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**Circular 35/2006: Appointment in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children  
– Participation/Education Officer, (Higher Executive Officer Grade)**



A Dhuine Uasail

1. Applications are sought from officers **currently serving in the grade of Higher Executive Officer** for appointment to the post of Participation/Education Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children's.

**General Information:**

2. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children was established under the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002. The Office has a dual function of promoting children's rights (advocacy role) and investigating complaints against public bodies, schools and hospitals. Complaints are made directly by children or adults on their behalf. Because of this duality of function, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children is not only a redress board but a human rights institution which has an important role to play as a national monitor of children's rights and part of the reporting mechanism to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Details of the work of the Office are available on the website [www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie).

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children is located in Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1.

**The Post**

3. There are eight staff in the Office, and this post is dedicated to fulfilling the statutory function to educate children and members of the public about their rights.

## **Job Specification**

4. Reporting to the Head of Communications and Participation as a member of the team, the Participation/Education Officer will:

- promote awareness of the role of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children;
- promote awareness of the rights and welfare of children without prejudice using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in particular promote awareness of how these rights can be enforced;
- assist in the establishment of structures to consult effectively with children that are representative of children and young people;
- assist in the development and facilitation of a human rights education programme for children and young people;
- assist in facilitating and supporting the work of the Youth Advisory Panel, a group of 15 young people which has been established to work with the Office;
- forge links with relevant agencies to ensure that the development of the participation/education programme of the Office complements existing work.

## **Person Specification**

5. Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they meet each of the following criteria to be appointed:

- At least two year's practice experience in one or more of the following disciplines: a position relevant to children and youth communications and participation in the public, private, voluntary or non-governmental sectors; education; youth work; or children's rights.
- Demonstrable ability to carry out participation work directly with children and young people under the age of eighteen.
- Experience of teamwork and the ability to work collaboratively with fellow team members.
- Experience in the area of participation and/or education programme research, development and evaluation for children and young people.
- Ability to develop new and productive relationships with relevant agencies.
- Excellent organisation and management skills.
- Familiarity with and experience of PCs, proprietary office software and 'new media' e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, internet.
- Ability to communicate effectively and confidently in diverse situations.
- A high level of personal commitment, with an ability to create a culture of trust and openness where all members of the team will benefit.
- A relevant third level qualification would be an advantage.

Above all, a commitment to the statutory mandate of promoting the rights of children and young people without prejudice.

### **Skills Required:**

6. There are particular skills required for the position of Participation/Education Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. The Participation /Education Officer must be able to demonstrate a range of programme development, research and evaluation, media/new media, materials development and networking skills as follows:

- assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of an innovative children's and young people's participation programme, which will provide opportunities for participation at national and local level, in both the statutory and non-statutory sectors;
- assist in the development, facilitation and evaluation of an outreach participation/education programme on children's rights and on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, for primary and post primary schools and for the voluntary youth sector;
- assist in the development, delivery and evaluation of a series of activity-based workshops for children and young people to be provided in the Participation 'Lab' at the Office
- develop a responsive participation and education service sensitive to the needs of children and young people;
- develop creative methods of communicating with children and young people that will encourage them to engage with the Office. This could include involvement in media and 'new media' projects;
- through participation with young people, assist in the development and maintenance of the Office website to ensure the effective engagement of children and young people in the work of the Office;
- work with the Communications and Participation team in the production of youth-proofed informational and promotional materials;
- identify the needs of statutory and non-statutory agencies in facilitating children's participation and develop appropriate support for the relevant organisations;
- identify key stakeholders and develop collaborative working relationships for the benefit of the Office;
- uphold the core values of the Office by ensuring a genuine commitment to the participation of children and young people without prejudice.

### **Conditions of Appointment**

7. A member of staff of the Ombudsman for Children shall be a civil servant in the Civil Service of the State. Successful candidates must be in a position to take up duty without undue delay.

8. The appointee will be initially seconded to the Office of the Ombudsman for children for a 6 month probationary period and will continue to have access to promotional opportunities in his/her parent Department and to interdepartmental

competitions in the Civil Service. It is envisaged that an appointee will require relevant training during the first 3 months and this will be provided by the Office.

9. The assignment will be subject to review within the 6 month probationary period. During this probationary period, the appointee will be assessed by their manager to determine whether s/he has the skills set out in the Job Specification and;

- has demonstrated the capacity to undertake the duties of Corporate Business Coordinator in the Office
- has performed the duties in a satisfactory manner,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- is suitable from the point of view of health, with particular regard to sick leave.

10. Following this 6 month trial period, and subject to the agreement of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, the officer will be:

- appointed to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children on a permanent basis, or
- returned to the officer's parent Department, or
- where the officer's parent Department is decentralising in full, assigned to an alternative Dublin-based Department/Office

11. As a permanent member of staff in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, the officer will have access to internal competitions in the Office and interdepartmental competitions for which they are otherwise eligible.

12. Due to the nature of the work and the size of the organisation, this post requires an officer who is immediately capable of full time attendance.

13. Appointment to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children requires clearance from the Garda Síochána Central Vetting Unit

#### **14. Selection Process**

- 14.1. Should it prove necessary, a screening may be employed to compile a short list of applicants to be invited to interview, and/or
- 14.2. Preliminary interviews may be held to identify the stronger candidates for final interview.
- 14.3. Final Selection will be by means of a competitive interview conducted by the Public Appointments Service.

- 15.1 Interviews will be conducted by a board, or boards, to be set up by the Public Appointments Service and the selection criteria will be based on the nature of the duties and the personal requirements for the position. The board conducting the competitive interviews will form a panel in order of merit.
- 15.2 The Personnel Officer will be required to certify that a candidate has worked well in his or her present post, has been satisfactory in general conduct and in respect of sick leave prior to the candidate being offered a position.
- 15.3 (In determining the order of merit at the interview, credit will be given for proficiency in both Irish and English in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90 to candidates qualified for the award of such credit by such date as may be determined by the Public Appointments Service. This means that credit for proficiency in both Irish and English is awarded when candidates are being placed in order of merit following the final stage of the competition.)

### **Codes of Practice**

16. The recruitment and selection process for appointment to these positions will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice titled *Selection of Persons for Appointment on Promotion to Positions in the Civil Service (No. 02/04)* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

- *Probity*
- *Appointments Made on Merit*
- *An Appointments Process in Line with Best Practice*
- *A Fair Appointments Process Applied with Consistency*
- *Appointments Made in an Open, Accountable and Transparent Manner*

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.

17. Complaints and Requests for Review: Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Code of Practice.

18. The Code of Practice may be accessed by visiting [www.cpsa-online.ie](http://www.cpsa-online.ie) or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

### **Circulation and further information**

19. Personnel Sections 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, contract, secondment, maternity leave, career break and any other relevant forms of leave. If candidates have any queries about this circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed to the Public Appointments Service.

20. The Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer. Promotion within the service is made on the basis of qualifications and the ability to carry out the responsibilities of the grade or post.

### **Applications**

21. Application forms will be available on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) and must be returned by **1 December, 2006**. ***This closing date must be strictly observed.*** An applicant who has not heard from the Public Appointments Service by **7 December, 2006** should contact that office immediately by phoning (01) 8587673. Applications must be made on-line directly to the Public Appointments Service by logging on to [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie). The completed application form must be submitted so as to reach the Public Appointments Service, "Chapter House", 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, not later than **1 December, 2006**. Applicants may attach a CV if they so wish.

22. Candidates should note that health and the level of sick leave are not verified 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 Public Appointments Service will have regard to the Department of Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91, 33/99 and 17/03.

23. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with the application.

24. Interviews are expected to take place the week beginning **11<sup>th</sup> December 2006**. The onus is on candidates to make themselves available for interview at short notice. If candidates have not been contacted by the Public Appointments Service by **7 December 2006** they should contact that Office at (01) 858 7673.

#### **Information on Panels**

25. The information on panels formed as a result of these competitions will be available to the Personnel Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Careers and Appointments Section in the Department of Finance. In addition, candidates will be asked to agree to the same information being made available to the relevant civil service unions for the purpose of monitoring the operation of the scheme.

For additional information, you may contact Bernard McDonald on Tel. +353 1 8656 800.