

# **GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS**

## **COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

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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. Message from John French, Chief Executive

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide for Applicants.

This is an exciting time to join us. We are expanding as an organisation to fully support Northern Ireland in meeting the challenges of climate change, the continued 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 want the Utility Regulator to be the best possible organisation to work for. We need passionate people who have the skills, potential and motivation 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. We will recruit the best candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds. If you strive to provide the highest levels of service for the greater good and your professional values accord with our organisational values, working here will be exactly what you are looking for.

We are an employer of choice and are committed to staff wellbeing, inclusion and excellence. Recently, we were awarded Best Companies 'Very Good to Work For' status. We have also been successful in gaining the Investors in People Silver Award, the Diversity Mark and Disability Confident: Committed accreditations.

Working as a Communications Officer, you will support the provision of high-quality communication services that promote the work of the Utility Regulator to a range of audiences and stakeholders. Through this, you will support the Communications Team in the implementation of our communications and stakeholder engagement strategy.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. French'.

**John French, Chief Executive**

## 2. About the Utility Regulator

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

We are not a policy-making department of government, but we make sure that the energy and water utility industries in Northern Ireland are regulated and developed within ministerial policy as set out in our statutory duties.

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

We are based at Millennium House, Great Victoria Street, in the centre of Belfast.

The Chief Executive and two Executive Directors lead teams in each of the main functional areas of the organisation: Chief Executive Office; Price Controls, Networks and Energy Futures; and Markets, Consumer Protection and Enforcement. The staff team includes economists, engineers, accountants, utility specialists, legal advisors and administration professionals.



**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**

- ACCOUNTABLE:**  
We take ownership of our actions.
- TRANSPARENT:**  
Ensuring trust through openness and honesty.
- COLLABORATIVE:**  
Connecting and working with others for a shared purpose.
- DILIGENT:**  
Working with care and rigour.
- RESPECTFUL:**  
Treating everyone with dignity and fairness.

## **Our diversity statement**

### **Be UR Self**

We recognise and value that everyone is unique and that we all have different minds. We want to celebrate 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 of us brings 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 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries, we are proud to support women in STEM.

We are an equal opportunity and 'Disability Confident' employer. As people with a disability and those from ethnic minority communities are currently under-represented in our workforce, we would 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 regards 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:	Communications Officer
Directorate:	Chief Executive Office
Line manager:	Communications Analyst

#### Key dates for applicants:

Closing date: **2.00pm, Monday 19 January 2026**

Assessments and interviews are expected to take place mid-February 2026.

#### Terms and conditions

Contract	Permanent, full time. Flexible working arrangements will be considered.
Hours	37 hours per week.
Salary	£33,179 to £36,326 per annum.
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.

We may create a reserve list from this competition to fill any additional suitable similar roles.

#### Role purpose

Working as a Communications Officer, you will support the provision of high-quality communication services that promote the work of the Utility Regulator to a range of audiences and stakeholders. Through this, you will support the Communications Team in the implementation of our communications and stakeholder engagement strategy.

You will actively contribute to communication campaigns and activities that raise the profile of the Utility Regulator and support our corporate objectives.

You will assist with the development and publication of external and internal communications in a range of formats, including: written communications, such as press releases and media briefings; social media content creation; stakeholder event management; media engagement; public affairs monitoring; and developing content for our website and staff intranet.

You will be required to perform such duties as are commensurate with this role and to undertake any other Officer level duties as may reasonably be required.

## Key responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the role are set out below.

- To support the Communications Team in the implementation of our communications strategy.
- Assist with internal and external communications and stakeholder projects that support the key objectives of the Utility Regulator, as set out in our Corporate Strategy.
- Work with colleagues and stakeholders to promote and explain the work of the Utility Regulator to a range of audiences, including consumers, politicians, media and other stakeholders.
- Assist in the planning, creation, design and administration of high-quality communications, using various channels such as website, intranet, social media and newsletters.
- Assist in drafting press releases and briefing documents for a wide range of publications and issues.
- Assist in delivering a high-quality customer service by responding to external queries from a range of sources, including consumers, regulated companies and the media.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Assist in strengthening the profile of the Utility Regulator to all stakeholders, and as required, protect the reputation of the Utility Regulator in the event of a crisis.
- Present a proactive, professional image and engage effectively with visitors, stakeholders and enquirers, in person, in writing and by phone.
- Ensure that a first class and best practice, proactive support service is provided to the Communications Team, and other stakeholders as required.
- Promote a culture of openness, inclusiveness and transparency across all aspects of the Utility Regulator's operational activity and service delivery.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, health and safety as part of the administrative support function.

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



**Please note that this list is not exhaustive and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management and according to organisational need and evolution.**

## 4. Selection criteria

This role is ideally suited to someone with experience working within a busy and professional communications environment. You will have experience in assisting with the development and delivery of high-quality communications services, across a range of channels and mediums, to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

We welcome applications from candidates with strong organisational and communications skills, with the ability to build and maintain open and positive stakeholder relationships.

You will have the ability to prioritise and use your own initiative and will have a high level of attention to detail and accuracy. Alongside these interpersonal skills, any previous experience within energy, water, public sector, and/or within a regulatory role, would be an advantage.

Please note that you will be required to demonstrate fully the following essential criteria **1-4 on the application form** to be shortlisted for the next stage of the process.

Criteria **1-5** will be tested at the **interview and assessment** stages.

Essential criteria - application form and interview/assessment	
1	At least two years' relevant professional experience working in communications, public relations or related disciplines.
2	Experience of assisting in the design and delivery of effective communication campaigns to deliver key messages to specific audiences, using a range of channels.
3	Experience of developing excellent working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders that demonstrates strong communication and interpersonal skills.
4	Ability to demonstrate excellent organisational skills and experience of working to deadlines, while ensuring attention to detail and accuracy.
Essential criteria - interview/assessment	
5	Ability to positively demonstrate by giving examples, an understanding of and commitment to further workplace values that align to those of the Utility Regulator. (Our mission, vision and values can be found on page 4 of this pack.).

## Desirable criteria

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

	Desirable criteria
1	Experience of graphic design or video content creation.

### 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.

Key skills and competencies	
Professional knowledge/skills	<p>Strong writing skills and digital skills.</p> <p>Ability and keenness to develop excellent subject matter knowledge.</p> <p>Ability to work independently and proactively.</p>
Analytical rigour	<p>Strong attention to detail, especially in relation to written communication.</p> <p>Ability to interpret and communicate complex information in an accessible way.</p>
Governance	<p>Ability to build an understanding of best practice and work within policy, governance, appropriate guidelines and legal requirements.</p>
People	<p>Strong communication and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Positive alignment with the Utility Regulator's values.</p> <p>Excellent verbal communication and writing/drafting skills.</p>
Relationship management	<p>Ability to proactively develop and build positive and trusted relationships.</p> <p>A proactive, collaborative and flexible attitude, with ability to work in partnership.</p>
Strategic thinking and delivery	<p>Ability to think creatively and problem solve.</p> <p>Ability to contribute to the delivery of projects.</p> <p>Ability to proactively identify areas of opportunity and contribute to driving them forward.</p>
Managing resources	<p>Ability to demonstrate organisational and time management skills.</p> <p>Ability to balance priorities effectively.</p> <p>Ability to meet deadlines.</p>

## Competency Framework

You may wish to consider the Utility Regulator's Competency Framework when completing your application. A copy can be downloaded alongside this recruitment pack.

## 5. The recruitment and selection process

### How to apply

Completed application forms must be received by **2.00pm Monday 19 January 2026**.

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 you to ensure your application is received before the closing date. We will use the time it is received according to our computer systems, not the time sent from your email account.

Applications and queries must be emailed to: [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk).

If you have a disability and require assistance, we will facilitate this on request. If you wish to receive this information pack in an accessible format, please advise of your requirements as soon as possible as the closing date is the same for all applicants.

### Monitoring Form

We monitor 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 to fully complete and return it 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.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and welcome 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

We are the data controller for the personal information you provide as an individual seeking employment. This means we determine the purposes for which, and the manner in which, any personal information relating to your 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 our Job Applicant's Privacy Notice. This notice describes how we collect and use personal information during the recruitment process and afterwards in accordance with GDPR and can be downloaded, in full, from [www.uregni.gov.uk/publications/gdpr-privacy-notices](http://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 that 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, for example, 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 examples you provide may be checked out at interview and you need to be prepared to talk about them in detail if invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel is interested in, not your team's.

An application form is designed to ensure you provide the necessary information to determine how you meet the eligibility/shortlisting criteria required for this post. The panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information provided on your 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 deadline. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted will not be accepted;
- Please note that the time of receipt of emailed applications will be defined by our computer systems, not the time and date sent; and
- Only details provided by you on your application form (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 a sift of completed application forms against the essential criteria. You must demonstrate on the relevant page of the application form how you meet each criteria stated.

If you do not fully demonstrate by example how you meet each of the criteria, you will not progress to the next stage. Please note, where the criteria requires experience for a minimum length of time, the panel will not refer to the employment history section to demonstrate this. You must state the dates in your answer.

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 selection stages may be needed. We intend that the interview process will take place in Millennium House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast. You will be informed of assessment and interview arrangements closer to the time and notified of the outcome (successful or 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 that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider needed to take up an appointment. If you wish to

Ref: UR/CO/P/28/25

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 [www.uregni.gov.uk](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).
- Equality Monitoring Form (emailed in a separate email).

## 6. Benefits of working for us

### Key employee benefits

These headline terms will be included (amongst others) in a written contract of employment.

### Your salary

The starting base salary will be £33,179 to £36,326 per annum. You will be paid monthly in arrears via Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS).

### Your pension

If you are successful, you will be employed as a civil servant and, as such, automatically enrolled into the NICS pension arrangements. Employer's contribution for this salary range is 34.25%. This is a generous, defined benefit pension scheme. Information about pensions can be found at [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni](http://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. If, in your current role, you have already attained 30 days leave by dint of service with the Northern Ireland or Great Britain Civil Service, your entitlement will be 30 days from your start date (pro-rated).

### Non-salary benefits

We offer a range of non-salary benefits including a supportive family friendly environment, flexible working in a hybrid setting, generous leave including special leave, maternity/paternity entitlement, 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 be considered. Our offices are open for business between 7am and 7pm (Monday to Friday). You may avail of 'flexitime', provided it meets business needs, with flexible start and finish times outside 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



necessary for the proper fulfilment of your duties for which no additional payment will be made.

### **Place of work**

If appointed, you will be our employee and based at Millennium House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast. We operate a hybrid working pattern, which is an average of 40% of all staff working hours to be in person with colleagues, either on-site at Millennium House or on official business.

This hybrid working pattern is subject to business need. The home working element of hybrid working is voluntary and while you may opt to be office based, we welcome applicants whose circumstances lend themselves to a degree of remote working.

### **Mobility**

Excluding secondment opportunities, employment does not confer any right of mobility or transfer to a position in any other part of NICS (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 is dependent on the outcome of this. During the probationary period, your performance will be regularly monitored and we reserve the right to extend it for such further period or periods as considered reasonably necessary to assess your performance further.

### **Additional information**

If you are being considered for appointment, we will ask you to complete the AccessNI application form for a basic disclosure certificate. Full details will be provided with an offer of employment. Instructions can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni).

You should not be 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.

## Proof of right to work in the UK and visa conditions

As part of our pre-employment checks, we are required by law to verify your right to work in the United Kingdom. The following conditions related to any future offer or employment with the Utility Regulator are detailed below.

You must provide satisfactory evidence of your right to work in the United Kingdom prior to commencing employment. Acceptable documents include, but are not limited to:

- A valid passport.
- National identity card or Home Office registration certificate.
- United Kingdom Border Agency work document if you 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 United Kingdom illegally.

However, to protect themselves against discrimination laws they should treat all job applicants equally. So don't be offended if you're asked to prove your nationality, as all those who are made an offer of employment will be asked to provide proof of right to work. Please refer to the Home Office guidelines for a complete list of acceptable documents.

If your right to work in the United Kingdom is based on a visa or work permit, any future offer of employment is conditional upon:

- You providing a copy of your valid visa or work permit.
- The duration of which your visa or work permit covers.
- You maintaining your right to work status throughout your employment.

For further support on working in Northern Ireland, please visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland) or [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do](http://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.