



Invest  
Northern  
Ireland



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## Review of Invest NI's Recruitment and Selection Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

**February 2020**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

## INTRODUCTION

Invest NI has an Equality Scheme in place which sets out its commitment to the Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties and contains a timetable for undertaking a series of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs).

Invest NI has previously carried out an EQIA of its Recruitment and Selection Policy. The aim of this Policy is:

**“to recruit and select staff using fair and equitable procedures that promote equality of opportunity and ensure that the most suitable person is appointed or promoted.”**

Following public consultation a final report of this EQIA was published in September 2005. This final report outlined the actions/recommendations which Invest NI committed to take forward and to monitor on an annual basis. In 2006 the first annual progress report was completed, in 2007 the second progress report was published and then again in 2008 the third progress report was issued.

## CURRENT POSITION

Invest NI has now undertaken a further review of the actions and recommendations contained in the final report and would like to highlight the process made to date against each recommendation. The table below outlines progress made up to June 2018.

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to
1	We will continue to ensure that recruitment and selections are open, transparent and relevant, and that these provide equality of opportunity for all applicants.	<p>We will continue to ensure that recruitment and selection activities are open, transparent and relevant and that these provide equality of opportunity for all applicants. The recruitment process is in line with good practice guidelines. No significant issues have been highlighted as a result of any of the monitoring returns supplied to the Equality Commission.</p> <p>Updated February 2016: In the case where Invest NI is seeking to recruit for specialist posts it may alternatively consider using specialist agencies to assist with this process”.</p>
2	Advertisements for all posts to state that applications are available in alternative formats and how they may be obtained.	A statement stating that applications are available in alternative formats is included in all advertisements.
3	Staff on duty to be notified of all vacancies via email. Vacancies will be placed on the website and Intranet and in newspapers as appropriate and any member of staff who is not on duty can check daily newspapers for advertisements.	<p>Vacancies are placed on the Invest NI website and Intranet and in newspapers as appropriate. Staff are notified of vacancies to their work e-mail address. Line managers are also encouraged to bring vacancies to the attention of staff not on duty.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>Job opportunities will be publicised to staff in an organisation-wide email, which will be issued at the same time as external candidates are made aware, to ensure a level playing field for all candidates. Line managers will make absentees aware of the vacancy</p>

		and HR will advise outward secondees.
4	Where appropriate and lawful, affirmative and/or positive action advertising to be used. At this time we will specifically welcome applicants from minority racial groups, persons with a disability and, for Senior Management posts, applications from females.	<p>At present, in its general recruitment advertising, Invest NI specifically welcomes applications from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. For Grade 7 posts and above we also state that we welcome applications from females. The composition of the workforce is regularly reviewed and any imbalance will be addressed. The analysis of the Article 55 review in line with Invest NI's Fair Employment and Treatment Order obligations provided evidence that Invest NI's employee and applicant pool is in line with the economically active population.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>Positive action advertising statements will be used to encourage applications from an under-represented group as appropriate, and the availability of applicant packs in alternative formats (eg larger print) highlighted.</p> <p>At this time we will specifically welcome applicants from minority racial groups, persons with a disability and, for Senior Management posts, applications from females.</p>
5	We will advertise jobs widely but in an effective manner. The current practice of advertising in the Irish News, Belfast Telegraph and News Letter will continue for the next six months. The effectiveness and impact of advertising will then be assessed and reviewed.	<p>We advertise in the Irish News, the Belfast Telegraph, the News Letter and Invest NI's website. There is a link to the Invest NI website placed on the job section of the Employers Forum on Disability website.</p> <p>Updated 2016: In the case where Invest NI is seeking to recruit for specialist posts it may alternatively consider using specialist agencies to assist with this process.</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>Internal trawls for posts will only operate in limited circumstances and normally where this action may avoid a potential redundancy or in situations of restructuring or redeployment within the existing Invest NI headcount.</p>	<p>Following a recruitment need being highlighted, headcount constraints and the composition of the potential applicant pool are reviewed. The decision to run recruitment trawls externally or internally will be made following this review.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>The HR Team will work in partnership with line managers to review department structures when assessing staffing requirements. The line manager will identify the post and then liaise with HR regarding the content and grading.</p> <p>Vacancies must be appropriately authorised at Executive Leadership Team (ELT) level via a formal business case or completed New/Replacement Staff Form.</p> <p>In assessing the approach to filling a vacancy, a range of factors will be taken into account, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The priority of the vacancy;</li> <li>• Current staffing levels on a corporate basis;</li> <li>• Internal availability of the skills required;</li> <li>• Knock-on effects of staff movement;</li> <li>• The availability of a suitable reserve list;</li> <li>• Whether a representative and suitably skilled applicant pool can be demonstrated within Invest NI for a recruitment and selection process.</li> </ul> <p>Staff at the grade who require redeployment will be deployed (either to the vacant post or to another suitable post) before a vacancy is advertised, and an existing staff member at the same substantive</p>

		<p>grade may be transferred to fill a vacancy.</p> <p>Where a recruitment competition is required, the appointment process must be fit for purpose, fair, and applied with consistency to all candidates.</p> <p>Appointments will be conditional on satisfactory vetting clearance and eligibility to work in the country of the vacancy as appropriate. External appointments will also be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references.</p> <p>With the exception of vacancies at Grade 5 or above, which will be advertised externally, posts may be advertised internally or externally, subject to business need and/or equality considerations. Where the use of recruitment agencies or executive search is required, government procurement rules will apply.</p>
7	<p>We will ensure that the Knowledge, Skills, Experience and job specific Competences (KSEC's) Assessment framework which is being developed is non-discriminatory, transparent, promotes equality of opportunity and is objective where possible. Staff will be fully briefed about any changes before it takes place.</p>	<p>Prior to advertising, all proposed selection criteria are assessed to ensure that they are strictly job related, objective, non-discriminatory and promote equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The panel's decision at every stage of the selection process is final. This information is clearly highlighted in the information for applicants pack.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>The panel will agree in advance the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential and shortlisting criteria, which must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ be objectively justified</li> <li>○ exclude the requirement for a specific length of experience</li> <li>○ exclude the requirement for qualifications, unless essential for the performance of the role</li> <li>○ avoid the use of language which is unclear or open to interpretation, e.g. words like 'senior' or 'significant', unless explained;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview questions;</li> <li>• Assessment exercise;</li> <li>• Marks to be awarded;</li> <li>• Weighting of criteria;</li> <li>• Any criteria for which a minimum mark must be achieved;</li> <li>• How late arrivals/requests to reschedule interviews will be dealt with.</li> </ul>
8	<p>We will prepare improved guidelines for all applicants to help them understand criterion-based selection. We will also provide clarity as to the skills, knowledge and behaviours which are considered essential and desirable criteria for shortlisting and make these explicit to candidates.</p>	<p>The Information for Applicants Pack available to all applicants provides a comprehensive outline of the job role, main duties and outlines the specific skills knowledge and behaviours which are essential for the role. Guidance on how the application form should be completed is available to all applicants.</p> <p>In the event that a large number are received, applications may be processed in batches, in order of date of receipt. Where applications are processed in batches, the process will include shortlisting, selection assessment, selection interviewing and the appointment of successful candidates prior to the next batch of applications being processed. This information will be clearly highlighted in the information for applicants pack as appropriate.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>For high volume competitions, multiple panels may be used. To ensure consistency of approach, all panels will be briefed together.</p>
9	<p>The scoring framework will be reviewed to provide consistency across each selection exercise.</p>	<p>A consistent scoring framework is used across each selection exercise.</p>
10	<p>A consistent approach will be adopted to contact all candidates, whether internal or external.</p>	<p>Initially, all candidates are contacted by letter to their home address. Candidates who are at the same stage of the process are contacted in the same manner and at the same time.</p> <p>2018 Update</p>

		<p>All application documentation must be completed in full, and the Application Form must be signed, or the declaration ticked if submitted electronically. Only complete applications submitted on the appropriate Application Form will be accepted. No contact in advance of the competition closing date will be made with individuals who have submitted incorrectly completed applications.</p> <p>2020 Update</p> <p>Candidates may be contacted by email or by letter to their home address. All candidates at the same stage of the selection process will be contacted in the same manner and at the same time.</p>
11	<p>Our Recruitment and Selection website job board will be linked to the Intranet; vacancies will also be posted on appropriate jobsites.</p>	<p>Externally advertised jobs are posted on Invest NI's website. There is a link to the Invest NI website placed on the job section of the Employers Forum on Disability website. Roles advertised in the Belfast Telegraph are subsequently advertised the nijobfinder website. Internal vacancies are advertised on the Human Resources section of the intranet and an email notification issued to relevant staff to their work e-mail address.</p>
12	<p>Standard letter templates will be developed for each stage of the recruitment process.</p>	<p>Standard letter templates for each stage of the recruitment process are used.</p>
13	<p>The information pack for candidates will include a summary of Invest NI's Equal Opportunities Policy, a description of the role and of the skills, expertise and qualifications required. We will also endeavour to give best estimates of recruitment and selection timescales to applicants.</p>	<p>The Information for Applicants pack includes a summary of Invest NI's Equal Opportunities Policy and a description of the role, the skills, expertise and qualifications required. Where possible we also include specific dates for the various stages of the selection process in the Information for Applicants pack.</p>
14		<p>Having reviewed our recruitment and</p>



	<p>We will include within the Information for Applicants pack for each vacancy an explanation as to how evidence of past convictions will be assessed. Our recruitment and selection training will be modified to cover this and provide selection panel members and HR staff with the necessary legal knowledge. We will adapt our Recruitment and Selection policy by including a statement of non-discrimination to ensure treatment for those who have disclosed details of criminal convictions.</p>	<p>selection procedures, the information for applicants pack issued for each vacancy contains an outline on how past convictions will be assessed. Recruitment and selection training has been updated to include how convictions are assessed during the selection process.</p> <p>2020 Update</p> <p>Invest NI's Recruitment and Selection Policy confirms our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all in our recruitment, selection and promotion practices.</p> <p>Internal promotions to permanent positions and all external appointments are conditional on satisfactory vetting clearance through Access NI. The Information for Applicants Pack for each vacancy explains this process, and HR staff have received appropriate training.</p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p>Applicants requesting specific feedback on their performance against the selection criteria for a particular post will be provided with this.</p>	<p>To provide feedback on performance, and if requested, applicants will be provided with a copy of the shortlisting document, their score at assessment or candidate interview assessment form as applicable.</p>
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive monitoring and data management system, tracking applicants from application through to appointment, will be applied and will cover all nine Section 75 dimensions.</p>	<p>Invest NI monitors all applicants through to appointment on the following areas - Age, Religion, Ethnic group, Gender and Disability. Invest NI monitors and reports on applicants as per our legal requirements.</p>
<p><b>17</b></p>	<p>At this time we will continue to monitor the success rates of older candidates to identify and remove any barriers to fair selection.</p>	<p>We monitor the success rates of older candidates on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p><b>18</b></p>	<p>All selection panel members will have to attend training and refresher courses. Refresher courses will normally be held within two years of initial training. This training will include reference to section 75 and associated legislation and will be tailored to our procedures.</p>	<p>Recruitment interview training includes a strong emphasis on equality and diversity awareness. All selection panel members undergo training in small groups or through one to one briefings with HR. Where a selection panel member has not interviewed for 2 years or more, a refresher briefing is available. This refresher training is available from</p>

		<p>either the Learning and Development team or and internally developed online Recruitment and Selection Training module.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>It is the duty and responsibility of every person involved in recruitment and selection to ensure that Invest NI's Recruitment and Selection Policy is applied fairly and consistently, and that Invest NI's commitment to selection on merit is seen to be clear and unambiguous.</p> <p>All involved in Invest NI's Recruitment and Selection processes will have received adequate training and promote Invest NI as an employer of choice, concerned with service excellence and customer care.</p> <p>All panel members will receive appropriate training in selection skills prior to participating in a selection process, with refresher training completed every 3 years.</p>
<p><b>19</b></p>	<p>Where external consultants are employed, we will ensure selection techniques are valid and reliable.</p>	<p>On an ongoing basis where external consultants are engaged, the tender process requires all those tendering to demonstrate that selection techniques are valid and reliable.</p>
<p><b>20</b></p>	<p>At least one representative from the Human Resources department will normally be in attendance on Invest NI managed selection panels</p>	<p>This is a formal requirement for our selection panels.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>Panel members and those involved in the preparation of Information for Applicants Packs or assessment material must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declare any potential conflict of interest in advance of the selection process, and in this situation HR will determine how to proceed;</li> <li>• maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the selection process;</li> <li>• not engage with any applicant</li> </ul>

		<p>or potential applicant regarding any aspect of the selection process until the outcome of the competition has been published.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete online recruitment and selection training.</li> </ul> <p>2020 Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Invest NI's online Criterion Based Interviewing training course. The course was developed to ensure that Invest NI can deliver a high quality selection process and that all candidates are afforded fairness, equality of opportunity and have the best opportunity to demonstrate their ability and experience. The course covers Invest NI's recruitment process, the roles and responsibilities of panel members, best practice interviews and guidance on how panel members can contribute effectively to the selection decision making process.</li> </ul> <p>At least one representative of the Human Resources Team will normally be in attendance on Invest NI managed selection panels for permanent, Northern Ireland based roles.</p> <p>The Executive Director, Human Resources, will determine the requirement for Human Resources representation on selection panels for roles based outside Northern Ireland, or where a specialist recruitment agency has been engaged to assist with the recruitment process.</p>
<p><b>21</b></p>	<p>The Human Resources Director will set the starting salary for a successful candidate and apply any recommendations of the current equal pay review programme.</p>	<p>The Human Resources Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that starting salaries for successful candidates are appropriate, based on the job role and ensure pay equality.</p> <p>2020 Update</p> <p>The proposed appointee will</p>

		<p>normally start on the minimum point on the relevant salary scale. As outlined in Invest NI's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, any proposal to pay above the scale minimum (for example where an offer is not accepted and there is no reserve list) should be justified by a business case which should be approved by appropriate officials within Invest NI.</p>
<p><b>22</b></p>	<p>We will prepare a policy statement on the use of reserve lists. The Human Resources department will make clear how it will choose from candidates with the same scores.</p>	<p>At present, reserve lists remain live for up to 6 months following the selection decision as per guidance from the Equality Commission, with the option to extend for a further 6 month period if appropriate. The JNCC Policy sub Group prepared a policy statement in relation to the use of reserve lists. Where candidates have been awarded the same score, the selection panel reviews the score against the highest weighted criterion. The candidate with the highest score in this area is ranked highest.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>Decisions reached at all selection stages will be quality assured and recorded by the selection panel. Candidates will be ranked so that no 2 candidates have the same overall mark. In the event that 2 candidates have the same overall score, the heaviest weighted criterion will be used as the differentiator for ranking purposes.</p> <p>The top-ranked candidate will be offered the appointment, normally on the minimum point of the relevant salary scale.</p> <p>All candidates will be notified of the outcome at the same time.</p> <p>Where more candidates meet the threshold for appointment than there are vacant posts available, a reserve list may be compiled for use in the</p>

		<p>event of future vacancies of that type for a period of 6 months from the outcome of the competition. This list may generally be extended for a further period of up to 6 months.</p> <p>Where there is a live reserve list from a previous competition, further appointments to approved vacant posts of the same type may be made from it.</p> <p>2020 Update</p> <p>Where there is a live reserve list from a recruitment competition, subject to it having been indicated in the Information for Applicants Pack, appointments may be made to further approved vacancies at the same grade and with the same selection criteria.</p>
<p><b>23</b></p>	<p>We will include a text phone number on all correspondence. Guidelines are currently being drafted to make information more accessible. This Policy will include communication protocols on the use of the text phone. In the interim, HR will amend Recruitment and Selection procedures as necessary.</p>	<p>The text phone number is included on all recruitment advertisements. It is also incorporated into applicant packs and other correspondence. We are also considering the introduction of the text relay service.</p> <p>2018 Update</p> <p>The text relay system is now in place.</p>
<p><b>24</b></p>	<p>We will work closely with the Equality Commission during 2005-2006 to implement an appropriate programme of action to address under representation issues that may be identified.</p>	<p>The analysis of the Article 55 review in line with Invest NI's Fair Employment and Treatment Order obligations provided evidence that Invest NI's employee and applicant pool is in line with the economically active population. Should further action be necessary in the future, we will work closely with the Equality Commission to address any imbalances.</p>
<p><b>25</b></p>	<p>Establish a system to monitor the impact on relevant groups by the Section 75 dimensions, and annually review the information. Widely and openly publish the results, and take appropriate action to ensure equality of opportunity as required.</p>	<p>A system to monitor the impact on the relevant equality groupings is in place for Invest NI.</p>

## INFORMATION

If you would like to view the draft Recruitment and Selection EQIA or the Recruitment and Selection EQIA Final Report or Progress Reports, you can do so by accessing the Invest NI website at:

[www.investni.com/equality](http://www.investni.com/equality)

Alternatively, you can obtain a hard copy of the reports by contacting:

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