

HSE Protocol

regarding

Appointments to Gaeltacht Areas

The HSE provides recruitment services to all parts of the HSE and this includes Gaeltacht areas where the clinician must be able to provide the services in Irish to an Irish speaking population.

As you are aware, prior to the formation of the HSE recruitment practices were not bound by recruitment legislation. However, since April 2004, the HSE is obliged to conduct all its recruitment under the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointment) Act 2004. This legislation is underpinned by codes of practice which outlines the basic principles of:

- Appointments made on merit
- In line with best practice
- To the highest standards of probity
- Transparency and accountability
- Consistency

In essence, all appointments must be based on fairness and anchored in assessment of the core skills requirement for a post.

The HSE is acutely aware that some clinical posts will be based in a Gaeltacht area and therefore the successful candidate must be able to conduct their service in Irish. Therefore, in order to ensure that these posts are filled with candidates which are both clinically competent and are fluent in the Irish language but also giving due consideration to the legislation under which we operate, i.e. making appointments based on merit, the following process applies:

1) On approval to fill a post, each Hiring Manager provides the National Recruitment Service (NRS) with a complete description of the post, e.g. size of team, geographical location, specific requirements. In the case of a post in the Gaeltacht, it is at this stage that the Irish language requirement would be highlighted. This is known as "job order stage".

2) The full details of the post as provided by the manager above are "expressed out" to the panel. In other words, all those who are on that panel are provided with full information on the post, including the requirement to be able to speak Irish. This is communicated through a text message and an email.

3) Some candidates will "express interest", i.e. indicate their interest in the post and some will not. This is done by email in a given timescale.

4) The candidate who has indicated interest in the post and is highest in order of merit will undergo a further assessment on their Irish language skills. This will be completed using an Irish Language Assessor from a bank of Irish Language Assessors.

5) If the candidate is unsuccessful in this Irish language assessment, the next person highest in order of merit will undergo the assessment.

This approach ensures that the HSE is conducting its appointments in line with the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointment) Act 2004 but also ensuring that the successful candidate is appropriately fluent in the Irish language.

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