Northern Ireland Assembly

Deputy Communications Officer (2 posts)

£44,039 - £45,318

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later than **12 noon (UK time) on 18 September 2026**

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

Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the position of Deputy Communications Officer AG6 in the Northern Ireland Assembly (the Assembly).

The Assembly operates in a dynamic political and parliamentary environment, and as a newly appointed Deputy Communications Officer, you will be provided with an excellent opportunity to make an important and valued contribution reflecting Assembly business at Parliament Buildings and beyond.

Working at the Assembly offers a rewarding career. In this role you will project and explain the work of the Assembly in a range of formats and to a range of audiences. This is an exciting opportunity to join a high-profile organisation with a dedicated and inclusive team.

In turn, we offer a competitive salary and an excellent pension provision where you contribute 5.65% 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 would like to find out more about the post before making an application please contact Chris Andrews at email chris.andrews@niassembly.gov.uk or telephone 02890 521884.

John Hart

Head of Communications

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 work of the Executive and representing constituents. It is the prime source of authority in respect of all devolved responsibilities.

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. The day-to-day running of the Assembly is delegated to the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

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 400 staff and an annual budget of approximately £70m. Our organisational structure is illustrated on the Northern Ireland Assembly Recruitment website.

Contents

About the Role....2
The Person....2
Core Responsibilities....2
Essential Criteria....4
Shortlisting Criteria....5
Assembly Commission Leadership Strengths (Leadership Strengths)....6
Equal Opportunities Statement....6
Location....6
Completing the form....7
Recruitment and Selection Framework....7
Stages of the Selection Process....8
Disability Confident....8
Key Employee Benefits....9
Terms and Conditions of Appointment....10
Equality Monitoring....10
Merit List....10
Communication during the recruitment process....10
Further Information....11

About the Role

The Communications Office business area in the Northern Ireland Assembly is responsible for providing information to the media, the public, government departments and other stakeholders through various means including media relations, broadcasting services and digital channels. Information communicated covers the Speaker's Office, plenary and committee business, the Assembly Commission and public engagement activities.

The Deputy Communications Officer, as part of the Communications Office team, is responsible for providing information concerning the work and membership of the Assembly, its Committees, the Speaker's Office and the Assembly Commission to the media, the public, Executive Departments, external bodies and other stakeholders.

The Person

You will be an experienced communications professional with previous experience in communicating effectively with a wide range of audiences. You will be an enthusiastic professional who gets satisfaction from applying your skills to deliver engaging communications outputs and keeping up to date with new ways of delivering them in the digital environment.

You must also be willing and keen to adopt a customer facing focus, as you engage and work collaboratively and creatively – both across and beyond your own team.

Core Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities are:

- Identifying, developing and leading on communications opportunities to promote the work of Assembly Statutory, Standing and Ad-hoc Committees, public-facing business areas (e.g. Events, Public Engagement, Education

Service, Research, Building Services), the Speaker's Office and the Assembly Commission.

- Attending external Committee meetings or other events in venues (outside of Parliament Buildings) across Northern Ireland to manage attending media or at the request of the Committee Clerk / Head of Communications.
- Creating strategic and engaging content for a wide range of platforms and audiences, including news releases, web pages, advertisements, social media posts, graphics, and videos.
- Planning, delivering and managing a programme of audience-focused, cross-channel communications and marketing campaigns, including budget for paid-for activity.
- Responding to and managing media enquiries in a timely and professional manner, including liaising with senior staff, developing and managing drafts, obtaining sign-off, issuing responses, recording and filing responses and monitoring output.

- Liaising with members of the media to manage enquiries, gather additional information, provide guidance and coordinate interview bids.

- Liaising as required with the Assembly's media monitoring provider.

- Contributing to the effective staffing of the Communications Office by participating in a duty rota to ensure continuous coverage for communications activity and media enquiries, during standard business hours (i.e. 9am-5pm) and on an out-of-hours basis when required according to business need.
- Developing and maintaining accurate media contact lists, ensuring the central database is regularly updated and effectively managed.
- Drafting content to prepare the Speaker, Committee Chairs and senior staff for media opportunities e.g. lines-to-take, briefing notes, speaking notes etc.
- Advising the Speaker, Committee Chairs, senior staff and business areas on communications objectives and creating communications plans to realise those objectives, including advising on the best methods, messages and channels to reach and influence target audiences.

- Tracking, measuring and evaluating communications activities and reporting on successes and learnings / insight.
- Researching and implementing creative and innovative approaches to communication and engagement.
- Building and maintaining positive working relationships with media personnel, colleagues, and stakeholders to support and enhance coverage of the Assembly and its work.
- Representing the Assembly at internal and external meetings and representing the Communications Office on Assembly-wide working groups.
- Prepare and deliver presentations to internal teams in the Assembly and represent the organisation at inter-parliamentary communications sessions, including travel to other legislatures.
- Facilitating and supporting media personnel's access to and accommodation within Parliament Buildings;
- Developing concepts and writing specifications to inform creative agencies providing advice and support to the Assembly Commission (e.g. photography, design and branding).
- Developing and managing key procedures and policy/guidance.
- Managing, motivating and developing staff and evaluating staff performance.
- Complying 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.
- Managing information and records in accordance with established policies and statutory requirements.
- Carrying out other duties that the Assembly Commission may reasonably require of you.

Essential Criteria

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

1. A primary degree (minimum 2:2 classification) in journalism, media studies, public relations, communications, or a related subject. Applications will also

be considered from candidates who hold formal qualifications of an equivalent or higher standard in the relevant subject area to those specified above.

AND

2. At least 3 years' experience in the areas specified at (a) – (e) below;

   OR

3. At least 5 years' experience in the areas specified at (a) – (e) below:

   (a) Working in a communications, public relations or news environment, regularly providing engaging content (including digital content) for publication;

   (b) Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with key stakeholders such as media, colleagues, senior management, or members of the public to deliver organisational objectives.

   (c) Excellent written and verbal communication skills used to effectively communicate complex or detailed information to a wide range of stakeholders such as media, colleagues, senior management, or members of the public.

   (d) Assessing context, planning and delivering communications activity to support organisational objectives.

   (e) Planning and organising a diverse workload in a fast paced environment, delivering high quality work to tight deadlines and in line with organisational policy and procedures.

Shortlisting Criteria

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

Significant experience of responding effectively to media enquiries under tight deadlines, delivering responses that support and protect organisational reputation.

Assembly Commission Leadership Strengths (Leadership Strengths)

The role is a **Leader** and the following Leadership Strengths will be assessed during the selection process: Seeing the Big Picture, Judgement and Building Effective Networks.

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. Access to a form of transport is necessary as travel to Assembly events located throughout Northern Ireland will be required from time to time.

The Assembly Commission operates a Hybrid Working Policy and the balance between working in Parliament Buildings and working at home will depend on

business and service 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 **18 September 2026**.

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:

The elements that will be assessed for this role are Experience, Technical and Leadership Strengths 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 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 above 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.

Written Assessment

As part of this stage of the selection process, applicants will be required to complete a written exercise. Further details will be provided to applicants who successfully pass the sift stage.

Interview Stage

Applicants invited to interview will be assessed using the Essential Criteria and Leadership Strengths as outlined above.

Further Interview Stage

The Selection Panel reserves the right to hold a further interview stage if deemed necessary.

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

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.

Where a Shortlisting Criteria is included, applicants applying under GIS will not be required to complete this section of the application form.

Where a job related assessment or test forms part of the selection process, all applicants must complete and meet the minimum standard required for that assessment or test, including those applying under GIS.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you require adjustments to assist 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. **Please note that you will be required to provide written confirmation of your disability from a general practitioner or an appropriate specialist when requested by the Human Resources Office.** If you do not have written confirmation available at the time of submitting your application, please arrange to obtain it at the earliest opportunity so that you can provide it promptly when requested to do so**.**

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; 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 pre-appointment enquiries which will include security vetting to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level. The successful candidate will also be required to satisfactorily complete 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.

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.