



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

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Circular 23/2002: Confined competition to fill the post of Executive Director of the Public Service Friendly Society

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that, at the request of the Public Service Friendly Society, he has agreed to publicise, by means of this circular, a competition to fill the post of Executive Director of the Public Service Friendly Society (PSFS). The competition will be run by the Civil Service Commission. The Executive Director post is not a civil service post, though it has, until recently, been held by a civil servant on secondment to the Public Service Friendly Society.
2. The competition is open to certain officers in the civil service or one of the public sector agencies listed in Appendix I. The full eligibility requirements for the competition are set out in paragraphs 11 and 12. The position will be based in the Plaza Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24 and will involve some travelling to locations around the country. A flexible working hours system will be available and some evening work will also be required. 29 days annual leave will apply. The appointment, which will not involve a promotion, will be on a temporary secondment basis which is expected to last for no longer than 5 years.
3. The Public Service Friendly Society is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

Background

4. The Civil Service Benevolent Fund was established in 1927 and relaunched in 1993 as the Public Service Friendly Society. The registration of the Civil Service Benevolent Fund was cancelled on 29 November 1993 and the Public Service Friendly Society registered on the same date with the Registrar of Friendly Societies by way of substitution. The Society currently operates under rules made under the Friendly Societies Acts 1896 and 1977.
5. The Society is a non-profit organisation which operates within the civil service and approved public bodies. Using the contributions made by all members, the Society adopts an altruistic approach by providing confidential assistance to those members and their dependants in times of need.

For the purposes of this Circular, DEPARTMENT refers to all Government departments and offices and also to public sector agencies listed in Appendix I.

6. In terms of its guiding principles, the Society provides an independent and totally confidential service to members. It intends to be an organisation which:

- Sets out to formulate and regularly review a policy to relieve the identified needs of those eligible within the available resources.
- Processes applications appropriately and promptly, and, if necessary, directs applicants to other sources of help and advice.
- Strives to apply these principles in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Nature of work

7. The Executive Director will report to the Committee of Management of the Public Service Friendly Society. The Executive Director will be involved in developing and implementing the policy of the Society under the aegis of the Committee of Management, providing an annual business plan which will facilitate the delivery of the strategic objectives of the Society, managing and developing the administrative services for the Society in order to provide the efficient delivery of services to beneficiaries, and promoting the work of the Society within the public sector.

Main duties and responsibilities

8. The main duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director are to:

- Plan and evaluate the implementation of the Society's policy initiatives.
- Prepare, analyse, and put forward recommendations in respect of claims made for assistance to the Society for consideration by the Grants Committee.
- Be in attendance at all relevant committee meetings of the Society.
- Liaise with financial and brokering institutions in relation to the Society's investment portfolio and to prepare regular reports on the status of such investments for the Management Committee.
- Manage the development of the Society to meet ongoing challenges.
- Initiate, review and implement policy matters in relation to the Society.
- Manage the affairs of the Society in an efficient and effective manner in accordance with law and the Rules of the Society.
- Develop the role of the Society to reflect the changing needs of members.
- Provision of a management information system for the purposes of planning and evaluating the activities of the Society.
- Introduce initiatives to develop the membership base of the Society.
- Ensure the Society maintains a suitable level of accounting and financial expertise, exercises budgetary and cash flow control, and conducts its business in accordance with principles of cost effectiveness and value for money.
- Constantly seek to improve on its efficient delivery of services through the active participation of its members.
- Supervision and training of staff of the Society.
- Any other duties that may be assigned from time to time by the Trustees/Committee of Management.

General Qualifications and Experience

9. Management Experience:

- The successful candidate will have at least five years' management experience at a similar level within the civil service or in an agency listed in Appendix I of this Circular.
- A relevant third level qualification is not essential but would be an advantage.

Personal requirements

10. The successful candidate will possess the following qualities:

- A commitment to the aims of the Society and the ability to work as part of a team in order to achieve those aims within the Constitution and Rules of the Society.
- Achievement orientation, the ability to work on his or her initiative and to display empathy with the strategic objectives of the Society.
- Sound judgment.
- An aptitude for dealing with financial concerns and the ability to produce monthly and annual statements of accounts.
- An aptitude for communicating effectively, in particular for developing relationships of trust and confidence.
- A concern for the well-being for others.
- A mature and responsible approach to dealing with people.
- Good listening skills.
- Good negotiating skills.
- An objective approach to dealing with other people's problems.
- An ability to display initiative and efficiency in setting priorities and balancing demands.
- An ability to work with voluntary committees and a willingness to be part of a team.
- A good knowledge of IT and presentation skills.
- An ability to provide effective leadership and to manage a small team.

Eligibility

11. Candidates must,

(a) on the date they apply for this competition, be serving in an established capacity in the civil service or in one of the public sector agencies listed in Appendix I in a grade in respect of which the maximum point is either equal to or higher than the maximum point of the civil service Higher Executive Officer (standard) scale - €38,441.32.

and

(b) on 1 August 2002 have not less than five years' service in their existing grade **or** an aggregate of five years' service in eligible grades (set out at (a)). In this context credit is given for all work-sharing service on the same basis as full-time service.

12. 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 - Personnel Sections should check individual cases if they are not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91. A candidate who resigns, retires, is suspended or dismissed from his/her post will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition. Officers on career break may apply if the terms of their career break conform with the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and they are otherwise eligible.

Conditions of appointment

13. The successful candidate will, if appropriate, in addition to his or her normal salary, be paid an allowance by the Public Service Friendly Society, the amount of which will be no greater than the difference between his or her current salary and the first point of the civil service Assistant Principal (standard scale) salary scale - €44,768.43. Assistant Principals and officers currently serving at a similar level will continue to receive their normal salary.

14. The appointee will be on loan to the Public Service Friendly Society for a period of no longer than five years. The period of loan may be extended by agreement between the officer, the parent Department and the PSFS. On expiry of the loan, the officer will return to fill a normal vacancy in the parent Department. Any extra payment arising from the appointment would then cease. If there is no suitable vacancy at that time the return will be deferred until one arises. If the successful candidate is currently serving as a Higher Executive Officer or Assistant Principal (standard scale) in the civil service, the officer's return to the parent Department will be offset against the next liability that Department would have under the appropriate interdepartmental scheme of promotion.

15. In the event of an officer's service with the Public Service Friendly Society not being satisfactory, the officer will be returned to his or her parent Department prior to the completion of the loan period; any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease. In the event of an officer failing to remain with the PSFS for the duration of the loan period, the next eligible officer on the panel may be offered an appointment.

The Competition

16. Selection will be by means of a competitive interview to be conducted by the Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners. The interview board may, having examined the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties, general qualifications and experience, and personal requirements described in paragraphs 7 to 10 above, decide that only a number of the candidates will be invited to attend before the board for interview. In addition, the board may, at its discretion, require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview to select the candidate best qualified for appointment. The interview(s) will be conducted by a board(s) to be set up by the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners.

Applications

17. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Section. The Civil Service Commission will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the **Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Civil Service Commission, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, or via e-mail to: Gillian.holmes@publicjobs.ie** as soon as possible but not later than **5.30 p.m. on Thursday 25 July, 2002. This closing date must be strictly observed.** Candidates should use only one means of application. Candidates invited to interview must be prepared to make themselves available at short notice. Interviews are expected to take place in August 2002.

18. The Civil Service Commission will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each such candidate the Personnel Officer will be required to send to the Commission an assessment of the candidate's suitability for appointment to the post applied for on a form to be supplied by the Commission. The Personnel Officer will also be required to certify, in respect of each candidate being called to competitive interview, that the candidate;

- 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 11 and 12 above, and
- will be released to serve in the Public Service Friendly Society, on loan, if successful in the relevant competition.

19. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition and (ii) health and level of sick leave are not verified by the Civil Service Commission until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Therefore, admission to the competition and placement on a panel does not imply acceptance by the Commission. 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 should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

Circulation

20. The Department of Finance will ensure that this Circular is sent to Personnel Sections in Government Departments and Offices and in the Public Sector bodies listed at Appendix I. On receipt of this Circular, Personnel Sections are requested to bring it to the attention of all eligible officers serving in their Department/organisation without delay. Special care should be taken to ensure that eligible officers on maternity leave, career break or other relevant forms of leave (see paragraph 12 above) are notified of the competition. If candidates have any queries about this competition they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX I

Agencies Eligible for Membership of the Public Service Friendly Society

An Post

Charitable Donations & Bequests

Cóillte

Environment and Local Government / National Roads Authority

Environmental Protection Agency

Fás

Irish Aviation Authority

Law Reform Commission

National Gallery

Teagasc

Met Eireann

Ordnance Survey Ireland