ANNEX A

FOI DOF/2026-0045

Request

Re: IRC306699

1. The total number of sanctioned Grade 6 posts across the Northern Ireland Civil Service as of the date of this request.
2. Of those posts, how many are currently filled by:
    - permanent appointees
    - temporary promotions or acting appointments.
3. For each Grade 6 post currently filled by temporary promotion or acting appointment, the start date of the temporary arrangement and its current duration.
4. The number of candidates who passed the most recent NICS Grade 6 general service recruitment competition and are currently on the panel awaiting placement and the length of time (in weeks or months) each such candidate has been awaiting placement.
5. The total cost of running the most recent NICS Grade 6 recruitment competition, including (where available) advertising, recruitment services, staff time, interview panels, assessment tools and administrative processing.
6. Any analysis, calculations or records held by the Department of Finance showing:
    - the cost of filling Grade 6 posts through temporary promotions or acting appointments, and
    - the cost of filling Grade 6 posts through permanent appointments from the recruitment competition, for the period from the conclusion of the competition to the present.

Clarification was requested on 5th February 2026 as below.

Please clarify what is meant by “acting appointments” as referenced in Questions 2, 3, and 6. Please also confirm whether you are seeking information relating to Deputising Allowance, as outlined in section 8.09 of the NICSHR Handbook – *Payment for Temporary Service in a Higher Grade (Deputising Allowance and Temporary Promotion).*

In line with policy, Deputising Allowance will be paid for a maximum of one month – thereafter it will automatically be replaced by temporary promotion terms if the period of acting up is to continue. Departmental Line Management determines whether a temporary promotion or a Deputising Allowance is the most appropriate arrangement. Deputising Allowance is calculated at 9% of the lower-grade pay scale, rather than the higher grade being covered. As a result, the data held

centrally by DoF does not identify the higher grade into which a member of staff is deputising and therefore this information is not held centrally by DoF. Individual NICS Departments may be able to advise if any staff have temporarily covered the duties of a Grade 6 member of staff and claimed deputising allowance.

Also, to be helpful, in respect of Question 1 the Department of Finance (DoF) does not maintain a central record of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) staff establishment figures. Instead, each NICS Department is individually responsible for determining and managing its own staffing and financial resources. This includes identifying the total number of posts required to meet its operational needs.

DoF does hold centrally the number of staff in post as at end of December 2025 (the most recent data available at the time of request).

• Regarding Question 6, part 1, can you clarify if there is a specific timeframe for your request. Part 2 is this request is competition specific to IRC306699**.**

Response was received 17th February 2026

Please exclude the term 'acting appointments' from the request at questions 2, 3 and 6.

Re question 6 the timeframe is the financial year 2025/26 (to date). I confirm part two of the request is specific to IRC 306699.

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information requested.

1. and 2.

   The Department of Finance (DoF) does not maintain a central record of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) staff establishment figures. Instead, each NICS Department is individually responsible for determining and managing its own staffing and financial resources. This includes identifying the total number of posts required to meet its operational needs.

   However, DoF does maintain central data concerning the number of permanent (including Fixed Term) Grade 6 employees, as well as those staff members temporarily promoted to Grade 6.

   The table below displays the total number of NICS Grade 6 staff, as of the end of January 2026 (the latest data available at the time of request). It also indicates whether the member of staff member is working at their substantive grade or is on a temporary promotion (TP) to Grade 6.

Employee Category	Substantive Grade 6 (HC)	TP'd to Grade 6 (HC)	Total (HC)

Permanent	292	138	430
Fixed Term	2	1	3
Total	**294**	**139**	**433**

Source: HRConnect Month End January 2026

3. Responsibility for the management and recording of temporary promotions lies with individual business areas within Departments. Temporary promotions may be implemented for a variety of operational reasons, including the need to cover vacant posts, support special projects or other business requirements.

   The following table presents the number of NICS staff on temporary promotion to Grade 6 and the commencement date (month/year) of the TP arrangement. The duration of the TP is calculated up to the end of January 2026 (the latest data available at the time of this request).

Grade 6 TP Duration	Start Date		Headcount
	Year	Month	
Under 6 Months	**2026**	Jan	4
	2026 Total		**4**
	2025	Aug	4
		Sep	17
		Oct	9
		Nov	8
		Dec	3
	2025 Total		**41**
Under 6 Months Total			**45**
6-12 Months	**2025**	Feb	2
		Mar	8
		Apr	4
		May	3
		Jun	4
		Jul	5
	2025 Total		**26**
6-12 Months Total			**26**
1-2 Years	**2025**	Jan	1
	2025 Total		**1**
	2024	Feb	1
		Mar	2
		Apr	3
		Jun	5
		Jul	1
		Aug	2
		Sep	3
		Oct	5
		Nov	4

		Dec	3
	2024 Total		**29**
1-2 Years Total			**30**
2-4 Years	**2024**	Jan	2
	2024 Total		**2**
	2023	Jan	2
		Mar	1
		May	3
		Jul	1
		Aug	1
		Sep	2
		Oct	3
		Nov	1
		Dec	3
	2023 Total		**17**
	2022	Feb	1
		Mar	1
		Apr	2
		May	1
		Jun	1
		Aug	1
		Nov	2
		Dec	1
	2022 Total		**10**
2-4 Years Total			**29**
Over 4 Years	**2022**	Jan	1
	2022 Total		**1**
	2021	Jan	1
		Aug	1
		Oct	1
	2021 Total		**3**
	2020	Jun	1
		Jul	1
	2020 Total		**2**
	2019	Mar	1
		Jul	1
	2019 Total		**2**
	2018	Dec	1
	2018 Total		**1**
Over 4 Years Total			**9**
Grand Total			**139**

Source: HRConnect Month End January 2026

4. As at the end of January 2026 (the most recent information available at the time of clarification of request), the number of candidates who passed the

most recent NICS Grade 6 general service recruitment competition and remain on the merit list awaiting placement is 60. The length of time each such candidate has been awaiting placement is 6 months.

5. This information is being withheld because it is exempt under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) exempts information whose disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation, including the department.

   The application of Section 43 (2) in this case requires a Public Interest Test (PIT) to be carried out, which can be found attached separately (**Annex C**). In carrying out the PIT the department contends that disclosure of the requested material would not be in the public interest.

6. I confirm that the Department does not hold information which includes calculations showing the following:
   •the cost of filling Grade 6 posts through temporary promotions or acting appointments, and
   •the cost of filling Grade 6 posts through permanent appointments from the recruitment competition, for the period from the conclusion of the competition to the present.

ANNEX B - INTERNAL REVIEWS

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state**: That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.