

**Guide for Applicants**

**Human Resources Officer (Maternity Cover)**

**Fixed Term 12 Months**

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| **Key Dates for Applicants** | |
| **Closing Date:** | **2.00 pm on 1st March 2021** |
| **Interview Dates:** | **Week commencing 8th March 2021 in Queens House, Belfast** |

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| **Contents** |
| Prior to completing the application form we recommend that applicants familiarise themselves with the contents of this guide which includes:  **Section 1** A Message from John French, Chief Executive  **Section 2** About Us, Northern Ireland’s Utility Regulator  **Section 3** Role Description  **Section 4** Selection Criteria  **Section 5** The Recruitment and Selection Process  **Section 6** Terms of Appointment |

1. **A Message from John French, 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 **HR Officer** within Northern Ireland’s Utility Regulator.

Electricity, Gas, and Water are essential services that support all homes and business in Northern Ireland. As an economic regulator, our role is to enable, incentives and hold energy and water companies to account for providing the very best for consumers and society both now and in the future.

We are ambitious about the future and we are looking for passionate people who can help us achieve our goals, and actively display our organisational values.

I want to make the Utility Regulator the best place to work. To be successful in this, we need to recruit the best candidates from a range of backgrounds.

This recruitment is focused on the appointment of a fixed term HR Officer to cover a period of maternity leave. Working within the Corporate Affairs directorate you will work proactively within a team-based environment and contribute to the delivery of the UR People Strategy by providing operational support across a broad generalist HR remit.

Thank you for your interest in joining the Utility Regulator. We look forward to receiving your application.



**John French**

**Chief Executive**

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| 1. **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 chair (Dr Bill Emery) and four other members (Teresa Perchard, Jon Carlton, Alex Wiseman,David De Casseres and Claire Williams), plus the Chief Executive, John French. The office currently employs approximately 91 staff.  The Chief Executive heads our Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT also currently includes the Directors for Retail Markets, Wholesale Markets, Networks 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 organisation, its strategy and our work, may be viewed at [www.uregni.gov.uk](http://www.uregni.gov.uk)  We have recently been awarded Silver accreditation from Investors in People. |
| **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.  **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](http://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](http://www.uregni.gov.uk/retail) |
| **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](http://www.uregni.gov.uk/water)  **Networks and Markets**  The Networks and Markets Directorate is structured to achieve synergies and efficiencies by taking a cross utility approach to our regulation. This applies 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.  **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](http://www.uregni.gov.uk/gas)  **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. |

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| 1. **Role Description** |
| **Role: Human Resources Officer**  **Group: Corporate Affairs (CA)**  **Reporting to: HR Manager**  **Terms and Conditions:**  **Contract:Fixed term 12 months maternity cover, full time**  **Hours: 37 hours per week (UR operates a flexi-time system)**  **Salary: £24,532 - £29,672 per annum**  **Holidays: 25 day 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, performance management, learning and development, wellbeing initiatives and payroll preparation. The HR Officer will act as a first point of contact dealing with a wide range of employee queries and will also maintain HR and payroll information to ensure accurate reporting.  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, IT, Procurement & Facilities 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 UR Values and 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 learning and development, including booking courses, maintaining a training log, monitoring the training spend and contributing to the development of a learning and development plan. * Prepare and submit reports and returns to management, external agencies, and statutory bodies, as required, including annual equality monitoring returns and section 75 duties. * Operational support and administration of the performance management (annual appraisal) cycle. * Maintain staff records (manual and electronic) and ensure information is up to date and compliant with GDPR at all times. * Assist the HR Manager in developing and delivering the objectives of the UR People Strategy (URP) and in line with the IiP standards for accreditation. * Take responsibility for particular HR projects including the Employee Wellbeing Programme, URP initiatives and assist in team building and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 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. |
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| *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.* |

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| 1. **Selection Criteria** |
| **Essential Criteria**  Applicants must demonstrate how they meet the following essential criteria on the application form by the closing date for applications. Please note you will be required to fully demonstrate essential criteria 1-4 on the application to be shortlisted for interview. Essential criteria 3-6 may also be tested at the interview stages.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Tested on the application form only** | **Tested on the application form & and interview** | **Tested at interview only** | | **1** CIPD Associate Level. |  |  | | **2** Working experience of IT systems including use of MS Office and Excel to maintain HR information and produce accurate reports. |  |  | |  | **3** Proven experience of working effectively in a HR generalist role providing support services in the areas of:   * recruitment and selection; * equality (diversity & inclusion); * performance management/appraisal; * learning and development; and * employee relations. |  | |  | **4** Proven experience of providing HR advice and guidance (e.g. on key policies, procedures, employment legislation, best practice) to staff and managers. |  | |  |  | **5** Ability to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to workplace values that align to those of the UR. | |  |  | **6** Ability to demonstrate excellent organisational skills and experience working to deadlines while ensuring attention to detail and accuracy. |   **Desirable Criteria**  In the event of a large number of applicants the following desirable criteria will be used as further shortlisting criteria. This criteria should be demonstrated on the application form and may be tested further at the interview stages.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Tested on the application form only** | **Tested on the application form & and interview** | **Tested at interview only** | |  | 1. Experience of monthly payroll preparation. |  | |  | 1. Experience of using Sage or other payroll software. |  |   **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. |
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Competency Framework

You may wish to consider the UR Competency Framework when completing your application. A copy is attached to this recruitment pack

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| 1. **The Recruitment and Selection Process** |
| **How to Apply**  Completed application forms must be received by **2pm on Monday 1st March 2021.**  **Please submit your application form by email. A typed or scanned signature will be accepted. Please submit your completed equal opportunities monitoring form in a separate email labelled clearly “Monitoring From” in the subject line.** 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 the UR computer systems, not the time sent from a candidate’s email account.  Applications and queries can be emailed to [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk)  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 at** [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk) **07805 819 666** or **07794 965 909.**  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.  *It should be noted that the Utility Regulator may use reserve lists to fill similar, suitable posts within 12 months of competitions.*  **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.  **Job Applicant’s Privacy Notice**  The Utility Regulator is the data controller of the personal information you provide to us as an individual seeking employment. This means the Utility Regulator determines the purposes for which and the manner in which any personal information relating to a candidate’s application and the recruitment procedure generally is processed. We are required under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to notify you of the information contained in the Utility Regulator Job Applicant’s privacy notice. This privacy notice describes how we collect and use personal information during the recruitment process and afterwards in accordance with the GDPR and can be downloaded in full from <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/publications/gdpr-privacy-notices>  **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 criteria and 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. **It is intended that the interview process will take place in the week commencing 8 March 2021.** **However, this will be subject to Executive guidance on COVID-19 restrictions and candidates will be informed of interview arrangements closer to the time. 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 possible that the scope of the advertised role may evolve 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](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk)  **Further Information**  Further information about the work of the Utility Regulator can be found at <http://www.uregni.gov.uk>  Should you have any further queries about the recruitment and selection process then please email [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk) |
| **Checklist for Applicants** |
| * Application Form   Emailed by closing date |
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| * Equality Monitoring Form   Emailed in a separate email |

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| 1. **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 12 months fixed term, full-time post to cover a career break. The starting base salary will be in the range of £24,532 - £29,672 per annum.**  The successful applicant will normally be offered the first point on the salary scale. You will be paid monthly inarrears 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. Information about pensions can be found at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni  **Place of Work**  The postholder will be an employee of the Utility Regulator and will be based at Queens House, Queen Street, Belfast. ***Please note that, this will be subject to Executive guidance on COVID-19 restrictions and staff are currently working from home****.*  **Hours of Work**  **This is a full-time appointment**. The offices of the Utility Regulator are open for business between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday – Friday. **Staff may avail of “flexi-time” provided that it meets with the business need, 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. **All staff are currently working remotely from home and this is subject to Executive guidance on COVID-19 restrictions.**  **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. |