

FOI DOF/2024-0179

**Request**

What is prison service policy on promotion lists regarding how long it lasts for and what exceptions to extending this list are considered as exceptional?

Was a merit list produced for the last NIPS Dog Instructor SO and if so, has the list now expired?

**DoF Response**

I can confirm the department holds the information requested.

Some of the 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. The NICS Career Opportunities and Promotion policy (copy appended below) sets out (at Section 5) the arrangements for filling vacancies from the internal NI Prison Service Senior Officer Promotion Competition:

[1.05 Career Opportunities and Promotion \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

A merit list from the above-mentioned competition was produced for the Senior Officer Dog Handler Instructor role on 13 February 2022. The merit list was due to expire on 12 February 2024 (internal promotion competition merit lists remain live for 2 years from the date that the first merit list is produced). The Policy provides for exceptions under which a merit list may be extended for example, if there are no plans to run a new competition before the live competition is due to expire but there are vacancies to be filled (in the following 6 month period) which could be filled from that merit list. This avoids the need to run a new promotion competition and the associated costs with doing so.

For the reason set out above, a merit list extension approval was granted for the Senior Officer Dog Handler Instructor until 11 August 2024. This arrangement will hopefully allow this merit list to be exhausted.