



Northern Ireland
Assembly



Payroll and Pensions Manager Assembly Grade 6

£39,442 - £40,625

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later
than 12 noon (UK time) on 4 September 2023

Please retain a copy of this booklet for your reference
throughout the selection process.

Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the position of Payroll and Pensions Manager (AG6) at the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Assembly Commission).

The Assembly Commission operates in a dynamic political and legislative environment, and as a newly appointed member of staff, you will be provided with an excellent opportunity to make an important and valued contribution to Assembly business at Parliament Buildings.

As the Payroll and Pensions Manager you will play an important role, not only in supporting the work of the Assembly Commission, but also supporting Members of the Legislative Assembly ('MLAs' or 'Members') as they carry out their Assembly duties. This role involves working directly with MLAs and Support Staff, as well as a range of other internal and external stakeholders.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a high-profile organisation with a dedicated and inclusive team.

In turn, we offer a competitive salary, excellent pension provision and a range of other [employee benefits listed on the Recruitment website](#).

Please read the information provided in the candidate information booklet carefully and if you are interested in this exciting post, I would encourage you to submit your application.

If you would like to find out more about the post before making an application please contact Suzanne Murphy at suzanne.murphy@niassembly.gov.uk or telephone 02890 521901.

Paula McClintock
Head of Finance

About Us

The Assembly is at the heart of political and public life as the democratically elected parliament that represents the interests of Northern Ireland and its people.

Established as a key element of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the Assembly comprises 90 Members and has three main functions - making legislation, scrutinising the Executive and representing constituents.

In accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the staff, services and facilities which are needed to support the work of the Assembly are provided by the Assembly Commission, a corporate body comprising the Speaker and five Members of the Assembly. The day-to-day running of the Assembly is delegated to the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team.

The Assembly Commission therefore provides the infrastructure (including Parliament Buildings), facilities and staff to allow the Assembly and its Committees to meet and to encourage public awareness of, and engagement with, the parliamentary process. It also pays the salaries of Members and reimburses the expenses which enable them to undertake their duties both at the Assembly and in their constituency offices.

The Assembly Commission is a high-achieving and professional organisation providing impartial support to the Assembly and its Members. The Assembly Commission is independent of the Executive and the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Assembly Commission has approximately 370 staff and an annual revenue budget of £51m. [Our organisational structure is illustrated on the Northern Ireland Assembly Recruitment website.](#)

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The Person

As the new Payroll and Pensions Manager you will manage a team of five people. You will not only have a detailed knowledge of end to end payroll processing, but you will have the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. You will be able to offer advice on payroll related matters in line with legislative requirements and organisational policy.

In providing services directly to MLAs and Parties you must be willing to adopt a customer focus, as you and your team provide important payroll and pension services to, and on behalf of, MLAs and a range of people involved in parliamentary business.

About the Role

The Finance Office offers a range of financial services to the Assembly Commission, MLAs and political Parties. In order to deliver these services, the Finance Office comprises a number of small integrated teams, one of which is the Payroll and Pensions team. This team is specifically responsible for the delivery of payroll and pension services to a number of internal and external stakeholders.

This role has responsibility for overseeing the administration of all payroll payments including those to, and made on behalf of, MLAs under the provisions of legislation.¹ As well as overseeing all the routine payroll transactions, the administration includes assisting MLAs with payroll budgetary management, ensuring legislation is fully complied with and that all expenditure is accurately recorded so that all statutory reporting requirements are met.

The Payroll and Pensions Manager has responsibility for overseeing the pension administration processes for staff and MLAs, ensuring data is accurately recorded and transferred to the Pensions Administrators in a timely manner.

¹ The Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016, as amended by the Assembly members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020 (the 'Determination')

The administration for the Assembly Commission's staff pension scheme is undertaken by Civil Service Pensions and the administration for the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme is undertaken by ISIO.

The team is also responsible for providing payroll bureau services to Political Parties under the provisions of The Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016 ('the FAPP Scheme'), which offers financial support to Political Parties as they seek to support MLAs undertaking their Assembly duties.

While the Payroll and Pensions Manager is responsible for leading the team and overseeing these administrative processes, the role is also responsible for ensuring adequate procedures and controls are in place to ensure accurate payments are made in a timely manner, providing technical payroll advice, undertaking all statutory reporting and assisting with a number of key monthly reporting, forecasting and accounting tasks.

Core Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities are:

Payroll and Pension Duties

- Supervise the preparation of three monthly payrolls for approx. 900 people. This includes but is not limited to overseeing end to end payroll processing, assisting the team to resolve queries, providing guidance and support on technical payroll matters;
- Oversee the implementation of the annual pay award, ensuring it is implemented accurately and in line with agreed pay policies;
- Liaise with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on all payroll related queries, preparing technical queries, ensuring that all HMRC decisions/determinations are implemented in a timely and compliant manner;
- Assist with the preparation of monthly and annual payroll records for audit and HMRC reporting purposes, including the preparation of P45s,

submission of monthly payroll real-time information, assisting with the preparation of supplementary P11Ds for MLAs; and the preparation of P60s etc.;

- Review pay policies and procedures as required to ensure they represent best practice, reflect changes to legislation and comply with all HMRC requirements;
- Oversee the operation of the Assembly Commission's Cycle to Work Scheme;
- Ensure adherence to the provisions of the Determination or the FAPP Scheme in terms of admissibility and funding limits. This includes ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place to verify compliance;
- Oversee weekly and monthly pension administration processes, ensuring accurate and timely transfer of information to the pension administrators (i.e. Civil Service Pensions and ISIO (formerly Deloitte Total Reward and Benefits Ltd) and the Government Actuary's Department (GAD);
- Respond to queries from the pension administrators on payroll related matters, which includes but is not limited to, verification of payroll data, assisting with issuing annual benefit statements to scheme participants and assisting GAD with annual and triennial valuation exercises of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme.

Financial and Accounting Duties

- Ensure expenditure is recorded accurately, through the management of cost coding and costing rules within the computerised payroll system, to ensure all internal and statutory reporting is accurate;
- Provide monthly payroll information to managers to assist with the reconciliation of Trial Balance payroll control accounts;
- Assist with the monthly forecasting of payroll related costs, which includes providing up to date information on all payroll costs, analysing variances,

providing corrections and dealing with all costing queries;

- Monitor the annual budget for each MLA's support staff costs, by recording current staffing costs and calculating the value of committed expenditure;
- Ensure all audit and corporate governance requirements in relation to payroll are met and updated accordingly. This includes but is not limited to ensuring controls are appropriate and reflect best practice, implementing audit agreed audit recommendations in a timely manner and participating in scheduled internal and external audits.

Managing Information

- Provide reliable, consistent, high quality, timely information and advice on payroll and pension matters to staff, MLAs and Support staff. This may include advice to MLAs in relation to the administration of the Determination and how it relates to payroll, through the provision of payroll surgeries;
- Undertake research and investigatory work in order to provide timely and accurate analysis of information or policy issues in relation to payroll and pension;
- Collate and analyse information to assist with the preparation of Assembly questions, press queries, Freedom of Information requests and reports for senior managers;
- Support the Finance Office's Information Asset Owner by reviewing document management and retention policies and privacy notices to ensure compliance with all GDPR requirements.

System Administration and Contract Management

- Carry out system administration duties on the computerised payroll system, including but not limited to setting up new pay elements; amending pay scale tables, maintaining and testing payroll calculations

etc.;

- Assist managing the contract for maintaining and developing the computerised payroll system. This will be undertaken by supporting the contract manager, in logging and resolving payroll queries in a timely manner, carrying out system testing following upgrades etc.;
- Manage the contract for pension administration services for the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme.

Using Technology

- Use computerised payroll systems for end to end processing of payroll transactions, to assist with the accuracy and timeliness of payments, to ensure compliance with statutory reporting requirements and to assist with forecasting and budgetary management;
- Effectively use Microsoft Office and internal report writing software to undertake payroll administration, analyse payroll and pension information and to prepare and present documentation including letters, reports or memos etc.;
- Manage a small team of payroll and pension administrators, ensuring all policies and procedures are complied with. This includes overseeing operational tasks, managing attendance and sick absence in line with corporate policies;
- Provide appropriate induction, training, support and development for team members as required;
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders including Assembly Commission staff, MLAs, and Support staff;
- Attend meetings with MLAs and Party representatives, take minutes and capture actions/notes, proactively following up on actions to ensure timely delivery.

General

- Contribute to the delivery of appropriate projects through participation in working groups, or providing advice as required;
- Comply with all of the Assembly Commission's policies and procedures, including Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies_and procedures, and undertaking all mandatory training requirements;
- Carry out any other duties which may be required by the Assembly Commission.

Essential Criteria

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

1. Attained at least a BTEC Level 3 qualification in Payroll Techniques or equivalent*,

AND

At least three years' experience of each of the areas detailed at a) - d):

- a) Undertaking end to end processing of a weekly or monthly payroll for 300+ employees. This should include but not be limited to calculating and processing gross to net pay amounts, calculating and processing overtime payments, adding new starters, processing leavers, calculating and processing statutory and/or occupational sick pay payments, calculating and processing statutory and/or maternity or paternity payments; amending payroll records, submitting monthly HMRC records, using the Government Gateway to receive and update tax code notifications; processing student loan deductions, processing court deduction orders, calculating and processing unpaid annual leave; calculating and processing pay in lieu of notice etc;
- b) Liaising with HMRC to resolve payroll queries, undertaking statutory reporting and making monthly PAYE payments;

- c) Providing payroll advice to internal and external stakeholders to assist with resolving queries;
- d) Proficient in using a computerised payroll system and Microsoft Office packages, such as Excel, MS Word etc. to analyse and communicate payroll information to stakeholders to assist with budgetary management, forecasting or policy review;

AND

At least two years' experience of leading and managing a payroll team to ensure the delivery of payroll services and the quality, accuracy and timeliness of work.

* The onus is on the applicant to clearly illustrate that their qualification is equivalent to the one specified above. All applicants should list all of the modules studied.

OR

- 2. At least five years' experience** of each of the areas detailed at a) - d) above;

AND

At least two years' experience of leading and managing a payroll team to ensure the delivery of payroll services and the quality, accuracy and timeliness of work.

** Candidates who do not currently hold at least a BTEC level 3 in Payroll Techniques, will be expected to complete this or an equivalent payroll qualification within two years of successfully completing their probationary period.

Assembly Skills & 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.

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.

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.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Assembly Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability,

marital status, sexual orientation or people with dependents or without. **All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit.**

Location

The successful applicant will be based in Parliament Buildings, Belfast. The role offers hybrid working whereby staff will have the opportunity to work from home for part of the week.

Completing the form

Only the information presented in the application form will be considered by the selection panel. CVs or other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms. Completed online forms must be submitted by **12 noon (UK time) on 4 September 2023**.

[Launch the application portal and complete the application form.](#)

Application forms submitted after the closing time and date will not be accepted.

Recruitment and Selection Framework

There are five elements within the Recruitment and Selection Framework:

Experience – the knowledge or mastery of an activity or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it.

Ability – the aptitude or potential to perform to the required standard.

Technical – the demonstration of specific professional skills, knowledge or qualifications.

Assembly Skills and Behaviours – the actions and activities that people do which result in effective performance in a job.

Strengths – the things we do regularly, do well and that motivate us.

The elements that will be assessed for this role are Experience, Technical and Assembly Skills and Behaviours and the selection method(s) that will be used are detailed below. Further information on the [Recruitment and Selection Framework](#) are included in the [Guidance on Recruitment and Selection for Applicants](#).

Stages of the Selection Process

Eligibility Sift

The essential criteria reflect the experience and knowledge that an applicant must possess in order to be able to undertake the role. An eligibility sift will be carried out on the basis of the information contained in the essential criteria section of the application form. You must therefore demonstrate clearly in your form how, and to what extent, you meet with the essential criteria for the post.

Shortlisting

The Selection panel reserve the right to use shortlisting as part of the selection process for this post. Should shortlisting be used, the shortlisting criterion listed in the Job Specification will be applied. The selection panel reserve the right to set a minimum standard for the shortlisting criterion and/or to only invite those who score highest in the shortlisting criterion to the next stage of the selection process. If shortlisting is not necessary, all applicants who have demonstrated the essential criteria will proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

Interview Stage

Applicants invited to interview which will assess the information contained in this booklet.

Interviews are planned for week commencing: 25 September 2023

Further Interview Stage

The selection panel reserves the right to hold a further interview stage if deemed necessary.

Further information on the Recruitment and Selection process is available in the [Recruitment and Selection Framework](#) and [Guidance on Recruitment and Selection for Applicants](#).

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) supports applicants with disabilities or those with a long-term impairment or health condition, that is expected to last for at least 12 months and which means that they cannot meet the shortlisting criteria. In these instances, provided that they have demonstrated in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the role, the applicant will be invited to interview. If you are applying under GIS it is therefore important that you include all relevant information in your application form. You should refer to the Guidance on Recruitment and Selection for Applicants for more information.

When considering applications made under GIS, the Human Resources Office reserves the right to request medical information from the applicant's general practitioner (through the applicant and with their consent).

If you are disabled and consider that you require reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate in any part of the selection process, please indicate this on the application or contact us at recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk.

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office – contact details are available on NIDirect:

[Find contact details for your local Jobs and Benefits Office](#).

Key Employee Benefits

We offer an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing by one day per year up to a maximum of 30 days. In addition, we offer 12 days of public and privilege holidays.

The Assembly Commission will enrol you into the Civil Service Pension Scheme from the first day of employment. Staff contribute between 4 and 9% of salary and the Assembly Commission contributes a further 28 to 35% of salary,

depending on your rate of pay.

We also offer a range of non-salary benefits which include hybrid working; supportive family friendly policies; flexi-time; health and wellbeing initiatives including an Employee Assistance Programme; supported learning and development; Cycle to Work Scheme; Payroll Giving; and volunteering opportunities.

The successful applicant will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.

[View further details of our employee benefits.](#)

Terms and Conditions of Appointment

This is a permanent appointment. The successful candidate will be an employee of the Assembly Commission. All appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

The standard working week is 37 hours, (excluding meal breaks). Working hours will be dictated by the mode of operation of the Assembly and may involve work into late evenings and on occasions, at weekends and on public holidays.

The taking of annual leave will be influenced by the Finance Office reporting timetable.

Equality Monitoring

Under Fair Employment legislation, we are required to monitor the community background and gender of those applying for jobs. You must therefore complete the equal opportunities monitoring section of the application form when applying for the post.

Merit List

The merit list of applicants deemed to be appointable will remain “live” for 18 months from the date it is signed and may be used to fill any further permanent

or fixed term opportunities for the same post.

Communication during the recruitment process

The Assembly Recruitment Team will issue most communication electronically. You should therefore regularly check your email account to make sure you do not miss any important communication. Please note, sometimes the Recruitment Team emails are automatically filtered as spam by email providers.

Further Information

If you require more information on the recruitment process, please contact the Assembly Recruitment Team on 02890 521741.

Further information about the Assembly can be obtained on the [Northern Ireland Assembly website](#).

The Candidate Information Booklet does not constitute any term or condition of employment.