



The public administration and services sector in Northern Ireland (commonly called the ‘public sector’) refers to all of the organisations and bodies funded by the government to provide services for our citizens.

This is a very broad and diverse sector that includes local government (Councils), central government (the Northern Ireland Civil Service), and other bodies such as the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Northern Ireland Police Service, and the Northern Ireland Fire Service.





KEY FACTS

- The public sector is the largest employment sector in Northern Ireland, with approximately **29%** of the workforce employed in this sector.

- As of September 2021, there were **198,950** people employed in the public sector in Northern Ireland.

- The largest employer in the public sector is the Northern Ireland Civil Service, which employs around **23,000** people.



WHY THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

The great thing about this sector is that there are so many different types of job roles available; you can have a varied career whilst working for one employer. There is something to suit everyone, and lots of opportunities to try something new.



Another attractive aspect of this sector is that it provides essential services for the people of Northern Ireland, which means there is often good job security and progression opportunities.

It is also a sector that supports vital service delivery for society, communities, and individuals across Northern Ireland, so it can be a very fulfilling career because your work directly impacts on the lives of others.





WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

The public sector is incredibly diverse, with more than 300 different job roles. There are opportunities for everyone within this sector, with some roles requiring minimum entry criteria of five GCSEs at Grade C or above, including Maths and English. There are also specialised roles, which require specific qualifications or higher entry criteria, such as a degree or professional qualifications in a relevant subject.

Opportunities available in the sector include

- Administration Officer (AO)
 - Executive Officer (EO1/EO2)
 - Staff Officer
 - Grade 5 (Head of Division)
 - Grade 3 (Head of Directorate)
 - Council Officer
 - Business Support Officer
 - Environmental Health Officer
 - Firefighter
 - Prison Officer
 - Police Constable
- ...and more!

In addition to the above roles, there are a wide range of roles in IT, Finance, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, and more. Just like a business in the private sector, the public sector needs individuals with specialist skills to help it operate effectively.



SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Average salaries across the public sector vary significantly based on the specific job role, your level of experience, and the qualifications required for the role. Average salaries in the public sector can range from approximately £19,000 per year for an Administrator or Support Worker to approximately £83,000 per year for a senior management role.

Here are some **average salaries** for job roles within the sector:

Administrative Officer
(NICS)

Starting salary

£22,519 per year

Executive Officer (EO1)
(NICS)

Starting salary

£28,706 per year

Staff Officer
(NICS)

Starting salary

£32,328 per year

Firefighter

Starting salary approx.

£24,000 per year

Police Constable

Starting salary approx.
(when training complete)

£24,780 per year

Environmental Health Officer

Starting salary

£36,362 per year



For further information, click the link highlighted in **blue**



WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?

The entry qualifications needed for a job in the public sector will vary depending on the career you are interested in. For many entry level administration roles, you may need a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade C, including English and Maths.



For some roles, you will need at least a 2:1 or 2:2 in a relevant degree. In 2022, the Northern Ireland Civil Service launched a Graduate Management Programme offering 30 successful graduate applicants a starting salary of at least £32,328 per year. Following completion of a four-year development programme, the participants will be eligible to apply for a promotion, which could increase their earnings to £52,026 a year.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service also offers a number of Apprenticeship schemes for entry into certain roles, such as ICT or Civil Engineering, which take between two and four years to complete.

For specialised roles, such as a Firefighter or Police Constable, the Northern Ireland Fire Service and Northern Ireland Police Service offer their own training programmes, which have specific entry requirements.



WHAT SKILLS ARE USEFUL?

Beyond the qualifications needed to pursue a career in the public sector, there are a range of employability skills and personal attributes that are useful to have.

These include:

- The ability to work well under pressure
- Organisation and time management
- Conflict management
- Teamwork and leadership skills
- Strong communication skills
- The ability to work on your own initiative
- Creative thinking and problem solving
- Resilience





WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND OUT MORE?

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)

Working for the Northern Ireland Civil Service means you have the opportunity to make a contribution to local communities, wider society, and individuals' lives. The different departments and range of job roles within the NICS mean you do not have to be confined to one area of work – there is plenty of opportunity to develop your abilities and to grow.



PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYERS



For further information, click the Company Logos or the links highlighted in **blue**