



Candidate Information Booklet

Verification Officer
REF: VO/0319

Closing date for applications:
12noon, Friday 22 March 2019

Job Description

Job Title:	Verification Officer
Location:	1 st Floor Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.
Grade:	Executive Officer I (EOI)
Salary:	£26,962 - £27, 819 per annum (under review)
Hours/Term:	Full-time / Fixed-Term Contract Expiring on 31 July 2021 (with the possibility of extension)
Reports to:	Governance Officer

Background

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established to deliver support and services for all victims and survivors of Troubles/Conflict-related incidents.

The VSS currently operates two Programmes of funding:

1. The Individual Needs Programme (INP), which delivers financial support and direct access to goods and services to individual victims and survivors in particular circumstances.

2. The Victims Support Programme (VSP), which delivers funding to organisations that provide Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland.

These Programmes enable the VSS to provide accessible, responsive and co-ordinated services to meet the needs of victims and survivors in an integrated way.

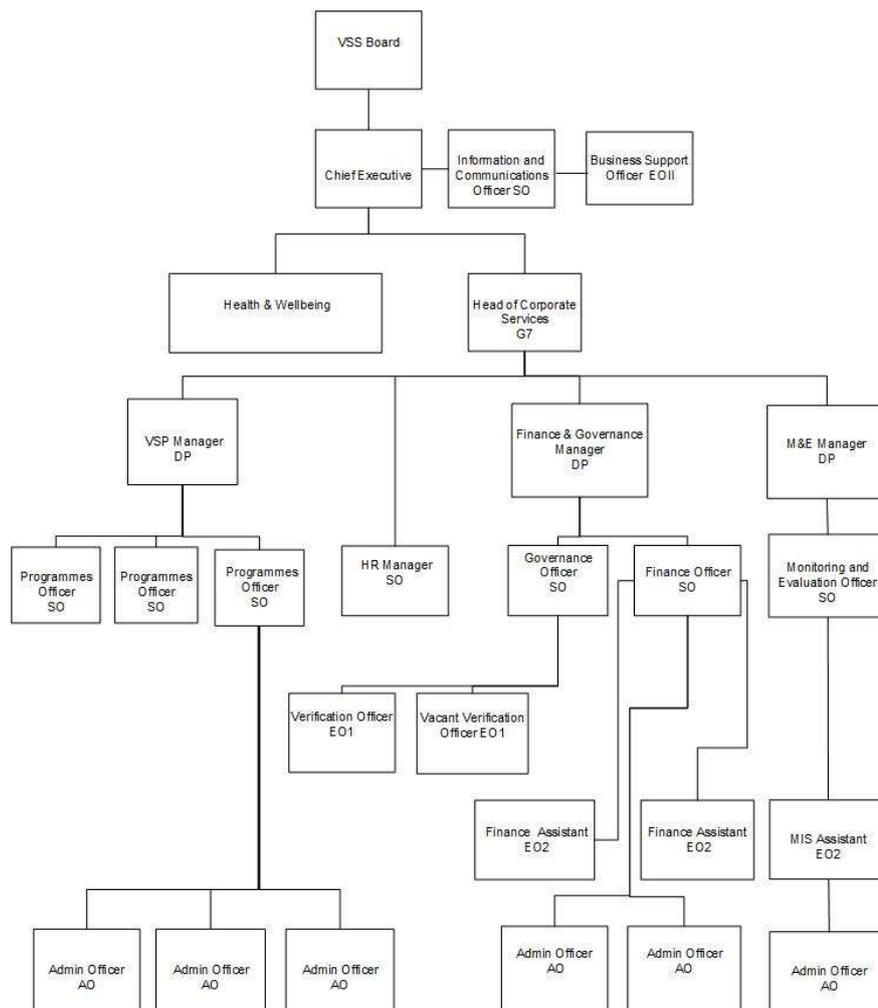
The VSS has been named as lead partner for the victims and survivors element of the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE IV). PEACE IV provides funding for cross-border Health and Wellbeing services by increasing the quality of care in the sector for victims and survivors and their families.

Purpose of the Role

Reporting to the Governance Officer, the Verification Officer is responsible for managing, planning and providing an independent audit service for organisations funded by VSS.

The post holder must ensure that there is a robust system of risk management, control and governance in place within each funded organisation.

Organisational Structure



Responsibilities

The key elements that constitute the role of the Verification Officer for the Victims and Survivors Service are as follows:

- Ensure that projects comply with descriptions given in grant applications; confirm compliance with contract conditions, and verify grant has been used, as specified in the Letter of Offer.
- Ensure expenditure incurred is eligible, actual and consistent with the project concerned.
- Monitor verification of expenditure against budgets.
- Complete verification forms, and produce verification reports as necessary, highlighting areas of non-compliance or potentially ineligible expenditure, detailing irregularities that will need reported to VSS management for recovery action.
- Design and tailor the nature and the scope of verification work to address the size and nature of projects and uncover and address irregularities.
- Report on financial systems and the effective management and accounting of publicly funded grant aid.
- Complete pre-contract and post-contract checks to ensure robust systems are in place and follow up any recommendations.
- Be responsible for undertaking financial control visits, verification of projects, ensuring management control systems operate satisfactorily.
- Regularly report to the Governance Officer on non-compliance and financial irregularities and provide 'best practice' recommendations for improvement in line with the Best Practice Guidelines.
- Contribute to the review of monitoring and evaluation of the VSS funding schemes, policies and procedures, projects and programmes.
- Support the implementation of the VSS policies in relation to its statutory compliance.
- Liaise with VSS staff and a wide range of organisations and support the maintenance of positive client relationships.

- Work in conjunction with other VSS staff, where projects are of mutual concern.
- Organise and manage own workload to meet the changing priorities of the VSS.
- Ensure the safe storage of all financial records within the area of responsibility.
- Facilitate the work of internal and external auditors appointed to report on matters relating to the verification of funding.
- Work flexibly to meet the requirements of the post, as occasional meetings out of office hours may be required.

Advice and Guidance

A vital role for the Verification Officer will be to develop and nurture excellent working relationships both within and between all areas of the service. Key elements of the role will be to:

- Provide effective professional guidance and recommendations to the Governance Officer and SMT in relation to delivering the verification function.
- Demonstrate a high level of personal integrity and maintain professional standards throughout the organisation.
- Deliver results against departmental and business objectives.
- Develop comprehensive reporting procedures between external organisations and VSS.

Communication

The Verification Officer will contribute towards developing the internal and external communication channels and processes within the VSS. These include:

- Provide effective and timely verification updates, advice and information to the Governance Officer.
- Prepare reports, attend team meetings and represent the Victims and Survivors Service in any appropriate organisational activity at the request of the Governance Officer.
- Provide support for plans and programmes and demonstrate the ability to problem solve innovatively.
- Uphold the Service's reputation and public image in any external communications.

Policy and Strategy

- Contribute to the development and implementation of related policies within the governance function.
- Support the Governance Officer with the implementation of the governance policies.

Personal Development, Performance and Professionalism

- Endeavour to ensure the ongoing confidence of VSS stakeholders, maintaining high standards of personal accountability.
- Develop excellent interpersonal skills and self-motivation required to facilitate liaison with professional and senior management within stakeholder organisations.
- Work outside standard business hours (9-5pm) and therefore will need to be flexible in terms of availability.
- The Verification Officer may receive additional duties, appropriate to the grade, at the request of VSS management.

The foregoing is a broad range of duties and is not intended to be a complete description of all tasks. It is important to note that the responsibilities may change to meet the evolving needs of the Victims and Survivors Service.

Personnel Specification

Essential Criteria

Applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, this will be done by carrying out an objective evaluation of the information provided by candidates against the eligibility criteria, so that only those candidates who demonstrate by example that they meet the criteria will be invited to interview.

If an applicant does not provide sufficient detail **against each individual criterion**, including the appropriate dates required to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject the application. **Please do NOT refer to other sections of the application form.**

By the closing date for applications, candidates must demonstrate that they fulfil each of the following essential criteria:

1. A minimum of 2 years' experience carrying out verification or audit of expenditure.
2. A minimum of 2 years' experience reviewing controls within an organisation.
3. 2 years' experience liaising with multiple stakeholders to achieve a positive outcome.
4. A current UK Driving Licence with access to a car. This will be waived in the case of an applicant whose disability prohibits driving but who is able to organise suitable alternative arrangements.

Desirable Criteria

In addition to the above qualifications and experience, the VSS reserves the right to short-list only those applicants who, at the closing date for receipt of applications, possess the following

1. Experience of monitoring and reporting expenditure against budgets.
2. Reconciling complex financial information.

3. Working with financial and non-financial information to prepare reports and make recommendations to management.

NOTE: Clear evidence should be provided of all the elements of each criterion in the application form, giving specific length of experience, examples and dates. It is not sufficient to simply provide a list of duties and responsibilities. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of an applicant's post or the nature of the organisation, as to the skills and experience gained.

Role Competencies

The VSS has adopted the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework. This post is graded at Executive Officer I (EOI) and further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be viewed at <https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-competency-framework-2014---framework-updated-april-2018.pdf>.

Setting Direction – Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. It is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet VSS and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value. At this level, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities

Setting Direction – Making effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. In this role, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Setting Direction - Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area take initiative, are innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it's about learning from what has worked as well as what has not, being open to change and improvement, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. For leaders, this is about creating and encouraging a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take informed decisions. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy implementation and build a leaner, more flexible and responsive Civil Service. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches wherever possible.

Engaging People – Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is having a strong focus on continuous learning for oneself, others and the organisation. It is about being open to learning and keeping their knowledge and skill set current and evolving. In this role, it is

about ensuring a diverse blend of capability and skills is identified and developed to meet current and future business needs. It is also about creating a learning and knowledge culture across all levels in the organisation to inform future plans and transformational change.

Engaging People – Leading & Communicating

Effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of individuals. In this role, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the VSS.

Engaging People – Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area are team players. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information appropriately and building supportive, trusting and professional relationships with colleagues and a wide range of people within and outside the Civil Service, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. For senior leaders, it's about being approachable, delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, welcoming challenge however uncomfortable.

Guidance for making your Application

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the essential/desirable criteria.

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- VSS will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to, completed application forms.
- Applicants must complete the application form in Arial font 12, or legible, block capitals.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail, etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Relevant or equivalent qualifications – If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied, etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.
- It is essential that all applicants demonstrate on their application form how and to what extent their experience and skills are relevant to this post and the extent to which they satisfy each of the essential and desirable criterion specified. If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as they may be discussed at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about them in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role that the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.
- The Victims and Survivors Service will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation, as to the skills and experience gained.

Application form Submission

- Completed applications can be submitted by: Post or delivered by hand to the Recruitment Officer, VSS, 1st Floor Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.
- We will not accept incomplete application forms; application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms.
- Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to the Victims and Survivors Service to meet the required deadline.
- Completed application forms cannot be submitted electronically.
- VSS will not accept any application where there has been a shortfall in postage.
- Should you have any queries please contact the Victims and Survivors Service on 028 90 279 100.

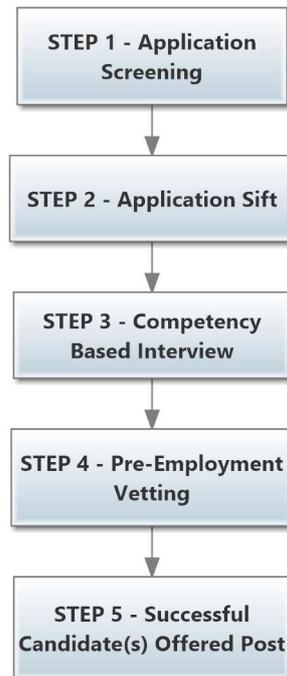
Equality of Opportunity

Please complete the monitoring form and return with your application form. This form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

The information is used for monitoring purposes only. VSS are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. Our equal opportunities policy is available to view or download at www.victimsservice.org

Please complete the monitoring form and return with your application form.

Application Process



Interview Guidance for Applicants

At interview, the selection panel will assess candidates against the behavioural competences, qualifications and experience for the post. It is anticipated that the interviews will take place during **Late March/Early April 2019** at VSS, 1st Floor Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish.
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience.
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the competences required for the effective performance in the role.
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

Further Appointments from this Competition

Where a further position in the Victims and Survivors Service is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The reserve list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

Disability Requirements

VSS will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact the Victims and Survivors Service on 028 90 279 100.

Data Protection

Please note that the personal information on the Application Form will be processed and handled in accordance with Data Protection legislation. In accordance with our Data Retention and Disposal Policy: Data contained on the application form of applicants successful in securing employment will be used for HR and Payroll administrative purposes during the period of employment. Data contained on the application form of applicants who do not secure employment will be used for HR administrative purposes and retained for up to 3 years from the end of the competition. Equal opportunities monitoring forms will also be retained for a period of 3 years. In the case of posts which are PEACE IV funded all data will be retained for the period of time required in line with EU legislation. The current disposal date is currently 31 December 2024 (with the possibility of extension).

Feedback

VSS are committed to providing feedback in respect to decisions taken in determining eligibility/short-listing as well as at interview. Feedback will be communicated on receipt of a written request. All requests for feedback are welcome.

Vetting Procedures

Prior to appointment with the Victims and Survivors Service, the following will be required:

- Proof of qualifications.
- Baseline Personnel Security Standard vetting checks.

Pension

The VSS offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni>

If you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 02871 319000