



8 May 2025

Circular 12/2025

**Interdepartmental Competition for Promotion to
Assistant Principal Officer (Standard) in the
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**

Introduction

1. I am directed by the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform to say that Osborne Recruitment will hold an interdepartmental competition on behalf of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) for the position of **Assistant Principal Officer (Standard)** level.
2. The Assistant Principal Officer (Standard) is a senior managerial grade in the Civil Service.

3. The Role

IHREC is currently at the start of a new strategic cycle from 2025-2027. The Assistant Principal (Your Rights Public Information Manager) will play a key role in the strategic development of IHREC's public information service (known as '*Your Rights*').

Your Rights provides information to members of the public on rights under equality and human rights law in Ireland. It is not a legal advice service (see www.ihrec.ie/your-rights/).

The *Your Rights* service is currently going through a process of significant development and transition. The role of the Your Rights Public Information Manager will be to lead on the development of the service and to manage its transition to a service with the following aims:

- Provision of high quality authoritative and accessible information on human rights and equality law in Ireland;
- Delivery of information to everyone – in particular, effective delivery to marginalised and vulnerable communities, including through partnerships with key organisations;
- Visibility - providing information to the public in ways that they can easily access, including via new technology and social media pathways, and meeting the need for information provision in a range of accessible formats;
- Development of an efficient and effective information service that meets real needs and that adds value, rather than duplicating the work of other actors; and
- Ensuring that the role and purpose of the information service is clearly positioned within the IHREC brand and complements and supports the work of other teams within IHREC.

This is a new role to lead the transition and development of the *Your Rights* service, and a critical element of this role will be project planning and development. This role will require leadership and adaptability throughout the transition process.

Your Rights is part of the Legal Team but it is not part of the Commission's legal practice. Staffing of the *Your Rights* Service is currently one Executive Officer and two Clerical Officers. The staffing

model will be reviewed as part of the work of the Your Rights Public Information Manager. The successful candidate will report directly to the Head of Legal.

4. **Key Areas of Responsibility**

Management and Leadership of the *Your Rights* Service

- Develops a workplan to operationalise the transition to, and development of, the new public information service;
- Manages the transition from the current *Your Rights* Service to a new service, including ongoing day to day management of queries and cases;
- Manages and develops *Your Rights* staff for ongoing service delivery and transition to the new service, including capacity development;
- Uses a project and change management approach to lead the transition to the new service offering;
- Leads a team, and supports others to deliver on organisational strategies, action plans and day-to-day service requirements;
- Leads the team by example, coaching and supporting individuals as required;
- Works with the team to facilitate high performance and addressing any performance issues, if they arise;
- Places high importance on staff development/training and maximising skills and capacity of the team; and
- Is flexible and willing to adapt and implement change.

Customer Service

- Understands who the client is and is willing and able to deliver high quality services;
- Proven ability to meet the needs of clients;
- Constantly strives to find new ways to increase client satisfaction;
- Demonstrates a clear commitment to the organisation's quality customer service, standards, strategies, policies and initiatives;
- Applies appropriate systems or processes to enable quality checking of all activities and outputs;
- Focuses efforts and energy on successfully achieving standards of excellence in delivery of goals and objectives;
- Thinks ahead, identifies opportunities and independently takes action to influence events where appropriate; and
- Is accountable for meeting objectives to the required standard.

Digitalisation and Modernisation of the *Your Rights* Service

- Leads the development of a work programme for the modernisation and roll out of a new modernised public information service;
- Delivers digitalisation of the *Your Rights* service, by designing and managing innovative processes for the provision of quality information on rights to the public through a variety of accessible formats and channels;
- Manages the development of, and oversees the updating of, information on rights made available to the public, devises policies and practices for delivery of the service in an accessible manner;
- Handles complex and sensitive enquiries;
- Oversees compliance with regulatory obligations including, criminal law reporting, FOI and DSAR etc.; and
- Develops/maintains skills and expertise necessary to perform the role effectively e.g. relevant software and IT systems, organisational policies and procedures and relevant legislation, policy and regulatory framework.

Data Management and Communications

- Establishing processes for the development of a data management framework as part of service delivery, including production and management of operational statistics, performance metrics

development, impact assessment, monitoring and reporting, including regular information sharing with other teams to support and align with their work;

- Ensuring a quality management system is in place to deliver high quality authoritative and accessible information on human rights and equality law; and
- Ongoing management of data and information, in accordance with IHREC's data management policies and procedures.

Stakeholder Management

- Strong networking skills and an ability to form strategic alliances across the civil society sector and with relevant statutory agencies;
- Identifying business needs and customer trends, developing innovative knowledge-based solutions; and
- Working closely with stakeholders to develop and maintain knowledge management systems, including identifying and integration of technology-based solutions which ensure accessibility.

The responsibilities outlined in this job description should not be regarded as comprehensive in scope and may be added to or altered as required, in line with the requirements of the Commission.

Note: Assignment to this position does not preclude a position change in time and in line with IHREC Commission business requirements.

5. Essential Eligibility

On the closing date of 1pm, on Wednesday 28 May 2025, to be eligible for consideration, a candidate must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- Be serving in a permanent, temporary or acting capacity in the Civil Service in a grade below that of Assistant Principal Officer or equivalent.
- Hold a relevant qualification at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications in a relevant discipline (e.g. Communications, Law, Digital Marketing, Project Management, etc.);
- Have significant project and change management experience on similar projects such as managing information services to the public;
- Have excellent stakeholder and customer service skills;
- Demonstrate that they possess the core competencies identified for effective performance at Assistant Principal Officer level which are:
 - Leadership;
 - Analysis and Decision Making;
 - Management and Delivery of Results;
 - Interpersonal and Communication Skills;
 - Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development.
 - Drive and Commitment to Public Service Value.
- Demonstrate that they have two or more years' service in the Civil Service, either continuously or in aggregate. Temporary officers and officers serving in an acting capacity in the eligible grades may compete in the competition provided they fulfil the eligibility requirements set out above. All forms of maternity leave, including extended maternity leave, constitute service for the purpose of calculating the two-year service requirement in the Civil Service (see *Letter to Personnel Officers dated 10 March 2009 – Extension of Probation due to Maternity Leave and Competitions for Promotion*)
- Where an officer was acting or serving on a temporary contract and was subsequently appointed

in a permanent capacity, eligibility may be based on the aggregate service, e.g. six months in an acting capacity or on contract and eighteen months in a substantive capacity, can be aggregated to give two years' service

- Be suitable from the point of view of performance, conduct, health and sick leave
- Have received a performance evaluation of "Satisfactory" in their 2024 PMDS annual review
- Demonstrate that they possess the key requirements to carry out the role as detailed at Section 4 above, along with the skills and capabilities identified as being essential for the role.

Additionally, it should be noted that:

- a. The eligibility requirements in this competition reflect those set out in [General Council Agreed Report 1526](#) in respect of cross-stream promotion arrangements to apply in the Civil Service.
- b. An applicant who is no longer serving in a Department, resigns, retires, is dismissed from their post or transfers out of the Civil Service will cease to be eligible for appointment from any panel established from this competition.
- c. Applicants in grades having the same maximum pay scale (or higher) as Assistant Principal Officer Standard **are not eligible to compete in this competition.**
- d. Officers on special leave with pay may apply if otherwise eligible. Officers on career break may apply if their career break conforms to the terms of Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform Circular 04/13 and if they are otherwise eligible. Officers on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible; HR Units should check cases not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91 with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

The onus is on the candidate to ensure that they satisfy the essential eligibility requirements for the position. Candidates having doubts on any aspect of their eligibility are advised to clarify their position with their HR Section before proceeding with their application. Admission to the competition does not imply acceptance that a candidate is eligible.

NOTE: Qualifications/eligibility may not be verified by the IHREC until the final stage of the process. Therefore, those candidates who do not meet the eligibility requirements, and proceed with their application, are putting themselves to unnecessary effort/expense and will not be offered a position from this competition. An invitation to interview or any other element of the selection process is not an acceptance of eligibility.

6. Desirable Criteria

- A relevant third level qualification in a law-related course **or** a minimum of three years' relevant professional experience in a legal practice or other law-related environment, whether in the public or private sector;
- An understanding of digital accessibility, or a willingness to upskill;
- An understanding of the area of human rights and equality law in Ireland, or a willingness to upskill;
- An understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, or a willingness to upskill;
- An excellent capacity to develop, manage and maintain effective working relationships; and
- A good track record of working effectively in teams in a multidisciplinary environment.

7. Salary

The Assistant Principal Standard Scale (rates effective from 1 March 2025) for the position are as follows:

Personal Pension Contribution (PPC)

€80,668 €83,639 €86,651 €89,672 €92,690 €94,431 €97,474(LSI1) €100,530(LSI2)

This rate will apply where the appointee is an existing civil or public servant appointed on or after 6 April 1995 and is required to make a personal pension contribution.

Non-Personal Pension Contribution (Non-PPC)

€77,921 €80,757 €82,321 €85,189 €88,057 €89,714 €92,602(LSI1) €95,502(LSI2)

This rate will apply where the appointee is a civil or public servant recruited before 6 April 1995 and who **is not required** to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

Long service increments may be payable after 3 (LSI1) and 6 (LSI2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Important Note

The terms of Circular 08/2019 – Revised Arrangements for Starting Pay will apply, as appropriate, to appointments under this competition.

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy.

8. Application Process

Practical Matters

If invited to tests and/or interview, the onus is on each applicant to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by Osborne. If you do not attend on the specified date/time you will be deemed withdrawn from the competition.

How to Apply

Application Form:

To apply for this role please complete an application form which is available at the following link <https://osborne.ie/public-sector/ihrec-employment-opportunities>

Candidates must submit the relevant, signed and completed application form outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and how your skills and experience meet the requirements for the position. Completed applications should be submitted by email to ihrec@osborne.ie
Only one application per person is permitted.

Closing Date

Deadline for application: Please note latest receipt for applications is **Wednesday 28 May 2025 at 1pm**. Incomplete applications, postal applications or CV's will not be accepted. Any applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered.

Acknowledgment of your application: An acknowledgement email will be issued for all applications received. If you do not receive acknowledgement of your application within two working days of submission, please contact Osborne Recruitment at ihrec@osborne.ie to ensure your application has been received.

No enquiries or canvassing should be made directly to IHREC.

Only fully completed and submitted applications received by the closing date will be accepted in the competition.

9. Next Steps after Application

Selection Process

The Selection Process may include the following:

- Shortlisting of candidates based on the information contained in their application
- Initial/preliminary interview
- Presentation or other exercises
- A final competitive interview
- Any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.

Interviews

Interviews are anticipated to be held in person **week commencing 7 July 2025**. Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by IHREC and should make sure that the contact details specified on their application form are correct.

Equality and Diversity

IHREC is committed to equality of opportunity to individuals applying to work. We seek to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of each individual as part of our statutory obligation under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. We undertake to build a diverse workforce, representative of Irish society. We aim to create an inclusive work environment where our differences are respected and all individuals are valued.

We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups, candidates identifying with minority communities and those with a broad variety of backgrounds and experiences.

Reasonable Accommodations

IHREC is an equal opportunities employer and applications are welcome from those with a disability. Reasonable accommodation to support people with disabilities to participate in this competition will be provided. Please contact Osborne Recruitment at accessihrec@osborne.ie to ensure that specific needs are obtained and known at application stage and prior to interview / testing. Reasonable accommodations will be delivered, meeting the needs of the individual insofar as possible.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, applications will be treated in strictest confidence.

Security Clearance

Garda vetting will be sought in respect of individuals who come under consideration for appointment. The applicant will be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form should they come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to the Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which they have resided.

Other Important Information

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result notification, is not to be taken as implying that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, IHREC will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises IHREC may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Candidates' Rights - Review and Complaint Procedures in relation to the Selection Process

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission will consider requests for review and complaints in accordance with the provisions of the code of practice published by the CPSA.

A request for review may be taken by a candidate should they be dissatisfied with an action or decision taken by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). IHREC will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of the Code of Practice *Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (Commission). When making a request for a review, the candidate must support their request by outlining the facts they believe show that the action taken or decision reached was wrong. A request for review may be refused if the candidate cannot support their request.

IHREC recommends that, subject to the agreement of the candidate, where the office holder (in this instance the Director of IHREC) considers the matter could be resolved they should first seek to engage on an informal basis, before making use of the formal review procedure.

Procedure for Informal Review

A request for Informal Review must be made within 5 working days of notification of the decision, and should normally take place between the candidate and a representative of IHREC who had played a key role in the selection process.

Where the decision being conveyed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for informal review must be received within 2 working days of the date of receipt of the decision.

Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such informal discussion, they may adopt the formal procedures set out below.

If a candidate wishes the matter to be dealt with by way of a formal review, they must do so within 2 working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal review.

Procedure for Formal Review

The candidate must address concerns in relation to the process in writing to IHREC, outlining the facts that they believe show an action taken or decision reached was wrong.

A request for review must be made within 5 working days of the notification of the selection decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for review must be received within 4 working days.

Any extension of these time limits will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances and will be at the sole discretion of the Director of IHREC.

The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate as soon as possible but in any event within 25 working days of receipt of the request for review.

Complaints Process

A candidate may believe there was a breach of the Commission's Code of Practice by IHREC that may have compromised the integrity of the decision reached in the appointment process. The complaints process enables candidates (or potential candidates) to make a complaint under Section

8 to IHREC in the first instance on an informal or formal basis. A formal review will be carried out by an IHREC independent reviewer.

Allegations of a breach of the Code of Practice should be addressed in writing, and within a reasonable timeframe, to IHREC in the first instance. The complainant must outline the facts that they believe show that the process followed was wrong. The complainant must also identify the aspect of the Code they believe has been infringed and enclose any relevant documentation that may support the allegation. A complaint may be dismissed if the complainant cannot support their allegations by setting out how IHREC has fallen short of the principles of this Code.

On receipt of a complaint IHREC may determine to engage with the complainant on an informal basis.

For further information on the above procedures please see the Code of Practice Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service which is available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments, www.cpsa.ie

There is no obligation on IHREC to suspend an appointment process while it considers a request for a review.

Please note that where a formal review of a recruitment and selection process has taken place under Section 7 of this Code of Practice, a complainant may not seek a further review of the same process under Section 8, other than in the most exceptional circumstances that will be determined by the CPSA at its sole discretion.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and result in their exclusion from the process. Candidates must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information,
- canvass any person with or without inducements,
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, they will be disqualified as a candidate and excluded from the process.

If a person is found guilty of an offence and has been appointed to a post following the recruitment process, they will be removed from that post.

Specific candidate criteria

Candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned
- Be suitable on the grounds of character
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned; and if successful, they will not be appointed to the post unless they:
- Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are, or may be required to be, performed
- Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by IHREC, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as IHREC requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Data Protection

When your application is received, a personal record is created by Osborne Recruitment on behalf of IHREC, in your name, which contains much of the personal data you have provided as well as additional information which may be gathered throughout the selection process e.g. confirmation of Garda Vetting, tests and exercises, where applicable. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. This processing is necessary in order to take steps at your request prior to entering an employment contract. The personal record will be shared with Osborne Recruitment and the interview panel. The record will be retained by IHREC for 3 years from the end of the competition and by Osborne Recruitment for 18 months. Interview board notes may be retained for 30 years after which they will be transferred to the National Archives. Neither IHREC nor Osborne Recruitment will transfer your personal data outside the EEA. If you wish to exercise any of your data protection rights enshrined under the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts 2003 – 2018 or you have any questions on data protection, please contact our data protection officer at dpo@ihrec.ie.

10. Conditions of Appointment

Appointment to the post of Assistant Principal Officer (Standard) in the Civil Service will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments.

The recruitment and selection process for appointment to this position will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil and Public Service published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

Candidates will be responsible for any expense incurred in connection with their candidature.

11. Further Information and Circulation

If candidates have any queries about this circular, they should contact their HR Unit. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to Osborne Recruitment on behalf of IHREC. Osborne Recruitment, 13 Fitzwilliam Square E, Dublin, D02 PY27, Phone (01) 638 4400 ihrec@osborne.ie

HR Units should bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their Departments and associated Offices without delay, including eligible fixed term workers, officers on term time, secondment, maternity leave, career break, contract, and all other relevant forms of leave.

The Civil Service and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from people from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups including ethnic minority and people with disabilities.

Mise le meas



John Howlin
Assistant Secretary
Public Service Resourcing Division

Appendix 1 – Assistant Principal Officer Level Competencies

Leadership

- Actively contributes to the development of the strategies and policies of the Department/ Organisation
- Brings a focus and drive to building and sustaining high levels of performance, addressing any performance issues as they arise
- Leads and maximises the contribution of the team as a whole Considers the effectiveness of outcomes in terms wider than own immediate area
- Clearly defines objectives/goals & delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility for tasks
- Develops capability of others through feedback, coaching & creating opportunities for skills development Identifies and takes opportunities to exploit new and innovative service delivery channels Judgement

Analysis & Decision Making

- Researches issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all information needed on an issue Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data (including numerical data)
- Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages
- Uses judgment to make clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues
- Considers the wider implications, agendas and sensitivities within decisions and the impact on a range of stakeholders
- Takes a firm position on issues s/he considers important

Management & Delivery of Results

- Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard
- Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances
- Ensures quality and efficient customer service is central to the work of the division
- Looks critically at issues to see how things can be done better
- Is open to new ideas initiatives and creative solutions to problems
- Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high value services Effectively manages multiple projects

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Presents information in a confident, logical and convincing manner, verbally and in writing Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues
- Promotes teamwork within the section, but also works effectively on projects across Departments/Sectors Maintains poise and control when working to influence others
- Instils a strong focus on Customer Service in his/her area
- Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing
- Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders, including members of the public, Public Service Colleagues and the political system

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Has a clear understanding of the roles objectives and targets of self and the team and how they fit into the work of the unit and Department/Organisation
- Has a breadth and depth of knowledge of Department and Governmental issues and is sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities
- Is considered an expert by stakeholders in own field/area
- Is focused on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth to help carry out the specific requirements of the role

Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
- Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon
- Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided
- Through leading by example, fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity