

Information Booklet

Sigmar Recruitment Consultants on behalf of the Ombudsman for Children (OCO) will hold a competition for the purpose of creating a panel for new **permanent contract** roles as they arise to the position of:

Early Resolution Officer (ERO) in the Ombudsman for Children's Office

Grade: Executive Officer

Closing date: **12 noon, Friday, 01 December 2023**

Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. will run this campaign in compliance with the Codes of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) and which are available on www.cpsa.ie

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Title of Position:	Early Resolution Officer in the Ombudsman for Children's Office
Grade:	Executive Officer
Employing Authority:	Ombudsman for Children
Location:	Dublin
EO Salary Scale¹:	34,562 – 36,464 – 37,538 – 39,634 – 41,513 – 43,330 – 45,141 – 46,914 – 48,705 – 50,446 – 52,264 – 53,482 – 55,219 ¹ – 56,969 ²

It is really important to know that entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. Candidates should note that different pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is a serving civil or public servant at an analogous grade.

Please do not hesitate to contact Sigmar Recruitment via publicsector@sigmar.ie if you have any queries in relation to this before submitting your application.

OCO Background

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is an independent children's rights body.

The current Ombudsman for Children is Dr. Niall Muldoon and he is directly accountable to the Oireachtas in relation to the exercise of his statutory functions under the 2002 Act. These functions are:

- to promote the rights and welfare of children
- to examine and investigate complaints made by or on behalf of children in relation to the administrative actions of public organisations that have, or may have, adversely affected a child.

Further information about this work is available on the OCO's website at www.oco.ie.

What does an Early Resolution Officer do?

Our Complaints and Investigations team is the largest team in the OCO and deals with over 2000 complaints every year. We offer a service that is impartial, free and independent to children and families across Ireland. This role involves receiving complaints directly from children, families and engaging directly with public bodies on the issue. All matters are dealt with in an empathetic, efficient and child centred manner.

We uphold all of our statutory obligations under Children's First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. It is a regular occurrence that EROs would have to deal with matters of a child protection nature, with support and guidance from our Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Such occurrences, involve reporting and liaison with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and or An Garda Síochana.

¹ Candidates should note that entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

The ERO may support outreach visits to Oberstown Detention Campus, special care units run by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, direct provision centres and centres accommodating Ukrainian children and families. When we receive a complaint we oftentimes engage with a wide variety of services such as the HSE, Tusla, schools, local authorities and hospitals to try and resolve it in the best interest of children.

We are seeking dynamic, motivated persons with a strong belief in children's rights to work with us in dealing with complaints made from or on behalf of children about public bodies, schools, voluntary hospitals and a number of other bodies in receipt of public funding. A video explaining the work of the team is available here <https://www.oco.ie/complaints/>

From this recruitment campaign we intend to create a panel of Early Resolution Officers (ERO) at Executive Officer level. This panel will be in place for two years and we will offer these posts as they arise to successful candidates in order of merit.

There are two functions of the Early Resolution Offices in the team. One role administers our admissibility process which includes dealing with initial queries to the office, make initial assessments, provides advice and will have a small number of cases. The second role carries a large number of cases and will occasionally administer the admissibility process as needed. Both are executive officer roles.

Key Responsibilities in the ERO role:

- Receive complaints and enquiries by mail, email, telephone or in person and obtaining all relevant information by asking clarifying questions, requesting documentation where appropriate and conducting appropriate follow-up where necessary.
- To effectively manage a caseload of complaints, using a variety of strategies and ensuring a timely and relevant response to all complaints assigned.
- To regularly ensure that timelines and deadlines are met in keeping with our key performance indicators and that all complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion without undue delay and are appropriately recorded and managed.
- Engage effectively with all bodies within our remit in ensure they fully understand our process and in accordance with OCO policies, procedures and legislation.
- In relation to any cases assigned, conduct and make appropriate research and make focused inquiries in order to identify opportunities for potential resolution or to promote good administration. This includes researching applicable legislation, regulations, policies or procedures.
- To support the work of assistant investigators and investigators as appropriate.
- To ensure accurate data entry on all contacts/complaints to the Office on our electronic workflow system tools.
- To assess complaints to determine next steps with due regard our statutory remit and Ombudsman principles and child centred ethos.
- Collaborate with the wider team to ensure consistent quality of messaging and engagement with public bodies

Candidates must, on the closing date for this competition, satisfy the following requirements:

- A qualification of at least level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications from a recognised university or other third level institution in a relevant discipline

OR

A qualification of at least level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications from a recognised university or other third level institution in a relevant discipline along with a minimum of two years' experience in providing intake, complaint handling and resolution services along with referral information in an Ombudsman or similar type organisation.

Essential:

- Experience of direct work with children and families and or vulnerable groups.
- Experience and knowledge of child protection policies and procedures.
- Strong administrative skills with advanced skills in Word, Excel, Outlook, and a working knowledge of the Microsoft Office suite
- Possess the core competencies described below.

Desirable:

- At least two years' relevant experience in the field of complaints and/or conflict resolution.
- Understanding of the landscape of children's services in Ireland including policy and legislation pertaining to children in Ireland.

Core Competencies

Specialist Knowledge/Expertise

- Possess an understanding of relevant legislation, policy and practice regarding children and young people.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles underpinning the work of Ombudsman.
- Ability to effectively resolve complaints
- Possess knowledge of the core principles of good complaint handling.

Analysis and Decision Making

- Excellent judgment and objective decision-making skills, problem solving skills and influencing skills
- Experience of analysing complex written material to identify and summarise key issues
- Ability to research, review and apply relevant legislation, regulations and policy

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Ability to communicate effectively with individuals especially children who may be distressed or emotionally distraught or who may face other challenges
- Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with a wide range of people
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.

- Ability to communicate with empathy and sensitivity with people from all walks of life
- Ability to work collaboratively with excellent planning and organisational skills

Delivery of Results

- Ability to manage in a busy work environment, prioritise issues and tasks and meet deadlines
- Ability to work with initiative and flexibility and attend meetings and meet deadlines as appropriate to the needs of the job

Drive and Commitment

- Demonstrated commitment to the promotion of the rights and welfare of children
- Be self-motivating and committed to a high standard of work performance

It is an absolute requirement that candidates declare any potential conflict of interest at the application stage of the recruitment process. Failure to declare such conflicts of interest which later come to light may result in the candidate being disqualified from the competition or if the candidate is offered and takes up a role with the OCO on the basis of misleading information may result in immediate dismissal from the OCO.

Conditions of Service

General:

The appointment is to an Executive Officer post on a permanent contract and is subject to the Civil Service Regulations Acts 1956 to 2005, the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004, the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002 and any other Act for the time being in force relating to the Civil or Public Service.

The selection process will include competency based interviews.

Pay:

Executive Officer salary scale –

34,562 – 36,464 – 37,538 – 39,634 – 41,513 – 43,330 – 45,141 – 46,914 – 48,705
– 50,446 – 52,264 – 53,482 – 55,219¹ – 56,969²

The remuneration shall be deemed to accrue from day-to-day and be payable by equal two-weekly instalments on the agreed day of every two weeks in arrears by bank credit transfer.

Important Note:

Candidates should note that entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Candidates should note that different pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is a serving civil or public servant at an analogous grade.

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy. (See Haddington Road Agreement paragraph 2.19 for recent changes.)

Tenure:

As they arise, these will be permanent positions. The appointee will be required to serve a 12-month probationary period.

Location:

The appointee for this role will be a hybrid employee based in the Ombudsman for Children's Office, Millennium House, 52-56 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1 and their place of residence within the Republic of Ireland. A minimum of two days per week to be decided with your line Manager will be Office based.

When absent from home and place of employment on official duty, the appointee will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal civil service regulations/public sector regulations.

Hours of attendance:

Hours of attendance will amount to not less than **35** hours gross. The appointee will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of his/her duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations.

Rest Periods:

The terms of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 will apply to this appointment.

Annual Leave:

In addition to the standard 10 public holidays and Good Friday, the annual leave for this position is 23 days per annum.

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, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars.

PRSI:

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 OCO. 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.

Superannuation and Retirement:

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the OCO at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment (see paragraph d below), this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme").

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

Pensionable Age:

The minimum age at which pension is payable is 66 (rising to 67 and 68) in line with State Pension age changes.

- a) **Retirement Age:** will be determined in accordance with the relevant government Departmental circulars.
- b) **Pension Abatement**
- If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil Service normal abatement rules will apply. However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) or the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS which, as indicated above, renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements will, 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.
 - If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service or in the Public Service please note that the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 includes a provision which extends abatement of pension for all Civil and Public Servants who are re-employed where a Public Service pension is in payment. This provision to apply abatement across the wider public service came into effect on 1 November 2012.
 - This may have pension implications for any person appointed to this position that is currently in receipt of a Civil or Public Service pension or has a preserved Civil or Public Service pension which will come into payment during his/her employment in this position.

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).

Ill-Health Retirement

- Please note that where an individual has retired from a 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.

c) Prior Public Servants

While the default pension terms, as set out in the preceding paragraphs, consist of Single Scheme membership, this may not apply to certain appointees. Full details of the conditions governing whether or not a public servant is a Single Scheme member are given in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012. However, the key exception case (in the context of this competition and generally) is that a successful candidate who has worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) capacity in the public service within 26

weeks of taking up appointment, would in general not become a member of the Single Scheme. In this case such a candidate would instead be offered membership of the pension scheme for non-established civil servants (“Non-Established State Employee Scheme”). This would mean that the abatement provisions at (c) above would apply, and in addition there are implications in respect of pension accrual as outlined below:

d) 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 existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

e) Pension-Related Deduction

This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measure in the Public Interest Act 2009.

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 candidates.

The Selection Process

How to Apply:

All candidates should visit www.ocojobs.com where there is a full list of available positions in the OCO with the corresponding downloadable information booklet for each position. There will also be a link to the online application portal to where all applications must be submitted.

To apply, candidates must provide an up-to-date application form and submit their application form via the online application portal.

Only Application Forms fully submitted online will be accepted into the campaign. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

Closing Date:

Your application must be submitted on the online application portal by 12 noon, Friday, 01 December 2023. Applications will not be accepted after this time.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 24 hours of applying, please contact OCO@sigmar.ie.

Campaign updates will be issued to your registered email address as entered on the online application portal.

The onus is on each applicant to ensure that they are in receipt of all communication from Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. You are advised to check your emails on a regular basis throughout the duration of the competition; in addition, being sure to check junk/spam folders should any emails be mistakenly filtered.

Sigmar Recruitment accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. and should make sure that the contact details specified on their application form are correct.

Selection Process:

The Selection Process may include the following:

- Submission of Application Form
- Shortlisting of candidates based on the information contained in their Application Form
- Initial/preliminary interview
- Presentation or other exercises
- A final competitive interview
- Any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.
- Reference checks

Shortlisting:

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While you may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. may decide that a smaller number of applicants will only be called to interview. In this respect, Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. provide for the employment of a short-listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against a pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. 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 on the application form.

Panel

A panel is to be formed from which future vacancies may be filled during the life of the panel; such a panel will remain active for a maximum period of 24 months. Only candidates that pass the competency interview and meet the interview boards qualifying score may be included in the panel. Please note that once an offer of appointment has been accepted and/or declined by a candidate, the candidate will no longer remain on the panel.

Confidentiality:

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 applications will be treated in strictest confidence.

Security Clearance:

Garda vetting will be sought in respect of the successful candidate. The successful candidate will be invited to complete a Garda vetting form via the eVetting portal. This form will be checked by An Garda Síochána. The Garda vetting disclosure will be kept on file with the OCO. It is expected that a re-vetting policy will be in place in the near future, which will set out the frequency of vetting within the OCO.

Other Important Information

Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. 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 notification, is not to be taken as implying that Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements 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 Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. 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 Board 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

Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd. will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of the codes of practice published by the CPSA. The Codes of Practice are available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments <http://www.cpsa.ie/>.

Should a candidate be unhappy with an action or decision in relation to their application (where the selection is managed by Sigmar Recruitment) they can seek feedback from Sigmar Recruitment. An initial review will be carried out internally by the candidate's recruitment contact as to why their application was deemed unsuccessful. The outcome of this review will be sent to the candidate in written format.

- To request an initial review, a candidate must write to Sigmar within 5 working days of receiving notification of the decision on their application. Sigmar will carry out the initial review without delay. If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may resort to the formal procedures within 2 working days of receiving notifications of the outcome of the initial review.
- Should the candidate not be satisfied with the outcome of the initial review, it will be referred to the Account Director who acts as the decision arbitrator.
- The decision arbitrator will be a person unconnected with the selection process and he/she will adjudicate on requests for review. The decision of the decision arbitrator in relation to such matters is final.

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 personate 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.

Specific candidate criteria

Candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned
- Be suitable on the grounds of character
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned and 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
- Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

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

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. Feedback will be provided on written request.

Data Protection Act 2018

When your application is received, we create a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature and as part of the recruitment process, certain information you provide will be forwarded to the employing organisation. Such information held by Sigmar and the employing organisation is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. For more

information on how we retain and use your personal data, please review our Privacy Statement, which includes instructions on their right to withdraw consent at any point:
<https://www.sigmarrecruitment.com/privacy-statement>.

To make a subject access request under the Data Protection Act 2018, please submit your request in writing to: Data Protection Officer – Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Ltd., 13 Hume St., Dublin 2 or email privacy@sigmar.ie. Ensure that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record. Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from records for general statistical purposes.