



## Candidate Information Booklet



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# Welcome to Sport NI

Firstly, we are delighted that you are sufficiently interested in working in Sport NI to access this candidate booklet.

Sport NI is on a journey of transformation that has resulted in significant changes to culture, strategy and structure, culminating in the appointment of four new Executive leaders. We have listened closely to what our Governing Bodies of sport, our partners and stakeholders have told us is needed of us to support them to thrive.

Sport NI's transformation process began with culture; Sport NI has learnt of the critical role of a strong organisational culture that sets clear standards and expectations of us all. We have invested energy and commitment into defining a culture that reflects that of a high performing sports team and enables us to demand of ourselves what we demand of our best athletes. We aspire to developing leaders at all levels of the organisation, supported by a strong DNA, including values of excellence, integrity, teamwork and clear behaviours that enables all of us to be held accountable by colleagues and customers.

Our DNA has informed the development of a new five year strategy for sport, the second element of transformation. Our new draft Corporate Plan, ***The Power of Sport***, is driven by a strong and positive sporting culture that sets the tone of well-being in sport and respect for the voices of all involved. We are now at the stage in transformation of appointing to a new staffing structure and the appointment of three new Executive Leadership posts.

Sport NI is incredibly proud to have a team of committed staff, many of whom are directly involved in sport in their own communities, as athletes, coaches, volunteers, administrators and leaders. There is a drive to achieve the best we can and during COVID-19 our staff have consistently stepped up to meet the challenges of supporting the sector. These new posts provide an exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunity for people with the same passion for sport and/or excellence in public service provision to join a highly motivated family in Sport NI.

Our transformation will complete with the fourth and final stage of change, which is system, process and digital transformation; this work has already begun and will support a world class approach to delivering and developing sport in NI.

I would encourage you to join us on a journey that aspires to excellence through innovation and insight, learning and growth and one that puts equality and inclusion at the heart of everything we do.



## Executive Leadership Team

# About Sport NI

Sport NI is the lead development public body for sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland. We are established under the Recreation and Youth Service Order 1986 and we provide a range of support services to the sport sector, ranging from direct financial investment and thought leadership resources to training sports coaches and leaders to specialist sport science provision to sports and athletes. We are an Arms Length Body of the Department for Communities.

Sport Northern Ireland is based at the House of Sport in Belfast, and operates a National Outdoor Training Centre at the base of the Mourne Mountains – Tollymore National Outdoor Centre. Sport Northern Ireland also manage Sport Northern Ireland's Sports Institute (SNISI), which is the High Performance Arm of Sport Northern Ireland based at the Jordanstown campus of the University of Ulster. SINI prepares Northern Ireland's best athletes to perform on the world stage by providing an environment that nurtures elite athletes and coaches.

Our annual budget reflects a total investment of £20m. This includes a mix of Exchequer and National Lottery resources, as Sport NI is a national lottery funds distributor.

In Sport NI we are passionate about maximising the power of sport to change lives and we work with a range of strategic partners and other stakeholders to deliver our goals. Our work is directly aligned to supporting the Programme for Government and New Decade New Approach. We are also working with our Department for Communities to develop a new strategy for sport and physical activity in NI, reflecting an exciting time for policy and strategy in sport here.

## Sport NI's Strategy for Sport – Corporate Plan 2020-25

Our new Corporate Plan (currently out for public consultation – link [here](#)) aims to provide the leadership and support which the changing sports sector in NI requires, working with communities to ensure people adopt and sustain participation in sport and working uniquely across two jurisdictions (UK and Ireland) to ensure that our athletes are amongst the best in the world.

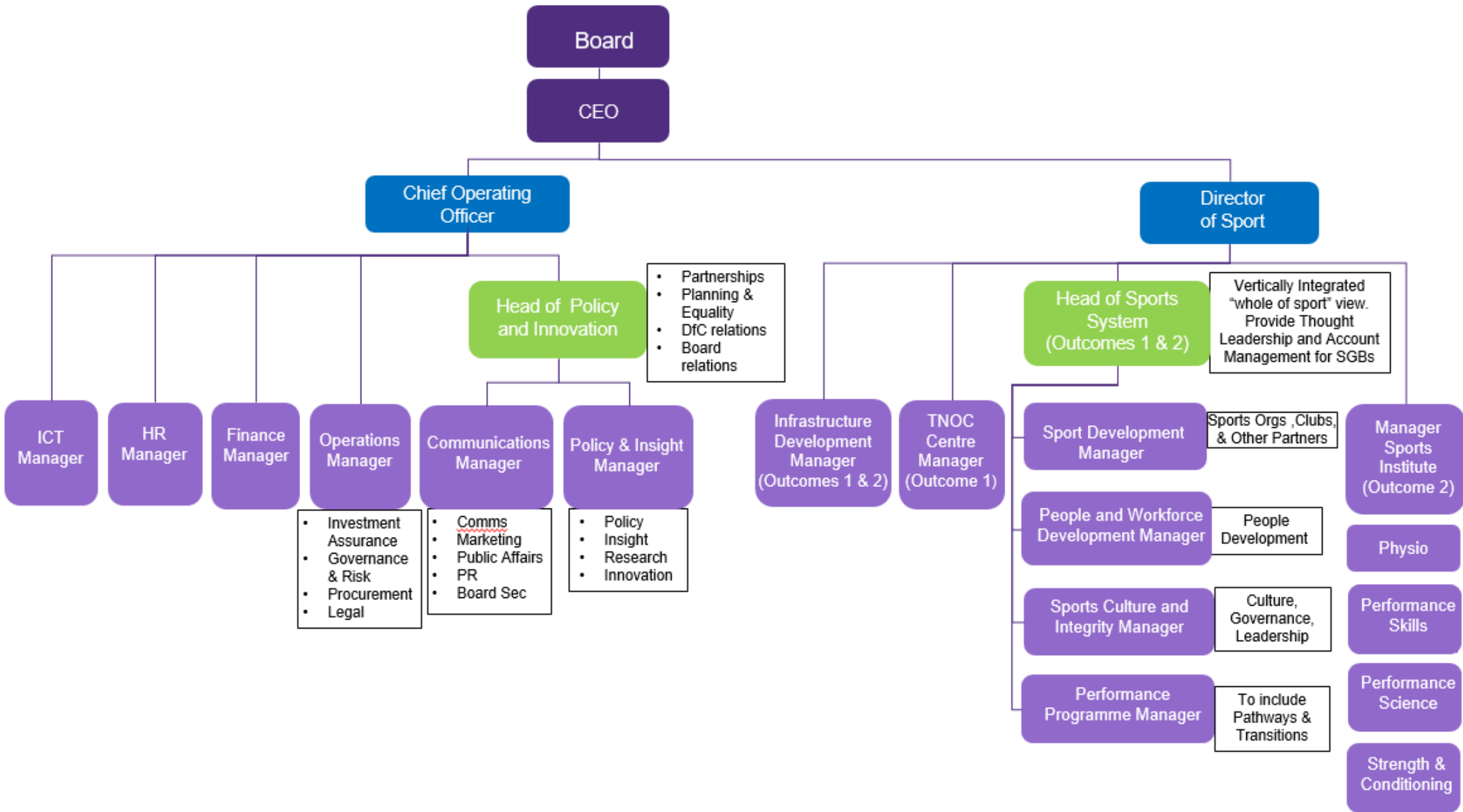
The sports sector has also grown considerably in recent years, with many more sports having a professional staffing structure and high performance and participation strategies that have supported real growth. Sport NI will continue to add value to a strong sporting family which puts people – participants, athletes, teams, coaches, volunteers and leaders – at the heart of what we do.

Supporting a more professionalised sporting sector and a diverse range of governing bodies at many different stages of development, the Corporate Plan makes a clear commitment to the co-design, with governing bodies, other partners and stakeholders, of a sporting culture and system that is right for Northern Ireland now. We also aim to support this work with the right human resources and world class services, systems, knowledge and insight to enable us to deliver what the sector demands of us in the dynamic and rapidly evolving environment that is sport.



Jason Smyth of Ireland competing in the Men's 100m at the 2019 Morton Games

# Sport NI's New Organisation Structure





# Job Description

<b>Job Title:</b> Communications Officer	
<b>Grade:</b> Staff Officer	<b>Salary Scale:</b> £32,328 - £33,459per annum
<b>Department:</b> Operations	<b>Location:</b> House of Sport, Belfast
<b>Responsible to:</b> Communications Manager	<b>Duration:</b> Permanent
<b>Organisational background:</b>  Sport NI is the lead development public body for sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland. We are established under the Recreation and Youth Service Order 1986 for the furtherance of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland. We develop all aspects of sport and physical recreation, from active participation to Olympic and Paralympic levels.  Sport NI is primarily funded by grant in aid from the Department for Communities and the National Lottery.  <b>Our mission statement is:</b>  We are passionate about maximising the power of sport to change lives  <b>Our DNA (attached)</b>  Sport NI’s values are excellence, integrity, collaboration and learning. Sport NI seeks an individual who shares and exemplifies our values and associated behaviours in their daily work.	
<b>Overall purpose of job:</b>  This role holder will support and deliver Sport NI’s communications and public affairs work (including PR, Marketing, and advocacy) in order to effectively tell the compelling story of the power of sport to change lives to stakeholders in Government, the media, strategic partners, and the wider public.  The role holder will implement a Communication, advocacy and PR strategy for Sport NI and sport in NI, engaging with key stakeholders to influence greater recognition of the value of sport.  	

## Duties and Responsibilities:

### Communications

- Deliver Sport NI's communications function, building a strong and innovative Communications hub with key competencies in PR, advocacy, marketing, digital and social media skills.
- Deliver Sport NI's overall communications plan, recognising the diverse range of stakeholders and formulating communications with regard to the target audience.
- Deliver Sport NI's strategic stakeholder plan, ensuring it remains proactive, innovative and responsive to the sector and all stakeholders.
- Cultivate and maintain effective working relationships with the media, managing communication and messaging effectively and ensuring Sport NI's views are heard and understood.
- Maintain strong working relationships with PR officers of sports organisations, to ensure that Sport NI and the National Lottery are represented effectively within their activity.
- Deliver Sport NI's day to day social media strategy development and delivery, pursuing new opportunities to create engaging and innovative content and using this to engage with key influencers to raise the profile and awareness of Sport NI.
- Plan and deliver effective and proactive targeted news stories and features across print and social media/digital/web and other direct Sport NI communications outlets, including newsletters.
- Work in partnership with the Sports Directorate teams to promote their work and programmes to the public, and other stakeholders demonstrating the Power of Sport.
- Work closely with the Policy & Insights Team in implementing a public affairs strategy which maximises wider opportunities to communicate policy positions and to influence change to enhance sports practice, policy and strategy.
- Plan and deliver from concept to completion, a broad array of digital and print promotional and communication materials for Sport NI ensuring that all materials present a clear, unified, and positive image for the organisation and brand.
- Formulate and deliver a range of communication messages aligned to the corporate plan for the Chair, CEO and Executive Team for public addresses and key high level meetings.

### **Corporate Management**

- To assist in the effective management of resources, ensuring work completed aligns to Business and Corporate Plan objectives and is of a high quality, delivered on time and within budget.
- Manage individual and team performance, and to ensure compliance with all Sport NI's policies and procedures. This includes effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation of all projects and programmes for which the post holder has a responsibility.
- To carry out any other duties that, from time to time, may reasonably be undertaken in the pursuit of the post's overall objectives, undertaking duties of the post with regard to Sport NI's DNA (Values).



# Person Specification

**Job Title:** Communications Officer

**Essential Criteria**

- A relevant degree or equivalent 3rd level qualification (eg. PR, Marketing, Communications, Journalism or other related discipline)
- AND;
- A minimum of one year’s full time (or equivalent part time) experience working within a press office, PR agency, editorial team or similar communications environment involving media relations activity.
- OR
- Two years’ full-time relevant experience (or part time equivalent) of working in a press office, PR agency, editorial team or similar communications environment involving media relations activity.
- 
- Demonstrable experience (or part time equivalent) in preparing a wide range of media and communication products targeted to diverse audiences, including managing multiple social media and digital platforms, including web content.
  - Demonstrable experience of applying current communication practice and techniques, including positioning, timing and targeting of news stories to ensure quality generated coverage.
  - Demonstrable experience of building strong networks with media outlets and people to influence positive news stories.
  - Demonstrable experience of forging and maintaining strong partnerships and working relationships with organisations to gain tangible support for organisational goals.
  - Exceptional communication and influencing skills, with a proven ability to convert complicated concepts to effective messages
  - Valid driving licence and access to a form of transport, insured to enable the post holder to carry the responsibilities of the post in full\*

\* *(This criterion will be waived in the Shortlisting by Application Form, in the case of applicants whose disability prohibits driving but who have access to a form of transport approved by SportNI)*

**Desirable Criteria**

- Experience of working within a sporting environment
- Chartered member of CIPR, or CIM

*Sport NI reserve the right to shortlist based on desirable criteria*



# Terms and Conditions

This role is a permanent appointment. As an Arm's Length Body our pay scales are analogous to those of the NI Civil Service (NICS).

## Location

The post-holder will be based at the House of Sport, Upper Malone Road, Belfast and will also be expected to work at other Sport NI sites as required.



## Travel

The successful applicant will be required to travel on official duty throughout Northern Ireland and occasionally to Ireland and Great Britain. The post-holder must have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.

## Salary

Salary will be within the range **£32,328 - £33,459** within which pay progression will be performance related.

The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the pay scale, although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if he/she has exceptionally relevant skills/experience.

## Pension

Sport NI offers staff membership of the NILGOSC Pension Scheme. Details can be found at the NILGOSC website [here](#)

## Holidays

In addition to public holidays, currently 12.5 days, the annual leave allowance will be 25 days rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

## Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 37 hours net per week including 0830 to 1700 Monday to Friday. The post-holder may be required to work outside their normal conditioned hours, where necessary, to fulfil the demands of the post.

## Probation

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 6 months. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

# Application and Selection Process

## Introduction

Sport NI will carry out a two stage application and selection process for this role which will include the following:

- Stage 1: Shortlist for essential skills and experience and competencies using the application form. Candidates who fail to meet the essential and/or desirable criteria will be rejected at this stage
- Stage 2: Competency-based interview by a suitable interview panel

It is noted that restrictions in place in relation to COVID-19 may restrict Sport NI's ability to conduct the selection process for this role face to face as we would prefer to do. If this is necessary, we will seek to utilise technology (such as Zoom) to facilitate interviews and other selection events.

## Competencies

The Sport NI competency framework can be downloaded from the Sport NI Website. These competencies will be used throughout the selection process including as the basis for competency-based questions at interview.

## Application Form

Sport NI requests that all applicants complete an application form when applying for a vacancy and a CV will not be considered. Application form for the role can be downloaded from the Sport NI Website and requests for an application form may be made via email to [recruitment@sportni.net](mailto:recruitment@sportni.net) Alternative forms of applications such as Braille or audio can be made available if required.

The application form includes a section on reasonable adjustments in order to give applicants an opportunity at an early stage to indicate any relevant effects of a disability and to suggest adjustments which might help them to overcome any disadvantage they might encounter in the recruitment and selection process. Candidates should note that Sport NI is committed to ensuring that all applications will be considered equally.

The closing date is **Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 12:00 noon**. Application forms received after the closing date will not be considered.

## Shortlisting

Sport NI will form a suitably qualified and independent selection panel for the role. The panel will use only information contained on the application form for shortlisting purposes and will not make assumptions about qualifications or experience.



Sport NI will shortlist candidates who meet the essential criteria required for the role. Should there be excessive numbers of applicants for the role, Sport NI reserves the right to use desirable criteria in shortlisting.

As soon as possible after the shortlisting, the HR Department will notify each applicant of the result. Shortlisted candidates will be called to the next stage of the process - an interview. Any applicant who is not shortlisted and wishes to know the reason why will be advised to write to the HR Department and an explanation will be provided as to which of the criteria the applicant did not meet.



## **Interview**

The selection panel will convene to interview shortlisted candidates. Questions will be based on competencies outlined in the Sport NI Competency Framework and the content of the job description, and will test the skills and competencies required in the person specification.

Candidates may be deselected at this stage of the process, and if so the HR Department will notify any unsuccessful applicants of this result. Any deselected applicant who wishes to know the reason why will be advised to write to the HR Department and an explanation will be provided as to which of the criteria the applicant did not meet.

## **Feedback**

Meaningful feedback in alternative formats will be provided to candidates on request. To protect the confidentiality of a candidate's application, requests for feedback from candidates should be in writing.

Factual information should be provided to the candidate in writing, in the format requested, drawing upon the documentation held on the selection panel's deliberations and taking account particularly of the selection and assessment criteria specified for the post(s) in question. Depending on what the candidate wishes to know, we may include the following information:

- the candidate's interview score and his/her position in the order of merit;
- the number of vacancies declared / filled.

If at any time after the interview a candidate seeks a feedback interview with a member of the selection panel to discuss his/her performance, the policy is to decline such requests and instead to seek to deal with any concerns in writing. ALL feedback must be managed by Sport NI HR and will only be provided following requests from candidates.

## **References and Pre-employment checks**

All applicants will be asked to nominate two referees on their application form, including their current/most recent employer. Where the applicant has previous working experience, it is essential that at least one of the referees has prior knowledge of the applicant's recent work and is in a managerial position relative to the applicant.

References will not be used as a means of deciding between candidates who appear from assessment to be equally matched as this relies on the subjective opinion of a referee rather than the performance of the candidates at interview.

The successful candidate must go through an ACCESS NI check as standard.

If a candidate is under consideration for a post in an 'excepted' category of employment (for example, Accountant), a criminal record check must be carried out. Where a post has been short-listed on the basis of qualifications, candidates must provide evidence that they hold these qualifications, before any appointment can be confirmed.