

FOI DOF/2022-0335

Request

I would like to request the following under Freedom of Information:

1. The number of declared Staff Officer vacancies across the NICS at 1 September 2022, broken down by Department.
2. In addition to question one, how many Staff Officer posts are anticipated to become vacant in the next 12 months?
3. Of the recent external NICS Staff Officer competition results (IRC 275969), how many successful candidates will be offered Staff Officer posts?
4. Of the answer to question 3 above, how many of these successful candidates will be offered posts before December 2022?
5. What is the anticipated lifetime of NCS Staff Officer Competition IRC 275969 merit list?
6. How many people are currently temporarily promoted to Staff Officer, broken down by Department?
7. Of the answer to question 6 above, how many of these staff have been temporarily promoted to Staff Officer for at least one full calendar year?
8. Of the answer to question 7 above, how many of these staff TPd for one full calendar year or more are in posts that have been declared vacant?
9. The average age of NICS staff at each grade.

DoF Response

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

1. Details of the total vacancies in each department is 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 it 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 August 2022, NICSHR was managing a caseload of 425 General Service Staff Officer vacancies. A breakdown of the vacancies by Department is set out in the table below.

Department	Vacancies
DAERA	111
DE	18
DfC	98
DfE	35
DfI	26
DoF	36
DoH	26
DOJ	42
PPS	2
TEO	31
Total	425

2. This information is not held. However, see response to question 4.
3. Competition IRC275969 is a live competition to fill General Service vacancies over its' lifetime. As at end August 2022, tranche one of this competition has completed with 575 successful candidates reaching merit list. Offers are in progress for the top 337 candidates on this merit list.
4. As at end August, the first 337 successful candidates will be offered posts before December 2022. Depending on business need, there may be further offers issued on or before end of December 2022.
5. Appointments will not be made from this competition after 19 August 2024, unless there are cogent practical reasons for extending the lifetime of the competition.
6. A breakdown of the number of NICS staff temporarily promoted to General Service Staff Officer grade by Department at the end of August 2022 is set out in the table below.

Department	Vacancies
DAERA	58
DE	13
DfC	131
DfE	31
DfI	10
DoF	35
DoH	27
DOJ	47
PPS	1
TEO	7
Total	360

7. As at end of August 2022, 184 NICS staff have been temporarily promoted to General Service Staff Officer grade for at least 12 months.
8. This information is not available.

When a Department identifies a vacancy that needs filled, the request is referred to NICSHR to initiate the process to fill the post. The reason for the vacancy is not recorded centrally within DOF as it is not required as part of the central vacancy management process. Each department will have already determined its individual workforce needs and ensured that any additional staffing resources are affordable before referring the vacancy to NICSHR.

9. Information you have requested is held by the Department but is exempt under Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 21 exempts information if this information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and the department is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

Age analysis of the NICS workforce including a breakdown by grade is published by NISRA. The most recent publication "Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2022" is based on staff in post at 1 January 2022 and can be accessed at [Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service - January 2021 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/equality-statistics-for-the-northern-ireland-civil-service-january-2021)