



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Social Protection

## INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR CANDIDATES

Open competition:

**Traineeship Programme**

**The Department of Social Protection**

**Closing date 3pm on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

The Department of Social Protection is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

This Competition will be run in compliance with the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service prepared by the Commission of Public Service Appointments (CPSA). Codes of practice are published by the CPSA and are available on [www.cpsa.ie](http://www.cpsa.ie)

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### HELPDESK CONTACT DETAILS:

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## Introduction

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is running an open competition for **Traineeship Opportunities**, trainees will be appointed to the role of **Deciding Officer** alongside a defined and fulfilling career development opportunity for progression to **Executive Officer (EO)** level. The role of Deciding Officer has a real impact in 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, undertake one of the two distinct customer facing roles of EO Inspector and Job Coach and undertake accelerated learning and development. At the end of the two-year journey, Officers will then have the opportunity to progress 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 either a Job Coach or Inspector role and undertake an accelerated learning programme.

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.

Successful candidates from this competition will be placed in roles located in **Dublin City, Limerick City, Cork City and Sligo** for the duration of the career development journey. **It is intended to recruit a total of 20 staff as part of this competition in 2025.**

## DSP Background Information

DSP is the largest Government Department 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 several agencies and third-party service providers.

The Department employs over 6,700 staff, with a budget of approximately €25 billion, delivered processes in excess of 2.5 million customer service applications per annum and issued approximately 87 million payments to 2.2 million customers and their families.

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

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 in 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 the 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.

**It is expected that those successful in this competition will:**

- Spend their first year in the Deciding Officer role.
- Following successful probation (or for those staff who have already completed probation) take part in an accelerated learning programme in their second year (in either a Job Coach or EOI role) to gain experience of different areas and of key aspects of these and other roles in the Department.
- Upon successfully commencing their second year, be awarded an allowance to support them taking on either a Job Coach or EO Inspector role.

- Participate, complete and be successful in Third Level Accredited Learning Programmes (to QQI Level 6 & 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).
- Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (Accredited QQI Level 7) – for Deciding Officer Role.
- Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (Accredited QQI Level 7) – For Job Coach Role.
- Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (Accredited QQI Level 7) – For EO Inspector Role.
- [Note: For those staff who have already completed these specific accredited learning programmes noted, 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, via an interview process, for a role at Executive Officer grade.
- Be placed in any available EO roles further to successful promotion to EO.

### Who Should Apply

#### Eligible persons who are:

- **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 an accelerated learning programme and a further assessment through a final interview process following completion of the initial two years.

### The Application Process

If interested in this unique career development opportunity, your first step, will be to create an account on the [DSP Careers Portal](#) so that you can apply for this opportunity by **3pm** on the closing date of **18<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

#### The next stage is the assessment stage:

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 competency-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 competencies for the CO role (see [Appendix A](#)).
- An aptitude and interest in engaging in the training and development aspects of the career development opportunity and in developing:
  - good analysis and decision-making capacity,
  - interpersonal and communication skills,
  - specialist knowledge, expertise, and self-development of particular relevance to DSP and
  - drive and commitment to public service values, that would demonstrate the potential of candidates successfully completing the two-year programme.

Following the competitive interview stage, it is intended to recruit **20 successful candidates** on the order of merit, by preferred location, to undertake this Programme commencing early in 2025.

### Entry Requirements and Eligibility

#### Candidates must:

- Demonstrate an ability to perform the competencies required of a Clerical Officer with potential to develop the competencies required for the role of Executive Officer during a two-year period. – see relevant competencies at [Appendix A](#).
- 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 e.g., QQI Level 6 & 7.
- Have the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours required including:
  - 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 **Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024**
- Fulfil citizenship, health, and character requirements ([see below](#)).
- Ensure that they meet the criteria regarding Public & Civil Service Redundancy/ Ill Health Retirement Schemes.

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

Successful candidates will be placed in a role located in **Dublin City, Limerick City, Cork City or Sligo** initially and for the duration of the career development journey in Deciding Officer and Job Coach / EO Inspector.

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](#).

## Other Recruitment Information

### Health & Character

Candidates must be in good health, capable and competent of carrying out the work assigned to them, and they must be of good character. Those under consideration for a position will be required to complete a health and character declaration and a Garda Vetting form. 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.

### Garda Vetting

If an applicant comes under consideration for appointment, they will be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which they resided. If otherwise unsuccessful at the selection process, the Garda Vetting form will be destroyed by the Department of Social Protection. Therefore, if the applicant subsequently comes under consideration for another competition conducted by the Department of Social Protection, they may be required to supply this information again on that occasion.

## Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility

### Citizenship Requirements

#### Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility

**In order to participate in this competition, the following Citizenship requirements apply:**

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area. 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<sup>1</sup> visa or a stamp 5 visa;

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

To qualify, candidates must meet one of the citizenship criteria above by the closing date.

**Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants.

It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the Public Service by any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non- eligibility).

**Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER):**

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

**Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010):**

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

**Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013)**

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the *Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants* dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body [as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012] for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

**Declaration:**

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement and/or the collective agreement outlined above. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

### Employer of Choice

As an **Employer of Choice**, the Civil Service has many flexible and family friendly policies e.g. Work sharing, Shorter Working Year, Remote Working (operated on a 'blended' basis), etc. All elective policies can be applied for in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and are subject to the business needs of the organisation.

The Civil Service also operates a Mobility scheme for all general service grades. This scheme provides staff with career opportunities to learn and partake in diverse roles across a range of Civil Service organisations and geographical locations.

### Principal Conditions of Service

#### General

The appointment is to a permanent post in the Civil Service and is subject to the Civil Service Regulations Acts 1956 to 2005, the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and any other Act for the time being in force relating to the Civil Service.

#### Salary

New Entrant Appointees will be offered a salary of €29,296.98. This is the first point of the Clerical Officer Salary scale.

Where a successful candidate has had prior Civil/Public service, incremental credit may be awarded after offer and acceptance of the position on the first point of the Clerical Officer Salary scale and further to satisfactory evidence being provided by the Appointee in line with normal procedures.

#### CO Pay-scale Effective 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024 [DPENDR Circular 08/2024](#)

€29,296.98 - €31,020.48 - €31,457.75 - €32,311.94 - €33,572.61 - €34,830.67 - €36,088.20 - €37,004.49 - €38,042.87 - €39,248.75 - €40,097.19 - €41,290.55 - €42,476.60 - €44,327.95 (Max) - €45,782.21 (LSI1) - €46,449.59 (LSI2)

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.

#### Important Note

Entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. Different terms and conditions may apply if you are a currently serving civil or public servant. Subject to satisfactory performance increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy. You will agree that any overpayment of salary, allowances, or expenses will be repaid by you in accordance with Circular 07/2018: Recovery of Salary, Allowances, and Expenses Overpayments made to Staff Members/Former Staff Members/Pensioners.



### The Probation Process as part of this Competition

**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 one year from the date specified on the contract.

**For existing Civil Servants** who have already successfully completed a 1-year probationary contract at CO grade, there will be no requirement to repeat probation.

All other appointees will serve a one-year 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 1-year probationary period further to 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.

During the period of the probationary contract, an officer's performance will be subject to review by the appropriate supervisor(s) to determine whether the officer:

- (i) has performed in a satisfactory manner
- (ii) has been satisfactory in general conduct
- (iii) is suitable with regard to attendance, and
- (iv) is suitable from the viewpoint of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Prior to completion of the probationary contract a decision will be made as to whether or not the officer will be retained pursuant to *Section 7. 5A (1-4) Civil Service Regulation Acts 1956-2005*. This decision will be based on the officer's performance assessed against the criteria set out in (i) to (iv) above.

The detail of the probationary process will be explained to the officer by Department of Social Protection.

A copy of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform guidelines on probation will also be made available to the officer.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs in this section, the probationary contract may be terminated at any time prior to the expiry of the term of the contract by either side in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 to 2005.

In the following circumstances your contract may be extended, and your probation period suspended.

- The probationary period stands suspended when an employee is absent due to Maternity or Adoptive Leave.
- In relation to an employee absent on Parental Leave or Carers Leave, the employer may require probation to be suspended if the absence is not considered to be consistent with the continuation of the probation, and
- Any other statutory provision providing that probation shall - stand suspended during an employee's absence from work and be completed by the employee on the employees return from work after such absence.

Where probation is suspended the employer should notify the employee of the circumstances relating to the suspension.

### **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.

### **Hours of Attendance**

Hours of attendance will be as fixed from time to time. Typically, hours will be of the order of 35 hours per week. The position holder will be required to work a five-day week.

### **Duties**

Appointees will be required to perform any duties which may be assigned to them from time to time as appropriate.

### **Outside Employment**

The position will be whole time and appointees may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business which would interfere with the performance of official duties.

### **Blended Working Arrangements**

The Department operates a formal blended working policy in DSP. Eligibility criteria is driven via business need, individual suitability and health and safety requirements. Attendance varies from a minimum attendance of one 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 those 20 successful candidates to attend the workplace fulltime for a six-month period and thereafter, where possible and within eligibility criteria, successful candidates may apply for a blended working arrangement.

### **Headquarters – Limerick City / Cork City / Dublin City / Sligo**

Headquarters will be such as may be designated from time to time by the Head of the Department/organisation. When absent from home or headquarters on official duty appointees will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal regulations.

### Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick leave absence will apply, in accordance with the provisions of sick leave circulars.

### Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Civil Service at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, an appointee who has never worked in the Public Service will be offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"). Full details of the Scheme are at [www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie](http://www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie).

Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable (non-Single Scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment or is currently on a career break or special leave with/without pay different terms may apply. The pension entitlement of such appointees will be established in the context of their public service employment history.

Key provisions attaching to membership of the Single Scheme are as follows:

- **Pensionable Age:** The minimum age at which retirement benefits are payable is the same as the age of eligibility for the State Pension, currently 66 years.
- **Retirement Age:** Scheme members must retire on reaching the age of 70 years.
- Career average earnings are used to calculate benefits (a pension and lump sum amount accrue each year and are up-rated each year by reference to CPI).
- Post retirement pension increases are linked to CPI.

An appointee who is not eligible for membership of a civil or public service pension will be facilitated should they wish to make voluntary deductions from their remuneration to a Standard PRSA established by their employer.

### Pension Abatement

If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her re-employment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. **Please note: In applying for this position you are acknowledging that you understand that the abatement provisions, where relevant, will apply. It is not envisaged that the employing Department/Office will support an application for an abatement waiver in respect of appointments to this position.**

However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil or Public Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER), the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS or the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular letter LG(P) 06/2013, any of which renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements may, however, be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.

**Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007**

The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).

**III-Health-Retirement (IHR)**

Please note any person who previously retired on ill health grounds under the terms of a superannuation scheme are required to declare, at the initial application phase, that they are in receipt of such a pension to the organisation administering the recruitment competition. Candidates will be required to attend the CMO's office to assess their ability to provide regular and effective service taking account of the condition which qualified them for IHR.

**Appointment post III-health retirement from Civil Service**

If successful in their application through the competition, the candidate should be aware of the following:

1. If deemed fit to provide regular and effective service and assigned to a post, their civil service ill-health pension ceases.
2. If the applicant subsequently fails to complete probation or decides to leave their assigned post, there can be no reversion to the civil service IHR status, nor reinstatement of the civil service IHR pension, that existed prior to the application nor is there an entitlement to same.
3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks.

**Appointment post III-health retirement from public service:**

1. Where an individual has retired from a public service body his/her ill-health pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill- health retirement under that scheme.
2. If an applicant is successful, on appointment the applicant will be required to declare whether they are in receipt of a public service pension (ill-health or otherwise) and their public service pension may be subject to abatement.
3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks.

Please note more detailed information in relation to pension implications for those in receipt of a civil or public service ill-health pension is available [via this link](#) or upon request to PAS.

**Pension Accrual**

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

**Additional Superannuation Contribution**

This appointment is subject to the Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017.

**Note:** ASC deductions are in addition to any pension contributions (main scheme and spouses' and children's contributions) required under the rules of your pension scheme.

For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme please see the following website: [Single Public Service Pension Scheme](#)

**Secrecy, Confidentiality and Standards of Behaviour: Official Secrecy and Integrity**

An officer will be subject to the [Provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1963](#), as amended by the [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#).

The officer will agree not to disclose to third parties any confidential information either during or subsequent to the period of employment.

**Codes of Ethics, Standards and Behaviour**

The officer will be subject to the Civil Service Code of Ethics (a copy of which will be made available on assignment) and the Codes of Conduct.

**The Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995** will apply, where appropriate, to this employment.

**Prior approval of publications**

An officer will agree not to publish material related to his or her official duties without prior approval by the Chairperson of the Authority or by another appropriate authorised officer.

**Political Activity**

During the term of employment, the officer will be subject to the rules governing public servants and politics.

All circulars are available on the website [www.circulars.gov.ie](http://www.circulars.gov.ie) or from the Personnel Section

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

The above represents the principal conditions of service and 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.

**Additional Facilities & Enquiries**

If you require any additional facilities to assist with your participation in any stage of this competition or have any queries, please email [TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie](mailto:TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie)

## The Application and Selection Process

### 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](mailto: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 can view any advertised jobs.
- 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 Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> 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 Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> 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'**.

### Selection Process

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 questionnaire and tests.

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 them 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 questionnaire and tests on a PC or Laptop. Candidates should not attempt to take the test on 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 questionnaire and 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 application will receive no further consideration.



**Candidates with Additional Requirements**

Candidates who have indicated on their application form or profile that they would like to avail of reasonable accommodations are asked to submit a psychologists/medical report. The purpose of the report is to provide DSP with information to act as a basis for determining reasonable accommodations where appropriate. These reports must be forwarded to [TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie](mailto:TraineeshipProgramme@welfare.ie).

**General Information**

- 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 the Department of Social Protection is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.
- Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, 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.
- Placement on any panel from this competition is no guarantee that a position will be offered.

**The Importance of Confidentiality**

Candidates can expect that all enquiries, applications, and all aspects of the proceedings to the extent that they are managed by DSP are treated as strictly confidential subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. However, candidates should note that all application material may be made available to the employing authority/organisation.

**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.

**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.

**Declining an offer of appointment**

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

**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.

**Candidates' Rights - Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process**

The Department of Social Protection will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of the codes of practice published by the CPSA. These review procedures can be found using the following link [CPSA - Code of Practice](#)

**Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify them from the Competition**

**Appendix A – Clerical Officer Competencies****Teamwork**

- Shows respect for colleagues and co-workers,
- Develops and maintains good working relationships with others, sharing information and knowledge, as appropriate,
- Offers own ideas and perspectives,
- Understands own role in the team, making every effort to play his/her part.

**Information Processing, Analysis and Decision Making**

- Approaches and delivers all work in a thorough and organised manner,
- Follows procedures and protocols, understanding their value and the rationale behind them,
- Keeps high quality records that are easy for others to understand,
- Draws appropriate conclusions from information,
- Suggests new ways of doing things better and more efficiently,
- Is comfortable working with different types of information, e.g., written, numerical, charts, and carries out calculations such as arithmetic, percentages etc.

**Delivery of Results**

- Takes responsibility for work and sees it through to the appropriate next level,
- Completes work in a timely manner Adapts quickly to new ways of doing things,
- Checks all work thoroughly to ensure it is completed to a high standard and learns from mistakes,
- Writes with correct grammar and spelling and draws reasonable conclusions from written instructions,
- Identifies and appreciates the urgency and importance of different tasks,
- Demonstrates initiative and flexibility in ensuring work is delivered,
- Is self-reliant and uses judgment on when to ask manager or colleagues for guidance,

**Customer Service, Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

- Actively listens to others and tries to understand their perspectives/ requirements/ needs,
- Understands the steps or processes that customers must go through and can clearly explain these,
- Is respectful, courteous, and professional, remaining composed, even in challenging circumstances,
- Can be firm when necessary and communicate with confidence and authority,
- Communicates clearly and fluently when speaking and in writing,

**Specialist Knowledge, Skills or Expertise and Self Development**

- Develops and maintains the skills and expertise required to perform in the role effectively, e.g., relevant technologies, IT systems, spreadsheets, Microsoft Office, relevant policies etc.
- Clearly understands the role, objectives, and targets and how they fit into the work of the unit,
- Is committed to self-development and continuously seeks to improve personal performance.

**Drive and Commitment to Public Service Values**

- Consistently strives to perform at a high level and deliver a quality service,
- Serves the Government and people of Ireland,
- Is thorough and conscientious, even if work is routine,
- Is enthusiastic and resilient, persevering in the face of challenges and setbacks Is personally honest and trustworthy,
- At all times, acts with integrity.

Candidates must also demonstrate an interest and ability to undertake the structured learning and development programme to acquire the following EO competencies:

1. People Management
2. Analysis and Decision Making
3. Delivery of Results
4. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
5. Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development
6. Drive and Commitment to Public Service Values

A more in-depth description of competencies set for the Executive Officer grade can be found here:

[PAS CS Competency Models Executive Officer.pdf \(publicjobs.ie\)](#)

## Appendix B

### 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 program, 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 whole heartedly 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 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 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

### 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.