



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



## Legal Adviser

£66,376 - £68,349

## Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later  
than **12 noon (UK time) on 17 February 2025**

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

# Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the position of Legal Adviser AG4 in the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Assembly Commission).

The Assembly operates in a dynamic political and parliamentary environment, and as a newly appointed Legal Adviser, you will have the opportunity to make an important and valued contribution to Assembly business at Parliament Buildings.

Working at the Assembly offers a rewarding career. This is an exciting opportunity to join a high-profile organisation with a dedicated and inclusive team. Legal Advisers work in the Legal Services Office, an integral part of the Legal, Governance and Research Directorate. The function of the Legal Services Office is to provide specialised, in-house legal advice and assistance to the Assembly, the Speaker, Assembly Committees, the Assembly Commission, the Clerk/Chief Executive and other senior staff.

In turn, we offer a competitive salary. We also offer excellent pension provision where you contribute between 7.35% of salary and the Assembly Commission will contribute a further 34.25%.

We offer an annual leave allocation 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. We also offer 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 Helen Smyth at [helen.smyth@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:helen.smyth@niassembly.gov.uk) or telephone 02890 521836.



**Tara Caul**

**Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services**

# 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 (SMT).

The Assembly Commission provides the infrastructure, 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 400 staff and an annual revenue budget of £68m. [Our organisational structure is illustrated on the Northern Ireland Assembly Recruitment website.](#)

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## **About the Role**

Legal Advisers contribute to the provision of a specialist in-house legal advice service to the Assembly, its Committees and the Speaker. They provide objective legal advice, independent of government, to support the Assembly in its scrutiny and legislative roles. They advise on legislation, procedural matters and committee work to assist political actors in achieving their goals. They represent the Assembly and Assembly Commission in proceedings before courts, tribunals and inquiries. They also advise and assist key corporate clients in the Assembly Commission. In this role they work at a senior level to manage contractual, employment and commercial legal issues on behalf of the Commission.

## **The Person**

You may previously have worked effectively within a team in the past, and will be expected to work collaboratively within the Legal Services Office. You will have the ability to quickly build new working relationships and communicate clearly and effectively as you carry out your role.

You must also be willing and keen to adopt a client facing focus, as you engage with a wide range of people involved within business at Parliament Buildings.

## **Core Responsibilities**

The role of a Legal Adviser is that of in-house counsel. The successful applicant will:

- Provide comprehensive, thoroughly-researched, sound and timely legal advice to the following clients:
  - the Speaker, on the legislative competence of legislation under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public law issues in parliamentary procedure, and the interpretation of standing orders.
  - Assembly committees, on legislative scrutiny (including scrutiny of replacement EU acts under the Windsor Framework), their statutory and other powers, privilege, compliance with Standing Orders,

public law issues in parliamentary procedure and the conduct of committee inquiries.

- the Assembly Commission in relation to any legal issue arising in connection with the discharge of its functions.
  - Corporate clients at a senior level, on constitutional and other public law matters, contract and employment law, information law, public procurement and members' expenditure.
- Provide legal advice to the Director and Head of Legal Services Office.
  - Deliver legal advice which supports Members in the development of legislative proposals.
  - Draft legal and statutory documents including standing orders, statutory rules and determinations, and contracts.
  - Conduct legal research including the use of electronic and other resources to provide authoritative advice on unfamiliar areas of law at short notice.
  - Personally represent individuals and committees in legal proceedings and inquiries, or manage external counsel and solicitors to provide such representation.
  - Conduct legal proceedings by or against the Assembly and the Assembly Commission, for example judicial review proceedings, civil claims and employment proceedings.
  - Maintain membership of the relevant professional body (the Bar of Northern Ireland or the Law Society of Northern Ireland), undertake sufficient and relevant training, and act in accordance with the applicable code of conduct in the discharge of your duties.
  - Develop and maintain effective relationships with senior staff and political actors in the Assembly and colleagues in other legislatures.
  - Regularly participate in or lead teams to deliver legislation or corporate and organisational objectives.
  - Comply with all of the Assembly Commission's staff policies and procedures including the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies.
  - Manage information and records in accordance with established policies and statutory requirements.

- Carry out such other duties as the Assembly Commission reasonably requires of you.

## **Essential Criteria**

At the closing date for applications, applicants must:

1. Hold a first or bachelor's degree of minimum 2.1 classification (or equivalent);

**AND**

2. be a barrister or solicitor who is entitled to practice in Northern Ireland;

**AND**

3. have at least four years' post-qualification experience ('PQE') in law to include evidence of the following:

- (a) interpreting legislation and legal documents;
- (b) demonstrating legal analytical ability and sound judgement in the resolution of complex legal problems; and
- (c) communicating with clients with clarity and confidence.

**AND**

4. provide evidence of:
  - a) a knowledge of constitutional, administrative and human rights law in Northern Ireland; and
  - b) a knowledge of the role of the Assembly in the political and institutional relationships in Northern Ireland.

## **Shortlisting Criteria**

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

At least three years' PQE in providing legal advice in three of the following areas: constitutional law; administrative law; human rights law; procurement and contract law; data protection and information law; EU/assimilated EU law.



## **Assembly 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.

### **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.

## **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 Assembly Commission operates a Hybrid Working Policy and the balance

between working in Parliament Buildings and working at home will vary: you will attend Parliament Buildings for at least three days each week and additional office attendance will be governed by business need.

## **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 17 February 2025**.

[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, Assembly Skills and Behaviours and Strengths. 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 may use shortlisting as part of the selection process for this post. Should shortlisting be used, the shortlisting criterion listed at page 4 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 will be assessed using the Essential Criteria, Strengths and Assembly Skills and Behaviours as outlined above.

Part of the interview process will be the delivery of a presentation. The subject of the presentation will be advised to the applicant on the day of the interview and the applicant will be expected to present information to the selection panel.

### **Disability Confident**

The Assembly Commission is a Disability Confident Committed Employer and for our recruitment, we have committed to:

- ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible;

- communicating and promoting vacancies;
- offering an interview to disabled people who meet the essential criteria for the job (the Guaranteed Interview Scheme); and
- anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required.

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 by offering an interview to disabled people who meet the essential criteria for the job. 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.

If an assessment or test is used as a shortlisting tool, then applicants applying under GIS will not be required to complete the assessment or test and will be offered a guaranteed interview, provided that they demonstrate in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the role.

In instances where an assessment or test forms part of the selection process and is not a shortlisting tool, then all applicants must meet the minimum standard required for that assessment or test, including those applying under GIS.

If you wish to submit your application under the GIS, or if you require adjustments to enable you to participate in any part of the selection process, please indicate this on the application form or contact us at [recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk). **Please note that you will be required to provide written confirmation of your disability or long-term health condition from a general practitioner or an appropriate specialist, by the closing date for applications.**

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 a competitive salary, excellent pension provision and generous annual leave allowance.

We also offer a range of non-salary benefits which include hybrid working; 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 expected to undertake 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 pre-appointment enquiries which include an Access NI basic check and 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 may be influenced by the Parliamentary 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 normally 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 or email us at [recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk).

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.**