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

**Policy and Research Officer (Staff Officer)**

**September 2022**

**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 Research 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 until December 2025 with the possibility of extension of a 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 SO salary scale and will be within the range £32,328

- £33,459 within which pay progression will be performance related. Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

**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 to produce and develop 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 conduct and/or oversee policy analysis and 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 be involved in the delivery of the Commissioner’s legislative duties and will assist the organisation in presenting the interests of victims and survivors including the delivery of outstanding recommendations in the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry Report.

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:

* Prepare and present a wide range of policy documents, including the development of policy positions, papers, briefings, consultation submissions and the provision of advice and guidance to government, statutory bodies, and others.
* Take a lead on the Commissioner’s research programme including developing potential methodologies (quantitative and qualitative) appropriate to each research topic, outlining steps involved, including any relevant procurement/funding considerations and management of the agreed research project.
* Working with a high level of autonomy to plan, design and manage policy and research projects with external suppliers and all stakeholders in line with the Northern Ireland public sector procurement policies.
* Undertake or manage commissioned research into systemic or thematic matters relevant to interests of Victims and Survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse, including identifying gaps and challenges; reviewing domestic and international literature to identify good practice.
* Identifying and/ or developing demographic data relating to Victims and Survivors of institutional abuse.
* Manage and maintain awareness of all issues of interest to the Commissioner, the office, Victims and Survivors and wider stakeholders including relevant services.
* Presenting key findings internally and to a range of external audiences including government and policy makers.
* Provide evidence-based research input to draft briefings for the Commissioner.
* Draft input for responses to Ministerial and Official Correspondence, and Assembly Questions, briefings, submissions and any other correspondence or issues which may be referred for consideration.
* Engage with colleagues to inform and develop communications and engagement initiatives;
* Identify and understand relevant legislation and case law, including policies and processes to deliver agreed outcomes on matters relevant to the Commissioner’s duties.
* Supporting the Commissioner’s office in defining and progressing key operational objectives, including the development of monitoring frameworks, and the establishment of an Advisory Panel, with adherence to the legislative framework establishing COSICA, and taking into account similar developments in other areas.
* Working cohesively and agilely, as part of a team to manage and deliver the Commissioner’s programme designed to advocate on behalf of victims and survivors of institutional childhood abuse
* Undertaking training and personal development activity as agreed with the Head of Policy and Engagement.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

The role holder would be expected to have a minimum of at least three years’ experience working in a research and policy post.

Applicants must demonstrate as at the closing date for receipt of applications that they possess:

1. University level degree, in a relevant area including law, social policy or social science.

**And**

1. 3 years consecutive years’ work experience within the last 10 years, in a Policy or Research role leading on research and policy projects - with exposure in the field of rights, or justice and accountability.
2. Ability to demonstrate up to date knowledge of relevant Northern Ireland legislation;
3. Awareness of the political environment and experience in effectively bringing forward policy advice to key stakeholders.
4. Track record of communicating effectively orally and in writing with a range of audiences.
5. Experience of developing a range of policy documents including reports, briefings and submissions.
6. Experience of undertaking qualitative and quantitative research including managing data; in accordance with relevant Data Protection Legislation and ethical standards.
7. Experience of working in a busy team and working at pace with capacity to respond to short-term ad hoc requests.
8. Experience of project management with strong organisational and time management skills and using own initiative to problem solve and be solutions-focused.

**Desirable Criteria**

1. Postgraduate degree in a relevant area including law, social policy or social science.
2. Experience of commissioning research.
3. Knowledge of the Northern Ireland public procurement process.

**CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

***Between Government Organisations***

Officials in other Departments may be contacted in accordance with the work of the Commissioner. This may be for relationship building and seeking information or. The role holder will be expected to maintain regular contact with management level staff for the above purposes.

**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**

Currently, there are significant knowledge and data gaps within the area of historical institutional childhood abuse in Northern Ireland. Areas for further research may be identified by the Commissioner, through information provided by Victims and Survivors or by stakeholders. The role holder may make recommendations to the Commissioner about taking forward such studies and the methodologies to be used.

Particular sensitivity and a trauma informed approach will be essential when dealing with any lived experience and data that may be disclosed.

Maintain up to date and comprehensive knowledge of key developments that impact or may be of relevance to the work of the Office of the Commissioner.

**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 provide research-informed, evidence-based material to support the Office of the Commissioner’s objectives this may include originating research, drafting briefings, contributing to overall team initiatives.

The role holder will be responsible for overseeing and ensuring effective progression of research areas and policy topics in consultation and agreement with the Head of Policy and Engagement.

**MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES**

***Financial Resources***

The role holder will be responsible for managing budgeted resource.

The role holder will contribute to processes and procedures to ensure all financial records are completed and returned within prescribed deadlines. This is to ensure full auditing requirements relating to financial expenditures are met.

The role holder will follow appropriate financial procedures to monitor contracts and the use of resources in line with organisational procedures and plans to ensure deliverables are achieved.

The role holder will also be responsible for ensuring that all expenditure has the necessary approvals before they are incurred, particularly where the costs might be sizeable, such as travel outside Northern Ireland.

***Leadership and Team working***

The role holder is the main point of contact for communications and research matters in the Commissioner’s Office.

The role holder will be required to operate as part of a larger team and must set, progress, and contribute to the achievement of the Commissioner’s objectives. They will also be required to work with staff in the Commissioner’s Office, with occasional line management responsibilities.

The role holder will be supporting the Commissioner in ensuring that key 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, 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 12th 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.

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**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.**