

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET – STAFF OFFICER

Panel A – Confined to Employees of Carlow County Council
Panel B – Confined to Employees of the Local Authority Sector only
Panel C - Open Competition

CLOSING DATE: 12 noon on Friday, 21st FEBRUARY 2025

FOUR APPLICATION FORMS (one original completed signed copy and three full copies of the original) SHOULD BE RETURNED TO:

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
HUMAN RESOURCES SECTION
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY BUILDINGS
ATHY ROAD
CARLOW, R93 E7R7

CANDIDATES WHO SEND THEIR APPLICATIONS BY POST SHOULD ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO ENSURE DELIVERY NOT LATER THAN THE LATEST TIME FOR ACCEPTANCE.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

- A Curriculum Vitae or applications by email or fax will **NOT** be accepted.
- All applications forms should be **TYPED** and before signing the form, please ensure that you have replied fully to all sections/questions.
- You should satisfy yourself that you are eligible under the regulations - **copy of your educational results MUST be submitted with your application to confirm your eligibility if applying for the Open competition.** The Council cannot undertake to investigate the eligibility of candidates in advance of the interview and hence persons who are ineligible, but nevertheless, enter, may put themselves to unnecessary expense.
- Carlow County Council is not responsible for any expenses which may be incurred by the candidate in attendance for aptitude test or interview.
- Applications received after the closing date and time specified will **NOT** be accepted.
- Applications received that do not comply with the requirements set out in the booklet, i.e. typed application form, one original fully completed signed copy and 3 copies of the application form, copy of results where required, will **NOT** be accepted.
- Carlow County Council may decide, by reason of the number of persons seeking admission to the competition, to carry out a shortlisting procedure. Shortlisting will be based on qualifications, relevant experience and information submitted on the application form. The number of persons to be invited for interview shall be determined by Carlow County Council.

POST OF STAFF OFFICER

Panel Information & Eligibility

In accordance with an agreement secured via the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), Recruitment to each separate post of Clerical Administrative Grades IV, Grades V, Grades VI and Grade VII is now on the following basis with effect from 1st January 2020:

- 50% confined to employees of the sector
- 30% open
- 20% confined to employees of an individual local authority

A recruitment competition will be held to create Panels A, B, & C.

Panel A: Confined to Employees of Carlow County Council

This will comprise of successful applicants in order of merit who are currently working in Carlow County Council only.

Panel B: Confined: to Employees of the Local Authority Sector

This will comprise of all successful applicants in order of merit and may include candidates who are currently working in a local authority or regional assembly.

Panel C: Open

This will comprise of all successful applicants in order of merit and may include candidates who are currently working in a local authority, regional assembly and external applicants.

Vacancies that arise during the life of these Panels may be filled from the appropriate Panel in the following sequential order:

1	Confined to Carlow County Council	Panel A
2	Confined to Local Authority Sector	Panel B
3	Open	Panel C
4	Confined to Carlow County Council	Panel A
5	Confined to Local Authority Sector	Panel B
6	Open	Panel C
7	Open	Panel C
8	Confined to Local Authority Sector	Panel B
9	Confined to Local Authority Sector	Panel B
10	Confined to Local Authority Sector	Panel B

Current employees of Carlow County Council who meet all the Qualifying criteria are eligible to apply for inclusion on all three Panels. Current employees of a Local Authority or Regional Assembly, who meet the Qualifying criteria are eligible to apply for inclusion on both Panel B (Confined) and Panel C (Open). Candidates who are not employees of a Local Authority or Regional Assembly, but meet the Qualifying criteria are eligible to apply for inclusion on Panel C (Open).

QUALIFICATIONS – POST OF STAFF OFFICER

Essential Criteria

Current Employee of Carlow County Council - Panel A

Candidates shall on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms:

- (a) Be a serving employee of Carlow County Council and have at least two years satisfactory experience in a post of Clerical Officer or analogous post.

Local Authority Sector - Panel B

- (a) Be a serving employee of a local authority or a regional assembly and have at least two years satisfactory experience in a post of Clerical Officer or analogous post.

Open Panel – Panel C

- (a) Meet the Educational Qualification outlined below.

Character

Each candidate shall be of good character.

Health

Each candidate must be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Education, Training, Experience

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms -

1. Have obtained at least Grade D (or a Pass), in Higher or Ordinary Level, in five subjects (or four subjects if Irish is included) from the approved list of subjects in the Department of Education Established Leaving Certificate Examination or Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme including Irish and/or English and one of the following: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics, and
2. Have obtained at least Grade C (or Honours) in higher level (or Honours) papers in three subjects in that examination (or two subjects if Irish and/or one of the following is included: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics) or
3. Have obtained a comparable standard in an equivalent examination (equivalent of the Leaving Certificate) if applying from outside Ireland or
4. Hold a third level qualification of at least degree standard.

Copy of Educational Results **MUST** be submitted when applying for Panel C – Open Competition

The Role of the Staff Officer

The **Staff Officer** is a frontline supervisory position in the Council with responsibility for managing the performance of a section or function within a Department. He/she will work as part of a multidisciplinary team within the Council, assisting with the implementation of work programmes to achieve goals, targets and standards set out in Departmental and Team Development Plans. A Staff Officer is expected to use initiative, work to a high standard and have excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

The ideal candidate shall have:

- Knowledge of the structure and functions of local government, of current local government issues and of the key influencers of local government.
- An understanding of the role of Staff Officer.
- An understanding of the representational role of the elected members and the need to work with them to deliver quality services and implement policy decisions.
- An ability to supervise a team effectively to achieve a common goal, ensuring strong governance and ethics standards are adhered to and maintained.
- An ability to motivate and encourage staff under his/her control to achieve maximum performance.
- A career record that demonstrates an ability to supervise staff.
- Relevant administrative experience and input to delivery of organisational objectives.
- Proven management report writing and analysis skills.
- An ability to work under pressure to tight deadlines in the delivery of key operational objectives.

The ideal candidate will also:

- Be self-motivated with ability to work on his/her own initiative.
- Have strong interpersonal communication skills and be capable of representing the Council in a professional and credible manner with all stakeholders.
- Have an awareness of Health & Safety Legislation and Regulations, the implications for the organisation and the employee, and their application in the workplace.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Candidates will have to demonstrate from their application form to the satisfaction of a short-listing board that they possess sufficient skills and experience in the competencies listed below to be called for interview.

- 1. Understanding of Purpose & Change in Local Government**
- 2. Delivering Results**
- 3. Performance through People**
- 4. Local Government Knowledge & Understanding**

Candidates short-listed for interview will then be assessed at the interview under the four competencies listed above using some/all of the following indicators within each competency.

Understanding Purpose & Change

- Understands the Council's purpose, goals and priorities.
- Shows commitment to these goals and ensures that the team understands how their work contributes to meeting the Council's objectives.
- Understands the Role of the Elected Council and the Representational Role of the Elected Members

- Understands and adheres to the Code of Conduct for all employees and complies with all Council rules, regulations and procedures.
- Ensures that there is full understanding of and compliance with all Council rules, regulations and procedures for employees within designated area of responsibility.
- Supports diversity.
- Understands and supports Workplace Partnership.
- Represents the Council positively when dealing with the public or other agencies.
- Creates a positive image of the Council both within the team and through interaction with the public and other stakeholders.
- Understands the need for change and gets this across persuasively to others.
- Makes a positive case for change and elicits commitment from others.
- Implements change in an orderly and determined manner.
- Co-operates fully in implementing safe systems of work in accordance with the Corporate Safety Statement and relevant Ancillary Safety Statement for their area of work.

Delivering Results

- Evaluates issues and situations in a logical and objective manner to arrive at effective solutions.
- Makes decisions in a timely, clear and well-informed way.
- Helps translates the business/team plan objectives into clear priorities and actions for their area of operation.
- Helps establish high quality service and customer care standards.
- Allocates resources (staff and equipment) across jobs to ensure that priorities are met, and that work is executed in the most efficient manner possible to deliver quality work and services.
- Takes initiatives to control and reduce the cost of activities and minimise waste in the services provided.
- Abides by the laws, regulations and policies and procedures affecting your employment and the discharge of your duties.
- Sets and implements high standards of service delivery in accordance with the established parameters of the operational plans:
- Closely monitors quality of activities and takes initiatives to improve work processes over time.

Performance through people

- Leads the team/service area in a manner that provides clarity of purpose and a focus on delivery.
- Engages with individual staff and the team in a motivational and supportive way.
- Leads and develops the team and its members to achieve corporate objectives through the effective management of performance.
- Builds and maintains positive working relationships and constructively addresses conflict or employee dissatisfaction.
- Recognises the value of and requirement to communicate effectively.
- Have good written and verbal skills.
- Have good interpersonal skills.

Local Government Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrates knowledge of the structure and functions of local government.
- Demonstrates knowledge of current local government issues and advocates practical approaches to addressing them.
- Demonstrates a clear and realistic view of future trends and strategic direction of local government.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the role of a Staff Officer in this context.

Particulars of Post

Duties

The duties of the office are to give to the local authority under the direction and supervision of its appropriate officer such services of an executive, supervisory or advisory nature as are required for the exercise and performance of any of its powers and duties and shall include the duty of deputising for other officers of the local authority when required and such duties as may be required in relation to the area of any other local authority.

The duties shall include but are not limited to:

- Providing high level administrative support based on a thorough understanding of the overall workings and policy of a section.
- Management of Staff.
- Representing the Council at a variety of meetings.
- Budget preparation and management of same.
- Attending inter-departmental meetings on behalf of the section to which you are assigned.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with external agencies as appropriate to the activities of the section.
- Continuously monitoring existing procedures to ensure they comply with best practice and the development of new/improved procedures where appropriate.
- Policy formation
- Attending court as a witness for the Council as required.
- Working on inter-departmental teams concerned with introducing organisational change.
- To undertake any other duties of a similar level and responsibilities as may be required from time to time.

These duties are indicative rather than exhaustive and carried out under general guidance.

Salary

The salary shall be fully inclusive and shall be as determined from time to time. The holder of the office shall pay to the local authority any fees or other monies (other than his/her inclusive salary) payable to and received by him/her by virtue of his/her office or in respect of services which he/she is required by or under any enactment to perform.

The salary scale for the position of the Staff Officer is: €50,206 - €60,051, gross per annum (Circular Letter EL 03/2024).

Entry point to this scale will be determined in accordance with Circulars issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. In accordance with Departmental Circular Letter EL.01/2022, a person who is not a serving local authority employee on or after 1st January 2011 will enter the scale for the position at the minimum point. Rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government Policy.

Location of post

Carlow County Council reserves the right to assign the post holder to any council premises, now or in the future subject to reasonable notice. Changes in location of employment will not result in payment of disturbance money or other compensation. The person appointed will be required to provide him/herself at his/her own expense with the necessary mode of travel to and from work.

Working Hours:

The working hours at present provide for a five day, thirty-five hours working week, hours may vary from time to time. Carlow County Council operate a flexible time scheme with the earliest start time of 8.30 a.m. and a latest start time of 10.00 a.m. and the earliest finishing time of 16.30 p.m. and the latest finishing time of 18.00 p.m. Lunch break consisting of a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours must be taken between 12.30 p.m. and 14.30 p.m. The Flexi Leave Scheme is available, on request.

There may be a requirement to work additional hours from time to time for which Time in Lieu on a time for time basis will apply. Overtime does not apply to this post. All hours of work will be subject to and recorded in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 and the Organisation of Working Time Act (Regulations) 2001.

The working hours may be reviewed at any time by the Council. The post may require flexibility in working outside of normal hours, including at weekends, as necessary. No additional remuneration will be paid in respect of such activities.

Probation:

Where persons who are not already permanent employees of a local authority are appointed, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) there shall be a period after such appointment takes effect during which such persons shall hold such position on probation,
- (b) such period shall be 12 months, but the Chief Executive may at his or her discretion extend such period,
- (c) such persons shall cease to hold such position at the end of the period of probation unless during such period the Chief Executive has certified that the service of such persons is satisfactory,
- (d) the period at (a) above may be terminated on giving one week's notice as per the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts,
- (e) there will be assessments during the probationary period.

Health:

For the purposes of satisfying the requirement as to health it will be necessary for each successful candidate, before he/she is appointed, to undergo a medical examination by a qualified medical practitioner to be nominated by the local authority.

Residence

The holder of the office shall reside in the district in which his/her duties are to be performed or within a reasonable distance, thereof.

Annual Leave:

The current annual leave entitlement is **30 days**. Granting of annual leave, payment for annual leave and arrangement for public holidays will be governed by the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (as amended).

Sick Leave:

The terms of the Public Service Sick Pay Scheme will prevail.

Training:

It is a condition of employment that successful candidates will be required to participate in training programmes relevant to the skills necessary for the performance of the duties attaching to the post and to attend all mandatory training.

References

Applicants are required to advise the names of two responsible persons to whom they are well known but not related (at least one of the referees should be an existing or former employer). In advance of any offer of employment, Carlow County Council reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. The Council reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees.

Vetting

Garda vetting is required for certain roles within Carlow County Council. Failure to complete a Garda vetting form on request may prevent your employment with Carlow County Council. In the event of an unsatisfactory Garda declaration being received Carlow County Council reserves the right not to commence employment. In the event of an existing employee changing role as a result of promotion or otherwise to a role that requires Garda Vetting and an unsatisfactory disclosure being returned, Carlow County Council reserves the right to withhold promotion, and also to investigate if further sanction/disciplinary action is warranted on foot of disclosure on a case-by-case basis.

Health & Safety:

The holder of the post shall co-operate with the terms of Carlow County Council's Safety Statement and Major Emergency Plan. It is a condition of employment that the successful candidate will be required to participate in training programmes relevant to the skills necessary for the performance of the duties attaching to the post. He/She shall familiarise him/herself with the safety rules and procedures and make proper use of all safety, clothing and equipment. Failure to comply with the terms of the Safety Statement may result in a disciplinary action.

Superannuation & Retirement:

If you are pensionable under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998 and are liable to pay Class A PRSI contributions, you would be required in respect of superannuation to make contributions at the rate of 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children) plus 1.5% of full pensionable remuneration. You are required in respect of spouses' and children's pension benefit to contribute at the rate of 1.5% of full pensionable remuneration in accordance with the terms of schemes made under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998. Maximum retirement age is 70.

If the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 applies to your employment, 65 is the minimum age at which your pension may be paid. As a new entrant to the public service, under the terms of this legislation you will not be required to retire on grounds of age. Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority who are liable to pay the Class D rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of their superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 5% of their pensionable remuneration. You may also be required to pay Spouses and Children/ Widows and Orphans contributions at the rate of 1.5% of gross pay. Maximum retirement age is 70.

Persons who become pensionable staff of a local authority for the first time on or after 01 January 2013 are assigned to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme with effect from the date of appointment. The scheme is contributory and provides pension, retirement gratuity, death gratuity and survivors benefits. If you are pensionable under the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other provisions) Act 2012, you are liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution. You are required to pay contributions as follows: 3% of gross remuneration and 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a

person with no adult dependant or qualified children). The minimum age at which you may retire is allied with the State Contributory Pension age (currently 66, rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028). The maximum retirement age is 70. To qualify for a pension the successful candidate must have served a minimum of two years employment in a local authority. You are reminded that under this agreement the Council may refer you to a medical advisor at any time to determine fitness for carrying out the duties to which you have been assigned. Further information is available from the Human Resources Department.

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 existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

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 reemployment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

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 debarred from applying 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 re-employment 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 are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility)

Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants

The Department of Public Expenditure 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 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 the agreement 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).

Data Protection:

Basis for Processing your Personal Information

The basis for processing your personal data is to progress your application for the position you have applied for with Carlow County Council under the Terms of the Employment (Information) Act 1994 and Human Resources policies and procedures. Personal data sought for the purpose of recruitment will

include your name, your contact details including email address and mobile phone number, particulars of education, details regarding your record of employment and confirmation if you require an employment permit / visa / or work authorisation.

Sharing of Information

Outside of the relevant recruitment team, the information provided in your application form will only be shared for progressing the competition for which you have applied, with a designated shortlisting and / or interview board. If, following the competition, you are placed on a panel and offered a position, the information provided in your application form will form part of your Personnel File.

Storage period

Your application will be retained for one year from the date a panel for this position is formed. In exceptional circumstances panels can be extended for an additional year and your personal data will be kept until the extension has expired. Applications that are unsuccessful at interview stage will be retained for one year. Applications that are not progressed to interview stage will be destroyed post competition.

If you do not furnish the personal data requested Carlow County Council will not be able to progress your application form for the competition.

When your application is received, Carlow County Council creates a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and will be destroyed following the expiry of any panel put in place in respect of this competition.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Candidates will initially be assessed to ensure that they meet the minimum specified eligibility criteria for the position. All applications must be **TYPED**, and the form filled out in full. Handwritten submissions will **NOT** be accepted. When completing the application form, accuracy is essential as the information supplied in the form will play a central part in the selection process. **Submission of an application for employment is regarded as consent to share your information for the purposes of short-listing and recruitment.**

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, Carlow County Council may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, Carlow County Council may provide for a shortlisting process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application form.

Canvassing

Applicants are reminded that any attempt by themselves or by any persons acting on their behalf directly or indirectly by means of written communication or otherwise to canvass or otherwise influence in the candidate's favour any officer of the County Council or persons nominated by the Chief Executive to interview or examine applicants, will automatically disqualify the applicant for the position they are seeking.

Competitive Interview

Selection of candidates for appointment shall be by means of a competitive interview. The Council is committed to a process of selection on merit, based on fair and open competition. The criteria for judging suitability and ranking will be related directly to the qualification, attributes and skills required to undertake the duties and responsibilities to the standard required in the post.

Panels

Following completion of interviews, a panel may be formed, the duration of which is at the discretion of the Council. While a panel remains in force, offers of temporary or permanent employment may be made subject to confirmation of qualifications and satisfying clauses in relation to health, character or other requirements of the particular post. Persons to whom an offer of employment is made must take up duty within 1 month from the date of offer, or such extended period as the Council may agree, otherwise, the Council may decide not to appoint them.

After the Interview

Carlow County Council will automatically advise you of the result of the interview. This may be done by letter and will include a copy of your individual marking sheet which will include the marks awarded to you for the various competencies at interview and any comments made by the Interview Board.

Taking up Appointment

The local authority shall require a person to whom an appointment is offered to take up such appointment within a period of four weeks and if he/she fails to take up the appointment within such period or such longer period as the local authority in its absolute discretion may determine, the local authority shall not appoint him/her.

Carlow County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer