



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Candidate Information Booklet

Traineeship Programme In the Civil Service

Locations: Longford, Buncrana, Letterkenny, Galway City, Waterford City, Cork City, Limerick City, Thurles, Bray, Dublin 1, Clondalkin and Coolock.

Department: The Department of Social Protection

Closing Date: 15:00 Tuesday 15th September 2026

Email TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie

WEBSITE [Careers in the Department of Social Protection](#)

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1. ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Civil Service is at the heart of Irish society. Everything we do impacts our country and our people. We are a robust and trusted institution which has served the people of Ireland since the foundation of the State. Civil servants and Civil Service organisations play a crucial role in providing and supporting the delivery of necessary front-line services to help meet the needs of our people and implement government policy. Our experience dealing with national and international issues has shown the tremendous commitment, resilience and ability of the Civil Service to respond with innovation and determination to any challenge.



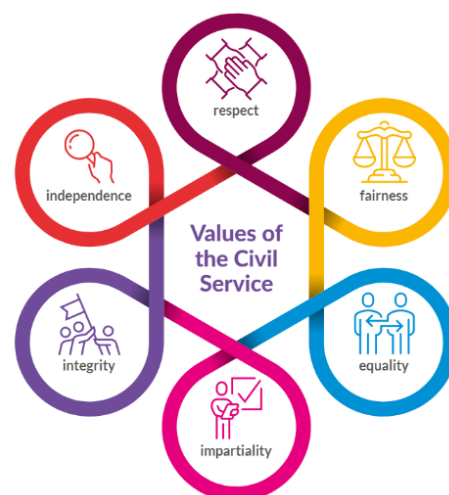
Climate change and sustainability; geopolitical and demographic changes; housing and healthcare add complexity to the environment in which the Civil Service operates. We therefore need agile and resilient staff to support the Government in managing the breadth of complex issues and in preparing for the future.

While the challenges which face the Civil Service today are different to those faced at the foundation of the State, our core values remain the same.

The Irish Civil Service employs people in over 40 Government Departments and Offices with a diverse set of responsibilities. We support the Government by developing policy options and legislation to address major national issues, co-ordinating the broader public service, helping to manage the economy and delivering services to the public.

[Civil Service Renewal 2030](#) is an ambitious 10-year strategy of reform for the Civil Service. Aligned to it, [Better Public Services](#), the Public Service Transformation Strategy, aims to deliver for the public and build trust. The Civil Service Renewal Strategy delivers a diverse and high performing Civil Service that is more inclusive, engaged and agile. By implementing these plans and demonstrating an enduring commitment to public service values, the Civil Service can create a more diverse yet unified, professional, responsive, open and accountable organisation that inspires confidence in Ireland and internationally.

Our Values



The Civil Service can offer suitable candidates a very satisfying and varied career, with competitive terms and conditions. All civil service employers are committed to championing an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects modern Ireland and the people we serve. We strive to create a culture where all staff have equal access to opportunity and feel comfortable and empowered to be themselves at work.

2. ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is one of the largest Government Departments of State in the Irish Civil Service and one of the largest organisations in the State. It plays the lead role in developing policy and advising Government on social protection and labour market issues including employment rights, income support, pensions and activation policies.

The Department also has responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services through its own nationwide network of offices and through a number of agencies and third-party service providers. The Department, which employs circa 7,200 staff, processes in excess of 3.5 million customer service applications per annum and issues about 87 million payments each year to 2.4 million customers and their families. The range of supports includes over 100 schemes. The Department's expenditure was circa €27.4 billion in 2025.

3. ABOUT THE ROLE

Title of Position: Traineeship Programme

Starting Salary: CO Pay-scale effective 1st June 2026 [DPER Circular 22/2026](#)

€611.75	€645.43	€654.01	€670.69	€695.32	€719.93
€744.51	€762.42	€782.74	€806.29	€822.89	€846.23
€869.42	€905.60	€934.03 ¹	€958.80 ²		

Blended Working: The Department operates a formal blended working policy in DSP. Eligibility criteria are driven by business need, individual suitability, and health and safety requirements. Attendance varies from a minimum attendance of two days day per week to full-time attendance in the workplace, based on the eligibility criteria. For the initial period of employment, under this competition, **it will be necessary for successful candidates to attend the workplace fulltime for an eighteen-month period.** From eighteen months, subject to business needs and within eligibility criteria, successful candidates may apply for a blended working arrangement.

Work Location: These posts will be situated in the Department's Offices in **Longford, Buncrana, Letterkenny, Galway City, Waterford City, Cork City, Limerick City, Thurles, Bray, Dublin 1, Clondalkin and Coolock.**

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is running an open competition for Traineeship opportunities. Trainees will be appointed to the role of Deciding Officer combined with a defined and fulfilling career development opportunity for progression to Executive Officer (EO) level. The role of Deciding Officer has a real impact on improving the lives of others, assisting people requiring income support and also through their job-seeking journey (See [Appendix B](#) for "A day in the life of..." examples of job roles in DSP).

This unique career development opportunity gives successful candidates the chance to work and develop in the role of Deciding Officer in year one, and in year two to undertake one of the three distinct customer-facing roles of EO Inspector, Job Coach or EO Operations. At the end of the two-year journey, Officers will then have the opportunity to proceed following a final assessment through an interview process to be assigned as an EO in DSP.

Successful candidates in the competition will initially be placed as Clerical Officers (COs) carrying out the role of Deciding Officer. After one year and following a successful probation for new entrants or for those already established, a successful year's performance in the Deciding Officer role,

candidates will then progress to a role as Job Coach, EO Inspector or EO Operations and undertake associated learning programmes.

At all times, candidates will be provided with practical on-the-job training, distinct learning and development supports, and third-party accredited learning.

DSP is now recruiting for **Trainees** (Clerical Officer grade) to embark on this exciting career development journey.

Overview of this Competition and Career Development Journey for Deciding Officer to Job Coach, EO Inspector or EO Operations.

Successful candidates will gain valuable experience of working in the Civil Service at an entry-level grade of CO initially carrying out the Deciding Officer role, while undertaking learning (to include structured on-the-job training and formal classroom-based learning) to develop towards an EO role in several key areas across the Department.

In commencing employment under this competition, Officers will be required to develop and apply the following key skills:

- **Efficiency:** meeting deadlines while ensuring all work carried out is to a high standard.
- **Being a Team Player:** the capacity to work well with others by offering ideas and knowing/understanding the responsibilities expected by others.
- **Organisational Skills:** you may have several tasks to complete every day. Good organisational skills are required so that you can plan, manage, and delegate all tasks as necessary.
- **Technical Skills:** strong IT skills are required to process the knowledge to run relevant tools and programmes within DSP.
- **Results-driven:** ensuring that all work carried out is thoroughly checked to ensure a high standard of work while showing the flexibility to get a number of tasks completed daily.
- **Customer Service Skills:** Strong customer service skills can help you negotiate interpersonal relationships with members of the public and other stakeholders.

On-the-job practical experience and structured learning (on the-job and formal accredited training) will be provided to successful candidates from this competition. Over the two-year distinct career development journey, in which candidates will be fully supported, it is envisaged that successful candidates will take on the following DSP-specific customer facing roles:

Year 1

- **Deciding Officer** – making decisions on the awarding of income support and other payments within the scope of Social Welfare legislation.

AND

Year 2

- **Job Coach** – working with and engaging with jobseekers to assist them find employment.
- OR
- **EO Inspector (EOI)** - carrying out routine investigations/reviews in line with powers under Section 250 of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act 2005.

OR

- **EO Operations** - Process claims, manage applications for various schemes, and handle customer inquiries related to income supports and services.

It is expected that those successful in this competition will:

- Spend their first year in the Deciding Officer role.
- Attend a learning programme for year 1 which will include attending numerous courses as well as on-the-job training with other experienced staff members.
- Following successful probation (or for those staff who have already completed probation) take part in learning programmes in their second year (in either a Job Coach, EOI or EO Operations role) to gain experience of different areas and of key aspects of these and other roles in the Department. Therefore, it is a requirement that all successful candidates attend the office fulltime for at least the first eighteen months.
- Upon successfully commencing their second year, be awarded an allowance to support them taking on a Job Coach, EO Inspector or EO Operations role.
- Participate, complete and be successful in Third-level Accredited Learning Programmes (to QQI Level 6 and 7, Special Purpose Awards), E-Learning, Self-directed Learning, Instructor-led Training and Peer-supported Learning (practical role-based activities). Examples of specific accredited learning modules included on the Programme are:
 - Certificate in Social Protection Studies (Accredited QQI Level 6, 15 ECTS).
 - Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (Accredited QQI Level 7, 15 ECTS) – for Deciding Officer Role.
 - Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (Accredited QQI Level 7, 15 ECTS) – for Job Coach Role.
 - Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (Accredited QQI Level 7, 15 ECTS) – for EO Inspector Role.
 - Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services (Accredited QQI Level 7, 15 ECTS) – for EO Operations Role.
 - [Note: For those staff who have already completed these specific accredited learning programmes above, there will be no obligation to complete the learning again.]
- Take part in regular checkpoint meetings to assess and review their progression. Successfully completing these assessments will allow staff in the distinct roles to progress on the career development journey. Local Coaches and a Human Resources Mentor will provide successful candidates with ongoing support and advice.
- After year two, and having demonstrated satisfactory progression, successful candidates will have an opportunity to participate in an interview process for a role at Executive Officer grade.
- Be placed in any available EO roles following successful promotion to EO.

4. LOCATION

Successful candidates from this competition will be placed in roles located in **Longford, Buncrana, Letterkenny, Galway City, Waterford City, Cork City, Limerick City, Thurles, Bray, Dublin 1, Clondalkin and Coolock** for the duration of the career development journey. It is intended to recruit a total of 30 staff as part of this competition to commence in February 2027.

The Department operates a formal blended working policy in DSP. Eligibility criteria are driven by business need, individual suitability and health and safety requirements. Attendance varies from a minimum attendance of two days per week to full time attendance in the workplace, based on the eligibility criteria. For the initial period of employment, under this competition, it will be necessary for those 30 successful candidates to attend the workplace fulltime for an eighteen-month period and thereafter, where possible and within eligibility criteria, successful candidates may apply for a blended working arrangement.

5. WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Who Should Apply?

Eligible persons who are:

- Interested in working with the public face to face and on the telephone as the majority of our roles are customer facing. In year 2, this may include attending customer' homes as Social Welfare Inspector.
- Interested in joining the Department at an entry level as a starting point for a career in the Civil Service.
- Existing/Serving Civil Servants – up to and including Clerical Officer grades (or equivalent grades), interested in progressing to a higher-grade role in DSP, following learning programmes and a further assessment through a final interview process following completion of the initial two years.

Essential Requirements

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate the capabilities required of a Clerical Officer with potential to develop the capabilities required for the role of Executive Officer during a two-year period.
– see relevant capabilities ([Executive Officer](#)).
- Demonstrate an openness and ability to acquire the skills and knowledge to progress to the Executive Officer Role in DSP.
- Demonstrate a keen interest in the career development aspects of the opportunity, the learning / training (on-the-job and formal) and the development opportunities that will be provided, as well as the capacity to take on and succeed in accredited learning programmes at QQI Level 6 and 7.
- Have the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours required including the ability to:
 - take direction / follow instructions.
 - organise and prioritise work effectively.
 - work well with the public and colleagues.
 - be flexible in their approach to work.
 - be able to communicate effectively in a clear and concise manner.

- Be at least 17 years of age on or before the closing date of 3pm on **Tuesday, 15th September 2026**.
- Fulfil citizenship, health, and character requirements.
- Ensure that they meet the criteria regarding Public & Civil Service Redundancy/Ill Health Retirement Schemes.

Desirable

- In year 2 of the programme, there may be a requirement to have a full driving licence depending on the role.

6. WHAT WE OFFER

Benefits of Working at DSP

Pay and Benefits

- Competitive salary, with yearly increments for satisfactory performance
- Regular opportunities for promotion through internal, interdepartmental and open competitions
- Public Sector Pension
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Tax saver public transport pass
- Civil Service Wide Mobility Scheme

Healthy Work-Life Balance

- **22 Days Annual Leave:** Benefit from a generous annual leave allowance that grows with your service length. Initial leave is 22 days per year, this can grow up to 27 days at the maximum of the Executive Officer's leave allowance after a number of years' service.
- **Flexible Hours:** Work a 35-hour week with flexible start/finish times between 8 to 10 am and 4 to 7pm, plus potential to work up flexi days when working from the office.

Comprehensive Learning and Development

- **Structured Career Paths:** We offer clear career progression pathways linked to the completion of specific training programs and certifications. As you acquire new skills and knowledge, you will have promotion opportunities to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities within the Department with an increased salary.
 - **Learning Management System:** Access a wide range of online courses and resources to support your continuous professional development provided by our industry-leading LMS.
 - **Skills Academy:** Participate in structured training programs designed to accelerate your growth and build core capabilities.
 - **Mentoring:** Benefit from ongoing guidance and support from staff who have built national-scale systems and led major digital transformations.
- Refund of Fees Scheme:** Avail of financial support for approved third-level courses relevant to your role and career development.

Impactful Work

- **Diverse Exposure:** Rotate across various divisions, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the department's functions and the interconnectedness of public service delivery. You will have the opportunity to experience the full spectrum of our work.

- **Meaningful Contributions:** Collaborate with experienced civil servants on projects that directly impact the lives of individuals, families, and communities across Ireland. Your work will contribute to the development and implementation of policies and initiatives that promote social inclusion, support employment, and enhance the wellbeing of our citizens.
- **Innovation and Continuous Improvement:** Bring your fresh perspectives and ideas to the table, challenging the status quo and identifying opportunities for innovation. You will be encouraged to think creatively and propose solutions that enhance service delivery, streamline processes, and improve outcomes for our customers.
- **Leadership Development:** Embrace opportunities to take on leadership roles within project teams and working groups. You will receive guidance and support from experienced managers who will help you develop the leadership capabilities required for future roles of increasing responsibility.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The details below represent a summary of the principal conditions of service for this competition. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

This is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment, which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate(s).

Appointments from panels

It is envisaged that a panel(s) of qualified individuals will be established from which vacancies may be filled to support the DSP-specific roles competition. Qualification and placement on a panel is **not** a guarantee of appointment to a position. Please note that once a candidate has been assigned, they will no longer remain on the panel.

Salary:

The salary for the position of Clerical Officer in DSP with effect from 1st June 2026 is as follows:

€611.75	€645.43	€654.01	€670.69	€695.32	€719.93	€744.51	€762.42	€782.74
€806.29	€822.89	€846.23	€869.42	€905.60	€934.03 ¹	€958.80 ²		

The PPC pay rate applies when the individual is required to pay a Personal Pension Contribution (otherwise known as a main scheme contribution) in accordance with the rules of their main/personal superannuation scheme. This is different to a contribution in respect of membership of a Spouses' and Children's scheme, or the Additional Superannuation Contributions (ASC).

A different rate will apply where the appointee is not required to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

Probation and Tenure:

For new entrants into the Civil Service, the appointment in Year 1 is to a permanent Clerical Officer position on a Probationary Contract in the Civil Service. The Probationary Contract will be for a period of nine months from the date specified on the contract.

For existing Civil Servants who have already successfully completed a Probationary Contract at CO grade, there will be no requirement to repeat probation.

All other appointees will serve a nine-month Clerical Officer probationary period. If an appointee who fails to satisfy the conditions of probation has been a serving civil servant

immediately prior to their appointment from this competition, the issue of reversion will normally arise. In the event of reversion, an officer will return to a vacancy in their former grade in their former Department.

If successfully assigned as an Executive Officer after two years, having undertaken the various roles and learning provided to a satisfactory standard, **Officers will be required to complete a nine-month probationary period following appointment as Executive Officer.**

If after an Officer's second year appointed under this competition or at any time throughout the first two years of employment as part of this competition, it is found that the Officer does not meet the assessment criteria required either to progress or the criteria required at the end of the two years to be assigned as an Executive Officer, they will be retained in the Department as a permanent Clerical Officer, provided they have successfully passed probation as a Clerical Officer.

Applicants must also note that they cannot be appointed from this competition if they are either serving a relevant sanction under the Disciplinary Code or are currently engaged in the Investigation/Disciplinary process at the time of assignment. For the latter, no appointment decision can be made until such time as the Investigation/Disciplinary process has concluded.

Annual Leave:

The Annual Leave allowance at Clerical Officer grade is 22 days rising to 23 days after 5 years' service and to 24 days after 10 years' service. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the civil service, is based on a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

If appointed to EO as part of the provisions of this competition, the appropriate annual leave for [EO level](#) will apply.

7. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

7.1 Competition Rules

Availability and Admission

During the selection process, the onus is on all candidates to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by DSP and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the contact details specified on their application form.

The Department of Social Protection will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that Department of Social Protection is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment from this competition, the Department of Social Protection will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed, a final determination cannot be made, nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Canvassing:

Canvassing will disqualify and will result in exclusion from the process. Candidates must not:

1. Knowingly or recklessly provide false information.
2. Canvass any person with or without inducements.
3. Personate a candidate at any stage of the process.
4. Interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine and/or imprisonment. In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- A candidate who has not been appointed to a post will be disqualified as a candidate.

And

- Where a candidate has been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, they shall forfeit that appointment.

Declining an offer of appointment

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the Department may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Security Clearance

A candidate will be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form should they come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all addresses at which they resided.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not complete and submit the Application before the specified date; or do not attend/undertake any subsequent stage of the selection process as requested or do not furnish such evidence as requested in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Confidentiality

Protecting confidentiality is a priority. Candidates can expect, and we guarantee, that all enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in the competition process. We will not contact referees, employers or previous employers without the candidate's written consent and then only if under consideration for appointment.

Quality Customer Service

We aim to provide an excellent quality service to all our customers. If, for whatever reason, you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from us, we urge you to bring this to the attention of the unit or staff member concerned. This is important as it ensures that we are aware of the problem and can take the appropriate steps to resolve it.

Candidates' Obligations**Candidates must not:**

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information,
- canvass any person with or without inducements,
- personate a candidate at any stage of the process,
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

It is important to remember that this is a competitive process for a role where integrity is paramount. Sharing information on the test material, e.g. through social media or any other means, may result in you being disqualified from the competition.

Please note that all test materials are subject to copyright and all rights are reserved. No part of the test material (including passages of information, questions, or answer options) or associated materials may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, photographing, recording, written or otherwise, at any stage. To do so is an offence and may result in you being excluded from the selection process. Any person who contravenes this provision, or who assists another person(s) in contravening this provision, is liable to prosecution and / or civil suit for loss of copyright and intellectual property.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- where they have not been appointed to a post, they will be disqualified as a candidate,
- where they have been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, they shall forfeit that appointment.

Specific candidate criteria

In addition to fulfilling the eligibility criteria set out, candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned.
- Be suitable on the grounds of health & character.
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned.

If successful, they will not be appointed to the post unless they:

- Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are, or may be required to be performed,
- Agree to undertake the learning and development required as part of this competition,
- Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position.

7.2 Eligibility

To be eligible, you will need to meet **certain requirements** by the date of the position offer:

You must be:

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; **or**
- (b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); **or**
- (c) a citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; **or**
- (d) A non-EEA citizen who has a Stamp 4* or a Stamp 5 permission.

** Please note that a 50 TEU visa, which is a replacement for Stamp 4EUFAM after Brexit, is acceptable as a Stamp 4 equivalent.*

Fulfil Health & Character, Garda Vetting and Security Clearance and Reference Check requirements and meet the criteria regarding Public and Civil Service Redundancy/III Health Retirement Schemes ([CLICK HERE](#) for further information). References will be sought. Some posts will also require special security clearance. In the event of potential conflicts of interest, candidates may not be considered for certain posts.

It is important that you list any previous civil or public service employment, if you have availed of a voluntary redundancy or retirement scheme and/or are in receipt of an ill-health retirement pension. Failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

Irish Proficiency

As part of our ongoing commitment to support the Irish language, our leadership on the Gaeilge365 programme and to comply with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, we are gathering information on candidates' capacity to speak Irish.

Under this legislation, public bodies are required to ensure that 20% of new recruits can perform their duties through Irish by 2030. While this position is not an Irish language speaking role, we are asking all applicants to indicate their current level of Irish language ability.

This information will be used for workforce planning purposes only and will not form part of the selection process for this competition.

PLEASE NOTE

Qualifications/eligibility may not be verified until the final stage of the process. Therefore, those candidates who have not met the specified eligibility requirements and proceed with their application are putting themselves through unnecessary effort/expense and will not be offered a position from this campaign. An invitation to tests, interview or any element of the selection process is not acceptance of eligibility.

7.3 Selection Process

7.3.1 How to Apply

Practical Matters

- Applications should be made online through the [DSP Careers Portal](#)
- To apply, candidates must have a “user-account” on the [DSP Careers Portal](#). If you have not already done so, you must register as a **‘New User’** to create your profile (register a new account).

If you cannot remember your profile details, please do not create a second profile, this could invalidate your TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie.

Please do not confuse registering (creating a profile) with submitting an application.

Once you have created a profile you must then access the application form, complete, and submit.

Candidates must use their own valid email address. Email addresses from third parties will not be accepted and may invalidate your application. DSP will only communicate application information with the candidate and not with any third party.

Username and Password

1. It is important that you keep note of your username and password as you will need this information to access your candidate portal.
2. It is strongly recommended that you do not change your email address or mobile phone number during this recruitment campaign, as any email/text message will be sent to the email address/telephone number originally supplied.

3. If invited to tests and/or interview, the onus is on each applicant to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the Department of Social Protection.

The Department of Social Protection accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant. They must ensure that they regularly check their emails, DSP Careers Portal messages and access all communications from the Department of Social Protection.

The Application and Assessment Process

Please read carefully all of the instructions contained in this booklet before submitting your application.

Important information in relation to the DSP Careers Portal:

- The DSP Careers portal is not supported by **Internet Explorer**. It should be used with **Microsoft Edge** or **Chrome**.
- You must **complete your profile** in full before you **complete your application form**.
- Please ensure you **save** any information entered on your profile/application as you go along as it will not be automatically saved. The system will display a popup message after 15 minutes, you are advised to save your application as draft at this time.

Technical Support

If you experience any technical difficulties, please select the **Help** facility which you will find in the top right-hand corner in the DSP Careers portal. From here, please **Submit a Request** by selecting **Support Ticket** from the drop-down menu and complete all the necessary fields. There will be staff available on-line to assist you through the process.

The onus is on Applicants to ensure that:

- The information provided within your profile is accurate as the information contained in your profile will automatically link to the completed Application. You should check that the information which you have included in your profile i.e., work history etc is relevant to the position you are applying for.
- The contact information contained in your profile is correct as DSP will use this information for all further communication.
- You have completed and submitted the relevant Application for the position for which you are applying, as Profile Registration alone does not allow access to the competition.

Important to Note: you will not be able to amend your application once submitted.

The onus is on each candidate to ensure that they have completed and submitted all requested documentation by **3pm on Tuesday, 15th September**. Candidates should allow plenty of time to submit their application. **Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted, and this will be strictly enforced.**

Closing Date for receipt of applications is: 3pm on Tuesday, 15th September.

It is suggested that you apply well in advance of the closing date in case you experience any difficulties.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within two working days of applying, please check your Junk / Spam folders as email notifications may be filtered into your Junk / Spam email folders (or promotions in the case of gmail). It is also recommended that you return to your career portal account and confirm that it has been successfully submitted via ***'My Applications'***.

Choosing the Location for the roles of Deciding Officer, Job Coach, EO Inspector and EO Operations.

Successful candidates will be placed in a role located in **Longford, Buncrana, Letterkenny, Galway City, Waterford City, Cork City, Limerick City, Thurles, Bray, Dublin 1, Clondalkin and Coolock** initially and for the duration of the career development journey in Deciding Officer and Job Coach / EO Inspector/EO Operations.

Applicants should select a maximum of one location where they would be prepared to work if successful. Locations, once chosen, cannot be changed.

Selection of one particular location will automatically eliminate applicants from being considered for positions in the other locations. The panel formed as part of this recruitment process will be in place for a period of 1 year from the date on which it is established.

DSP is an Equal Opportunities Employer. We believe that a thriving, inclusive public service that is energised by the contribution of employees from all sectors of society leads to more innovative, productive workplaces and more responsive and inclusive policies, programmes, and services. All of our activities and initiatives are underpinned by our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2021-2023](#).

It is important to note, you will not be able to amend your application once submitted.

Late applications will not be accepted, and this will be strictly enforced by HR Division.

7.3.2 Selection Process

1. All eligible candidates will be invited to undertake an online psychometric test.
2. The highest placed candidates, by preferred location, placed in order of merit following the psychometric test will be called for competitive interview.

These candidates will be requested to submit a capability-based questionnaire in advance of the interview which will be used during the interview stage.

At the competitive interview stage, candidates will be assessed for suitability based on:

- The capabilities for the CO role based on the Public Jobs Capability Framework (see [Clerical Officer](#)).
- An aptitude and interest in engaging in the training and development aspects of the career development opportunity and in developing EO Capabilities as detailed in the

EO Capability Framework. In particular:

- Innovation and change management
- Managing a team and ensuring high quality outputs
- Resolving complex queries
- Using initiative and taking responsibility for areas of work
- Analysing and understanding information, making recommendations and decisions
- Leading, supporting and motivating a team to achieve set goals
- Coaching, guidance and feedback to others to support their development
- Developing specialist expertise and knowledge in their area.

Following the competitive interview stage, it is intended to recruit **30 successful candidates** on the order of merit, by preferred location, to undertake this Programme commencing early in 2027.

Additional Information

Candidates will be required to take tests which are designed to identify their ability to fulfil a Clerical Officer role and their potential to be an Executive Officer. More detailed information in relation to the selection methods and confirmed dates will be made available to candidates as they progress through each stage.

The selection methods used to select successful candidates for positions will include:

- Online assessment tests
- Interview

Applicants must successfully compete and be placed highest to be considered for advancement to the next stage of the selection process. The number to be called forward will be determined from time to time.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment, all such enquiries as are deemed necessary by DSP to determine the suitability of that candidate will be carried out.

Online Assessments & Tests

As indicated, the selection process may comprise several stages. Stage 1 will comprise online psychometric testing.

Detailed information on each selection stage will be made available at the appropriate time to candidates being invited to that particular stage of the process. No other special preparation is required, and past papers are not available.

DSP has no function or involvement in the provision of, and does not endorse, any preparation courses relating to the selection process.

To facilitate candidates' availability and circumstances, initial stages of the selection process will be conducted online, with later stages requiring attendance at a test/interview venue. Live online proctoring will be used to verify candidates' identity when undertaking the tests.

Candidates may take the tests in a venue of their choice, wherever they have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection.

It is important to note that taking these tests within a secure IT network e.g., a network such as your work or college which may have firewalls or other security technology in place may cause you technical difficulties. You should consider taking your assessments in an environment where access to the internet is not restricted to the same level. **The onus is on you to ensure that you have full internet access to complete the tests.** You should ensure that you can complete the tests in a quiet environment where you can concentrate without being disturbed for the duration of the tests. It is advised to take the tests on a PC or Laptop. Candidates should not attempt to take the test on a smart phone, mobile or tablet device.

It is important to note that the email address you provide when applying must be one that you can always access. Candidates will be given specific time-windows in which to complete the tests. A link to the actual online assessment tests will be sent to candidates' career portal in advance of the test-taking window. Candidates who have not completed the online test before the deadline will be deemed to be no longer interested in this competition and their applications will receive no further consideration.

7.3.3 Right to Review

Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

Any complaints/requests for review will be considered in accordance with the procedures as set out in the Code of Practice.

Code of Practice

The selection and appointment process for this competition will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice on Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments. The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

1. Probity
2. Appointments made on merit
3. An appointments process in line with best practice
4. A fair appointments process applied with consistency
5. Appointments made in an open, accountable and transparent manner

The Code of Practice may be accessed at www.cpsa.ie

7.4 Working for the Civil Service

The [Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Civil Servants. If successful in this competition you must behave according to the code's principles and live by its values.

The Civil Service embraces diversity and is an equal-opportunities employer. We are committed to championing an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects modern Ireland and the people we serve. We strive to create a culture where all staff have equal access to opportunities and feel comfortable being themselves.

The Department of Social Protection will run this competition in compliance with the [Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service](#), prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA).

7.5 Data Protection

When candidates' application forms are received, DSP creates a record in each candidate's name, which contains the personal information supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing the candidature. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and Data Protection Act 2018.

Use of Recording Equipment

The Department of Social Protection does not allow the unsanctioned use of any type of recording on its premises or any location where assessments/tests/interviews, etc. take place, e.g. video interviews, teleconference. This applies to any form of sound recording and any type of still picture or video recording, whether including sound recording or not, and covers any type of device used for these purposes. Any person wishing to use such equipment for any of these purposes must seek written permission in advance. This policy is in place to protect the privacy of staff and candidates/clients and the integrity of our assessment material and assessment processes.

Unsanctioned use of recording equipment by any person is a breach of this policy. Any candidate involved in such a breach could be disqualified from the competition.

7.6 Accessibility, Disability and Reasonable Accommodation for the Selection Process

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to ensuring that our recruitment processes are accessible and inclusive for all candidates.

All requests for reasonable accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances, in line with best practice and current legislation. Having a disability or requiring adjustments will not impact your progress in the selection process, and you will not be disadvantaged by disclosing your disability or requirements. All information provided in this context will be treated as strictly confidential.

Candidates who have indicated on their application form or profile that they would like to avail of reasonable accommodations for the interview and assessment process are asked to submit a psychologist's/medical report. The purpose of the report is to provide DSP with information to act as a basis for determining reasonable accommodations where appropriate for the interview.

Candidates who wish to discuss or request a reasonable accommodation should:

- Indicate this on their application form.
- Contact the recruitment team at TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie as early as possible with a psychologist's/medical report.

Candidates should provide sufficient detail regarding the nature of the accommodation required to assist in making appropriate arrangements. We are committed to engaging with candidates to ensure, insofar as practicable, that appropriate supports are put in place to enable equitable participation in the recruitment process for all candidates.

Appendix A: Flexible and Family Friendly Policies

List of available Family Friendly policies:

- [Blended Working](#)
- [Shorter Working Year](#)
- [Career Break](#)
- [Work-Sharing](#)
- [Enhanced Parental Leave](#)
- [Adoption Leave](#)
- [Special Leaves](#)
- [Paid Sick Leave](#)
- [Flexitime](#).

Learning and Development

We are committed to supporting you to develop and grow in your career, providing:

- Training and further continuous education, including Study Leave
- Leadership Development Programme
- Mobility: This scheme provides staff with career opportunities to learn and partake in diverse roles across a range of Civil Service organisations and geographical locations.
- [Refund of Fees](#)

[Civil Service Employee Assistance Service](#) (CSEAS) provides a wide range of free and confidential supports to staff designed to assist employees to manage work and life difficulties which, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and/or attendance and quality of life.

Schemes

- [Cycle to Work Scheme](#)
- [VDU Eye Test Scheme](#)
- [Travel Pass Scheme](#)

Appendix B: Day in the Life

A Day in the Life of a Current Trainee (Deciding Officer)

"I started my EO traineeship journey in January 2024, and although I am only six months into the course, the knowledge, and skills I have gained have really transformed me in my role as a Deciding Officer.

The course has great balance of practical on-the-job training and structured Learning. With a focus on managerial development in Year 2.

I also get to take part in 3 QQI Special purpose awarded certificates at level 6 and 7, accredited by the National College of Ireland during my time on the two-year programme, which will look great on my CV.

Our team enjoy learning and working together, with the help of a great group of coaches whose aim is to help you reach your maximum potential.

If you want to join a dynamic team to help you progress in a career as a junior Manager in the Department of Social Protection, then I can wholeheartedly recommend the Executive Officer Traineeship."

A Day in the Life of a Deciding Officer

"My role allows me the opportunity to engage with and help customers and have a good work-life balance.

I am part of a large team with responsibility for making decisions on Jobseeker and One Parent Family applications. The unit also has areas that look after quality assurance, appeals, scheme policy, system development and training.

My day typically starts out with my manager assigning customer applications to be decided. I work through the applications and liaise with the customers to establish or clarify information. Much of my interaction with customers is through telephone, emails, letters or even through MyWelfare.ie (online platform). I may need a report from an inspector before determining if a person has an entitlement to a payment and the level of payment. I ensure that my decision is based on facts and within the legislation or guidelines. I look at all applications case-by-case. I have access to my line manager or policy support areas if I need support or clarification on the guidelines.

My team has a mix of very experienced officers who can support me on almost any application and new staff who are bringing their experiences in from other areas. I always have a staff member available to assist me with any questions or queries I have.

The move into the Civil Service has been great. I really feel part of a very progressive team that makes a real difference to the lives of customers. I look forward to gaining more expertise in my current area and being able to ensure the customer is at the heart of all decisions and future developments that are ahead."

A Day in the Life of a Current Trainee (Job Coach)

“Year 2 of the traineeship has been a great experience. In my role as a Job Coach I have been able to use the knowledge I’ve gained throughout the Traineeship so far. I’ve been able to use my customer service knowledge and skills to help the public on their path to employment.

Meetings with the public can be in group settings like our Group Information Sessions or in one-to-one meetings where we go into more depth on their skills and experience and discuss what barriers may be preventing them from obtaining a job.

Dealing with the public in such a direct way has enhanced my interpersonal communication skills and group presenting skills. The experience has put into sharp focus the direct positive affect we can have on the public.”

A Day in the Life of a Job Coach

“I am a Job Coach in the Department of Social Protection since January 2021. The role of Job Coach is a busy one, providing support to jobseekers searching for work, courses, and training.

My job involves in person engagement with jobseekers through conducting the Group Information Session and following that I meet with clients for Activation Review Meetings. This regular engagement has utilised and improved my customer service and communication skills.

I have referred customers to training courses through the Training Support Grant funding and to suitable education options which gives a sense of progressing the client and assisting them in their career journey

I work with experienced colleagues within the Activation Section and other scheme areas. They provide a support system and guidance if needed.

There’s also some variety within the job with the organisation of Job Fairs and conducting meetings with clients off site. This is an opportunity to meet with them in a different setting and provide a friendly, professional service.”

A Day in the Life of a Current Trainee (Executive Officer Inspector)

“Year 2 has proven an interesting challenge, with a large step up in terms of independent working and accountability. Tasks are more varied, and the expectations are higher.

The field work component of the SWI Role is particularly interesting and can be very rewarding to see the real change made in people's lives made by state services.

There's also a greater human touch: with all walks of life sitting face to face with you, it gives better perspective on the profound changes in people's lives and the social issues driving them.”

“Year 2 of the traineeship is full of learning and development opportunities. We are working as EO Inspectors which involves investigating a customer’s entitlement to a payment, whether or not they meet the qualifying conditions, and reporting our findings back to the Deciding Officer.

We interview customers face-to-face, either in the office or in their home, whichever is more appropriate. Being organised and planning your day is essential in this role, which has developed our time management and organisation skills. The role also involves informing customers of additional schemes they may be eligible for.

Working in this role has developed our communication skills and has given us a new perspective on the supports we provide as a Department and how we assist people in all walks of life. We will complete a Level 7 NCI course in Social Welfare Investigative Work which will help develop us further as EOIs. As trainees, we work closely together and share the knowledge and experience we’ve gained with each other.

As well as working in the EOI role, we attend People Management workshops each quarter to complement the OneLearning courses, all of which are preparing us for a permanent EO role at the end of the traineeship. We have developed a great network between the traineeship group, our coaches and mentors which has helped us throughout the traineeship. It has been a challenging but very rewarding year so far.”

A Day in the Life of an Executive Officer Inspector (EOI)

“The Executive Officer Inspector (EOI) is a Social Welfare Inspector role involves investigating and reporting on a customer’s entitlement to means tested income support schemes and confirming that scheme conditionality is in order.

As an EOI, I assist both individuals and their families, inform them of their entitlements and the social welfare supports available.

The work I do is extremely varied from day to day based on the type and complexity of cases. I find that being organised, prioritising workload on hand and having a flexible approach is imperative.

As part of my job, I interview customers, and this can take place in various settings depending on the case and what’s most appropriate in the circumstances, for example in the office, in the customer’s home or sometimes in care service settings.

I work as part of a tightly knit team and we regularly seek advice and guidance from each other as there is always something new to discuss.

The job itself is very rewarding one, meeting different people and being able to make a positive impact on their lives.”

The accounts above are provided based on real life examples provided of the types of work undertaken in any typical day by current staff in these roles and do not constitute job descriptions.

Appendix C: Terms and Conditions

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Terms and Conditions

Your attention is drawn to this important information. By submitting an application, accessing, or attempting any assessment / test materials you are agreeing to be bound by the terms set out below:

1. All test and assessment materials are subject to copyright and all rights are reserved. No part of the tests/ assessment materials (including any text, questions and/or potential answer options) or associated materials (including practice and/ or familiarisation materials) may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, printing, photographing, recording, written or otherwise, at any stage. To do so is an offence and may result in you being excluded from the selection process. Any person(s) who contravenes this provision, whether an applicant or other, or who assists another person(s) in contravening this provision, is liable to prosecution and/ or civil suit for loss of copyright and intellectual property.
2. Note the [CPSA - Code of Practice](#)
In particular please note Section 4 - Responsibility of Candidates (see below)

Canvassing

Candidates should note that canvassing to enhance their candidature or encouraging others to do so will disqualify them and will result in their exclusion from the appointments process.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates in the recruitment process must not:

- Knowingly or recklessly provide false information,
- Canvass any person, with or without inducements,
- Interfere with or compromise the process in any way.
- A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Penalties for failure to comply

Any person who contravenes the above provisions, or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine and/or imprisonment.

If a person found guilty of such an offence was or is a candidate in a recruitment process, then:

- Where they have not been appointed to a post, they will be disqualified as a candidate.
 - Where they have been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, they shall forfeit that appointment.
3. The admission of a person to the competition, or invitation to undertake any element of the selection process is not to be taken as implying that the Department of Social Protection are satisfied that such a person fulfils the essential requirements.