

Guide for applicants

HEAD OF PRIVATE OFFICE

Key dates for applicants:

Closing date: 2:00pm, Friday 4 August 2023

Assessment and interviews are expected to take place in late August to mid September 2023

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 John French, CEO

Dear applicant,

Thank you for taking the time to read this 'Guide for applicants' for the Head of Private Office within the Utility Regulator.

This is an exciting time to be joining us, as we are expanding as an organisation so that we can fully support Northern Ireland in meeting the challenges of climate change, the cost-of-living crisis and ensuring the continuity of energy and water supplies.

Electricity, gas, and water are essential services that support all homes and businesses in Northern Ireland. As an economic regulator, it is our role to enable, incentivise and hold energy and water companies to account for providing the very best levels of service and price for consumers both now and in the future.

We are ambitious about the future of the Utility Regulator. It is essential that we can enthusiastically and professionally support Northern Ireland in its transition to a net-zero carbon economy, whilst ensuring affordable and good quality electricity, gas, and water services for all.

We want the Utility Regulator to be the best possible organisation to work for. We need passionate people, who have the skills, potential and energy to make a difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland and its economy. We are looking for people who share these goals and will pursue them with the highest standards of professionalism. For the Utility Regulator to be successful, we will recruit the best candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds.

If you strive to provide the best possible levels of service for the greater good and your professional values accord with our organisational values, working here will be just what you are looking for in the next step in your career path.

We are an employer of choice as we are committed to staff wellbeing, inclusion, and excellence. Over the last three years we have been awarded Best Companies 'Ones to Watch – Good to Work For' status, we have been successful in gaining Investors in People Silver, Diversity Mark and Disability Committed accreditations.

This recruitment is focused on the appointment of a permanent Head of Private Office, which is a senior role and part of our organisational Leadership Team. Our Heads of Function are responsible for leading multiple teams and working closely with the Senior Leadership Team in delivering our Corporate Plan and Forward Work Programmes.

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



John French, Chief Executive

2. About us, Northern Ireland Utility Regulator

Who we are

The Utility Regulator is an independent non-ministerial government department. We are responsible for regulating Northern Ireland's electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, to promote the short and long-term interests of consumers.

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:

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

We are governed by a Board of Directors and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through financial and annual reporting obligations.

Our organisation is arranged around four directorates:

1. Consumer and Business Protection;
2. Price Controls;
3. Markets; and
4. Networks and Energy Futures.

We are a professional and motivated workforce that is empowered to make a real difference for Northern Ireland.

Our Diversity Statement

Be UR Self

We recognise and value that everyone is unique and that we all have different minds. We want to use your difference so that we can harness your unique talent. To that end we are a diverse and inclusive organisation as we put the 'you are' into UR. Our success is based on the diversity and uniqueness that each person brings to the organisation and on the willingness of staff to accept and value one another. This approach helps us protect consumers by making a positive difference to all households and businesses in Northern Ireland.

Equality Welcoming Statement

Northern Ireland continues to have an under-representation of women across our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries. The Utility Regulator is an equal opportunities and Disability Confident employer. As people with a disability, people from ethnic minority communities and women are currently underrepresented in the Utility Regulator we would particularly welcome applications from these groups.

What we do

Our statutory objectives are to:

- Protect the short and long-term interests of electricity, gas, water, and sewerage consumers with regard to price and quality of service;
- Promote a robust and efficient water and sewerage industry, where appropriate, to deliver high quality services;
- Promote competition, where appropriate, in the generation, transmission and supply of electricity; and
- Promote the development and maintenance of an economic and coordinated natural gas industry.

Our work involves:

- Issuing and maintaining licences for gas, electricity, and water companies to operate in Northern Ireland;
- Making sure that these companies meet relevant legislation and licence obligations;
- Challenging these companies to keep the prices they charge as low as they can be;
- Encouraging regulated companies to be more efficient and responsive to customers;
- Working to encourage competition in the gas, electricity, water, and sewerage services markets;
- Setting the standards of service which regulated companies provide to customers in Northern Ireland; and
- Acting as an adjudicator on certain customer complaints, disputes, and appeals.

We hold concurrent competition law powers and are Northern Ireland's competition authority for its electricity, gas, water, and sewerage industries. We have quasi-judicial powers to determine certain complaints, disputes, and appeals.

In order to help us protect the interests of electricity, gas, and water consumers in Northern Ireland, we work with a range of partner organisations. These include:

- Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly;
- Northern Ireland government departments;
- Energy and water utility companies;
- The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland;
- Government departments and bodies in Great Britain and Ireland, including Ofgem, Ofwat, the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities; and
- Non-governmental organisations.

3. About the role

Role:	Head of Private Office
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office
Line manager:	Chief Executive
Responsible for:	<u>Direct line management:</u> Managers. <u>Indirect line management:</u> Analysts/Associate Analysts/Officers.

Terms and conditions:

Contract:	Permanent. Flexible working arrangements will be considered, including part-time working.
Hours:	37 hours per week.
Salary:	Circa £72k per annum (this is 2021 figure and is currently under review).
Pension:	Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pension arrangements.
Holidays:	25 days per annum (rising to 30 days after two years) and an additional 12 public and privilege days.

Role purpose:

The scope and volume of the Utility Regulator's work continues to expand significantly as we look to support the targets and aims within the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, the Department for the Economy's Energy Strategy, and the Department for Infrastructure's Long Term Water Strategy.

This is a challenging and exciting time to be working in the Utility Regulator, as we look to support the move to net-zero, whilst providing a stable investment environment, develop energy markets and improving consumer protection.

Our Private Office team operates at the heart of the organisation.

The Head of Private Office will act as high-level gateway between the Chief Executive and their teams, the wider organisation, and external stakeholders. You will be responsible for ensuring the Chief Executive gets the right information at the right times to support decision making, steer the organisation and manage engagement across the energy and water sectors, consumer groups, the Northern Ireland Assembly and beyond. The work is fast paced, highly varied and purposeful, and requires excellent communication and influencing skills, the ability to collaborate effectively, a highly developed grasp of policy and political dynamics, and strong management and delivery skills.

You will work with a range of internal and external stakeholders and also hold the responsibility of personal development lead for your team, mentoring and coaching your team to achieve their full potential.

We are looking for a dynamic leader, who has strong collaborations skills and the ability to build strong diverse relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

The ideal candidate will have solid expertise/capability in professional specialism and experience working with and gaining trust and confidence of senior leaders. The ability to work at pace and under pressure is essential for this senior role, along with exceptional communication skills and the ability to distil complex information, verbal and written.

The Utility Regulator will create a reserve list from this competition in order to fill any additional suitable, similar Head of Function roles which may arise across the organisation. We will draw on this reserve list for Head of Function roles after the competition closes.

4. Selection criteria

This role is well suited to value driven leaders with:

- A highly developed grasp of policy and political dynamics;
- Excellent stakeholder management;
- Excellent communication and influencing skills;
- The ability to distil complex information and work in a fast paced and highly varied environment;
- The ability to collaborate effectively;
- Demonstratable experience of complex project management and risk management
- A clear focus on good governance;
- The ability to plan, oversee and deliver a set of work deliverables on time and to a high standard through effective project management and support of multidisciplinary team members;
- Provide inclusive team leadership by supporting and developing team members and demonstrating commitment to the Utility Regulator's values;
- High-level interpersonal skills; and
- Previous experience in a private office type environment will also be valuable.

Essential criteria

Please note you will be required to **demonstrate fully** the following essential criteria on the **application form** to be shortlisted for interview.

1. Demonstratable experience of strong collaboration skills and a track record of building relationships with diverse colleagues at all levels to shape direction and agree priorities.
2. Demonstrable experience of working with and gaining the trust and confidence of senior leaders.
3. Demonstrable experience of the ability to work at pace and under pressure at a senior level.
4. Demonstrable experience of excellent communications skills, able to distil complex information into concise format both orally and in writing for those at a senior level.
5. Demonstrable experience of developing, planning, and delivering work outcomes, including clear and transparent work objectives, milestones, and success metrics.

6. Ability to positively demonstrate by examples an understanding of, and commitment to, promoting workplace values that align to those of the Utility Regulator.

'Senior'" means working at: organisational board level; or senior civil service level; or equivalent; with a track record of dealing directly with Ministers; or demonstration of a significant deputising role; or leading large divisions of an organisation will also be considered as evidence of working at a senior level.

Desirable criteria

In the event of a large number of applicants, the following desirable criteria will be used as further short listing criteria. This criteria **should be demonstrated on the application form** and may be tested further at the interview stages.

1. Prior experience of working within a private office type environment.

Key skills and competencies

In addition to satisfying the above essential criteria, **applicants will be expected to display the following competencies and skills at interview and assessment stages.**

Competencies	Key skills
Strategic cluster – setting direction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeing the big picture 2. Changing and improving 3. Making effective decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to anticipate long-term impacts of the wider environment and shape a business area to support the work of the Utility Regulator. • Ability to operate and influence at Board level and within a Board context. • Ability to contribute to shaping and delivering strategy and work-plans. • Ability to promote and ensure high levels of governance, contributing and conforming to highest standards of business governance and managing risk. • 'Expert' in work area of regulation knowledge/skill. • Ability to understand the regulatory/legislative framework within which the Utility Regulator operates and its impact on the Utility Regulator's purpose.
People cluster – engaging people <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Leading and communicating 5. Collaborating and partnering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to promote inclusion of the Utility Regulator's values within individual and team ways of working. • Strong management skills with ability to work with individuals and teams to deliver complex work programmes against challenging timetables. • Ability to work in collaboration with other stakeholders to achieve shared objectives.

6. Building capability for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work collaboratively with people at all grades. • Ability to develop teams and individuals to enhance performance and meet business objectives. • Ability to build and sustain internal and external relationships to foster a climate of openness, respect, co-operation and positive challenge.
Performance cluster – delivering results 7. Delivering value for money 8. Managing a quality service 9. Delivering at pace 10. Achieving outcomes through commercial partners and contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand the financial position of own area, the organisation and the wider economy and recognise impacts of this when delivering services. • Ability to make strategic choices on spend and use financial data effectively in decision making. • Promote a culture for value for taxpayers' money. • Ability to probe spend and develop robust business cases. • Ability to drive a performance culture and set clear outcome focused objectives. • Ability to efficiently manage a variety of resources to deliver quality outputs. • Promote a strong focus on consumer needs and collaborative working with stakeholders and business partners to achieve common goals.

Competency framework

You may wish to consider the Utility Regulator's full Senior Competency Framework when completing your application. A copy is provided with this recruitment pack.

5. The selection process

How to apply

Completed application forms must be received by **2:00pm on Friday 4 August 2023**.

Please submit your application by email, in MS Word format. A typed or scanned signature will be accepted. Please submit your completed equal opportunities monitoring form in a separate email labelled clearly 'Monitoring Form' 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 Utility Regulator's computer systems, not the time sent from a candidate's email account.

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

Candidates with a disability who require assistance will be facilitated upon request. Candidates who wish to receive the information pack in accessible formats are asked 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.

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.
- 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.
- Please note that the time of receipt of emailed applications will be defined by the Utility Regulator server, not the time and date sent.
- 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.

Assessing your application

After the closing date, the first stage in the selection process will be to assess your application against the essential criteria and then consider if you also have any of the desirable elements. **You must demonstrate on the relevant page of the application form how you meet each of the criteria stated. If you do not fully demonstrate by example how you meet each of the eligibility criteria, you will not be progressed to the next stage of the process. Please note: the panel will not refer to the employment history section to demonstrate a requirement for a number of years' experience.**

You will be notified of the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) by email.

Assessment and interview

Following shortlisting, it is intended that the selection process will involve an assessment and interview against the **criteria, key skills, and competencies** for the role. Panels may test any aspect of either the essential, desirable criteria, or key skills.

Additional stages to the selection process may be required. **It is intended that the assessment and the interview process will take place either remotely or in person in our offices in Belfast. Candidates will be informed of assessment and interview arrangements closer to the time.** You will be notified of the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) by email.

Disability requirements at interview

We ask on this 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 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

Checklist for applicants

- Application form (Emailed by closing date)
- Equality monitoring form (Emailed in a separate email)

6. The benefits of working for the Utility Regulator

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.

Key employee benefits

Your salary

This is a permanent, full-time post, however flexible working arrangements will also be actively considered. The salary will be in the region of £72,133 per annum, this salary is currently under review. If you are successful, you will normally be offered the first point on the salary scale. You will be paid monthly in arrears via Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS).

Your pension

If you are successful, you will be employed by the Utility Regulator as a civil servant and as such will be automatically enrolled into the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements. **Employer's contribution for this salary range is 34.2%.** This is a generous, defined benefit type pension scheme. Information about pensions can be found at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni

Your holiday entitlement

Holiday entitlement will be pro-rated based on **25 days per annum (increasing to 30 days after two 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 Northern Ireland (NI) or GB Civil Service, your holiday entitlement will be 30 days from your commencement date (pro-rated).

Other non-salary benefits

We also offer a range of non-salary benefits including a supportive family friendly environment, flexible working in a hybrid environment, Childcare Voucher Scheme, generous leave including special leave, maternity/paternity entitlement, annual leave and public holidays, wellbeing, and employee programme (Inspire), supported learning and development, Cycle to Work Scheme/season ticket loan, Payroll Giving; volunteering opportunities and a culture that supports diversity and inclusion.

Hours of work

This is a full-time appointment; however flexible working arrangements will also be considered. Our offices are open for business between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday, 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.

Place of work

If appointed, you will be an employee of the Utility Regulator and will be based at Queens House, Queen Street, Belfast. **The Utility Regulator is currently working in a hybrid capacity with the option to work one-two days in the office and three days from home subject to business needs. While you may opt to be office based, we welcome applicants whose circumstances lend themselves to some degree of remote working.**

Mobility

Excluding secondment opportunities, employment with the Utility Regulator does not confer any right of mobility or transfer to a position in any other part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (including any government department or agency) or to any non-departmental public body or other public body.

Probationary period

There will be a probationary period of six 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

Applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by the Utility Regulator and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form for a **Basic Disclosure Certificate**. Full details will be provided with an offer of employment. Instructions on the process can be accessed from www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni.

You should not put off applying because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made. Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

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

Right to work and nationality requirements

Offers of employment will be made on merit. The Utility Regulator must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the UK. Offers of employment will be made on condition of proof of right to work and pre-employment right to work checks will be conducted.

You will need to show a prospective employer one of the following documents:

- Passport.
- National identity card or Home Office registration certificate.
- UK Border Agency work document if need permission to work.

Employers can face unlimited fines if they employ illegal workers and need to make sure that no one they employ is working in the UK illegally. However, to protect themselves against discrimination laws they should treat all job applicants equally. So do not be offended if you are asked to prove your nationality, as even UK nationals will be asked to provide proof.

For further support on working in NI, please visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland or www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do

Please note that, if your application is shortlisted for interview, you will be asked to provide one of the above documents. Should you fail to do so, you may not be eligible to proceed. The successful candidate will be required to produce the same document in its original format before commencing employment.

Meet some of our staff:**STAFF PROFILE****Dr Paul Stewart****Regulatory Manager, Water and Gas Price Control Team**

Paul works as a manager in the Water and Gas Price Control team that delivers price controls for NI Water and the gas and electricity distribution companies. He is a civil engineer who spent 16 years working in the water industry after completing a PhD. His industry career included the planning, design, and delivery of capital investment projects, followed by a Head Office business planning role where he gained his first experience of regulatory reporting. This proved pivotal in his decision to join the Utility Regulator when it began regulating 'water' in 2007. His team is primarily responsible for reviewing and challenging capital investment proposals. In addition, it sets and monitors delivery of the majority of NI Water's output targets, assesses engineering related operating costs for the gas distribution companies and evaluates additional capital investment proposals during price control periods. Paul says: "Our role is wide and varied and the task of regulating three utility areas at the same time is a challenge. However, the extensive experience of delivering water, gas and electricity investment that exists within the team means we are well placed to effectively engage with the utility companies and evaluate their investment and output proposals. This is particularly valuable when comparative benchmarking is not practical or possible. We recognise the contribution our work makes to minimising consumer bills through the overall cost challenge delivered by the wider price control team in our determinations. The fact that we assess individual projects or programmes of work and monitor their delivery, also helps us to see beyond the numbers and appreciate the real benefits being delivered on the ground for consumers, the environment and society as a whole".

**STAFF PROFILE****Tanya Hedley****Director, Price Controls**

As the Director of Price Controls at the Utility Regulator Tanya leads the team that regulates electricity, water, and gas networks in Northern Ireland. She was previously a member of the all-island Single Electricity Market (SEM) Oversight Committee and is also the Chair of Sentinus and a member of the Sentinus Board for over 5 years, supporting the promotion and delivery of STEM subjects in Northern Ireland. Prior to joining the Utility Regulator, Tanya worked in the private sector. For over 19 years working for NIE Networks including roles of Transmission Projects Manager and Environmental Manager. With a degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Tanya is also a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology, a Member of the Institute of Directors and an Associated Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. In her spare time Tanya is a part-time Senior Lecturer for South Eastern Regional College where she supports a woman's mentoring programme. Tanya is also a Board Member of CASE (Centre for Advances Sustainable Energy) based at Queens University Belfast.



