



An tÚdarás Arachas Sláinte
The Health Insurance Authority

Candidate Information Booklet

Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications

— Assistant Principal Officer

Closing date: 12 noon, 11th September 2026

THE POSITION

Title of position:	Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications – Assistant Principal Officer
Office address:	Beaux Lane House, Mercer Street Lower, Saint Peter's, Dublin 2, D02 DH60
Organisation website:	www.hia.ie

THE ORGANISATION

The Health Insurance Authority HIA (the “**HIA**”) is the statutory regulator of the health insurance sector in Ireland. The HIA plays a key role as an independent regulator, a provider of consumer information, an adviser to the Minister for Health (the “**Minister**”) and as the custodian of the Health Insurance Risk Equalisation Fund. The HIA is a small, dynamic organisation that is committed to delivering on its vision for a well-functioning and transparent health insurance market, where consumers understand their rights and feel empowered in their decisions.

The HIA’s role is to regulate for a well-functioning market and provide consumers with information and tools to make informed choices. The HIA has five principal values that drives its work:

- **Professionalism:** The HIA upholds the highest ethical standards and behaves with integrity, care, and respect in all its interactions and work.
- **Agile:** The HIA works in a flexible, proportionate, and efficient manner with its staff and its stakeholders to deliver the best results for consumers.
- **Consumer-focused:** The HIA’s work is consumer-centric, putting consumers first in everything it does.
- **Excellence:** The HIA is focused on delivering the best results by leveraging its expertise, taking an evidence-based and consistent approach to its work.
- **Independence:** The HIA carries out its statutory functions in an impartial, fair and transparent manner in the public interest.

Governance

The HIA is a public body, which is independent in the exercise of its statutory functions. For public accountability purposes, the HIA operates under the aegis of the Department of Health (the “**Department**”). The HIA is governed by a Board comprised of seven members, who are appointed by the Minister.

Context of the Appointment

The HIA’s *Strategic Plan for 2025-2028* was mobilised in 2025, and includes the following key priorities:

1 The Informed Consumer

The HIA will empower consumers to make informed choices about their health insurance plans, with easily available and user-friendly tools to support them.

2 A Well-Functioning Health Insurance Market

The HIA will use its regulatory powers and expertise to maintain a well-functioning market, and it is recognised as the leading voice on private health insurance.

3 Our Capability and Capacity

The HIA will ensure it is resilient with appropriate capability and capacity to deliver our statutory functions effectively, sustainably, and to high standards of corporate governance.

Further information about the HIA including publications and key documents is available at www.hia.ie.

THE ROLE

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive/Registrar, the Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications is a member of the HIA Senior Management Team. The successful candidate will lead the Consumer Affairs & Communications Team with specific responsibility for directing HIA's activities in relation to supporting consumers interacting with the health insurance market. The Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications will be expected to contribute effectively to HIA activities and decisions, as well as playing an important role in the strategy, governance and development of the organisation and provide leadership to support the Chief Executive/Registrar to deliver on the vision for the Health Insurance Authority.

We are seeking a candidate to lead our consumer affairs & communications team with experience in marketing and communications, specifically in the development of consumer awareness campaigns, corporate communications and digital marketing. Their responsibilities will include the following:

Statutory mandate & consumer service

- Lead the statutory consumer information service, delivering the consumer information and protection mandate under the Health Insurance Acts.
- Lead on all activities, both strategic and BAU related to HIA's consumer engagement work, including managing the consumer support function and work of Consumer Information Office.
- Oversee the complex advisory escalations handled by the consumer information team.
- Manage content of HIA Website including HIA's health insurance plan comparison tool.

Consumer intelligence & market simplification

- Lead consumer intelligence, carry out consumer research, and identify learnings across the organisation, including embedding evidence into consumer communication
- Contribute to the Authority's market simplification and consumer choice initiatives, supporting clearer product information and decision-support tools for consumers.

Communications & external engagement

- Develop, manage and report on HIA's integrated consumer marketing communications campaigns across a range of platforms.
- Plan and execute HIA's external-facing activities, including presentations, attendance at tradeshows.
- Represent the Authority in its dealings with a range of external bodies.

Reporting

- Deliver and promote HIA's strategic external reports.
- Develop, track and report on function-level Key Performance Indicators.

Function development & leadership

- Deliver on the HIA communications strategy.
- Lead the communications team and manage 3rd party supplier contracts to deliver value for money.
- Lead the further development of the Consumer Affairs & Communications function in line with the HIA's Workforce Plan, including confirming role scope and grading requirements, and overseeing associated business case development and escalation.

General

- Manage associated budgets, business planning, risk management and procurement processes.
- Other relevant duties relating to this role, as and when required.

The Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications is expected to develop and maintain key working relationships with the following:

- HIA senior management team
- Board of the Health Insurance Authority
- Registered Insurance undertakings

- Department of Health and other state agencies, including other regulatory agencies such as the CCPC, Central Bank, FSPO.
- Outsourced service providers covering public relations, website developers, and any others relevant to the remit of this post.
- Line management of direct reports under the Consumer Affairs & Communications function.

The role is planned to evolve over time in line with the wider organisational transformation and business needs, and the Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications is expected to support throughout the transition period and beyond.

EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL QUALITIES REQUIRED

The Person

The person appointed will have a proven track record in a senior leadership role of a comparable organisation and will have worked collaboratively at Board and Executive level to build awareness of an organisation involved in supporting consumers in complex marketplaces.

Essential Requirements

- An honours degree, NFQ Level 8 equivalent, in communications, marketing, business or other relevant discipline.
- A minimum of 7 years' experience in a marketing/communications role.
- 3 years in a senior management/leadership role in a complex fast paced organisation with demonstrated strategic planning capabilities
- Experience of advertising strategy and digital marketing including social media, website design and development.
- Proficiency in developing and managing public education, consumer research and awareness campaigns to improve outcomes
- Excellent stakeholder management skills.

Desirable Requirements

- Experience operating in a similar type of public sector organisation.
- Understanding of the health insurance industry
- Experience using AI.
- Experience in change management and the ability to drive organisational improvements and innovation

The competencies for this role are provided in Appendix 1.

Shortlisting

A shortlisting exercise will be employed when assessing eligibility of applications. Eligible applications will be shortlisted according to how well the experience and skills as described by applicants match the requirements of the role of Head of Consumer Affairs & Communications– Assistant Principal Officer.

The criteria for the shortlisting exercise will be based on the information as outlined in this Candidate Booklet. It is important that applicants consider the information contained in this Candidate Booklet in presenting their relevant qualifications, skills and experience in their application.

The candidates whose applications, in the opinion of the shortlisting panel, appear best suited to the position will be shortlisted for interview.

Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend for a competency-based interview. The HIA reserves the right to invite candidates to a second-round interview and to undergo further assessment, including the use of psychometric assessment if so required.

It is anticipated that first round interviews will occur in September 2026

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

TENURE

The position is a full-time position. The appointment is on a permanent basis as a public servant, subject to satisfactory completion of the specified probationary period.

PROBATION

The successful candidate must serve a probationary period which will be of six months duration during which time the candidate's performance will be assessed. The probationary period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

SALARY AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The salary scale for the position (rates effective 1 June 2026) is at the level of Assistant Principal Officer (PPC) as follows:

€83,113, €86,173, €89,277, €92,390, €95,499, €97,292, €100,427¹, €103,576².

Long Service Increments may be payable after 3 (LSI-1) and 6 (LSI-2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Important Note

Entry will be at the minimum point 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 pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the successful candidate is already a serving civil or public servant. The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with government pay policy

Payment will be made monthly in arrears by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) into a bank account of the staff member's choice. Payment cannot be made until a bank account number and bank sort code has been supplied to the HIA. Statutory deductions from salary will be made as appropriate.

A staff member appointed to the post of Assistant Principal Officer will agree that any overpayment of salary or of travel and subsistence may be deducted from future salary payments due in accordance with the Payment of Wages Act 1991. Any such overpayment will be notified to the staff member in accordance with agreed internal procedures.

LOCATION

This role is based in the HIA's office at Beaux Lane House, Mercer Street Lower, Saint Peter's, Dublin 2. The HIA reserves the right, at its discretion, to change the primary location to any other place within Ireland.

The HIA offers flexible working hours, and we have Blended Working guidelines in place allowing employees to apply for Blended Working (a mix of office based and remote working). The HIA has put a significant number of supports in place to make the experience when working remotely as seamless as possible. The HIA has a modern IT infrastructure to help colleagues to collaborate virtually, it provides colleagues with the equipment they will need and has implemented new ways of working to keep its people connected.

ESSENTIAL TRAINING

The postholder will be required to undertake the following essential compliance training:

- HIA induction
- Health & Safety
- Data Protection (GDPR)
- Cyber Security Awareness
- Generative AI Literacy
- APA certification (CIP-01, CIP-02 & CIP-05)

WORKING WEEK

Hours of attendance at work will be arranged from time to time by the HIA and will amount to 35 hours net per week. Normal working hours will be 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with a minimum of 30 minutes for lunch. The HIA operates a flexible working hours scheme. You will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of your duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations. The rate of remuneration payable covers any extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

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

ANNUAL LEAVE

The annual leave allowance for this post will be 30 working days per annum (on a pro rata basis) to be taken at a time or times convenient to the HIA.

SICK LEAVE

Payment for absences through illness, during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service may be made in accordance with the provisions of the HIA's sick leave scheme. These sick leave arrangements are subject to any changes arising in the terms and conditions of sick leave in respect of the public service generally.

SUPERANNUATION

The successful candidate will, upon appointment, become a member of the appropriate pension scheme. Pension scheme membership will be notified within the contract of employment.

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Health Insurance Authority HIA, 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.singlescheme.gov.ie

Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable (non-Single Scheme) 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 history.

Eligibility to Compete

Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility 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 is a spouse or child of an EEA or UK or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 or a Stamp 5 visa.

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.

OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Further information on the conditions of employment will be outlined in the contract of employment for the successful candidate.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be made by e-mail prior to the deadline to cam@hia.ie. Applicants should forward a completed application form (available at hia.ie) outlining their suitability for the position.

The application form should be emailed in Microsoft Word format.

Applications to be submitted by email, prior to the deadline must include:

- 1 In preparing your application, please consider the essential and desirable criteria for this position which is outlined in this Candidate Booklet.
- 2 Any queries to be directed to Catherine O'Reilly: cam@hia.ie

Closing Date

Deadline for applications: 12 noon, Friday, 11 September 2026

Applications will **not** be accepted after the closing date. **CV's will not be accepted**, only a completed HIA application form.

Please note Interviews may be held remotely using Video-Conferencing software.

Competencies

Please see the competencies that will be assessed at interview stage for this competition. For more information on the competencies which are listed in Appendix 1 of this Candidate Booklet.

REFERENCE CHECKS

Please note that any offer of employment made to a successful candidate will be subject to satisfactory reference verification, pre-employment checks and satisfactory verification of academic and professional qualifications.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Candidate confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the recruitment process. Applicants should however note that all application material will be made available to those with direct responsibility for the recruitment process within the HIA.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

The HIA is committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign, including the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, Data Protection Act 2018, and the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997, 2003 and 2014.

EXPENSES

The HIA will not be responsible for any expense, including travelling expenses, candidates may incur in connection with their candidature.

CANVASSING

Canvassing will result in disqualification from the competition.

APPENDIX 1

Assistant Principal Officer (AP) Competency Framework in the HIA

Introduction

This framework outlines the core competencies and effective performance indicators expected of Assistant Principal Officers within the Health Insurance Authority HIA (HIA). It is designed to support high standards of performance, professional development, and the delivery of excellent service to the public.

Effective Performance Indicators

1. Management & Delivery of Results

- Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard.
- Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales, and resource constraints, re-prioritising as circumstances change.
- Ensures quality and efficient service is central to the work.
- Looks critically at issues to identify improvements.
- Is open to new ideas, initiatives, and creative solutions to problems.
- Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high-value services.
- Effectively manages multiple projects.

2. Analysis & Decision Making

- Research issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all necessary information.
- Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data (including numerical data).
- Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages.
- Makes clear, timely, and well-grounded decisions on important issues.
- Considers the wider implications of decisions for a range of stakeholders.

3. Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Presents information confidently, logically, and convincingly, both verbally and in writing.
- Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues.
- Promotes teamwork within the function and works effectively on projects across departments/sectors.
- Maintains poise and control when influencing others.
- Instils a strong focus on quality delivery.

- Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing.
- Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders, including the public, colleagues, and peers in other organisations.

4. Specialist Knowledge, Expertise & Self Development

- Has a clear understanding of the role's objectives and targets for self and team, and how they fit into the work of the function and organisation.
- Possesses breadth and depth of knowledge of function and HIA issues and is sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities.
- Is considered an expert by stakeholders in their field/area.
- Focuses on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth.

5. Leadership

- Contributes actively to the development of functional and HIA strategies and policies.
- Considers the broader impact of outcomes beyond their immediate area.
- Defines objectives and delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility.
- Identifies and exploits new and innovative service delivery channels.
- Develops others through feedback, coaching, and opportunities for skills development.
- Drives and sustains high levels of team performance, addressing issues as they arise.
- Leads and maximises the contribution of the team.
- Takes a firm position on issues considered important.

6. Drive & Commitment

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level.
- Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon.
- Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided.
- Leads by example, fostering the highest standards of ethics and integrity.