



**An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance**

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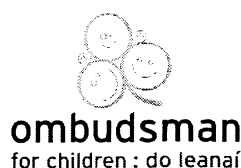
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**Circular 38/2006: Appointment in the Office of the Ombudsman Children  
– Caseworker, (Executive Officer Grade)**



**A Dhuine Uasail**

1. Applications are sought from officers **currently serving in the grade of Executive Officer** for appointment to the post of Caseworker in the Office of the Ombudsman Children.

**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 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 Children is located in Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1.

**The Post**

3. The Office was established in April 2004. The purpose of this post is to ensure that the Ombudsman for Children fulfils her role under sections 8 -13 of the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002. This refers to the independent investigation of complaints against public bodies, schools and voluntary hospitals. The Act also provides for the child proofing of legislation and the monitoring and reviewing of legislation concerning matters that relate to the rights and welfare of children.

The Ombudsman for Children may, on her own initiative or at the request of a Government Minister, give advice on any matter relating to the rights and welfare of children. In this regard a systemic pattern identified through the complaints and investigations function may influence a submission or special report to the Oireachtas.

There are eight staff in the Office, with two dedicated to the Complaints and Investigation function at present. The Caseworker will work very closely with the Investigator and with the other members of the team.

### **Job Specification**

4. The Caseworker is generally the first point of contact for the complainant (both children and adults) through phone, emails and letters. The caseworker's main tasks are to:

- Help, advise and guide complainants through the internal/external/local complaint procedures and/or support structures available to the complainant;
- Gain an understanding of the issues presented by the complainant and compile a complaint's file;
- Analyse the information provided in the complaint and help assess its admissibility;
- Carry out the preliminary examination of complaints in cooperation with the Investigator and in line with the OCO's procedures;
- Liaise with public bodies and complainants on the progress of files;
- Communicate the outcome of the preliminary examination to all the parties involved;
- Present a comprehensive but concise report and analysis of relevant cases to the rest of the investigation team at case reviews;
- Keep the complaints' database up to date;
- Support the work of the Investigation team as required;
- Contribute to participation activities of the Office as required including the Child Lab and other relevant project/programme;
- Contribute as required to the on-going work of the Office e.g. compiling of the Annual Report, etc.

Above all, he/she must have a commitment to fulfil the statutory mandate to promote the rights of children and young people without prejudice.

### **Person Specification**

5. The nature of the work in this Office is child-centred. A commitment to working with children and young people under the age of eighteen is essential. Many of the complaints are complex, involving children and their extended family situations. The individual should be capable of evaluation or analysis of complex and sensitive issues. Being empathetic, fair and impartial with all people (complainants, public bodies, etc) who bring a complaint to the

Office is essential to work in the Office of the Ombudsman Children's investigation team.

## **6. Skills Required:**

### *(i) Interpersonal Effectiveness*

A Caseworker must be able to establish good relationships with a wide range of people. The individual should have the ability to deal with children and young people and officials in Government Departments. Many children and families are distressed when they make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. It is essential that the person be sensitive, empathetic, impartial and guide a child or adult through the process. An excellent telephone manner and ability to listen is essential.

### *(ii) Objective processing skills*

A Caseworker must be able to objectively process and evaluate a wide range of complex information, identifying the main issues for presentation in a report to the Investigator. It is vital that the Caseworker adopts an open-minded approach to issues and is committed to expressing his/her own opinion on issues based on the evidence available.

### *(iii) Work Management Skills*

A Caseworker must have the ability to organise and schedule work in a timely and resource-efficient manner taking into account future objectives and cost implications. It is essential to be able to manage the workload and to handle problems in a well-organised manner.

### *(iv) Attention to detail*

A Caseworker must be thorough in maintaining accurate records and following appropriate investigative procedures generally and on a case-by-case basis, as directed by the Investigator. It is necessary to adopt a careful approach to information handling, ensuring that all the relevant information (received or originated by the Office) on an issue is assessed and checked for consistency and completeness.

## **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 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 Caseworker
- 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 would be 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 11th 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 Personnel Officer of 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 Marianne Azema, Head of Investigations on Tel. +353 1 8656 800.