



Northern
Ireland
Office

Northern Ireland Office

Appointment: Northern Ireland
Veterans Commissioner

Candidate Information Pack

October 2024

FOREWORD FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner position.

I place great importance on the role of Commissioner and seek an individual to be the advocate for veterans in Northern Ireland and ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are met.

The Commissioner must understand the wider public sector landscape and hear directly from veterans and from those who do so much to support them. Understanding the veterans' perspective, knowing where the problems are, and working alongside partners to identify solutions, will be crucial to the continuing success of this office and that will require creativity and leadership. A good working knowledge of the veterans sector or the ability to understand it quickly will therefore be essential as would be experience of working in or with the public sector.

The enclosed information will, I hope, answer many of the questions you may have about the role and work of the Commissioner. The post is non-statutory and, as such, does not have legal powers or duties. It does, however, offer a unique opportunity for a dynamic individual to deliver maximum impact for former members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force in Northern Ireland.

I will be looking to appoint an individual who can bring vision, influence and innovation to the role; someone who will work collaboratively with third sector partners and public sector leaders to drive improvements in standards of service. I welcome applications from all suitably experienced individuals regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability.

I hope that you will feel able to submit an application and, once again, thank you for your interest in the post.

RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ROLE

The New Decade, New Approach agreement to restore the Northern Ireland Executive in 2020 included a UK Government commitment to:

“Appoint a Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner to act as an independent point of contact to support and enhance outcomes for veterans in Northern Ireland.”

The Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner will be a visible leader and advocate, establishing strong networks and being influential. The Commissioner, working constructively with senior stakeholders, from public sector organisations and the ex-service sector, will support improved outcomes for veterans in Northern Ireland through collaboration and negotiation.

The work of the Commissioner must remain outcome-focused, requiring an individual who is able to foresee and overcome barriers to progress, in order to support continuous improvement.

The Commissioner must have or be able to quickly gain an understanding of the veterans sector and the broader military landscape.

Much of the Commissioner’s work will focus on the veteran’s journey as they navigate public services and thus familiarity with the public sector in Northern Ireland and how it provides services to the veterans’ community will be desirable. An understanding of the complaints handling and appeals procedures in place within the public sector would also be of benefit.

In advising on future policy development, the Commissioner should be cognisant of the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive’s strategic objectives and the wider policy context, taking a long-term, strategic and holistic approach. They should make connections across a number of environments and prioritise activities that will deliver the greatest value and link evidence to specific outcomes.

The budget for the Commissioner’s office is funded by the UK Government and will cover the Commissioner’s remuneration, support staff, office and IT requirements and general running costs. The Commissioner’s office will be supported by a small staff of civil servants.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties and functions of the Veterans Commissioner as agreed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland are:

- being open and accessible to the real experiences of individual veterans, using information about them to shape priorities and drive improvement in public services;
- raising the profile of veterans in Northern Ireland, improving communication and understanding of their needs, issues and aspirations and promoting wider recognition of their skills, experience and talent;
- working to support the alignment of effort on the delivery of priority outcomes for veterans through collaboration, building on and complementing the work of partners and stakeholders;
- improving outcomes for Armed Forces and Veterans' Families, recognising that they too require support, including during periods of transition; and
- responding to inquiries or requests for advice from policy makers in the devolved administration and UKG, on the support that Armed Forces' and Veterans' families may require.

The Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner will be expected to fulfil these responsibilities by:

- engaging with veterans individually and their representative bodies to understand their needs and aspirations;
- understanding existing public service provision for veterans in Northern Ireland, identifying barriers;
- undertaking thematic inquiries and developing the evidence to make recommendations, in response to requests from Ministers and senior officials, for improvement in public service provision;

- developing and maintaining relationships with other relevant bodies in order to maximise opportunities to share advice, expertise and good practice, especially with third sector organisations;
- providing the strategic direction, performance framework and governance of the office of Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner;
- developing a communications strategy to raise the profile of veterans;
- being accountable to UK Government, through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for the delivery of your objectives and performance of your office;
- giving consideration to which policy areas and services should be reviewed, including considering whether there are associated devolved issues for Armed Forces and Veterans' families that need to be considered; and
- being guided by the Seven Principles of Public Life to secure the best possible outcomes for veterans and their families in Northern Ireland.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner is a challenging and rewarding opportunity. It calls for someone who can work effectively with a wide range of individuals and who has good judgement, resilience, sensitivity and vision of a high order. He or she will be expected to engage with, listen to, and act upon the experiences of service users; promote rigorous and supportive challenge, while being sensitive to the views of others; foster and maintain good relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, and liaise effectively with the UK and Northern Ireland Governments, Health Boards, local councils and other local and national partners.

Essential Skills

All candidates for this challenging role will need to demonstrate:

- Strong and visible leadership skills, with the ability to challenge constructively, influence and negotiate with key stakeholders at local, national and strategic levels to deliver improvement.

- Proven ability to work collaboratively, delivering improved outcomes through partnership, demonstrating sensitivity in dealing with people, empowering and motivating, whilst maintaining a flexible and adaptable approach.
- Ability to make effective decisions and develop policy and strategy, be innovative and identify new solutions, providing a clear strategic vision for the work of the Veterans Commissioner’s office, translating that vision into successful outcomes.
- Knowledge of the ex-Service sector in Northern Ireland and Armed Forces transition arrangements or either the housing, health, employability or welfare sectors in Northern Ireland.
- Practical understanding of the requirements of good corporate governance, including financial and performance management and personal integrity.

The Selection Panel will assess your suitability for appointment by comparing the information you provide in your supporting statement and CV against the essential criteria. You should therefore review the skills requirements as detailed above before preparing your supporting statement and CV.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Appointment Description:	Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner
Appointment type:	This is not a statutory appointment, nor does it constitute employment.
Appointing Department:	Northern Ireland Office
Location:	NI Veterans Commissioner’s Office, Ballymena – occasional travel may be required throughout Northern Ireland and the UK.
Number of Vacancies:	1
Remuneration:	£306 per day plus expenses which will be paid at civil service rates
Time Requirement:	Approximately 110 days per year.

Term of Appointment:	Until August 2026 with the possibility of an extension subject to confirmation of continued funding
Date of Appointment:	December 2024
Security Vetting:	CTC

This competition may be used to fill any further vacancies that arise over the subsequent 12 months.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency and openness, applicants are asked to consider whether their appointment may give rise to a conflict of interest and state this clearly on the application summary form. You should provide information regarding interests that you, or your immediate family, have that might be construed as being in conflict with the role of Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner.

An appointee to a position in public life could find that matters or incidents which previously attracted no attention could become matters of legitimate public interest once the person concerned holds a public appointment. Actual or perceived conflicts might include, for example, a situation where a candidate has interests in an organisation that might benefit from a contract with the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner.

A conflict of interest will not necessarily preclude an individual from appointment but candidates must be prepared to have this explored at interview.

You should be aware that taking up such a position in public life will bring you to the attention of a wider public audience, which may include scrutiny of any activity on personal social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). If appointed, it is your personal responsibility to ensure that social media activity in your name does not bring the position of Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner or the UK Government into disrepute.

HOW TO APPLY

We encourage all applicants to apply online, further information on how to do this is set out below. However, should you be unable to submit an online application or have any issues then you should contact us at the earliest opportunity by email or telephone at NIVC2024@nio.gov.uk or call 07973773903.

The Northern Ireland Office is committed to the principle of appointment on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process and to providing equal opportunities for all. All supporting statements and CVs received by the closing date are automatically acknowledged and will be put before a duly constituted Selection Panel that will include an independent member.

The Panel will shortlist candidates to be invited to interview and then make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who in turn may wish to meet those candidates recommended for appointment before deciding whom to appoint.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 1 November 2024 at 4pm.**

In order to apply, you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#). Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions by the closing date of 1 November 2024 at 4pm. The Selection Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed below, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

For your application to be properly considered by the Selection Panel you must upload:

- A supporting statement of **no more than 1250 words** summarising your proven ability related to the essential criteria and person specification. Your statement should provide specific and detailed examples to demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria (including what you did to achieve a specific result); and

- A full CV (including education and professional qualifications, career history, and relevant achievements and responsibilities);
- Diversity / Equality Information;
- Information relating to any outside interests of reputational issues

You will be asked to check and confirm your personal details to ensure that your application is accurate and will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

PROCESS

Candidates selected at the shortlisting stage will be interviewed by the Selection Panel in November 2024. Interviews will take place remotely via video conferencing (Google Meet). If you require any further information about the application process you should contact the competition coordinator by email to NIVC2024@nio.gov.uk.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT - OFFERING AN INTERVIEW TO PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

As a Whitehall department, the Northern Ireland Office has adopted the Department for Work and Pensions sponsored Disability Confident scheme, which has replaced the Guaranteed Interview Scheme or Two Ticks scheme that was widely used in Great Britain. Disability Confident is a voluntary scheme which supports the Government's commitment to halve the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people by encouraging employers to think differently about disability and to take positive action to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers.

We will make reasonable adjustments to help you attend the interview. You may wish to contact the competition co-ordinator, by email or telephone (details above), about your individual requirements should your application proceed to this stage in the process.

We will also offer an interview to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job - by minimum criteria you must

be able to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate relevant skills and experience for each of the selection criterion set out in the essential skills section. This does not mean that all disabled people are entitled to an interview.

The aim of this commitment is to encourage positive action for disabled people, encouraging them to apply for positions in public life by offering them the assurance that, should they meet the minimum criteria as advertised for the position, they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, talent and abilities at the interview stage.

It is important to note that in certain recruitment situations such as an urgent appointment or if we receive a higher volume of applications that far exceeds the number of those expected then we may need to limit the overall numbers of interviews offered. This will include the number of interviews offered to disabled people that meet the minimum criteria for the job.

COMPLAINTS

If you feel that you have any complaint about any aspect of the way your application has been handled, we would like to hear from you. In the first instance please e-mail, the competition co-ordinator at: NIVC2024@nio.gov.uk

Complaints must be received by the competition co-ordinator within 1 calendar month from the issue or after the campaign has closed, whichever is the later. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt and answered as quickly and clearly as possible; at the most within 20 working days of receipt. If this deadline cannot be met we will inform you why this is the case and when you can expect a reply.

USE OF YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your personal information will be held in accordance with data protection legislation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending us any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes. When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- ensure you know why we need it
- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised

We ask that you:

- give us accurate information
- tell us as soon as possible of any changes
- tell us as soon as possible if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you

If you apply for a post, the manner in which we share information with the Panel is described above.

If you would like these details to be removed from our records as soon as this recruitment exercise is complete, please inform the competition co-ordinator via the email address or postal address to which you sent your application.

DIVERSITY MONITORING INFORMATION

This information is not used in the selection process. It will be removed on receipt and is not seen by the panel assessing your application. We use this information to monitor the diversity of candidates we attract and those we appoint.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The principles of public life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected for appointment to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, NDPBs and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public services. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity Holders of public office should not place themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour whenever it occurs.