

ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER - CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

Panel A - Confined to Employees of Carlow County Council Only

Panel B – Confined to Local Authority Sector Only

Panel C - Open Competition

CLOSING DATE: 12 noon on Friday, 13th September 2024.

FOUR APPLICATION FORMS (one original completed signed copy and three full copies of the original) SHOULD BE RETURNED TO:

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
HUMAN RESOURCES SECTION
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
ATHY ROAD
CARLOW
R93 E7R7**

CANDIDATES WHO SEND THEIR APPLICATIONS BY POST SHOULD ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO ENSURE DELIVERY NOT LATER THAN THE LATEST TIME FOR ACCEPTANCE.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

- A Curriculum Vitae or applications by email or fax will **NOT** be accepted.
- All applications forms **MUST be typed** and before signing the form, please ensure that you have replied fully to all sections/questions.
- You should satisfy yourself that you are eligible under the regulations – copy of educational results **MUST** be submitted with your application form to determine your eligibility for the open competition. The Council cannot undertake to investigate the eligibility of candidates in advance of the interview/examination, and hence persons who are ineligible, but nevertheless, enter, may put themselves to unnecessary expense.
- Carlow County Council is **not** responsible for any expenses which may be incurred by the candidate in attendance for aptitude test or interview.
- Applications received after the closing date and time specified will **not** be accepted.
- Applications received that do not comply with the requirements set out in the booklet, i.e. one original fully completed signed copy and 3 copies of the application form, and copy of educational results for “Open Competition” will **not** be accepted.
- Carlow County Council may decide, by reason of the number of persons seeking admission to the competition, to carry out a shortlisting procedure. Shortlisting will be based on qualifications, relevant experience and information submitted on the application form. The number of persons to be invited for interview shall be determined by Carlow County Council.

Qualifications

1. CHARACTER

Each candidate must be of good character.

2. HEALTH

Each candidate must be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

3. EDUCATION, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, ETC.

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms –

- (i)
 - a) have obtained at least Grade D (or a Pass), in Higher or Ordinary Level, in five subjects (or four subjects if Irish is included) from the approved list of subjects in the Department of Education Established Leaving Certificate Examination of Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme including Irish and/or English and one of the following: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics, **and**
 - b) have obtained at least Grade C (or Honours) in Higher Level (or Honours) papers in three subjects in that examination (or two subjects if Irish and/or one of the following is included: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics) **or**
- (ii) Have obtained a comparable standard in an equivalent examination, **or**
- (iii) Hold a third level qualification of at least degree standard.

Confined Competition – Panel B

- (iv) To be a serving employee in a Local Authority or Regional Assembly and have at least **two years'** satisfactory experience in a post of Clerical Officer or an analogous post.

THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER

The Assistant Staff Officer is a key support position within the Council and is assigned to a service delivery area or to support a functional area as required. The Assistant Staff Officer will work under the direction and management of the Administrative Officer or analogous grade or other employee designated by the Senior Executive Officer or Director of Services as appropriate. The role involves supporting managers and colleagues and working as part of a team in meeting work goals and objectives and delivering quality services to internal and external customers.

The Assistant Staff Officer role requires excellent administrative, interpersonal, communication and other particular skills and expertise depending on assignment and may also be required to deputise for a Staff Officer from time to time. The Assistant Staff Officer will be expected to use initiative and work to a high standard and will be required to operate the Council's existing and future IT systems as part of their work. The successful candidate will be expected to carry out their duties in a manner that enhances public trust and confidence and ensures impartial decision making.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate:

- Knowledge and understanding of the structures and functions of local government
- Knowledge of current local government issues
- Understanding of the role of Assistant Staff Officer
- Relevant administrative experience
- Experience of working as part of a team
- Experience of preparing reports and correspondence
- Knowledge and experience of operating ICT systems
- Ability to work on own initiative
- Ability to provide excellent customer service
- Ability to plan and prioritise workload
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Flexibility and openness to change

The main duties and responsibilities of the role of Assistant Staff Officer (Grade IV) include, but are not limited to the following:

1. To support the line manager to ensure the section or department work programmes are implemented to deliver on the Council's Corporate Plan and operational plans.
2. To communicate and liaise effectively with employee, supervisors and line managers in other sections and customers in relation to operational matters for their section or work area.
3. To prepare reports, correspondence and other documents as necessary.
4. Attending and servicing meetings as required.
5. Dealing efficiently and communicating effectively and professionally at all times with stakeholders including local authority staff, elected members, community groups, businesses and residents.
6. Liaising with and responding to other local authorities, government departments and statutory agencies where required.
7. To provide assistance and support in the delivery of projects as required.
8. Create and maintain any records or databases required.
9. Use all technology including IT and financial systems and any equipment assigned.
10. Participate in the Performance Management Development System
11. Complete all essential training successfully.
12. Carry out duties in a politically neutral and impartial manner that enhances public trust.
13. To ensure high levels of customer service, responding to queries and requests for information in a professional and courteous and timely manner.
14. To support the line manager to communicate, implement and manage all change management initiatives within the relevant area of responsibility.
15. To supervise employees within their team or programmes of work within their area of responsibility, providing support to team members or colleagues as required.
16. To participate in corporate activities and responsibilities appropriate to the grade.
17. To be in compliance with Health and Safety legislative requirements, policies and procedures and safe systems of work.
18. To deputise for line manager or equivalent when required.
19. To undertake any other duties of a similar level and responsibilities as may be required from time to time.

Essential Requirements for the Post

Candidates are required to demonstrate a clear **knowledge and understanding** of:

- Local authority services, its key stakeholders and relationships
- Local government structures and its democratic role and mandate
- Current local government issues
- Key policies guiding the local government sector
- Public service values

The ideal candidate must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient competence in the following **key skills** which are essential for the role:

- Communications and interpersonal
- People management
- Organisational and time management
- Problem solving
- Administration and report writing
- Operation of ICT systems and standard office software packages

Candidates must also demonstrate a proven track record in the following:

- Customer service
- Working effectively as part of a team
- Planning and prioritisation of workloads
- Dealing effectively with conflicting demands
- Working under pressure to tight deadlines
- Adapting to change
- Project management
- Budget management
- Acting on own initiative
- Ability to communicate effectively across different levels within an organisation
- Maintaining confidentiality

COMPLETING A COMPETENCY BASED APPLICATION FORM

A Competency Based Application Form requires, you, as the candidate, to describe some of your personal achievements to date, to demonstrate certain competencies (necessary skills & qualities) required for the position you are applying for. All question areas must be answered, as you will be questioned on all areas should you be called for interview.

You should describe situation(s) from your own experience, which you think is the best example(s) of what you have done which demonstrates the specific competency. It is essential that you describe how you demonstrated the skill or quality in question. The example(s) may be drawn from your experience in various settings, including employment, community, sporting or voluntary. Please do not use the same example to illustrate your answer to more than two areas of competence. Please note the interview board may look for additional examples of where you demonstrated the skills required for the post.

Carlow County Council is seeking candidates that demonstrate strong administrative and communication skills. They must also be self-motivated and committed to delivering quality public services. Key Competencies for the post have been identified as essential for the role of Assistant Staff Officer. These competencies will be assessed under the following headings:

Competencies for the Post

Key Competencies for the post include the following and candidates will be expected to **demonstrate sufficient evidence within their application form** of competence under each of these. Please take note of these when completing the application form as any short-listing or interview processes will be based on the information provided by candidates:

Candidates *Thinking Style* and approach to:

- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Decision making
- ✓ Analytical skills

Candidates approach to *Delivering Results*:

- ✓ Organising and planning workloads
- ✓ Business planning & reporting
- ✓ Goal setting
- ✓ Budget management
- ✓ Achieving efficiencies
- ✓ Quality customer service

Candidates *Interpersonal & People Orientation Skills*:

- ✓ Written and oral communications
- ✓ Persuading and influencing others
- ✓ Team-working
- ✓ Establishing and maintaining key internal and stakeholder relationships
- ✓ Dealing with conflict

Candidates *Personal Effectiveness*:

- ✓ Resilience and Personal Well-Being
- ✓ Commitment to integrity & Public Service Values
- ✓ Personal Motivation
- ✓ Initiative and creativity
- ✓ Understanding the structures and environment within which the local authority sector operates
- ✓ Political awareness

PARTICULARS OF OFFICE

The Post:

The post is whole time, permanent and pensionable.

The post holder shall not engage in any gainful occupation, other than as an employee of a local authority, to such an extent as to impair the performance of his or her duties as an employee of a local authority or in any occupation which might conflict with the interests of the local authority or which might be inconsistent with the discharge of his/her duties as a local authority employee.

Duties:

You shall perform such duties as may from time to time be assigned to you in relation to your employment and as may be appropriate to any particular function of any local authority for which the Chief Executive is responsible and carry out such instructions as may be given in relation to the performance of your duties. You shall, if required, act for an employee of a higher level. You may be required to work outside your normal job description from time to time.

Salary:

The current salary scale applicable to the post is €33,760 - €52,773 per annum:

The salary shall be fully inclusive and shall be as determined from time to time. Holders of the post will be paid at the appropriate point on the salary scale in accordance with the relevant Department Circular. The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay.

Work Base:

Carlow County Council reserves the right to assign you to any department or premises in use by the Council, now or in the future. Changes in location of employment will not result in payment of disturbance money or other compensation. The person appointed will be required to provide him/herself at his/her own expense with the necessary mode of travel to and from work.

Working Hours:

The working hours at present provide for a five day, thirty-five hours working week, hours may vary from time to time. Carlow County Council operate a flexible time scheme with the earliest start time of 8.30 a.m. and a latest start time of 10.00 a.m. and the earliest finishing time of 16.30 p.m. and the latest finishing time of 18.00 p.m. Lunch break consisting of a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours must be taken between 12.30 p.m. and 14.30 p.m. The Flexi Leave Scheme is available, on request.

There may be a requirement to work additional hours from time to time for which Time in Lieu on a time for time basis will apply. Overtime does not apply to this post. All hours of work will be subject to and recorded in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 and the Organisation of Working Time Act (Regulations) 2001. The working hours may be reviewed at any time by the Council. The post may require flexibility in working outside of normal hours, including at weekends, as necessary. No additional remuneration will be paid in respect of such activities.

Residence:

The holder of the post shall reside in the district in which his/her duties are to be performed or within a reasonable distance thereof as determined by Carlow County Council.

References:

Each candidate may be required to submit as references, the names and addresses of two responsible persons to whom he/she is well known but not related, at least one of whom must be a former/current employer. Candidates may be required to submit documentary evidence to the local authority in support of their application.

Probation:

Where a person who is not already a permanent employee of a Local Authority is employed, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) there shall be a period after such employment takes effect during which such person shall hold such position on probation;
- (b) such period shall be one year, but the Chief Executive may at his or her discretion extend such period;
- (c) such person will cease to hold such position at the end of the period of probation unless during such period the Chief Executive has certified that the service of such person is satisfactory.
- (d) the period at (a) above may be terminated on giving one weeks' notice as per the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts;
- (e) there may be assessment(s) during the probationary period.

Health:

For the purposes of satisfying the requirement as to health it will be necessary for each successful candidate, before he/she is appointed, to undergo a medical examination by a qualified medical practitioner to be nominated by the local authority.

Annual Leave:

The current annual leave entitlement is 30 days. Granting of annual leave, payment for annual leave and arrangement for public holidays will be governed by the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (as amended)

Sick Leave:

The terms of the Public Service Sick Pay Scheme will prevail.

Training:

It is a condition of employment that successful candidates will be required to participate in training programmes relevant to the skills necessary for the performance of the duties attaching to the post and to attend all mandatory training.

Health & Safety:

The holder of the post shall co-operate with the terms of Carlow County Council's Safety Statement and Major Emergency Plan. It is a condition of employment that the successful candidate will be required to participate in training programmes relevant to the skills necessary for the performance of the duties attaching to the post. He/She shall familiarise him/herself with the safety rules and procedures and make proper use of all safety, clothing and equipment. Failure to comply with the terms of the Safety Statement may result in a disciplinary action.

Use of Modern Technology:

The successful candidate will be required to use all equipment provided, including computers, hand held terminals, mobile telephone, electronic equipment, video or other monitoring equipment and any other new technology which may be introduced in the future.

Superannuation & Retirement:

If you are pensionable under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998 and are liable to pay Class A PRSI contributions, you would be required in respect of superannuation to make contributions at the rate of 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children) plus 1.5% of full pensionable remuneration. You are required in respect of spouses' and children's pension benefit to contribute at the rate of 1.5% of full pensionable

remuneration in accordance with the terms of schemes made under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998. Maximum retirement age is 70.

If the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 applies to your employment, 65 is the minimum age at which your pension may be paid. As a new entrant to the public service, under the terms of this legislation you will not be required to retire on grounds of age. Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority who are liable to pay the Class D rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of their superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 5% of their pensionable remuneration. You may also be required to pay Spouses and Children/ Widows and Orphans contributions at the rate of 1.5% of gross pay. Maximum retirement age is 70.

Persons who become pensionable staff of a local authority for the first time on or after 01 January 2013 are assigned to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme with effect from the date of appointment. The scheme is contributory and provides pension, retirement gratuity, death gratuity and survivors benefits. If you are pensionable under the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other provisions) Act 2012, you are liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution. You are required to pay contributions as follows: 3% of gross remuneration and 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children). The minimum age at which you may retire is allied with the State Contributory Pension age (currently 66, rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028). The maximum retirement age is 70. To qualify for a pension the successful candidate must have served a minimum of two years employment in a local authority. You are reminded that under this agreement the Council may refer you to a medical advisor at any time to determine fitness for carrying out the duties to which you have been assigned. Further information is available from the Human Resources Department.

Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

Pension Abatement

If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her reemployment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility

Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Data Protection:

Basis for Processing your Personal Information

The basis for processing your personal data is to progress your application for the position you have applied for with Carlow County Council under the Terms of the Employment (Information) Act 1994 and Human Resources policies and procedures. Personal data sought for the purpose of recruitment will include your name, your contact details including email address and mobile phone number, particulars of education, details regarding your record of employment and confirmation if you require an employment permit / visa / or work authorisation.

Sharing of Information

Outside of the relevant recruitment team, the information provided in your application form will only be shared for progressing the competition for which you have applied, with a designated shortlisting and / or interview board. If, following the competition, you are placed on a panel and offered a position, the information provided in your application form will form part of your Personnel File.

Storage period

Your application will be retained for one year from the date a panel for this position is formed. In exceptional circumstances panels can be extended for an additional year and your personal data will be kept until the extension has expired. Applications that are unsuccessful at interview stage will be retained for one year. Applications that are not progressed to interview stage will be destroyed post competition.

If you do not furnish the personal data requested Carlow County Council will not be able to progress your application form for the competition.

When your application is received, Carlow County Council creates a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and will be destroyed following the expiry of any panel put in place in respect of this competition.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Selection Process

Candidates will initially be assessed to ensure that they meet the minimum specified eligibility criteria for the position.

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, Carlow County Council may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, Carlow County Council may provide for a shortlisting process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other

candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather than there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application form.

Competitive Interview

Selection of candidates for appointment shall be by means of a competitive interview. The Council is committed to a process of selection on merit, based on fair and open competition. The criteria for judging suitability and ranking will be related directly to the qualification, attributes and skills required to undertake the duties and responsibilities to the standard required in the post.

Panels

Following completion of interviews, a panel may be formed, the duration of which is at the discretion of the Council. While a panel remains in force, offers of temporary or permanent employment may be made subject to confirmation of qualifications and satisfying clauses in relation to health, character or other requirements of the particular post. Persons to whom an offer of employment is made must take up duty within 1 month from the date of offer, or such extended period as the Council may agree, otherwise, the Council may decide not to appoint them.

Documentary Evidence:

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend an interview, is not to be taken as implying that Carlow County Council is satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the competition or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet the essential entry requirement but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense. Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position Carlow County Council will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of the candidate.

Canvassing

Applicants are reminded that any attempt by themselves or by any persons acting on their behalf directly or indirectly by means of written communication or otherwise to canvass or otherwise influence in the candidate's favour any officer of the County Council or persons nominated by the Chief Executive to interview or examine applicants, will automatically disqualify the applicant for the position they are seeking.

Taking up Appointment

The local authority shall require a person to whom an appointment is offered to take up such appointment within a period of four weeks and if he/she fails to take up the appointment within such period or such longer period as the local authority in its absolute discretion may determine, the local authority shall not appoint him/her.

Carlow County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer