



An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance

E109/65/02

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20 March 2002

**Circular 12/2002: Confined competition for appointment to the position of Human Resource Manager in the Chief State Solicitor's Office, at Assistant Principal (standard scale) level**

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce the holding of a confined competition to be run by the Civil Service Commission, for appointment on a four-year basis to the post of Human Resource Manager in the Chief State Solicitor's Office, at Assistant Principal (standard scale) level.

**Background**

2. The Chief State Solicitor's Office is part of the Attorney General's Office. The functions of the Office are to act as solicitor to Ireland, the Attorney General and Government Departments/Offices. Other functions are as follows:

- The performance of all conveyancing of State property, Landlord and Tenant and similar matters
- The furnishing of legal advice on the various subjects that are submitted by Government Departments and the drafting of the necessary accompanying legal documents
- The preparation and presentation of civil prosecutions initiated by Ministers or Government Departments
- Acting as Agent of the Government before the European Court of Justice
- Acting for the State in enquiries under the Tribunals of Enquiry (Evidence) Act, 1979, and supplying legal staff to act for the Tribunals
- The provision of a solicitor service in all civil courts and tribunals in which any Government Department or other State authority is involved
- Functions under The Hague Convention
- Costs - representing the State and State Authorities including the Director of Public Prosecutions in Taxation of costs before the Taxing Masters.

**TO ALL DEPARTMENTS**

[For Department, read Department/Office throughout this Circular]

3. The Office has a staffing complement of approximately 230 comprising professional, technical and general service staff. Present accommodation consists of two locations, the main office in Osmond House, Little Ship Street (opposite the back gate of Dublin Castle) and South Frederick Street.

4. The Office has been undergoing significant modernisation in recent times, a process that will continue into the future. The most recent organisational changes arise out of the strategic policies adopted by the Office and which envisage that the Office concentrates its service on the major areas of civil law relevant to the mission of the Government and of Departments. New work patterns feature on a regular basis e.g. asylum, childhood abuse in various institutions, Army hearing loss. Recent civil service wide initiatives have brought about the introduction of strategic and business planning processes, a performance management and development system, management information systems and increased emphasis on staff training programmes.

5. The Human Resource Manager will be expected to play a major role in the development of an effective and up-to-date human resource management strategy that will result in a staff complement with the capacity to respond to an ever-changing environment and facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Office.

### **Nature of Duties**

6. The appointee, who will report directly to the Head of Administration, will be responsible for managing the Human Resource function in the Office. This will require the preparation of progressive HRM policies, assisting with the management of the IR function, implementation of civil service wide initiatives such as PMDS and Partnership. The main tasks, as currently required and will in the normal course be subject to change in response to varying demands are set out hereunder:

- Implementation of HR aims set out in the SMI and particularly in the business plan of the Office
- Assisting and advising on the development of PMDS for professional, technical and administrative staff. Updating and implementation of training plans in the context of PMDS
- Development of recruitment and retention policies and campaigns
- Making arrangements for the recruitment of professional, technical and administrative staff
- Introduction of new IT software for personnel management systems
- Maintenance of Personnel IT database and attendance systems
- Involvement in local IR issues
- Planning and supervising staff training
- Dealing with ongoing Personnel matters for the staff of the office
- Drawing up contracts of employment
- Assisting in the Partnership process
- Authorisation of expenditure to appropriate limits.

### **Personal Requirements**

7. The successful candidate will possess the following essential requirements:
- Ability to lead and work as part of a team
  - Substantial HRM experience, involving a significant level of personal responsibility for personnel related issues
  - Proven ability to work on his/her own initiative
  - Good interpersonal, communications and presentation skills
  - Proven people management skills and sound judgement
  - Ability to contribute to the wider development of the organisation and the on-going achievement of the organisation's objectives
8. A relevant qualification in human resource management and/or a commitment to developmental requirements of professional/technical staff are desirable, but not essential.

Relevant Extracts from the Current PMDS Role Profile Form are attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **Eligibility**

9. In order to be eligible to compete, prospective candidates must,
- a) on the date they apply for the competition be serving in an established capacity in the civil service in one of the following grades:
- Assistant Principal (standard scale)
  - Assistant Regional Director or Regional Director on secondment to FÁS from the Civil Service
  - Assistant Principal on secondment to the Health and Safety Authority from the Civil Service

**or**

- b) on the date they apply for the competition be serving in an established capacity in the civil service in one of the following grades:
- Higher Executive Officer (including HEO/Systems Analyst)
  - Administrative Officer
  - 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
  - Systems Analyst in the IT and Telecommunications Division at Garda Headquarters of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
  - Social Welfare Officer in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

**and**

- c) on **1 April 2002** must have not less than three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of three years' service in an eligible grade. Service in the former grades of Officer and Indoor Officer of Customs & Excise in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners will count as service in an eligible grade. Officers on probation are ineligible unless they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade and they have served

continuously since satisfactorily completing a probation period: special leave without pay does not break continuity of service for this purpose.

10. Officers on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible; Personnel Sections should check cases not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91 with this Department. Officers on career break may apply if their career break conforms with the terms of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

### **Conditions of appointment**

11. A successful candidate who is not already serving as an Assistant Principal Officer will be offered appointment to that grade. Such appointment will be in an acting capacity for at least one year and will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. The appointee will be on loan to the Chief State Solicitor's Office for a period of **four** years. The period of loan may be extended by agreement between the officer, the parent Department and the Chief State Solicitor's Office. On expiry of the loan period, the officer will return to fill a normal vacancy at Assistant Principal level in the parent Department. If there is no suitable vacancy at that time, the return will be deferred until one arises. The officer's return to the parent Department will be offset against the next liability that Department would have under the interdepartmental scheme of promotion to Assistant Principal level posts.

12. In the event of an officer's service with the Chief State Solicitor's Office not being satisfactory, the officer will be returned to his or her parent Department and/or duties in the former grade; any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease. In the event of an officer failing to remain with the Chief States Solicitor's Office for the duration of the four-year loan period, the next eligible officer on the panel may be offered an appointment.

### **The competition**

13. Selection will be by means of a competitive interview conducted by the Civil Service Commission. The Commission may, at their discretion, request the interview board to examine the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties and personal requirements as detailed in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 above. The Commission, having considered the report of the Board, may decide that only a number of candidates will be invited to attend for interview. In addition, in order to select the candidate best qualified for appointment, the Commission may require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview.

14. In placing in order of merit the candidates considered best qualified for appointment, the Civil Service Commission will give credit for proficiency in both Irish and English, in accordance with Department of Finance Circular 30/90 and Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75, and any other relevant instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit.

### **Applications**

15. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Sections. The

Civil Service Commission will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Applications should be addressed **directly** to the **Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, or via e-mail to profman6@cslac.irlgov.ie** to arrive not later than **5.15 p.m. on Friday 12 April 2002**. This date must be strictly observed. Interviews are expected to take place in May 2002. The onus is on candidates to make themselves available for interview at short notice.

16. The Civil Service Commission will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each candidate called for competitive interview the Head of Department will be required to :

a) certify that s/he

- has worked well and been satisfactory in his/her present grade
- has been satisfactory in general conduct
- fulfils the conditions of eligibility set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 above

**and**

b) send to the Civil Service Commission an assessment of the candidate's suitability for

- appointment to the post applied for, and
- promotion (if appropriate),

on a form to be supplied by the Civil Service Commission.

17. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition, and (ii) health and the level of sick leave, are not verified by the Civil Service Commission until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment after the competitive interview stage. Admission to the competition, therefore, does not imply that a candidate meets the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave, the Commission will have regard to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91 and 33/99. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility, are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with the application.

### **Circulation**

18. 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.

19. If candidates have any queries about this Circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to the Civil Service Commission.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern  
Assistant Secretary

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **EXTRACT FROM CURRENT ROLE PROFILE FORM**

**Job Title: Human Resource Manager, Chief State Solicitor's Office**

#### **Main Purpose of Job**

The job holder is responsible for the general management of the human resources function within the Office, the development of modern human resource strategies designed to meet the objectives of the Office and the provision of appropriate advice on human resource issues to management at all levels.

#### **Functions/Responsibilities**

- Implementation of HR aims set out in the SMI and particularly in the business plan of the Office. Ensure the implementation and operation of effective human resource services and systems
- Assisting and advising on the development of PMDS for professional, technical and administrative staff
- Development of recruitment and retention policies and campaigns. Recruitment of professional, technical and administrative staff
- Introduction of new IT software for personnel management systems
- Examining local IR issues
- Planning and supervising staff training
- Dealing with specific personnel type issues on an ongoing basis
- Drawing up contracts of employment
- Assisting in the Partnership process
- Provision of Office equipment and authorisation of expenditure to appropriate limits.

#### **Key Deliverables for the year**

- Recruitment of the approved additional staff
- PMDS fully operational/provision of training in PMDS, IT, managing people, teamworking and customer service
- Development of HR policy guided by Partnership Committee
- Significant progress towards introduction of PeopleSoft
- Establishment of an effective training function
- Identification of training needs for all staff
- Establishment of a documentation centre to include registry and post room functions
- Re-organised personnel function
- Effective partnership process
- Completion of major re-organisation of clerical support systems (introduce support units in Divisions)
- Agreement on, and introduction of, a trainee law clerk scheme for clerical staff.

**Key Performance Indicators**

- Smooth and effective operation of HR systems
- Existence of an effective PMDS
- Effective training programme in place
- Serviced partnership process with regular monthly meetings
- Comprehensive draft HR policies available
- RFT for new HR package to be available
- Efficient maintenance and provision of office equipment.

**Identification of Competencies for the job**

- Initiative – as Human Resource Manager you will be required to have the proven ability to work on your own initiative
- People Management Skills & Sound Judgement – an ability to organise work, delegate as appropriate and adopt a positive developmental role within in the Division
- Leadership – be able to lead others and work as part of a team
- Knowledge of the HR function – this involves an awareness of the personnel practices within the civil service and an appreciation of modern developments in HR management
- Good interpersonal, communications and presentations skills – an ability to deal effectively with all staff members in relation to the day-to-day personnel issues that arise. Also a facility to present clear concise reports and recommendations to MAC and other groupings, as required
- Customer Service – an appreciation of the importance of quality service to staff and management on HR issues and an ability to organise the delivery of such a service in the CSSO

**Knowledge and Skills**

- Knowledge of Human Resources policies and developments
- Staff managements skills
- Report writing skills