

UPDATE – 7th Nov 2024 *Closing date for all applications has been extended to 22nd November. The date for submission of references will be extended to 29th November. *****

Announcement

BSO Legal Services (DLS) Junior Counsel Panels

BSO Legal Services (DLS), which provides legal services to the public health and social care sector in Northern Ireland, is re-establishing its Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel to provide legal advice, representation and support to its HSC clients.

DLS is also launching a new General Junior Counsel Bank.

It is anticipated that both

- (1) the Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel; and
- (2) the General Junior Counsel Bank

will be effective from 1st January 2025.

For the avoidance of doubt, any Junior Counsel instructed by DLS in any case under DLS' previous formal panel arrangements before 1st January 2025 will remain instructed in that case.

An Information Pack for Applicants will be made available for each of (1) and (2) above.

(1) Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel

DLS invites applications from suitably qualified barristers with relevant specialist experience to become members of the Specialist Panels for the following areas of law:-

- Administrative Law and Inherent Jurisdiction
- Commercial Law & Public Procurement
- Employment Law
- Family Law (and associated Judicial Reviews)
- General Litigation (Personal Injury)
- Inquests
- Medical Negligence
- Mental Capacity Law and Mental Health Law

- Recovery of Residential Charges/ Debt Recovery Work

Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible to apply for one of the Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel Applicants must:

- be a qualified barrister eligible to practise in Northern Ireland at the date of application, **and**
- demonstrate extensive post qualification experience as a barrister in the specialist area(s) of law for which the candidate wishes to apply.
- DLS may consider applications from barristers with less than 5 years experience in the last 7 years, but given the specialist nature of the work, it is expected that those with less than 5 years standing may find it more difficult to satisfy the criteria for selection.

DLS reserves the right to tighten the eligibility criteria, dependent on the volume of applications for any of the Specialist Panels.

Maximum number of applications

Due to the specialist nature of these panels, Counsel may apply for a **maximum of three** Specialist Panels.

If any counsel applies for more than 3 of the Specialist Panels, strictly only the first 3 of these applications received by DLS (or the first 3 attachments to an email submission) will be considered. **The later applications/attachments will be rejected.**

Duration of Specialist Panels

The Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel will be effective from 1st January 2025 for a period of 5 years, although DLS reserves the right to extend this timescale.

(2) General Junior Counsel Bank

DLS is also inviting applications for a General Junior Counsel Bank. This Bank will be open to all barristers, particularly those who are yet to develop an extensive specialist practice. DLS may from time to time instruct Counsel on this Bank in respect of a variety of matters such as:-

- Mental Health Tribunals (potentially at short notice)
- Project work
- Support work in relation to Public Inquiries or substantial cases before the courts
- Analysis of documents, review of discoverable documents
- Legal research
- Applications and reviews before various courts or tribunals
- Appearances in the District Judge's Court and Small Claims Court
- And any other appropriate legal work

Eligibility Criterion

In order to be eligible to apply for the General Junior Counsel Bank candidates must:

- Be a qualified barrister eligible to practise in Northern Ireland at the date of application

Duration of General Junior Counsel Bank

The DLS General Junior Counsel Bank will become effective from 1st January 2025. Those Counsel appointed will remain on the Bank for a period of 5 years from appointment.

The Bank will re-open for applications on an annual basis with Counsel appointed to the Bank for a period of 5 years commencing from 1st January of the following year.

Application Forms and Further Information

Application forms and further information for both

- (1) the Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel; and
- (2) the General Junior Counsel Bank

will be available from the Business Services Organisation Website [Home - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website \(hscni.net\)](#) Please follow the link from the Counsel Panel tile on the BSO homepage.

Closing date for ALL applications is 5pm on Fri 15th Nov

Referees

For the Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel only, **2 references are required** in support of the application and will form part of the selection process.

All references must be received by **5pm on Fri 22nd Nov**; it is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure references are submitted to DLS by that deadline.

Information Sessions

DLS will be holding an online information session regarding the DLS Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel. This will include information regarding the application process and working for DLS and our HSC clients.

This Information Session will be hosted on Microsoft Teams on: **3.30 pm on Weds 30th Oct**

If you would like to request an invitation to attend this session, please email dlscounselpanel@hscni.net

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