

FOI DOF/2026-0293

Request

RE: IRC306699 - G6 General Service

1. Whether there are existing or recurring vacancies at Grade 6 level that have not been filled from the current merit list.
2. The basis on which temporary promotion arrangements are being maintained where a valid competition list remains in place.
3. Whether consideration has been given to filling such roles through substantive appointment from the merit list.
4. What governance, assurance, and oversight arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles, including the requirements that appointments are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.
5. How the current approach aligns with relevant public appointments guidance and the principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency in workforce management.
6. I would also be grateful if you could confirm whether this matter has been subject to any internal review or audit, and whether any further review is planned.
7. I would therefore request a clear explanation of the current position, together with confirmation of any steps being taken to review, regularise, or transition these arrangements in line with established recruitment principles.

DoF response

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

1. Details of the total vacancies in each department are not held centrally by Department of Finance. Each Civil Service department is responsible for managing its resources – both financial and staff. Each department determines its individual workforce needs and is responsible for ensuring that any additional staffing resources are affordable. When a department identifies a vacancy that needs filled, the request is referred to NICSHR to initiate the process to fill the post. NICSHR liaises with all departments on an ongoing basis to seek to prioritise recruitment activity within allocated financial and staff resources.

As at the end of May 2026 (the most recent information available at the date of the request), NICS HR was managing a caseload of 14 General Service Grade 6 vacancies, 2 of which may be filled from competition IRC306699.

2. DoF does not hold data to determine whether vacancies currently being progressed by NICSHR are being covered by temporary promotion arrangements. The management and recording of temporary promotions are the responsibility of individual business areas within Departments, and such temporary promotion arrangements may be used for a range of business reasons, including covering vacant posts or supporting specific exercises.

The HR system allows line management to select a reason for a temporary promotion from a predefined list, which includes “vacant post.” In some cases, temporary vacancies may instead be managed through level transfer of staff from other areas or by redistributing work among existing staff, taking account of individual workloads. Additionally, a business area may have a vacant post that has not yet been requisitioned to NICSHR for filling.

Temporary promotions may be used as an interim measure to cover vacancies pending substantive appointment, or to meet specific business needs such as maternity cover or time-limited projects. Departments will appoint from a live merit list only where the post is being filled substantively and appropriate funding is available.

3. As at the date of the request, a further tranche of appointments was anticipated from competition IRC306699 but the start dates had not been confirmed.
4. As this is an internal competition, the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland Recruitment Code does not apply. However, internal appointments are generally made on merit following a selection process. Governance, assurance and oversight arrangements are set out in the NICS Career Opportunities and Promotion policy, which provides a clear corporate framework overseen by NICSHR. The policy requires all promotion activity to reflect the core principles of merit, fairness, openness, transparency and consistency.

NICSHR can confirm that Competition IRC306699 has been managed in accordance with the Career Opportunities and Promotion policy and all appointments from this competition have been made in strict merit order.

5. The NICS Career Opportunities and Promotion policy is an internal framework for managing staff development, progression and movement, while the [Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland](#) is an externally regulated framework, with formal accountability to Commissioners. Although they operate in different contexts, both frameworks share core statutory values i.e. they require appointments to be made on merit, through open, fair and transparent competition.
6. As part of our commitments in the People Strategy 2025–2030 and wider policy renewal work, internal moves at grade and on promotion are currently under review. The existing Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy will be replaced by a new Employee Mobility Policy, which will be implemented in line with the launch of Integr8.

7. Please see information at Q1 – 6 above.