



**An Ghníomhaireacht
Tithíochta**
The Housing Agency

Candidate Information Guide

The Housing Agency
53 Mount Street Upper,
Dublin 2
D02 KT73

recruitment@housingagency.ie

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WHO ARE WE?

The Housing Agency is a government body working with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in the delivery of housing and housing services.

Our Purpose is to provide expertise and solutions to help deliver sustainable communities throughout Ireland. In this strategic period, we will deliver our purpose in three ways:

1. Supporting stakeholders with evidence-informed insights and data to develop a sustainable Irish housing system.
2. Enabling supply and demand solutions throughout the housing system.
3. Ensuring the Agency and its stakeholders have the capacity and agility to respond effectively to challenges in the housing system.

Our Functions

Our primary function is to provide the services for, and on behalf of, the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and each local authority in the performance of their functions under the Housing Acts. These services include:

- Housing Research and Analysis
- Housing Supply Supports and Advice
- Local Authority Services
- Approved Housing Body Services
- Mortgage Supports
- Acquisitions Programme including property sourcing for social housing
- Housing Projects and Procurement Services
- Pyrite Remediation
- Mortgage to Rent
- Multi User Developments Advisory Services.
- Land development and management
- Local Authority Loan Underwriting
- Managing the Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Fund
- Housing Practitioner Training and Information
- National Strategy for People with a Disability
- Assistance in the delivery of affordable housing
- Financial appraisals of AHB funding applications
- Co-ordination of the Housing First initiative
- Pyrite Remediation and the Defective Concrete Block Grant Schemes
- Technical advice and supports to local authorities and AHBs regarding capital construction and refurbishment projects and procurement



Values

The values of the Agency set the standard for the way we work with colleagues and stakeholders. In this strategic period, we will continue to embed our values throughout the organisation to guide and inform everything we do. We have placed people at the centre of everything we do to highlight the importance of our staff, our stakeholders, and the people we are working to support with housing needs.



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide provides general information for candidates applying for positions within the Housing Agency. Additional information will be provided for each specific vacancy the Agency advertises - detailing the requirements of the role, the qualifications and experiences needed along with the skills and competencies the successful candidate(s) will need to demonstrate on their application form and competency interview.

THE POSITION YOU ARE APPLYING FOR

The particulars of each vacancy, including minimum required qualifications will be advertised alongside the Application form on the Housing Agency's website <https://housingagency.ie/Careers> and candidates are advised to read this information carefully prior to completion of their application form.

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms, have obtained all relevant qualifications and criteria of the vacancy. On occasion the Housing Agency may employ a third party to manage part or whole of the recruitment campaign and applicants will be advised of this fact.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

HEALTH

Candidates must be in good health, capable and competent of carrying out the work assigned to them.

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS. ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES MUST BE:

- a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- d) A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or UK or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 visa; or
- e) A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa or
- f) A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or the UK or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa.

To qualify candidates must be eligible by the date of any job offer.

It is important that candidates list their previous civil or public service employment, if they have availed of a voluntary redundancy or retirement scheme and/or are in receipt of an ill-health retirement pension. Failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT: REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS TO PUBLIC SERVANTS

The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants.

It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of any position will not be eligible for re-employment in the Public Service by any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

INCENTIVISED SCHEME FOR EARLY RETIREMENT (ISER):

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are not eligible to apply for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND CHILDREN CIRCULAR (7/2010):

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for reemployment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER scheme are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of the VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CIRCULAR LETTER LG(P) 06/2013)

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body [as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012] for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

DECLARATION

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

SUPERANNUATION & RETIREMENT

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Public Service at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, an appointee who has never worked in the Public Service will be offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”). Full details of the Scheme are at www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie

PENSION ABATEMENT

- If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her re-employment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

Please note: In applying for this position you are acknowledging that you understand that the abatement provisions, where relevant, will apply. It is not envisaged that the employing Department/Office will support an application for an abatement waiver in respect of appointments to this position.

- However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil or Public Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER), the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS or the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular letter LG(P) 06/2013, any of which renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements may, however be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.
- Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007 The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).
- Ill- Health Retirement Please note any person who previously retired on ill health grounds under the terms of a superannuation scheme are required to declare, at the initial application phase, that they are in receipt of such a pension to the organisation administering the recruitment competition. Applicants will be required to attend the CMO's office to assess their ability to provide regular and effective service taking account of the condition which qualified them for IHR.

APPOINTMENT POST ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT FROM CIVIL SERVICE

If successful in their application through the competition, the applicant should be aware of the following:

1. If deemed fit to provide regular and effective service and assigned to a post, their civil service ill-health pension ceases.

2. If the applicant subsequently fails to complete probation or decides to leave their assigned post, there can be no reversion to the civil service IHR status, nor reinstatement of the civil service IHR pension, that existed prior to the application nor is there an entitlement to same.

3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks. 11 Category Specialist (Public Procurement) Office of Government Procurement

APPOINTMENT POST ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC SERVICE

1. Where an individual has retired from a public service body his/her ill-health pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement under that scheme.

2. If an applicant is successful, on appointment the applicant will be required to declare whether they are in receipt of a public service pension (ill-health or otherwise) and their public service pension may be subject to abatement.

3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks.

PENSION ACCRUAL

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one pre-existing public service pension scheme (i.e. non-Single Scheme) as per the 2012 Act shall apply. This 40-year limit is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

ADDITIONAL SUPERANNUATION CONTRIBUTION

In addition to pension contribution requirements under the rules of the appropriate pension scheme of which an appointee may be a member, this appointment is subject to the additional superannuation contribution in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017. Note: ASC deductions are in addition to any pension contributions (main scheme and spouses' and children's contributions) required under the rules of your pension scheme. For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme please see the following website - www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie

Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable (non-Single Scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment or is currently on a career break or special leave with/without pay different terms may apply. The pension entitlement of such appointees will be established in the context of their public service employment history. Key provisions attaching to membership of the Single Scheme are as follows:

- Pensionable Age: The minimum age at which pension is payable is the same as the age of eligibility for the State Pension, currently 66.
- Retirement Age: Scheme members must retire on reaching the age of 70.

- Career average earnings are used to calculate benefits (a pension and lump sum amount accrue each year and are up-rated each year by reference to CPI).
- Post retirement pension increases are linked to CPI.

THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All sections of the application form must be completed, incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications should be typed and submitted to recruitment@housingagency.ie. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept applications after the closing date/time.

Additional information such as CVs, references, and certificates should not be attached to this form, unless expressly requested by the Housing Agency.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

When the Housing Agency advertises for a vacancy, we will attach a list of required skills and competencies required for that role. Required competencies will vary but in general we will look for evidence of the following;

- **Leadership**
 - Can work independently as part of a multidisciplinary team.
 - Demonstrable ability to develop the required engineering competencies.
 - Strives to develop and implement new ways of working effectively to meet objectives.
- **Communication Skills**
 - Excellent communications skills, both verbal and written
 - Able to demonstrate how they effectively engage with a multidisciplinary team and clients ranging from national and local authorities to major contractors.
- **Delivery of Results**
 - Can demonstrate the ability to plan and prioritise work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, reprioritising considering changing circumstances.
 - Can demonstrate the ability to produce quality work and their methods of ensuring this is achieved.
- **Specialist skills**
 - Skills that are particularly relevant to the role

HOURS OF WORK

The working hours at present for Housing Agency staff provide for a 5-day, 35 hour working week. A flexible working hours' system may be availed of subject to the terms of the Flexitime Policy.

The Housing Agency also operates a Blended Working Policy.

SHORT-LISTING

Following receipt of all applications, applicants will be shortlisted for interview based on the information they have provided.

Short-listing may take the form of Desk-top Short-listing, Aptitude Test and/or Preliminary Interview or combinations of all three.

If required, aptitude testing will be performed through a 3rd party provider – candidates will be advised of this. Any information provided by the candidate will be used for the purpose of shortlisting candidates and no other purpose.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

The Housing Agency is committed to equality of opportunity for all candidates. If you have a disability or need reasonable accommodations made during the selection process, we strongly encourage you to share this with us so that we can ensure you get the support you need. Reasonable accommodation in our selection process refers to adjustments and practical changes which would enable a disabled candidate to have an equal opportunity for this competition. Examples of adjustments we provide include the use of assistive technology, extra time, scribes and/or readers or a range of other accommodations.

THE INTERVIEW

Candidates will be invited to interview by email and must ensure that emails addresses and phone numbers provided on their application forms are correct. Dates, and times of interview are subject to change at short notice. Names of Interview Board Members will be provided in advance but may also be subject to change at short notice.

RESULTS OF INTERVIEW BOARD

All candidates will be advised of the outcome of their interview by email. In circumstances where there are more than one successful candidate a panel may be formed by order of merit and this panel will remain in place for a period of 12 months.

REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK

If you have been called for interview, you may request feedback. Unfortunately, due to the volume of applications we receive, we cannot provide feedback if you have not been shortlisted.

REFERENCES & EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants are required to give the names of two referees whom they are known but not related. At least one of the referees should be a current or recent employer. The Housing Agency will also require proof of all educational qualifications or any other organisation(s) with which the candidate has been/is associated. The Housing Agency reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of such references and referees.

TAKING UP DUTY

We would like you to start as soon as possible after the contract has been signed (within 4 weeks). However, we realise that some people have longer notice periods so we will try, if possible, to accommodate longer periods.

PROBATION

The probationary contract will be for a period of one year from the date specified on the contract. Notwithstanding this paragraph and the paragraph immediately following below, this will not preclude an extension of the probationary contract in appropriate circumstances.

During the period of your probationary contract, your performance will be subject to review by your supervisor(s) to determine whether you:

- (i) Have performed in a satisfactory manner,
- (ii) Have been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- (iii) Are suitable from the point of view of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Prior to the completion of the probationary contract a decision will be made as to whether or not you will be retained. This decision will be based on your performance assessed against the criteria set out in (i) to (iii) above.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs in this section, the probationary contract may be terminated at any time prior to the expiry of the term of the contract by either side in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 to 2005. In certain circumstances your contract may be extended and your probation period suspended.

The extension must be agreed by both parties.

- The probationary period stands suspended when an employee is absent due to Maternity or Adoptive Leave
- In relation to an employee absent on Parental Leave or Carers Leave, the employee may require probation to be suspended if the absence is not considered to be consistent with the continuation of the probation
- Probation may be suspended in cases such as absence due to a non-recurring illness
- Any other statutory provision providing that probation shall –
 - (i) stand suspended during an employee's absence from work, and
 - (ii) be completed by the employee on the employees return from work after such absence. Where probation is suspended the employer should notify the employee of the circumstances relating to the suspension.

All appointees will serve a one-year probationary period.

APPEALS PROCESS

If a candidate wishes to appeal either a short-listing or interview board decision, they must do so within three working days of being notified of this decision. The appeal must be made in writing to The Appeals Officer recruitment@housingagency.ie and clearly state the grounds of appeal.

Within two working days of receipt of the appeal, the HR Department will evaluate the grounds of the appeal. If grounds for an appeal are not upheld, HR Management will notify the candidate in writing of this outcome and no further action will be taken. If the grounds upon which the appeal is made are upheld, the HR Department will notify the candidate and corrective action will be taken.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. When you submit an application for a competition, we create a computer record in your name. Information submitted with a job application is used in processing your application. Where the services of a third party are used in processing your application, it may be required to provide them with information, however all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure the security of your data.

CANVASSING

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

The Housing Agency is an equal opportunities employer.