**Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA)**

**Policy and Engagement Officer (EO2)**

**April 2023**

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

On 29 September 2011 the Northern Ireland Executive announced that it intended to set up an Inquiry into abuse in residential homes in Northern Ireland, and on 31 May 2012 the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced the agreed Terms of Reference for the HIA Inquiry and advised the Northern Ireland Assembly of the appointment of the Chairman of the Inquiry and the panel members for the Acknowledgement Forum. The Chairman Sir Anthony Hart published the Inquiry Report on 20 January 2017.

One of the substantial and overarching recommendations made relates to the creation of a statutory Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA).

The Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 (HIANI Act 2019) became law on 5 November 2019; it sets out the role, functions, and powers of the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA).

COSICA is an Arm’s Length Body and sponsorship responsibility sits with the HIA Implementation Branch in the Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations Directorate of The Executive Office.

The Commissioner’s principal responsibility is to promote the interests of Victims and Survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse.

**ORGANISATIONAL POSITION**

The Policy and Engagement Officer is a key post within the organisation and will report to the Head of Policy and Engagement (DP) and will be based in the Office of the Commissioner, Belfast.

This is a fixed term appointment. You are an employee of the Commissioner and not an employee of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

This appointment is for a period up to Decemeber 2025 with the possibility of extension of a further 5 years. Any change to the length of the appointment period will be communicated to staff in advance.

Direct recruits are employed under Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) terms and conditions but are not members of the Civil Service. Direct recruits enjoy the same terms and conditions as civil servants with the exception of movement across the wider NICS by way of access to NICS promotion boards, trawls, interest circulars or transfer.

Salary

Salary will reflect the NICS EO2 salary scale and will be within the range £26,017-£26,575 within which pay progression will be performance related. Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

The Policy and Engagement Officer is a key post within the organisation reporting to the Policy and Engagement (SO) and Head of Policy and Engagement (DP) and will be based in the Office of the Commissioner, Belfast.

**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The role holder will assist the Commissioner and the office in carrying out the Commissioner’s duties and powers. The principal objective of the role will be as first point of contact for Victims and Survivors.

The role holder will assist with the development of research-informed, evidence-based, analysis, policy briefings and advice and contribute to the overall evidence base for the Commissioner’s work.

The role holder will assist with research into matters relating to the interests of Victims and Survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse. Depending on the research this may include engaging with Victims and Survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse and therefore sensitivity and trauma-awareness would be required.

The role holder will uphold a rights-based, trauma-informed, survivor-centred approach to delivering the objectives of the Commissioner.

**MAIN JOB ACTIVITIES**

Assist the Commissioner in carrying out the role. The primary relevant function is research into and policy advice on matters relevant to the interests of Victims and Survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse. This broad scope includes:

* First point of contact for stakeholder and Victim and Survivor enquiries.
* Provide information, advice and guidance to Victims and Survivors with reference to relevant specialist and general services that they may be able to avail of and the redress financial compensation scheme and/or refer onwards as appropriate and in line with training and protocols.
* Engage in a sensitive, professional and effective manner with all who contact the office, presenting a victim centred, trauma informed approach.
* Using case management system or comparable database for recording engagement data
* Ensure that complex and sensitive information is communicated and processed within the boundaries of Data Protection legislation; handle all personal data with extreme caution and have an awareness of the potential impacts of data loss.
* Collate, analyse and prepare draft information as required to assist line manager and COSICA in progressing key functions.
* Contribute to COSICA programme policy and research development through research and information gathering.
* Monitor contacts and enquiries to the office and produce statistical reports.
* Contribute to development of COSICA communications.
* Media monitoring.
* Use of the COSICA website and other sources/media to promote the work of the Commissioner.
* Provide support with the establishment and running of the Advisory Panel.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Applicants must demonstrate:

a) Experience working in an engagement role with client groups

b) Experience of policy development

c) Experience of research using both secondary and primary sources

d) Experience of managing data including personal data to the highest standards

e) Experience of drafting communication materials for different stakeholder audiences

f) Experience of generating reports from statistical data

g) Experience of building positive working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders

h) Working positively with colleagues and partners to meet organisational commitments and

deliver results

i) Excellent organisational skills, with the ability to prioritise and manage workloads and react

accordingly to short notice requests

j) Excellent computer skills, especially in information management tools and software, and in

presenting data in a variety of formats on request.

k) A working knowledge of the role of media (including social media), the political landscape,

and how these intersect with high profile and complex subject matters.

**Desirable Criteria**

1. Experience of working in an engagement role with victims and survivors or vulnerable groups.

**CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

***Between Government Organisations***

An exchange of information to deliver the essential activities of the office of the Commissioner by phone, email and in writing to departmental contacts, HIA Redress Board and VSS services colleagues.

**All other external contacts**

Contact with Victims and Survivors and their families locally, nationally, and internationally.

The role holder will be expected to support the Commissioner in liaising with external organisations. The role holder will be expected to maintain relationships that are of major importance and significance to their work; including contact with Management/Middle Management, other government Departments and administrations. For the purposes of building and maintaining networks with key stakeholders in other jurisdictions and administrations where required.

**PROBLEM SOLVING**

Fact Finding and Analysis

The role holder will be the initial contact point for all enquires to the office of the Commissioner. They will be responsible for obtaining and processing sensitive and complex information from a range of individuals and organisations.

The role holder will analyse the information received in order to assess risk before signposting to the appropriate service. The role holder will contribute to scoping and data collection exercises relevant to the functions of COSICA.

The office of the Commissioner is a new organisation and many systems and processes are in development. There is an opportunity to contribute to the development of efficient and data protection compliant procedures.

**DECISION MAKING**

***Collaboration and Initiative***

The role holder will be expected to work as part of the policy and engagement team while demonstrating the capacity to work on their own initiative. The primary function of the role is to further the objectives of the Office of the Commissioner in representing the interests of Victims and Survivors. The role holder will be expected to bring innovation and initiative to their work. They will report to the Head of Policy and Engagement.

***Research and Advice***

The role holder will analyse information and make recommendations to stakeholders and team colleagues to assist with case progression.

The role holder will obtain and analyse information when drafting responses to all enquiries and correspondence for submission to management and the Commissioner for approval.

**MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES**

The role holder is the first point of contact for casework matters in the Commissioner’s Office. They will be required to operate as part of a larger team and must set, progress, and contribute to the achievement of office objectives. The role holder will support the Commissioner in ensuring that the organisation’s objectives are identified and achieved.

**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

**How to Apply**

If you would like to be considered for this role, please forward your CV and Cover Letter to [lauren.farrell@thinkpeople.co.uk](mailto:lauren.farrell@thinkpeople.co.uk) , no later than 5pm on 31st May 2023.

Late applications will not be considered.

Timetable

The anticipated timetable is as follows:

• Advertisement: 3rd May 2023

• Closing Date: 31st May 2023

• Shortlisting: W/C 5th June 2023

• Interviews: W/C 26th June 2023

Please note that these timeframes are indicative and subject to change.

For more information regarding COSICA can be gained by visiting www.cosica-ni.org, a copy of the recruitment and selection policy is also available on request.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

COSICA is committed to equality and will comply with the Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) statutory duties which requires designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief; political opinion; and racial group. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) Section 49A requires designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. This is not an exhaustive list of duties and requirements. The nature of the organisation is such that it must respond to the dynamic environment in which it operates and the nature of duties, tasks, knowledge, and skills required for this post will evolve and change in time. The job holder is expected to adapt to these changes and develop the role as a result.

**COSICA is an Equal Opportunities Employer. All offers of employment will be made on merit in terms of relevant experience, abilities, and qualifications as applicable.**