



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Permanent Full-Time (1 post)

**Completed application forms must
be returned by email to Gráinne McCarthy
(grainne.mccarthy@eoni.org.uk) by
12 noon on Friday 3 October 2025**



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WELCOME & BACKGROUND: DEPUTY CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Thank you for your interest in this role. This is a rare opportunity to play a pivotal role in safeguarding democracy in Northern Ireland. As we prepare for combined elections in 2027, your leadership will shape how 1.4 million registered voters experience the democratic process.

The electoral system in Northern Ireland is administered centrally by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), a statutory officeholder independent of Government and the Chief Executive of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI). The CEO is the Registration and Returning Officer for all elections and is supported by two Deputy Chief Electoral Officers.

EONI is an independent, non-partisan body which runs elections and compiles the electoral register. EONI manages both scheduled and unscheduled elections, scaling rapidly to deliver elections involving 1.4 million registered voters, around 6,000 temporary staff, 1,400 ballot boxes, 3,000 polling booths, 600 polling places and 2–3 central count venues. The organisation operates in a highly scrutinised and politically sensitive environment, where public confidence depends on robust planning, impartiality and transparency.

In recent years EONI has been through significant change. There is now a much larger focus on online and digital advances, with enhanced data analytics part of all aspects of EONI's work. Your role as Deputy Chief Electoral Officer will be to lead change towards greater use of digital services and thus increased productivity and efficiency.

Further information about the role is available on our website www.eoni.org.uk. Finally thank you again for considering this post.

Dr David Marshall

Chief Electoral Officer Northern Ireland

September 2025



THE ROLE IN CONTEXT

The structure of the senior team of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) includes the Chief Electoral Officer, two Deputy Chief Electoral Officers, and five Manager positions in the areas of Operations, Business Support, Elections Planning & Communication and Data Services.

To allow the organisation to progress and provide resilience, we are recruiting a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer who will work closely with the Chief Electoral Officer, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer and the whole EONI team.

The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer post under recruitment will have line management responsibility for the Operations and Data Services teams. The role will also have a focus on registration, digital delivery of services, data services and governance arrangements. Critically at election time the postholder will also work with the Chief Electoral Officer, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer and the whole EONI team to deliver elections in Northern Ireland.

The post holder must have very strong digital & data skills (both technical & IT management project management), experience in analysing business processes to increase efficiency and an aptitude for developing organisations and delivering large-scale events at pace.



JOB DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW

Job title (Grade)	Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (NICS Grade 6)
Location	Colby House, Belfast
Salary	£73,577 to £77,904 (annual progression)
Hours	37 per week with a flexible/hybrid working scheme
Leave	25 days + 12 public/privilege days (rising to 30 after 5 years)
Pension	NI Civil Service Pension Scheme
Contract	Permanent, full-time

PURPOSE:

To provide operational support to the Chief Electoral Officer in the day to day running of the Electoral Office to enable them to maintain an outward focus.

To take a lead role in relation to governance, efficiency and continuous improvement in the Electoral Office.

WORKING HOURS:

The standard working week is 37 hours net, however the Electoral Office operates a flexible/hybrid working scheme to support staff in managing their commitments. During the 3 month election period, additional hours are required to meet business needs.



MAIN ACTIVITIES:

Strategic Planning & Delivery

- To take a lead role in organisational strategic planning, including development and monitoring of the Annual Business Plan.
- To help draft the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for Parliament.
- To take primary operational responsibility for ensuring the organisation meets key strategic objectives and delivers against aims and objectives in the Annual Business Plan.
- To have overarching responsibility for coordinating election planning and delivery.

People Management

- To act as line manager for the relevant Heads of Function on day to day business activities.
- To develop and coach all staff to achieve business objectives.
- To deputise for the Chief Electoral Officer, as appropriate.

Governance & Risk

- To review and continuously develop the corporate governance, audit and risk and other quality assurance arrangements of the organisation.
- To take primary responsibility for ensuring that systems & processes operate within high standards of corporate governance and expose the organisation to agreed levels of risk.
- To ensure the Chief Electoral Officer fulfils his/her statutory obligations.

Business Process Review & Innovation

- To scrutinise and subject business processes to continuous review and seize opportunities to develop and enhance processes as appropriate.
- To lead on enhancing and digitising existing business processes to ensure working systems to deliver elections and registration are as efficient as possible.
- To lead on innovation with a particular emphasis on using technology and data analytics to create maximum efficiency.



External Relationships

- To act as a spokesperson for the organisation and to deal with media, political and other enquiries, as and when required.
- To maintain and progress relationships with key stakeholders including the Northern Ireland Office, UK Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, local political parties and elected representatives (MPs, MLAs, Councillors), Council Chief Executives and senior council officials and the Electoral Commission.
- To network and develop relationships to progress the work of the Electoral Office.

In addition to take on any other duties as required by the Chief Electoral Officer.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA (tested on application form/during interview)

- At least 3 years practical* experience in the last five years at senior management** level of **planning, leading, and implementing the successful delivery of operational functions which include a large-scale digital/data transformation programme**
- At least 2 years practical* experience in the last five years at senior management** level of **successfully planning and implementing large-scale digital/data driven changes in a significant service***.**

***Practical experience** is having undertaken the work rather than having a knowledge or understanding.

****Senior Management** is being responsible for implementing decisions affecting the body or organisation an individual is working in. This includes providing advice at board level on such issues. Typically, in the public sector this is at NICS Grade 7 or Deputy Principal level or above.

***A **significant service** is one which impacts on multiple stakeholders and the general public.

Failure to provide detailed dates of your experience may result in failure to meet the relevant criterion.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA (tested on application form/during interview)

- Experience of **the interpretation and/or operational implementation of legislative requirements** in administrative/digital systems to achieve a public service purpose.
- Holding a **second class University honours degree or higher**
You must provide year of award, type, name & place of degree and a summary of subjects studied.
- Holding a **formal Data/ Statistics/ Information Technology related qualification or three years recent equivalent experience**
You must provide year of award, type of qualification and a summary of subjects studied – you must provide dates of the experience



ESSENTIAL SKILLS (tested during interview)

- Strong political awareness whilst being able to remain politically neutral in dealing with all stakeholders.
- Ability to exercise sound judgement & adhere to highest standards of probity.
- Strong communication skills to inspire confidence in others.
- Strong evidence of analytical and problem solving skills and the associated experience managing development and implementation of digital services.
- Evidence of planning, co-ordinating and delivering large-scale events that have a significant public focus.
- Demonstrable attention to detail.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Candidates must not be a member of any organisation or society which might be construed as a potential conflict of interest. This includes any employment or personal connections (current or previous), which might give rise to public speculation. This includes but is not limited to:

- Obtained office as an MP, MEP, member of the N.I. Assembly, local Councillor or other political office.
- Stood as a candidate for one of the above offices.
- Held office such as Chair, Treasurer or Secretary of a local branch of a political party.
- Canvassed on behalf of a political party or helped at elections.
- Been a member of a political party
- Spoken publicly on behalf of a political party or candidate.
- Acted as a political agent for a candidate in an election.
- Worked (either paid or voluntary) for any political party or candidate.
- Signed the nomination paper of any candidate(s) in an election.
- Applicants must also not have been convicted of an offence under electoral law
- Applicants must also not have undertaken any other political activity which may be considered relevant.

Candidates may also be queried to make an assessment of whether any conflict of interest exists. If appointed any failure to be candid in this assessment could result in dismissal.



MAIN TERMS AND CONDITIONS

SALARY: The salary range is **£73,577 to £77,904** (NICS Grade 6 equivalent – see <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/civil-service-pay>). Starting salary is normally at the bottom of the scale, with structured annual progression.

APPOINTMENT: These are **full-time, permanent positions**. Appointments are subject to two satisfactory references, including one from your current or most recent employer.

WORKING HOURS: The **standard working week** is **37 hours net**, however the Electoral Office operates a **flexible/hybrid working scheme** to support staff in managing their commitments. During the 3 month election period, additional hours are required to meet business needs.

LOCATION: Roles are based in our new modern open plan offices in Colby House, Belfast. Some travel may be required outside of election time. At election time travel to various locations across Northern Ireland will be required to assist in the running of elections across various venues. On site, staff have access to car parking and changing facilities for those who cycle to work.

PROBATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT: All new appointments are subject to a 12-month probationary period, during which support, and feedback will be provided to help you succeed in the role.

We place a strong emphasis on training and professional development. As part of this, you may have the opportunity to travel across the UK and Ireland to observe elections, learn from best practice, and build your expertise. If a candidate's performance, conduct or attendance during their probationary period is not satisfactory, their appointment may be terminated.

HOLIDAYS: You will enjoy **25 days annual leave**, rising to **30 days after five years' service**, plus **12 public and privilege holidays** each year.

PENSION: Staff benefit from membership of the **Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme**, one of the most attractive packages available in the public sector. Further details are available at [Civil Service Pensions NI](#).



APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates are strongly advised to read all the sections of the Candidate Information Booklet and the other useful information and links before completing their application form. Valuable information is available on the Electoral Office website at www.eoni.org.uk.

Please note:

- CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms cannot be accepted and will **not** be considered.
- Applicants must complete the application form in Arial font size 12.
- Candidates will be shortlisted for interview solely on the basis of the information given on the totality of the application form.
- Candidates should ensure that they provide evidence of experience giving length of experience, examples and dates as required. It is not sufficient to simply list duties and responsibilities. If they do not provide sufficient detail the selection panel may not shortlist candidates for interview.

Completed application forms and separate equality and diversity monitoring form should be sent by email to Gráinne McCarthy grainne.mccarthy@eoni.org.uk no later than 12 noon Friday 3 October 2025

Please do not send paper applications. Equality monitoring forms will be removed from application forms upon receipt and registered separately.

Shortlisting and Appointment Panel

The information provided within the application form will be used for shortlisting purposes to assess which candidates meet the required criteria to be brought forward to the next stage in the assessment process. It is the responsibility of the candidate to clearly demonstrate how they meet the criteria specified with relevant examples where appropriate. The Panel reserves the right to enhance the selection criteria as it sees fit in the event of a large volume of applications.



Applications will be considered for shortlisting purposes by the Panel who will also conduct the interviews. The Panel will include the following members:

- Dr David Marshall Chief Electoral Officer Northern Ireland (chair)
- Ms Nicola Fisher Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
- Mr Cahir Hughes Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland

Shortlisting and Interview Process

Candidates will be shortlisted for interviews according to the candidate's responses to the criteria set out in this booklet and the accompanying application form.

The interview will be competency based, and the panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your experience. Further information on the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk

Equality Statement

The Electoral Office is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The Electoral Office welcomes applications from all Section 75 groups regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, people with or without dependants, political opinion, religion, or sexual orientation.

Disability Requirements

We ask on the application form if applicants require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable them to attend any part of the selection process.

Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If an applicant has indicated on their application that they have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, the applicant may be required to outline any adjustments they consider are necessary to enable them to fulfil the requirements of the role.



KEY DATES

Date	Stage
Tuesday 9 September 2025	Advertisement launches and applications open
Friday 3 October 2025	Applications close (12 noon)
Week of 3 November 2025	Interviews to be held in Electoral Office, Colby House, Belfast



OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

The Electoral Office must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment. Please note all successful applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check.

Applicants must be either:

- i. UK national; or
- ii. National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- iii. National of a Commonwealth country; or
- iv. Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein with settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS); or
- v. Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS); or
- vi. Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service or who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- vii. Certain family members of the relevant EU, EEA, Swiss & Turkish nationals

All candidates are required to state their nationality and the category they are applying for in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box of your application form.

For candidates applying under categories iii – vii you are required to provide the confirmation of Right to Work and Nationality Requirements, including your 'Share code' in the response box of your application form.

You should provide details of your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your Right to Work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your 'Share code' at <https://www.gov.uk/evisa/view-evisa-get-share-code-prove-immigration-status>

Failure to provide the requested information will result in your application being rejected.

[EU Settlement Scheme EU, other EEA, Swiss citizens and family members](#) provides guidance on EUSS and certain family members.

Where a candidate has a Right to Work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the Right to Work is maintained.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available in the Nationality Guidance section of the NICS Recruitment website.



SECURITY VETTING PROCEDURES

The successful candidate will be required to hold or obtain security clearance at Security Check (SC) level (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-kingdom-security-vetting-clearance-levels/national-security-vetting-clearance-levels>)

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

EONI follows NICS Ex-Offenders Guidance. This information is available upon request.