

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

USA/TR/24

Receptionist – Two Year Fixed Term Contract

June 2024

**Completed Applications Forms must be returned
no later than 12noon (UK time)**

on

Thursday 27th June 2024



Ulster-Scots Agency
Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

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THE ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY BACKGROUND

The Ulster-Scots Agency, or Tha Boord o Ulster Scotch as it is known in Ullans (another name for the Ulster-Scots language), has been given the legislative remit of the “promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island”.

The Ulster-Scots Agency is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) established as a part of the North/South Language Body set up under the Belfast Agreement of 1998. The other part of the Language Body is Foras na Gaeilge which has responsibility for the development of the Irish (Gaelic) language. Each of these agencies has its own Board whose members together constitute the Board of the North/ South Language Body – otherwise known as Tha Boord o Leid in Ullans.

The aims of the Ulster-Scots Agency are to promote the study, conservation, development and use of Ulster-Scots as a living language; to encourage and develop the full range of its attendant culture; and to promote an understanding of the history of the Ulster-Scots.

The Agency is jointly funded by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in the Republic of Ireland and is responsible to the North/South Ministerial Council.

JOB DESCRIPTION

There is currently one two-year fixed term contract Receptionist position to be filled.

The Ulster-Scots Agency

The Ulster-Scots Agency is an independent employer. Its staff are public servants, employed on terms which largely mirror those of the Northern Ireland Civil Servants.

Salary

The salary for the post will be within the AO range of £23,071 - £24,507 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory. Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at The Corn Exchange, 31 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG. The premises are wheelchair accessible and there is an accessible toilet.

Annual Leave

In addition to the 12 standard public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days per annum pro rata.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, 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.

Training

Appropriate training will be provided, where required, to enable the successful candidate(s) to carry out the full range of assigned duties.

Pension

New entrants who join the Ulster-Scots Agency are eligible to join the North South Pension Scheme. Further information can be obtained on page 15.

Equality Commitments

Candidates will be expected to contribute to the Ulster-Scots Agency fulfilling all its commitments in relation to its Equality Scheme and under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Further Information

Further information about the post may be obtained from Lorna Elliott by email at l Elliott@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk or by telephone on 028 9026 1988.

If you have any queries about the competition process you should contact Lorna Elliott, HR/Office Manager, or email l Elliott@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk.

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The overall role of the receptionist is to assist in the promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and the Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island. The role will also help to administer the Financial Assistance Scheme in a manner which meets the needs of the Community while adhering to all corporate governance compliances.

Specifically, the receptionist will act as the initial point of contact for visitors and clients whether that be in person, over the phone or via email. This role involves co-ordinating and scheduling a boardroom calendar and facilitating appropriate set ups and catering, processing incoming and outgoing mail and provide admin support to team members as and when required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Office Manager, the Receptionist is accountable for providing professional administrative support to the smooth running of the Ulster-Scots Agency.

The main duties of the post will be:

- To provide reception cover operating Agency telephone switchboard.
- Assist officers with the organisation and administration of events and internal/external communications including mailshots, room bookings, hospitality arrangements, databases and registrations.
- Greeting and directing visitors in a courteous and professional manner.
- To provide additional admin support to the management team as and when required.
- To process in-coming and outgoing post and update relevant Agency databases.
- To create, update and maintain in-house databases.
- Assist in preparation of reports. Provide information from records when required to assist officers with Freedom of Information request, Parliamentary and Assembly Questions.
- Comply with the Agency's Equal Opportunities Policy and other policies.
- Participate in training and development initiatives in line with Agency policies and guidelines.
- To act as recording secretary at meetings in the absence of the Office Manager or PA to the CEO.

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 essential criteria:

1. Applicants must hold three GCSES grade A-C including English Language and Maths or equivalent.
2. Minimum of two years recent experience in organising and delivery administrative service in a busy office.
3. Minimum of two years experience in a customer facing/services environment.
4. Ability to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences in an appropriate style both written and oral.
5. High level competence in the use of IT packages, Microsoft Suite.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criterion will be applied in order:

1. Hold a recognised qualification that demonstrates competency in IT e.g., European Computer Driving Licence, CLAIT, OCR, RSA II Word processing.
2. Experience of working within a public sector organisation

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualification considered by the selection panel to be in an equivalent subject area to those stated. If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

In providing evidence for each of the criteria it will be essential that candidates draw upon specific examples of work they have undertaken to illustrate the extent to which they possess the experience and skills required. It will not be sufficient to simply to list the duties and responsibilities of post held.

Please note:

- **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 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 details, 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.**

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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 Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 2 for the purposes of personal and professional development.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The competency framework sets out how all NICS employees 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: Setting Direction; Engaging People and Delivering 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 stated above (Setting Direction, Engaging People and Delivering Results): The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e., a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

The Receptionist post is analogous to Admin Officer in the NICS.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.

CORE COMPETENCIES

The Core Competence Framework, which is grade specific, describes what people need to do in order to be effective at work. It is not enough to just have the knowledge and skills to do our jobs. Competence is about what people actually do, it is about how you apply or demonstrate the knowledge and skills whilst carrying out your tasks. Demonstrated competence is observable and measurable.

COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast from week commencing week beginning 22nd July 2024.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require to you:

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

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

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

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, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your last experience in relation to each of the competences. 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 Ulster-Scots Agency are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

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 space available on 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 applications forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency 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 branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the 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 panel are interested in, not that of your team of Division.

Application Form 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, hardcopy applications or applications received by fax will not be accepted.
- Only employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.

- Please do not attempt to reformat applications forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure the Ulster-Scots Agency 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 HR/Office Manager. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

Communication between Ulster-Scots Agency and you

The Ulster-Scots Agency will generally issue notices about this competition electronically, 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.

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the Ulster-Scots Agency is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit listing resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to two years.

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 HR/Office Manager.

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.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement to which the Ulster-Scots Agency adheres please refer to page 19.

THE ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER.

Assessment Information

It is the Ulster-Scots Agency'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 used with an invitation to attend for assessment. You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Employment Requirements

The Ulster-Scots Agency must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

Entry to the United Kingdom is controlled under the Immigration Act 1971. Everyone who does not have the right of abode is subject to immigration control. 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. 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.

Advice on entitlement to work may be obtained from the Home Office Website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality requirements for Ulster-Scots Agency posts.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post the level of vetting is 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.

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

Basic Disclosure Certificate

You should not 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.

Please Note: It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work to seek work, in regulated activity.

Further details can be found at www.accessni.gov.uk. Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by the HR/Office Manager, normally after interview/test and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. This can be downloaded from the AccessNI website. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer or appointment. Failure to complete the above 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.

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 Agency will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pensions

Northern Members of the Scheme:

The UK government requires all employers in the public and private sector to enrol eligible workers into a qualifying pension scheme. Upon joining the Ulster-Scots Agency, you are automatically enrolled in the organisation's pension scheme, which is referred to as the North South Pension Scheme (N/SPC), with the option to opt-out of the scheme if you wish. It is contribution scheme to which you will pay a percentage (based on your salary) if you decide to remain in the scheme during your employment with the Agency. The scheme is contracted out of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme. Full details of the North South Pension Scheme are given in the scheme guide which is issued to all new entrances to the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Southern Members of the Scheme:

The Ulster-Scots Agency has an Occupational Pension Scheme. This is referred to as the North South Pension Scheme (N/SPC). It is a contributory scheme to which you will pay a percentage (based on your salary). Full details of the North South Pension Scheme are given in the scheme guide which is issued to all new entrances to the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Feedback

The Ulster-Scots Agency 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.

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

All electronic applications must be submitted via the online portal.

Note: Late applications, hard copy or applications received by fax will not be accepted.

Contact details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process, please contact the HR/Office Manager at the address above or by:

Email: lelliott@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk

Tel: 028 9026 1988

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement to which the Ulster-Scots Agency adheres is set out below.

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in a harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high-quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles: -

Equality – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

Diversity – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together, we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

Inclusion – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promotion equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

Legislative Context

This section explains the reasons for gathering information by setting out the legislative background.

Gender

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also provided in the annual statutory monitoring as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions between NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ages and age groups.

Community Background

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS on the 1st of January each year.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions to NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality Commission for NI and NICS has decided to use 'community background' information as proxy for political opinion.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

This definition is interpreted as follows:

Physical impairment: this includes for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs etc.) caused through illness by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental impairment: this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as a learning disability and social functioning.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day to day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect: the effect has to have lasted or be likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

A normal day to day activity: this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

What sort of effect must there be?

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?

Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remains while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

Are there any types of conditions covered by special provisions in the DDA?

Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:

Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;

Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be substantial adverse effect; and

People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

Are any conditions not covered?

Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:

Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed):

Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g., hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;

Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;

Exhibitionism and voyeurism;

Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

What if someone has recovered from a disability?

Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

Race

The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions to NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group(s).

Sexual Orientation

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

Marital Status

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status.

Dependants Status

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions in NI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without.

Confidentiality of Monitoring Information.

The Following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:

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- Individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- Misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- Individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained, or is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of the Agency and Trade Union Officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.