to safeguard consumer protections and standards.
- Lead, motivate and empower staff by supporting collaborative working, continuous improvement and an inclusive and supportive culture.
- Champion and drive employee engagement and high performance, providing authentic leadership to your teams.
- Advise and support the development and delivery of annual plans to improve operational effectiveness and service delivery to consumers.
- Support the delivery of quality awards such as Investors in People, Diversity Charter Mark and Customer Service Excellence.
- Foster positive, mutually beneficial relationships with internal and external stakeholders to safeguard and protect consumer interests.
- Lead media engagement for the Directorate to build awareness of consumer rights, strategy and/or policy priorities and research insights.
- Embed strong governance and financial accountability through the implementation of internal controls and risk management protocols.
- Ensure organisational capacity and resources are managed and deployed effectively and efficiently to meet strategic priorities.

This list is not exhaustive and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.



Eligibility criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications provide evidence in their application form which demonstrates that they satisfy the following criteria.

To meet the requirements of the role, candidates must demonstrate at least three years recent* experience at a senior level** of the following skills, knowledge and experience in their application.

1. Recent experience of working in regulated markets and/or sectors that supply products and services required to meet social, public and/or corporate policy objectives.
2. Developing and implementing strategy, policy and/or business plans which have had a positive impact on corporate objectives and targets and improved operational effectiveness.
3. Providing values-based leadership and communicating effectively to achieve strategic priorities, organisational goals and annual plans, and meet stakeholder expectations.
4. Representing an organisation at local, regional and/or national levels and facilitating collaboration to build effective stakeholder networks and trusted relationships to deliver shared objectives and outcomes.
5. Managing and monitoring budgets and delivering value for money solutions within clear corporate governance, financial accountability, risk management and/or quality assurance frameworks.

Recent* is defined as within the last eight years.

Senior level** is defined as delivering outcomes on behalf of senior management teams operating just below Board level. Within the Consumer Council, this is at Deputy Principal grade or equivalent.



Your application

It is essential you provide specific examples and clear evidence of work you have undertaken to show the extent to which you can meet the eligibility criteria and possess the experience and skills required. Please bear in mind:

- You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.
- It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.
- The Selection 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.
- If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the Selection Panel will reject your application.
- ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the Selection Panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.

What is the NICS Competency Framework?

The Competency Framework sets out how all employees of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and its arm's length bodies should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The Framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters as set out below. The competencies are intended to be distinct and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. an applicant demonstrating a competency at Level 3 should be demonstrating Levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the NICS competency framework **at Level 4** for the purposes of personal and professional development.

The Director of Infrastructure & Sustainability role is analogous to a Grade 7 in the NICS.

It is important that all applicants familiarise themselves with the Competency Framework as this forms the basis of the assessment and interview criteria for this post.



Interview criteria

As an arm's length body of the Department for the Economy, the Consumer Council operates within the NICS Competency Framework. In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria, applicants are expected to display the qualities and skills outlined below at interview:

1. Seeing the big picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals, the Consumer Council 2021-2026 Corporate Plan and deliver the greatest value.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

2. Changing and improving

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. It is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in smarter, more focused ways.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

3. Collaborating and partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the Consumer Council, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

4. Leading and communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 12



5. Delivering at pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.

Marks available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

Total marks available 100

Overall pass mark 60

Competency based interviews

At interview, the Selection Panel will test the applicant's knowledge and experience across each eligibility criteria, and across the above competencies, and award marks accordingly.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Tuesday 23 July 2024**. Late applications will not be accepted.

We anticipate interviews will be scheduled for week commencing 5 August 2024.

Interviews for the position will take place in Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.

The interview will include an unseen presentation task with time allocated for preparation, followed by competency-based questions covering the areas listed above. The unseen presentation task will focus on the following areas:

- Seeing the Big Picture
- Leading and Communicating

Interview guidance for applicants

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind you will be required to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the competences required for effective performance in the role.
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

A competence-based interview does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish.
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience.
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- **Situation:** Briefly outline the situation.
- **Task:** What was your objective, what were you trying to achieve.
- **Action:** What did you actually do and what was your unique contribution.
- **Result:** What happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The Selection Panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competencies.

You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work/life experiences.



Selection process

The merit principle

Appointments to the Consumer Council are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Order of merit

The Selection Panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment.

The Selection Panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. The Consumer Council will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed.

The order of merit is valid for one year.

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the Consumer Council is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this Candidate Information Booklet, consideration may be given to filling the position from this competition.

The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

Making your application

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.



Guidance for applicants

- The application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- The Consumer Council will not examine applications until after the closing deadline.
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your organisation or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write “I” statements, for example, “I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation.” It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the Selection Panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the Selection Panel is interested in, not that of your team or division.



Application from submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **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 applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to the Consumer Council. The Consumer Council will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure the Consumer Council is informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

Transgender requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact the Consumer Council. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.



Communication between the Consumer Council and you

The Consumer Council will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Disability requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact the Consumer Council.

Equal opportunity monitoring form

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

The Consumer Council is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, age, race, political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependents.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the DoF website:

[Equal Opportunities - Information for Candidates | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/equal-opportunities-information-for-candidates)

The Consumer Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.



Assessment information

It is the Consumer Council's policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility/shortlisting criteria and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment. You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Nationality requirements

There are no nationality restrictions for this post. However, before an offer of appointment can be made to an overseas candidate, the Consumer Council will need to ensure that all UK visa and immigration requirements are met.

If you are invited to interview, we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post.

Vetting procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- A. Your passport OR
- B. A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g., P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- C. Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- D. A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form, etc.



2. Criminal Record Check

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all successful applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is a **Basic Disclosure Certificate**.

You should not be put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/>

Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by the Consumer Council, normally after interview, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form.

This can be downloaded from the AccessNI website. Guidance notes of the completion of the form are also included on the website. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

Feedback

The Consumer Council is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria.

All requests for feedback are welcome.



**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.**

Please apply online or post your hardcopy completed application form to:

Consumer Council
Floor 3
Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast
BT2 8EN

Email applications should be sent to: recruitment@consumercouncil.org.uk

Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any queries regarding the competition process, please contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland at the address above or by;

Email: recruitment@consumercouncil.org.uk

Tel: **028 9025 1600**



General information

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland is an independent employer. Its staff, while not civil servants, are employed on NICS Terms and Conditions.

Salary

The salary for this post will be within the Grade 7 range of £55,207 - £59,049 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN. The premises are wheelchair accessible and there is an accessible toilet.

The Consumer Council operates a hybrid model. This requires a mix of working from home and attendance in the office, which will be agreed with your line manager.

Annual leave

In addition to the 12 standard public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 after five year's satisfactory service. The leave year runs from 1 February to 31 January.



Working hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week (Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm), totalling 37 hours. A flexible working scheme is in operation. The successful candidate may be required on occasion to work outside normal working hours dependent on business need.

Travel

The post may entail some travel within Northern Ireland and for this reason the successful applicant will require access to a form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full. Occasional travel may also be required to attend meetings outside Northern Ireland.

Pension

New entrants who join the Consumer Council are eligible to join the NICS pension scheme. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at: www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

If you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 028 7131 9000
Email: cspensions@finance-ni.gov.uk

Equality commitments

Candidates will be expected to contribute to the Consumer Council fulfilling all its commitments in relation to its Equality Scheme, and under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.



Probation

The post holder will serve 12 months' probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. Performance will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Further information

Further information about the post or the competition process may be obtained from Rachel Molloy, HR Business Partner, by email at rachel.molloy@consumercouncil.org.uk or by telephone on **028 9025 1600**.