

Policy team role



Introduction from the CEO

Water is used by each of us every day, but until recently was rarely the subject of political debate. Greater scrutiny on the industry has created an unprecedented opportunity to challenge conventional wisdom and secure acceptance for contentious – but necessary – reforms. Joining Water UK provides the chance to develop ideas that are radical but progressive, and design the strategies needed to have them adopted by decision-makers.

Since joining as CEO in 2023, and supported by our Chair, the former Cabinet Minister Ruth Kelly, Water UK has increasingly been at the centre of leading work to ensure that the water industry better meets the needs and interests of society. This has included major new transparency platforms, sweeping and detailed work on long-overdue reforms and building the detailed case for investment.

However, there is much more to do and, in the next few years, I have three main priorities.

First, we need to ensure that industry is well-placed to deliver a quadrupling of capital investment over the next five years. This investment must deliver tangible benefits for customers and the environment or we will lose trust. To accelerate that progress we must also work with government to modernise controls over sewage treatment and wider pollutants across society, much of which can enter the water sources from which we take drinking water for treatment.

Secondly, we must work with Government on its major programme of reform, including the independent Commission being led by Sir Jon Cunliffe. Our aim is to develop major, well-evidenced and compelling policy ideas that better enable the sector to deliver on its long-term ambitions. Those ambitions include much better environmental performance and the huge effort needed to secure water supplies against climate change and to support economic growth and new homes.

It is hard to overstate the potential of this Commission. Since privatisation in 1990, there has been no major change to water regulation. With public and political expectations running very high, Water UK is uniquely well placed to shape the future of water for decades to come.

The third is to bolster our organisation's national capabilities across policy, regulation and wider engagement. The industry looks to Water UK to analyse some of the most profound public policy challenges facing the country. We need to develop and deliver policies in partnership with some of the largest companies in the country, as well as the most senior decision makers across government, regulators and NGOs.

Recognising the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, and our members' commitment to Water UK, we are expanding the organisation and are currently seeking to recruit a variety of roles across policy, regulation and public affairs.

If the kind of questions we're grappling with sound interesting, and you are excited about making a real difference on a subject that touches the lives of everyone in the country, I would love you to apply for one of our vital new positions. Should you have any further questions about the role, please see [here](#) to get in touch or to apply.

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David Henderson
CEO



Policy Officer

Water UK's Policy Team is led by our Director of Policy and comprises five 'Heads of' roles - experts who are each in charge of a discreet portfolio: the Head of Water Resources and Planning, the Head of Natural Environment, the Head of Environmental Regulation, the Head of Resilience, and the Head of Drinking Water; the team also has a Senior Policy Manager role. The Policy Officer will report into one of the 'Heads of' roles.

Our team is highly collaborative and effective, and the successful candidate will be expected to work flexibly across the policy team, supporting the experts across their different areas of expertise depending on fast-moving priorities.

The Policy Officer will have the following principal responsibilities:

1. Work with our internal policy experts and water companies to deliver projects responding to a range of strategically critical issues such as storm overflows, lead removal, leakage reduction, addressing obstacles to infrastructure delivery, managing bioresources and improving the nation's bathing waters.
2. Support with the delivery of projects that prepare the industry for the introduction of new regulatory requirements, such as the introduction of thousands of new in-river environmental performance monitors.
3. Support internal policy experts by delivering high-calibre research, briefings, and position papers, as well as data and research analysis.
4. Coordinate with Water UK member networks, building supportive relationships and engaging them in areas of technical work across our priority areas, including on PFAS, plastic.

Skills and Experience

The successful candidate will have the following attributes.

Essential

- Interest in ambiguous or complex problem-solving, comfortable working in fast-paced environments, able to multi-task effectively.
- Good planning and organising skills with the resilience and initiative to proactively overcome challenges.
- Ability to contribute to persuasive and compelling policy papers and presentations, with a fluent verbal style and a logical approach to setting clear and well-crafted arguments.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to build robust professional relationships both internally and externally, as required.
- Ability to see broader strategy, not just detailed mechanics, with an understanding of the 'bigger picture' and Water UK's role within it and to reflect this understanding in your advice to colleagues.
- It is not necessary to be a subject-matter expert, but key to success will be the candidate's ability to extract key themes and arguments from complex, often scientific, texts and repackage for different audiences.

Desirable

- Knowledge/understanding of the water sector or comparable utilities and/or familiarity with some issues outlined in this job description, including the water environment, government regulations or legislation.
- Comfort with handling and interpreting data.
- Experience preparing and presenting reports, briefings, or presentations to external audiences.

About Water UK

Water UK represents all 17 of the water companies across Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Our members range from Government-owned and not-for-profit companies to some of the UK's largest enterprises listed in the FTSE100. Water UK's job is to act as a force for good by understanding the biggest challenges facing the sector and solving them. Our activity ranges from developing long-term plans to suggesting legislation to running national behaviour change campaigns. Some recent areas of focus include:

- The increasing pressures to public water supply and the environment from drought. We are responding with work on [leakage](#), [new reservoirs and water transfers](#), and a [national campaign](#) to reduce wasted water.
- Achieving faster progress on sewage spills at lower cost to the customer (for example, by leading the [work on options](#), setting out a [plan of action](#) and campaigning to [reduce sewer blockages](#))
- Improving the broader condition of rivers and seas (for example, by reducing pollutants from sewage works or [supporting the creation of new wetlands and other nature-based treatment](#))
- Achieving [net zero operational emissions](#), reflecting the sector's use of about 2% of UK electricity

- Responding to new threats to drinking water, like microplastics and [persistent toxic chemicals](#)

- Better support for [vulnerable customers](#) and those [struggling with bills](#)

We also work to ensure that Ofwat's decisions [secure sufficient investment](#) for dealing with these challenges, and consider how they could better deal with specific problems like the [aging state of infrastructure](#). We promote education, [information](#) and understanding and work very closely with the most senior leaders across the UK's water companies, NGOs, regulators and Government departments – as well as international bodies and companies abroad.



Working for Water UK

Water UK is small, friendly and high-performing organisation.

Our work is typically fast-paced that offers engagement with and exposure to very senior decision makers and the opportunity to have a real and enduring impact for customers and the environment. The work is high-profile, varied and interesting.

1. Discretionary bonus up to 25%
2. Private medical insurance and dental coverage start from the date of joining
3. 27 working days' holiday, with the option to 'buy' more annual leave if you wish
4. Pension scheme – employee 5%, employer 6%
5. Life assurance from date of joining.

**We are based in central London, close to St James's Park.
All roles are offered on a hybrid basis meaning 2-3 days in the office.**

Please send your CV and Covering Letter to recruitment@water.org.uk. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. We encourage interested candidates to apply as soon as possible, as the position may be filled before the application deadline.

