



Guide for Applicants

Human Resources Officer

Key Dates for Applicants

Closing Date: 2.00 pm on Monday 16th October 2017

Interview Dates: Friday 20th October 2017 in Queens House, Belfast

Contents

Prior to completing the application form we recommend that applicants familiarise themselves with the contents of this guide which includes:

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1. A Message from Jenny Pyper, Chief Executive

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for taking time to read this Guide for Applicants. I hope it gives you all the information you need to decide whether to apply for the position of Human Resources Officer within Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator.

It is an exciting time to work for us. We are uniquely placed as the UK's only cross-utility regulator. Our extensive remit requires us to be expert and objective and we work closely with government and stakeholders to protect consumers with regard to both price and quality of service. Consumer recognition of our work and our value is growing. We have a strong track-record of innovation in the interests of consumers, working smart with limited resources. We deliver solutions that suit Northern Ireland's needs and are in some cases at the leading edge of regulatory practice in Europe. As our corporate vision puts it, we make a difference for customers by listening, innovating and leading.

We also continue to develop our organisation with the goal of being a best practice regulator. During 2014 we published a new Corporate Strategy 2014-2019 which set out the outcomes we would like to achieve over the next four years. To help us deliver this strategy we have taken steps to enhance how we are structured. This has resulted in us being organised into three groupings: Corporate, Networks and Markets and this role will sit within the Markets group.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the competition to fill this post. We are keen to receive experienced applications from a wide range of backgrounds.

I look forward to your application.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Pyper
Chief Executive

2. About Us, Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator

We were first established in 1992, following privatisation of the Northern Ireland electricity industry, and our role extended in 1996 to cover gas. From April 2007 we also became the economic and customer service regulator for NI's water and sewerage industries.

We are a non-Ministerial government department. Our board currently consists of a chairman (Dr Bill Emery) and five other members (Mr Bill Cargo, Mr Jonathan Carlton, Ms Teresa Perchard, Mr Richard Rodgers and Mr Alex Wiseman), plus the Chief Executive, Mrs Jenny Pyper. The office currently employs approximately 80 staff.

The Chief Executive heads our Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT also currently includes the Directors for Retail Markets, Wholesale Markets, Compliance and Network Operations, Finance and Network Assets and Corporate Affairs. It meets weekly to review matters of common interest, and provides the collegiate leadership of the office.

Our Corporate Strategy and annual Forward Work Programme together with further information about our work, may be viewed at www.uregni.gov.uk

Our mission:

To protect the short and long term interests of consumers of electricity, gas and water.

Our vision:

To ensure value and sustainability in energy and water.

Our values:

- Be a best practice regulator: transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable and targeted.
- Be professional: listening, explaining and acting with integrity.
- Be a collaborative, co-operative and learning team.
- Be motivated and empowered to make a difference.

Water

Our main aim is to regulate the water and sewerage industry in Northern Ireland in a way that encourages and incentivises Northern Ireland Water to achieve the highest possible service for customers in terms of both quality and value.

More information can be found at www.uregni.gov.uk/water

Gas

Natural gas first arrived in Northern Ireland in 1996 and has since brought considerable environmental, economic and social benefits to Northern Ireland. It is the least polluting fossil fuel and its availability in an area provides greater fuel choice for industry. Natural gas also provides domestic customers with the opportunity to convert from inefficient central heating systems to highly efficient gas condensing boilers and in due course to domestic combined heating power.

We are responsible for regulating Northern Ireland's gas industry. Our main duties are to promote the development and maintenance of an economic, efficient and co-ordinated gas industry. We also aim to protect the interests of gas consumers with regard to price and quality of service.

More information can be found at www.uregni.gov.uk/gas

Electricity

Our principal objective is to protect the interests of consumers of electricity supplied by authorised suppliers, wherever appropriate by promoting effective competition between persons engaged in, or in commercial activities connected with, the generation, transmission or supply of electricity.

More information can be found at www.uregni.gov.uk/electricity

Retail and Customer Protection

The Retail and Customer Protection directorate was created in 2009 to remove barriers and drive forward work on encouraging gas and electricity suppliers to enter the domestic energy market in Northern Ireland, in order to provide consumers with a choice of supplier.

Competition has long been at the heart of the European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK) and Northern Ireland vision of energy markets. A range of steps at all three levels have sought to promote wholesale and retail energy market competition.

The statutory remit given to us places a high value on competition as a means to deliver consumer benefits in the energy retail sector in Northern Ireland. The Directorate also undertakes the role of social protection for consumers.

We also have a vital role to play in promoting sustainability as we are the main gate keepers to infrastructure investment in three sectors with high environmental impact – electricity, gas and water.

More information can be found at www.uregni.gov.uk/retail

Networks and Markets

We have recently completed an internal restructuring to realise the potential synergies and efficiencies by taking a cross utility approach to our regulation. This has resulted in a cross utility (gas, electricity, water and sewerage) networks approach and a separate markets approach to regulation. Regulation of markets further divides into the Wholesale Electricity Market regulation of the Single Electricity Market for the island of Ireland and retail regulation in Northern Ireland.

Corporate Affairs

Corporate Affairs includes the Corporate Services team which is led by the Head of Corporate Services. The team serves the organisation by carrying out a number of key functions including HR, Finance, ICT, Information Management, Facilities and Procurement. Corporate Affairs also includes three other teams covering a range of functions including sustainability, communications and strategy and the in-house legal team.

Other Work Streams

We hold concurrent competition law powers and are Northern Ireland's competition authority for the industries it regulates.

Being uniquely placed as the UK's only cross-utility regulator creates challenges and opportunities which we are keen to address over the coming years.

We have quasi-judicial powers to determine certain complaints, disputes and appeals.

3. Role Description

Role: Human Resources Officer
Group: Corporate Affairs (CA)
Reporting to: HR Manager

Terms and Conditions:

Contract: Permanent, full time
Hours: 37 hours per week (UR operates a flexi-time system)
Salary: £23,577 - £28,517 per annum
Pension: Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements
Holidays: 25 day rising to 30 days plus 12 public and privilege days

Role Purpose:

The post holder will work proactively as part of the Corporate Services (CS) team to assist the HR Manager by providing operational support across a broad generalist HR remit, including recruitment and selection, equality, attendance management, employee relations and payroll preparation. The HR Officer will act as a first point of contact dealing with a wide range of employee queries.

This role will require a well organised individual who can work flexibly and collaboratively in a professional manner to contribute to the provision and development of a broad ranging generalist HR service.

Key Contacts:

Internal: HR Manager, Finance Team, Head of Corporate Services, Director of Corporate Affairs, CEO, other Directors and staff as required.

External: Utility Regulator legal advisors, NI Civil Service Pensions, HRConnect, HR staff in other government departments, HR professionals in other organisations, candidates applying for vacancies.

Key Tasks

- Develop effective working relationships with external stakeholders, the senior management team internally and staff across the organisation.
- Promote equality of opportunity across the organisation.
- Provide a HR advisory service and guidance to staff and managers as required.
- Assist in employee relations matters and provide advice and guidance as required.
- Assist in the development and communication of best practice policies and procedures.
- Interpret relevant employment legislation and assist in ensuring that the organisation meets all statutory requirements.
- Provide a first class, proactive service to all internal and external customers responding to queries in a professional and timely manner.
- Preparation of monthly payroll information for processing by Finance Team, including input to Sage Payroll, and providing accurate information to NI Civil Service Pensions.

- Ensure that accurate absences and attendance records are maintained and reported, using Excel to produce monthly absence management statistics.
- Coordinate and provide administration support for recruitment and selection activities, including monitoring, pre-employment checks, contracts of employment, induction and probationary reports.
- Assist with design and delivery of training sessions to staff at various levels of seniority on a variety of HR topics.
- Administration and coordination of staff training and development, including booking courses, maintaining a training log and monitoring the training spend.
- Prepare and submit reports and returns to management, external agencies, and statutory bodies, as required, including annual equality monitoring returns.
- Operational support and administration of the performance management (annual appraisal) cycle.
- Maintain staff records (manual and electronic) and ensure information is up to date at all times.
- Assist the HR Manager in delivering the objectives of the HR strategy “UR People”.
- Assist in team building and Corporate Social Responsibility events.
- Work collaboratively as part of Corporate Services team, including the interchange of duties within the directorate as required.
- Update and maintain HR sections of the organisation’s intranet and website.

Our statutory remit and organisational structure is continuing to evolve. It is therefore quite possible that the scope of the advertised role may evolve significantly with consequential changes to the job description.

4. Selection Criteria

Essential Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate how they meet the following essential criteria on the application form by the closing date for applications:

1. Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD);
2. Proven experience of working in a HR generalist role providing support services in the areas of recruitment and selection, performance management/appraisal, training and development, and employee relations;
3. Proven experience of providing HR advice and guidance (e.g. on key policies, procedures, employment legislation, best practice) to staff and managers;
4. Demonstrated excellent organisational skills and experience working to deadlines while ensuring attention to detail and accuracy;
5. Working knowledge of MS Office applications including Excel, Word and Outlook.

Desirable Criteria

In the event of a large number of applicants the following desirable criteria will be used as further shortlisting criteria:

1. Experience of payroll preparation;
2. Experience of using Sage or other payroll software;
3. Knowledge or experience of NI Civil Service policies and procedures.

Key Skills

In addition to satisfying the above essential criteria, applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills, these will be tested in the interview:

- A comprehensive knowledge of NI employment legislation;
- Proven ability to build and maintain productive working relationships internally and with colleagues and external organisations;
- Proven ability to work proactively in response to changing business needs in order to meet tight deadlines and complete tasks;
- Delivering monthly and annual objectives;
- Deliver to a high standard and to customer satisfaction;
- Strong communication and IT skills;
- Strong organising and planning skills;
- Proactive problem solving skills;
- Ability to work on own initiative;
- Strong team working skills.

5. The Recruitment and Selection Process

How to Apply

Completed application forms must be received by **2.00 pm on Monday 16th Oct 2017**.

If you submit your application form by email, you must also post a paper copy with your actual handwritten signature along with your completed equal opportunities monitoring form. Paper copies may arrive a couple of days after the closing date so long as the electronic version has been received by then. The onus is on the candidate to ensure their application is received before the closing date and we will use the time it is received according to Utility Regulator computer systems, not the time sent from a candidate's email account.

Applications and queries can be emailed to recruitment@uregni.gov.uk

Paper copies must be posted or hand delivered to **Human Resources, The Utility Regulator, Queens House, 14 Queen Street, Belfast BT1 6ED.**

Applications will be acknowledged by email within seven days from close of competition. **If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact the Utility Regulator on 028 9031 1575.**

The Utility Regulator may use reserve lists to fill similar, suitable posts within 12 months of the competition.

Candidates with a disability who require assistance will be facilitated upon request. Candidates who wish to receive the information pack in accessible formats are requested to advise of their requirements as promptly as possible allowing for the fact that the closing date for receipt remains the same for all applicants as noted above.

Monitoring Form

The Utility Regulator monitors applications for employment in terms of community background, sex, disability and race. You should note that this information is regarded as part of your application and failure fully to complete and return this part of your application will result in disqualification.

The use and confidentiality of community background information is protected by the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. It will be used only for monitoring, investigations or proceedings under the requirements of the above legislation.

The Utility Regulator is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of age, sexual orientation, marital status/civil partnership, dependants, religious belief, political opinion, gender reassignment, race, sex or disability.

Applications

In order to help you make this application and ensure that each applicant is provided with the same opportunity, the following advice is offered:

- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who will probably not know your employer or your job. Include concise examples and be sure you can expand on these at interview.
- Listing the titles of the various jobs which you have held will not show how you meet the criteria. The panel will not make assumptions about skills and experience gained from these or the nature/name of the organisation.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out the piece of work that the panel will be interested in.

- Identify relevant examples – this is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team.

An application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the eligibility/short listing criteria required for this post. The panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information they have provided on their application, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

Please note to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- On the application form you have been advised of the maximum space available for each question, this is the same for all applicants and must not be altered (except to delete spaces created when you type in your answer).
- CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to completed application forms will not be accepted.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either font size 10 to 12, or legible hand writing using black ink. The same limitations on space apply.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to the Utility Regulator. Any application where there is any shortfall in postage will not be accepted.
- Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt in this office. Please note that the time of receipt will be defined by the Utility Regulator server, not the time and date sent. You must also follow-up by sending a paper copy by post along with your equal opportunities monitoring form and these must arrive within a week of the closing date. Your electronic copy will be used for shortlisting, not the paper copy.
- Only the details provided by you on your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining eligibility and shortlisting for the post.

Eligibility Sift

After the closing date, the first stage in the selection process will be to conduct a sift of completed application forms against the essential eligibility criteria. You must demonstrate on the relevant page of the application form how you meet the criteria stated. If you do not fully demonstrate how you meet each of the eligibility criteria you will not be progressed to the next stage of the process. **You will be notified of the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) by email.**

Shortlist

If further short listing is required, the next stage would be to conduct a sift against the desirable criteria. In the event of a large volume of applicants, scored shortlisting against the eligibility criteria may also be used to form a final shortlist.

Interview

Following shortlisting, it is intended that the selection process will involve an interview against the key skills for the role. Panels may test any aspect of either the essential or desirable criteria, or both. Additional stages to the selection process may be required, including assessments. **It is intended that the interview process will take place in Belfast on 20th October 2017. You will be notified of the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) by email.**

The Utility Regulator's statutory remit and organisational structure is continuing to evolve. It is therefore quite possible that the scope of the advertised role may evolve significantly with consequential changes to the job description.

Disability requirements at interview

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments (special requirements), due to disability, to enable you to attend interview. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please email recruitment@uregni.gov.uk

Further Information

Further information about the work of the Utility Regulator can be gained by visiting <http://www.uregni.gov.uk>

Should you have any further queries about the recruitment and selection process then call the Utility Regulator on 028 9031 1575.

6. Terms of Appointment

The following headline terms will subsequently be included (amongst other terms and conditions) in a written contract of employment between you and the Utility Regulator.

Salary

This is a permanent appointment. The starting base salary will be in the range of **£23,577 - £28,517 p.a.** The successful applicant will normally be offered the first point on the salary scale. You will be paid monthly in arrears via Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS).

Pension

Staff employed by the Utility Regulator are civil servants and as such are automatically enrolled into the **Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements (Employers contribution currently 22.8%)**. Information about pensions can be found at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Place of Work

The post holder will be a permanent employee of the Utility Regulator and will be based at Queen's House, Queen Street, Belfast.

Hours of Work

This is a full-time permanent appointment. The offices of the Utility Regulator are accessible 24 hours a day and 7 days a week and are open for business between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday – Friday. **Staff may avail of “flexi-time” with flexible start and finish times outside the core hours of 10am to 4pm.** Due to the nature of your position you may be required to work such additional hours over and above your standard hours (37 hours excluding meal breaks) as may be necessary for the proper fulfilment of your duties for which no additional payment will be made.

Holiday Entitlement

Holiday entitlement will be pro-rated based on **25 days per annum (increasing to 30 days after 2 years' continuous service) and 12 public and privilege holidays.**

Within your current role, if you have already attained annual leave of 30 days by dint of service with the NI or GB Civil Service, your holiday entitlement will be 30 days from your commencement date (pro-rated).

Probationary Period

There will be a probationary period of 6 months and continued employment will be dependent on the outcome of this probationary review. During the probationary period your performance will be regularly monitored and the Utility Regulator reserves the right to extend your probationary period for such further period or periods as it considers reasonably necessary to assess your performance further.

Additional Information

Successful candidates must obtain a basic disclosure certificate from AccessNI prior to commencement of employment and may be required to attend a medical examination. Full details will be provided with your offer of employment.

As an employee of the Utility Regulator you will be subject to various office policies, for example, rules on shareholdings, conflicts of interest, and future appointments.

The Utility Regulator is an Equal Opportunities Employer.