



Northern Ireland Assembly

Job Title:	Private Secretary to the Speaker
Salary range:	£37,925 - £39,062
Grade:	Assembly Grade 6
Directorate:	Corporate Support Unit
Business Area/Office:	Speaker's Office
Accountable to:	Adviser to the Speaker/ Head of Corporate Support (Assembly Grade 3)
Accountable for:	Clerical Supervisor and Clerical Officer

Job Purpose

The role of Private Secretary to the Speaker is a wide-ranging, interesting and challenging role. The Speaker's Office has a broad range of functions in supporting, coordinating and delivering the procedural, representative and corporate responsibilities of the Speaker of the Assembly, in line with the key values of that office of independence and impartiality.

The Private Secretary supports the Adviser to the Speaker/ Head of Corporate Support and is responsible for the day to day running of the office. This role involves working with a range of internal and external stakeholders, including Members of the Legislative Assembly (Members).

The post of the Private Secretary to the Speaker is required to be responsive to the demands of a highly pressurised and high-profile environment, which often involves work outside of normal business hours. The post holder must be available for evening and weekend work as necessary. Working hours will be dictated by the business of the Assembly and may involve work into late evenings and on occasions, at weekends and on public holidays.

Job Description:

The main duties and responsibilities of the job are to:

- Ensure the provision of high quality and timely services to support the Speaker and Deputy Speakers in the performance of their duties.
- Manage the delivery of the Speaker's Office's responsibilities in relation to plenary sittings of the Assembly, in line with the appropriate deadlines and the requirements of Standing Orders.
- Support the delivery of a range of the Speaker's statutory responsibilities under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including in relation to the legislative process and the resignation and the appointment of Members and Ministers.
- Provide or obtain accurate and timely advice, on day-to-day issues of procedure, to the Speaker and Deputy Speakers, Members, Ministerial Private Offices and others.
- Manage the delivery and provision of advice on the Speaker's Office's responsibilities in relation to protocol for issues such as inward and outward visits and the marking of civic occasions.
- Lead on the day to day management of the Speaker's representational responsibilities including supporting the Speaker in contacts with visiting ambassadors, parliamentary delegations and others.
- Coordinate the delivery of the Speaker's outreach and engagement activities, including building relationships with external contacts, contributing to the development of a programme of events and initiatives to advance the Speaker's personal priorities, and managing the delivery of those events.
- Assist with the development of papers and responses to correspondence to the Speaker on complex or sensitive issues.
- Undertake research and provide analysis, options and recommendations to assist in the drafting of speeches, briefing documents and decision-making papers.
- Assist the Adviser to the Speaker/Head of Corporate Support in supporting the Assembly Commission, the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association and other corporate projects as required.
- Assist with the development, delivery and monitoring of policies within the responsibility of the Corporate Support Unit.
- Assist the Adviser to the Speaker/Head of Corporate Support with the management of the Corporate Support Unit, including compliance with organisational policies, budgetary management, information management and procurement procedures.
- Lead, manage and develop the team of staff within the Corporate Support Unit, to ensure the delivery of team objectives within appropriate requirements and agreed service standards.
- Comply with all of the Assembly Commission's staff policies and procedures including Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures and all mandatory training requirements.

Essential Criteria:

Applicants for the post must, by the closing date for applications, have:

1. A good level of understanding of the role and functions of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the political environment in which it operates, including the current challenges facing the Assembly.

AND

2. At least a primary degree, minimum 2.2 classification, in any subject **and** at least 3 years' experience in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d). Applications will be considered from applicants with formal qualifications of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

OR

3. At least five years' experience in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d).

The experience specified above at 2. and 3. must be in the following areas:

- a) Planning and organising a diverse workload, including managing day to day tasks and queries, while delivering other projects and/or events, in accordance with organisational policy, procedures and deadlines.
- b) Using high quality oral and written communications to provide advice on day-to-day issues to internal and external stakeholders, based on analysing information from a range of sources and contacts.
- c) Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders such as work colleagues, senior manager(s)*, elected representatives or representatives of external organisations to ensure the provision of a quality service and develop future opportunities.
- d) Using initiative in a fast-paced environment to develop potential solutions to problems and issues which arise on a day-to-day basis and may pose a reputational risk to the organisation.

Shortlisting Criteria:

Should shortlisting be required, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied:

Two years' experience of supporting or assisting senior manager(s)* or elected representative(s) and adapting your approach and working methods to reflect theirs.

**Senior Manager(s) is defined as equivalent or above to an Assembly Grade 4 or NICS Grade 7 post in any public, private or voluntary and community sector organisation for example a head of a business area or unit, a director or board member etc.*

Skills and Behaviours:

The following Assembly Skills and Behaviours will be assessed during the selection process:

Delivering a quality service

...is about providing a high-quality and efficient service to our customers. It is thinking ahead, managing resources effectively and delivering work on time and to a high standard. It is also using professional or technical expertise to enhance service delivery.

Building relationships and effective communication

...is creating and maintaining positive, professional and respectful internal and external working relationships through effective and appropriate communications.

Managing and Leading Self and Others

... is setting high standards for ourselves. It is about guiding, motivating and developing others to achieve high performance. It is about engaging others in delivering a corporate vision of excellence, expertise and innovation in support of the Assembly as a legislature.

Initiating Improvement and Delivering Change

...is looking for and being open to new and innovative ideas and improvements to the service provided. It is being flexible and adapting positively and professionally to sustain performance when the situation changes, workloads increase or priorities change. It is about forming sound, evidence-based decisions and being accountable for results.

Parliamentary and Political Understanding

...is displaying an appropriate understanding of the wider political environment; what the Assembly does and how our role fits in; and the level of public scrutiny to which the actions and decisions of Assembly staff are exposed. It requires impartiality, integrity and political sensitivity.