



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Visitor Guide

Candidate Information Booklet

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[Gov.ie/housing](https://gov.ie/housing)

Open competition for appointment to the position of permanent

Visitor Guide
in the
Western and Mid-Western Divisions
of the National Parks and Wildlife Service

in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Closing Date: 3.00pm on 11 April 2024

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Custom House

Dublin 1

D01 W6X0

Contact: heritagerecruitment@housing.gov.ie

Visitor Guide

Background

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is inviting applicants for the role of permanent Visitor Guide in the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). This competition is for a non-established State Industrial role based on a 39 hour week net of breaks, rostered five days over seven. Further information on the NPWS is available on <https://www.npws.ie/>.

Job Description

The Visitor Guide position is full-time and the successful candidates will be required to work in a role that is challenging, diverse and rewarding.

Visitor Guides will report to the Head Guide or Supervisor Guide or the Regional Manager, depending on the local staffing arrangements, and to any person to whom authority has been delegated.

They will work as part of the team within the regional NPWS staff of the Department who are responsible for management of our National Parks, Nature Reserves and other properties owned by the Department. The successful candidate will ensure that each site is managed to optimise its potential for nature conservation, heritage preservation and for the safety of the public who visit these sites.

Duties of the Post

An outline of the principal duties of the position includes:

- Providing guided tours of the Burren National Park, and Coole Park and Dromore Wood Nature Reserves
- Ensuring that any rules for visitors are observed
- Welcoming visitors to the Park, Nature Reserves and their facilities
- Administering admission tickets and receipts
- Selling Park and Nature Reserve publications
- Cash handling, stock taking and completing end of day returns
- Reception duties which will include dealing with telephone and face to face enquiries and operating audio-visual and other equipment
- Deliver existing Education Programmes and materials for primary schools, secondary schools, youth groups, adults and other groups.
- Any other duties considered appropriate to the position.

Location

Visitor Guides are deployed throughout the country and areas of responsibility are decided by the Departmental NPWS management.

For the purpose of this specific competition, the location of these Visitor Guide posts will be based in the Western and Mid-Western Divisions at the following locations:

- **Wild Nephin - Ballycroy Visitor Centre, Co. Mayo**
- **Connemara National Park, Co. Galway**
- **Coole Park, Co. Galway**
- **Dromore Woods, Co. Clare, and**
- **Burren National Park, Co. Clare.**

Successful candidates may be directed to work, from time to time, in other NPWS owned or managed sites, within a division, as may be required.

Panels

Panels will be established for the above locations.

Candidates successful at the final stage of the process are usually placed on a 'panel', where they are ranked in order of merit (i.e. ranked in numerical order based on their performance/score at final stage). Candidates will be taken from this list in order and offered a job or 'appointment', as vacancies become available. Please note, being placed on a panel does not guarantee an appointment or job offer will be made.

Panels usually remain valid for a maximum of two years from the date of creation or until such time as the panels have been exhausted, whichever is the sooner.

Appointments

Offers of appointment must be accepted within a maximum period of **ten working days from date of offer**; otherwise the offer will be considered as having been refused. If that person refuses, or is deemed to have refused, the post will be offered to the next candidate on the panel in order of merit.

Entry Requirements

Candidates must have **on or before the closing date**:

Relevant Work Experience, Knowledge and Skills Essential

- Proven ability to work as part of a team.
- Knowledge of the relevant National Park/Nature Reserve and its environs.
- Previous customer service experience.

Desirable

- Previous experience as a tour guide.

- A good knowledge of local tourism and heritage sites.
- Experience of public speaking.

Interpersonal Skills

Essential

- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral.
- Enthusiastic, friendly and outgoing personality.
- Flexibility in working hours. Early morning and late evening work will be required from time to time.
- Interest in history and conveying the story of the sites to visitors.
- Calm and responsible under pressure.
- A willingness to work outdoors when required.
- Excellent organisational skills.

Educational Qualifications

Essential

- Fluent English.
- Full clean category B driving licence.
- Basic Computer skills (MS Office Suite).

Desirable

- Fluency in Irish or another language.
- Higher qualification ideally in a natural science discipline (e.g, zoology, ecology, environmental science) or teaching, history, arts, etc.
- First Aid certificate/experience.

Note: * (1) If your Irish driving licence is restricted to driving cars with an automatic transmission only (denoted by the code 78 appearing on the licence), you are not eligible.

(2) From 1 January 2021 if you are resident in Ireland and hold a UK/NI driving licence it is no longer valid to drive on here in Ireland. It is not legal for driving purposes and must therefore be exchanged. It is vital that you have a valid driving licence and that you are legally allowed to drive in Ireland by exchanging a UK/NI licence for an Irish driving licence. Further information available on: www.ndls.ie

Areas of Assessment – Visitor Guide

Candidates are asked to provide specific details of the following areas on the application form.

- Previous guiding work experience.
- Previous customer service experience.
- Situation where you demonstrated good teamwork skills.
- Situation where you solved a problem using your own initiative.

See the Instructions on how to complete the application form.

Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility

Citizenship Requirements

Eligible candidates 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 visa*; or
- (e) A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa; or
- (f) A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or the UK or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 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 be eligible by the date of any job offer.

If your visa expires, this may result in your being stepped down from your employment until such time as you have regularised your permission to work in the State.

Principal Conditions of Service

General

The position will be a permanent non-established State Industrial post.

Pay

The current (1 October 2023) weekly pay scale for Visitor Guides in the case of officers appointed on or after 6 April 1995 is as follows:

Personal Pension Contribution (PPC)

€534.30, €567.02, €575.34, €591.55, €615.45, €639.34, €663.20, €680.59, €700.29, €723.17, €739.25, €761.90, €784.42, €819.53, €847.14 (LSI1), €859.79 (LSI2)

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 public servant.

Payment will be made weekly by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) into a bank account of an officer's choice. Payment cannot be made until a bank account number and bank sort code has been supplied to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Statutory deductions from salary will be made as appropriate.

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 the principles of Circular 07/2018: Recovery of Salary, Allowances, and Expenses Overpayments made to Staff Members/Former Staff Members/Pensioners.

Tenure and Probation

The appointment is to a permanent non-established State Industrial post in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The probationary contract will be for a period of one year from the start date specified on the contract. Notwithstanding this paragraph and the paragraph immediately following below, this will not preclude an extension of the probationary contract in appropriate circumstances.

During the period of your probationary contract, your performance will be subject to review by your supervisor(s) to determine whether you:

- (i) Have performed in a satisfactory manner,
- (ii) Have been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- (iii) Are suitable from the point of view of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Prior to the completion of the probationary contract a decision will be made as to whether or not you will be retained. This decision will be based on your performance assessed against the criteria set out in (i) to (iii) above. The detail of the probationary process will be explained to you by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and you will be given a copy of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's guidelines on probation.

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 certain circumstances your contract may be extended and your probation period suspended. The extension must be agreed by both parties.

- 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 employee may require probation to be suspended if the absence is not considered to be consistent with the continuation of the probation
- Probation may be suspended in cases such as absence due to a non-recurring illness

The employee may, in these circumstances, make an application to the employer for an extension to the contract period.

Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2005

The Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2005 will not apply to the termination of the employment by reason only of the expiry of the fixed-term contract without it being renewed.

Outside Employment

The position will be whole time and the appointee may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business, which conflicts in any way with his/her official duties, impairs performance or comprises his/her integrity.

Location

The headquarters will be such as may be designated from time to time by the Department. When required to travel on official duty the appointee will be paid the appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowance.

Hours of Attendance

The hours of attendance for Visitor Guide staff will be fixed from time to time, at present they amount to 39 hours net of breaks, rostered five days over seven, which may include weekends and bank holidays. Early morning and late evening work will be required from time to time. Actual work hours will be set by local management. Candidates should note that hours of attendance may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government policy.

Annual Leave

Annual leave for State Industrials is standardised at 25 days inclusive of Good Friday.

Health

In order to be accepted as suitable for employment, the appointee must satisfy certain criteria including suitability in respect of health. The onus is on the appointee to declare their suitability, to the best of their knowledge and belief, regarding their health status, and in this regard, the appointee will be asked to complete a health self-declaration statement. Please note that any misstatements, incomplete statements and/or false declarations are liable to disqualify the appointee from the competition and/or result in the summary termination of their appointment to/employment in the position. Appointment to the position will be subject to the provision of satisfactory references and meeting the requirement for satisfactory health.

Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis.

Officers who will be paying Class A rate of PRSI will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts directly to the employing Department. Payment during illness will be subject to the officer

making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

By applying for the position, the applicant is confirming that there is nothing on the grounds of health which would preclude the applicant from meeting the requirements of the position in a consistent and satisfactory manner and the applicant is fully competent, fully capable and available to undertake the duties of the post.

Appointees will be required to complete a health declaration and will also be required to declare, before appointment, that they are fully capable of undertaking the duties attached to the position. Employment in the position will be subject to the appointee remaining fully capable of meeting the requirements of the position.

Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing 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

For a Visitor Guide recruited before 1 January 2013 superannuation benefits are provided in accordance with the terms of the Non-Established Superannuation Scheme for State Employees. Membership of the scheme is compulsory. In general, 65 is the minimum age at which pension is payable. However, for appointees who are deemed not to be 'new entrants' as defined in the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004, an earlier minimum pension age may apply.

At the time of being offered an appointment, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will, in the light of the appointee's employment history, determine whether he or she is a 'new entrant' or not.

Declaration

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. 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.

III-Health-Retirement

For an individual who has retired from the civil/public service body on the grounds of ill-health his/her pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement within the pension scheme of that employment.

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: www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie

Important Notice

The foregoing 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.

Competition Process

Applications for the post are invited from persons who meet the essential eligibility requirements above.

How to Apply

An application must be made on the Application Form which is available for download from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/453df-recruitment-in-the-department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/>

Instructions on completing the application form area also available.

A clear copy of your Driving Licence, back and front * (required to verify the essential eligibility requirement and to verify your identification if you are successful in being appointed).

Candidates do not need to submit a Curriculum Vitae.

Your fully completed application form must be submitted to heritagerecruitment@housing.gov.ie by the closing date and time stated on the Application Form.

Postal or hand written applications will not be accepted.

As all correspondence from the Department will be via email, it is your responsibility to ensure that the email account provided on the application form is monitored and any changes to contact details should be notified with the competition title number to heritagerecruitment@housing.gov.ie as soon as possible.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview is not to be taken as implying that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.

On receipt of an application you will be issued with an acknowledgement by email. Please note that all further correspondence will be carried out via email.

It is anticipated that the interviews for this post will be held in in the coming months. Without prejudice to the outcome of the selection process you are advised to make whatever provisional arrangements necessary should you be called to attend for interview. More precise instructions in this regard will issue closer to the planned date for interviews.

Candidates must make themselves available, if invited for interview, on the date(s) specified by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and ensure that the contact details entered on their Application Form are correct.

Selection Methods

The selection process may include some or all of the following:

- shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application
- initial / preliminary interview
- presentation or other exercises
- a final competitive interview
- any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.

Shortlisting

If the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage provide for the employment of a short listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the applications, appear to be the most suitable for the position. A shortlisting panel will examine the applications against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position and the Areas of Assessment for the role. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. **It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications, experience and competencies in your application.**

Appointment Process

Appointments by the Department to approved positions of employment are made as and when considered appropriate by Department management and will be subject to:

- Receipt of satisfactory references for the candidate;

- The candidate meeting the health and vetting requirements for the position;
- If a panel member does not accept an offer of appointment, when made, that panel member will not receive further offers of appointment.
- Candidates may be required to provide satisfactory documentary evidence of all qualifications claimed by them, which must be provided promptly on request. Failure to produce such documentary evidence when requested may lead to disqualification from the competition and/or termination of contract.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 applications will be treated in strict confidence. All aspects of the application and assessment process are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside of persons directly involved in an aspect of the assessment process.

Security Clearance

Garda vetting may be sought in respect of individuals who come under consideration for appointment. The applicant 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 Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which the applicant resided. If unsuccessful this information will be destroyed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. If the applicant subsequently comes under consideration for another position, they will be required to supply this information again.

Other Important Information

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend an interview, is not to be taken as implying that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the competition or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview.

If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 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.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process

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

The selection process for this competition is being carried out in the spirit of the principles set out in the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service.

Candidate Feedback

In accordance with the principles of the above Code of Practice, the Department is committed to providing clear, specific and meaningful feedback to candidates. In this regard it is the Department's policy to provide written feedback to candidates. This will consist of the candidate's marks from the competition, and a comment from the assessment board in relation to the candidate's overall performance under each of the competency headings.

Access to Information

Interviewers will be advised not to write comments on application forms and HR will destroy copies on the completion of the competition. Candidates retain the usual access rights to information on completion of the competition.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates 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 impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process.

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/or imprisonment.

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

- where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and
- Where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

Deeming of Candidature to be Withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Freedom of Information Declaration

Applicants should note that some or all of the information contained in this application may be released subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

If any of the information in this application is considered sensitive, please identify same and specify in writing the reasons for its sensitivity.

The Department will consult with you about sensitive information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

Special Accommodations

If you require any special accommodations in relation to any aspect of this competition, please notify the HR Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage heritagerecruitment@housing.gov.ie

