

E109/19/11

16 March 2011

Circular 4/2011: Interdepartmental Competition for appointment to the post of Manager of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) - Assistant Principal Officer (Higher Scale) in the Department of Finance

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to seek applications for appointment to the post of Manager of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS). The post is set at the level of Assistant Principal Officer (Higher Scale). The competition will be conducted by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and will include a competitive interview.

2. Background – The Employee Assistance Service

The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) is an important shared service element of the human resource structure of the Civil Service. Employee Assistance Officers (EAO) cover all Government Departments/Offices and provide a wide range of supports to staff and management in relation to personal or job-related problems.

Policy in respect of the CSEAS is developed and monitored by a seven person Board consisting of representatives from the Department of Finance including the Chief Medical Officer, one representative of the Staff Side, and representatives from a number of Government Departments. The role of the Board is to determine the framework and broad policy for the ongoing modernisation of the CSEAS in line with Government policy and to monitor and review the effectiveness of the CSEAS

The Board of the CSEAS coordinates the recruitment and training of Employee Assistance Officers and is responsible for the central policy in regard to the development of the CSEAS. The CSEAS is being reorganised and, in future, will operate an inter-Departmental service on a regionalised basis.

The CSEAS Manager is being appointed to oversee the management and future development of the service and to report to the CSEAS Board. The Manager will report to the Board of the CSEAS in relation to the development and the strategic direction of the service. The Manager is responsible on a day to day basis for personnel / accommodation / administration budget issues in relation to the CSEAS. PMDS matters in respect of the Manager will be conducted by either the Chief Medical Officer or a Principal Officer in PSMD Division of the Department of Finance

or another individual who may be designated from time to time by the Personnel Officer of the Department. While an important element of CSEAS work will always be reactive in nature, the CSEAS Manager will be required to place a greater emphasis on a proactive CSEAS.

3. Job Specification – Manager of the Employee Assistance Service

- Management of a pro-active CSEAS whilst ensuring the timely and effective provision of service to its clients
- Addressing the strategic issues involved in establishing a centralised CSEAS with a regionalised structure including the facilitation and development of the regionalised structure of the CSEAS
- Management of the CSEAS including the relationship to staff, management, CMO and referral agencies including the continued implementation of PMDS within the CSEAS
- Implementation of CSEAS Board policy
- Provision of guidance, advice, feedback and briefing in relation to the development of the CSEAS as requested by the CSEAS Board.
- Management of the CSEAS budget including the management of Travel and Subsistence payable to staff in the CSEAS
- Ensuring the timely production of the CSEAS Annual Report
- To determine the framework and broad policy for the ongoing modernisation of the CSEAS in line with Government programmes
- Implementation of the CSEAS Board policy on training and development of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Officers
- Ensuring that the probity of the CSEAS is not compromised and that its members do not engage in outside businesses or activities which would in any way conflict with the interests of the CSEAS or impair them in carrying out their duties. Where it is necessary to refer a client of the CSEAS to a private provider of counselling services, neither the Manager nor any individual EAO may have a personal or business relationship with that counselling service
- Ensuring CSEAS adherence to Civil Service codes of practice/policies and monitor and review the effectiveness of the CSEAS
- Implementation and monitoring of EAO ratios across Departments/Offices and Regions
- Monitoring of CSEAS referral arrangements and the monitoring and allocation of CSEAS work and cases
- Ensuring that the website of the CSEAS is maintained as a permanent source of reference for its clients.
- Raising awareness of the CSEAS

3. Key Responsibilities

The person appointed as Manager of the CSEAS will:

- Contribute to the shaping of strategy and policy development in the administration of the CSEAS consistent with the general strategy and policy of the CSEAS as set out by the Board
- Ensure that overall strategy is translated into meaningful objectives, monitor outputs, and provide others with clear guidelines and indications of expectations

- Set high standards for staff, monitor and support staff in order to ensure delivery of objectives and will also inspire, motivate and challenge others to perform to their highest potential
- Will personally practise, promote and create a culture that fosters high standards of ethics and integrity within the CSEAS and will deliver on promises and honour commitments
- Will be results-driven to a high standard, including planning and managing the effective use of CSEAS resources, with the ability to relate and communicate effectively with a diverse range of people

4. Selection Criteria

4.1 The selection criteria will include an assessment of the candidate's:

- Capacity for independent assessment of complex issues and decision-making.
- Experience at an appropriate level of planning and organising large blocks of work.
- Experience at an appropriate level of leading and managing staff.
- Ability to communicate effectively
- An appreciation of the role of information technology in the work of the CSEAS.
- Understanding and commitment to the ethical framework within which the CSEAS operates
- Appreciation of the role of structured counselling in seeking to resolve work and personal problems
- Understanding of the role of the Manager of the CSEAS and of the Employee Assistance Officers in balancing organisational and client needs
- Significant experience and understanding of counselling / psychology/ psychotherapy and in the provision of these services.

4.2 In addition, it is desirable that by the latest date for receipt of applications, candidates for the post of Manager should hold a recognised relevant professional qualification equivalent to at least NQAI Level 7 or other relevant qualification deemed acceptable to the Public Appointments Service as being appropriate to the role.

5. Eligibility

5.1 Candidates must, on **7th April 2011** be serving in an established, unestablished or acting capacity in the Civil Service in:

- i) the grade of Assistant Principal (Higher Scale or Standard Scale) or one of the equivalent AP grades as set out in **Appendix 1** and have not less than 2 years' service in their existing grade, or
- ii) the grade of Higher Executive Officer or Administrative Officer or one of the equivalent grades as set out in **Appendix 1** and have not less than 2 years service in their existing grade,

5.2 Candidates selected for appointment must be certified by the Personnel Officer as being suitable for consideration with regard to:

- i) Eligibility - Personnel Officers should verify that a candidate is serving in an eligible grade

- ii) Performance of work in the present grade - Personnel Officers should verify that the candidate has received within the previous 12 months an annual review rating of at least grade 3 under the Integrated PMDS model (agreed in General Council Report 1452).
- iii) General conduct.
- iv) Suitability for promotion
- v) Health, especially sick leave.

5.3 Officers who are on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers who are on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible – applicants should check with their Personnel Unit if they fall into this category.

5.4 Officers on career break may apply if the terms of their career break conform to the provisions of Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible. **Officers who have availed of the incentivised career break under the provisions of Circular 13/2009 are not eligible to apply.**

6. Conditions of Appointment

6.1 Appointment to the post of Manager of the CSEAS based in the Department of Finance will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. On appointment, the Manager will serve a one-year probationary period in the post. Prior to the end of this probationary period a decision will be made on substantive appointment to the grade.

6.2 The appointment will be subject to normal PMDS procedures in relation to performance monitoring and to probationary reviews. During the probationary period, the appointee will be assessed to determine whether s/he:

- has demonstrated the capacity to undertake the duties of Manager of the Employee Assistance Service in the Department of Finance, and
- has performed the duties in a satisfactory manner, and
- has been satisfactory in general conduct.

6.3 An officer whose service is not satisfactory will be notified of the action to be taken. Where a decision is made not to confirm the appointee in the post of Manager of the Employee Assistance Service, the Personnel Officer of the Department of Finance may be asked by the appointee to request that the Civil Service Disciplinary Code Appeal Board review the decision. [Ref. Circular 14/2006 Civil Service Disciplinary Code paragraphs 11 and 50 (ii).]

6.4 It is expected that the person appointed will serve as Manager of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service for at least five years. In the fifth year of service, the appointment shall be reviewed by the Board in consultation with the Manager with a view to deciding if the appointment should continue. The Board may decide to allow the Manager to serve beyond the five-year period. In the event that the appointment continues, further reviews will be carried at annual intervals.

6.5 The successful applicant will be subject to the provisions of the *Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour* and must not use his/her official position to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal or business ties is forbidden.

7. Selection Process

7.1 The methods used to select the successful candidate for the post may include:

- i) Short-listing of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application form.
- ii) A Preliminary Interview to reduce the numbers of candidates to a more manageable number to invite to main interview.
- iii) Other assessment tests/exercises designed to measure the competencies required as deemed necessary by the Public Appointments Service.
- iv) A competitive interview which may include a presentation by the candidate.

7.2 In assessing a candidate's suitability having regard to the requirements of the post, applicants will be tested against the competencies set out in **Appendix 2**.

7.3 Where it is decided that short-listing is necessary, the Public Appointments Service will be guided by an expert board which will examine the applications and assess them against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in a candidate's interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of his/her qualifications/experience in the application.

7.4 The onus is on applicants to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the Public Appointments Service and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the contact details specified on their application form.

8. Applications

8.1 Applications must be made on the official application form which is available on the Public Appointments Service website www.publicjobs.ie. In the event of difficulties in applying online please call **Public Appointments Service LoCall at 1890 44 99 99**. Completed forms must be submitted so as to reach the Office of the Public Appointments Service not later than **7th April 2011**. This closing date must be strictly observed.

8.2 Admission to the competition does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service that a candidate is eligible to compete in the competition.

9. Credit for Proficiency in both Irish and English

9.1 Credit for proficiency in Irish and English will be given in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90. In placing candidates in the order of merit, credit due under the above Circulars will be applied only to those candidates who are successful at the final stage.

10. Code of Practice

10.1 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 Service and Public Service (No. 01/07)* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

10.2 The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

- i) *Probity*
- ii) *Appointments Made on Merit*
- iii) *An Appointments Process in Line with Best Practice*
- iv) *A Fair Appointments Process Applied with Consistency*
- v) *Appointments Made in an Open, Accountable and Transparent Manner.*

10.3 Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

10.4 The Code of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa-online.ie or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1.

11. Complaints and Requests for Review

11.1 Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Code of Practice.

11.2 Candidates' Rights and Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process are set out at **Appendix 3**.

12. Circulation

12.1 Please bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in your Department and associated Offices without delay. Special care should be taken to ensure that eligible officers on maternity leave, career break or other relevant forms of leave are notified of the competition.

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Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary
Public Service Management Division

APPENDIX 1

Departmental Grades eligible to compete at Assistant Principal Officer level

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- Senior Auditor

Courts Service

- Any grade at Assistant Principal Officer level in the Courts Service

Department of Foreign Affairs

- First Secretary

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

- Assistant Principal Officer - Committee Clerk
- Principal Clerk

Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner

- Investigator

Departmental Grades eligible to compete at Administrative Officer and Higher Executive Officer level

- Third Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- Auditor in the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.
- Senior Clerk in the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

APPENDIX 2

CSEAS MANAGER (ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL) - CORE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	
Competency Title	Summary Statement of Competency
Understanding & Appreciation of the Role of Manager in the CSEAS	<p>Understands the relevance of wider departmental, Civil Service and external issues and recognises the implications in the context of their role. Thinks about issues and their own role in a strategic way and aims to achieve beneficial outcomes for a wide range of stakeholders. Keeps up to-date with current EAS practice. Provision of input, as appropriate to Mission Statement; CSEAS Ethical guidelines; specific policies; and to CSEAS Board; regarding the role of the EAOs and their relationship to staff, management, CMO and referral agencies and the criteria for selection, training and development of the EAS. Needs to be conscious of EAO role.</p> <p>Implements change taking a solution-focused and creative approach to dealing with problems. Is willing to make difficult decisions and to take on responsibility for challenging tasks. Identifies barriers to change and works to overcome them. Looks critically at existing ways of working and recognises opportunities for making improvements. Implements CSEAS Board policy.</p>
Significant Experience / Understanding of Counselling/Psychology /Psychotherapy services	Has significant experience and understanding of counselling/psychology/psychotherapy services and in the provision of these services.
Assessment of Complex Issues and Decision Making	Identifies relevant information sources, objectively analysing and evaluating complex information to identify the key issues. Demonstrates a well-rounded general capability to analyse and interpret numerical information. Makes sound and realistic decisions on issues based on a thorough analysis of the relevant information. Consults with others where appropriate and considers the implications of decisions on other parties.
Leading and Managing Staff Performance	Shows staff how their work fits into the broader context and keeps them informed of relevant issues. Sets high standards for the team and encourages team members to meet these standards. Effectively manages staff performance and development by setting clear and realistic goals and providing constructive feedback as well as directly addressing issues of poor performance within the parameters of the Civil Service PMDS framework.
Organising for Results	Effectively plans projects, maximising available resources and setting realistic timeframes to ensure quality outputs/services. Involves relevant stakeholders and delegates tasks according to the strengths of the team. Measures and monitors progress to ensure delivery of results. Anticipates potential problems and puts contingency plans in place. Manages the organization of a centralized regionalised CSEAS including referral system; manage the staffing and budget of the CSEAS; Ensures timely production of the CSEAS Annual Report; Set up a standardised comprehensive training and development scheme for EAOs taking into account the needs of Departments and requirements for the EAS within the Civil Service.
Communicating and Influencing	Communicates clearly and effectively both verbally and in writing. Makes a compelling case, can present persuasive arguments and maintain poise under questioning. When influencing, is clear about the objectives, plans how to influence others to achieve the desired outcomes and is prepared to state own position clearly.
Commitment to High Standards	Demonstrates a commitment to achieving high standards even in pressurised or difficult conditions. Constantly develops own skills in

	order to improve standards of performance. Sets high standards for the work of their team and strives to ensure that these standards are met.
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APPENDIX 3:

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH APPEALS/REQUESTS FOR REVIEW

The Public Appointments Service will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of the codes of practice published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). Where a candidate is unhappy with an action or decision in relation to their application he/she can seek a review under **Section 7** of the code of practice governing the recruitment process by a person in the recruiting body (initial reviewer). Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following this initial review, he/she may seek to have the conduct of the initial review examined by a "decision arbitrator".

As an alternative to the above, it is open to a candidate to seek to have the matter resolved on an informal basis, as set out below. If a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such discussion it is open to him/her to seek a formal review.

Informal process:

- The candidate can avail of the informal review within 5 working days of notification of the initial decision, and should normally take place between the candidate and the person who communicated the decision (or relevant person).
- 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, he/she may adopt the formal procedures set out below.
- If the candidate wishes the matter to be dealt with by way of a formal review, he/she must do so within 2 working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal review.

Formal process: Initial review:

- The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing to the Chief Executive, setting out those aspects of the action or decision in relation to his/her candidature that he/she wishes to have reviewed.
- A request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the initial 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 Chief Executive.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint or request for review. The candidate will receive the outcome of the review by means of a written report.
- Should a candidate be dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial review, he/she may request a review by a decision arbitrator of the conduct of the initial review.

Review by the decision arbitrator

The decision arbitrator is appointed by the Chief Executive. The decision arbitrator is unconnected with the selection process and he/she will adjudicate on requests for review in cases where a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial review. The decision of the decision arbitrator in relation to such matters is final.

- A request made to the decision arbitrator must be received within 7 working days of the notification of the outcome of the initial review.
- The outcome of the investigation must be notified to the candidate in the form of a written report within 10 working days.

Where a candidate believes that an aspect of the process breached the CPSA Code of Practice, he/she can have it investigated under **Section 8** of the code of practice.

Informal process:

- The CPSA recommends that the candidate avail of the informal process to try to resolve the matter with the recruiting body. If the candidate is still dissatisfied he/she may resort to the formal process within 2 working days of receiving notification of the informal process.

Formal process:

- A candidate requesting a formal review must write to the licence holder (Chief Executive, Public Appointments Service), providing details of the breach of the code of practice and enclosing any relevant documentation that might support the allegation.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint or request for review. If a decision cannot be made within this timeframe, the reviewer will keep the candidate informed of the status of the review.
- Should a candidate be dissatisfied with the outcome of this review, he/she may request a further review by referring the matter to the Commission for Public Service Appointments in the form of an appeal of the review of the licence Holder. He/She must write to the Commission for Public Service Appointments within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of the licence Holder's review.

The codes of practice are available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments, www.cpsa-online.ie.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will 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, then:

- where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and
- where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

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

Quality Customer Service

The Public Appointments Service aims to provide an excellent quality service to all our customers. If, for whatever reason, you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from us, we urge you to bring this to the attention of the unit or staff member concerned. This is important as it ensures that we are aware of the problem and can take the appropriate steps to resolve it.

Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003

When an application form is received, PAS creates a computer record in the candidate's name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature.

Such information held on computer is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003. Candidates are entitled under these acts to obtain, at any time, copy of information about them, which is kept on computer. The Public Appointments Service charges a fee of €6.35 for each request and an applicant should enclose a cheque or postal order for that amount with each request addressed to:

**THE DATA PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR,
PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE,
CHAPTER HOUSE,
26-30 ABBEY STREET UPPER,
DUBLIN 1.**

Candidates should note that certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.