

Policy Officer Water UK

May 2026



Introduction from the Chief Executive

Water is used by each of us every day, but until the last few years 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 strategies 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.

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 to 2030. This investment is urgently needed to renew infrastructure and restore trust. We work to ensure the rapid and effective delivery of improvements across the country.

Secondly, we must work with the UK and Welsh Governments on their major programmes of reform, which includes implementing their responses to the Independent Water Commission 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. To accelerate progress, we must also work with government to improve controls over sewage treatment and wider pollutants across society, which also enter water used for drinking water.

It is hard to overstate the potential of this sector reform programme in England and Wales. 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 capabilities. This is because 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 non-governmental organisations.

Therefore, recognising the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, and our members' commitment to Water UK, we are expanding the organisation.

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.

David Henderson
CEO
Water UK



Policy Officer

Role description

The water industry is at a historic turning point. The policy officer will play a vital role in supporting the industry to make clear its views on the development of reforms which are more radical than any delivered since privatisation.

Water UK's Policy Team is led by our Director of Policy and comprises two Deputy Directors, one for wastewater and one for water and Price Review 24 delivery. Beneath them sit six 'Heads of' roles - experts who are each in charge of a discreet portfolio including the Head of Natural Environment and the Head of Planning and Growth. The Policy Officer will report to the Deputy Director, Water and Price Review 24 Delivery and support the Head of Drought and Resilience, the Head of Planning and Growth and the Head of Drinking Water. The post holder will also take responsibility for discrete elements of policy development – such as policy on managing sewer blockages, a strategy for more effectively managing rain where it falls, and policy on reducing demand for water through efficiency measures.

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.

Policy Officer

Responsibilities

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 enabling economic growth, lead removal, leakage reduction, addressing obstacles to infrastructure delivery and managing resilience challenges including drought.
2. Support with the delivery of projects that prepare the industry for the introduction of new regulatory requirements, such as policies which enable more effective management of rainfall, which reduce the pressure on wastewater networks from blockages, or which reduce demand for water through efficiency measures.
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, plastics, and industry standards. Water UK networks are formed of experts across member water companies who convene on emerging topics to guide policy development from an industry perspective. The policy officer will also engage with external stakeholders as needed, including with environmental groups, government, and academia.
5. Provide administrative support to the Policy Team, including proof-reading policy reports and briefs, formatting and distributing materials, scheduling and preparing for meetings, and responding to inquiries.

Skills and experience

About you

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 England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, our associate members include new market entrants and water providers in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Water UK members range from government-owned and not-for-profit companies to some of the UK's largest enterprises listed in the FTSE100.

Our 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).
- Responding to new threats to drinking water, like microplastics and [persistent toxic chemicals](#).
- Providing better support for [vulnerable customers](#) and those [struggling with bills](#).
- [Securing investment](#) for dealing with these challenges, considering how they could better deal with specific problems such as the [ageing state of water infrastructure](#), and intervening in [regulatory appeals](#).
- Producing comprehensive submissions on behalf of industry to influence [reviews of regulation](#), [independent commissions](#) and [parliamentary inquiries](#).
- Promoting education, [information](#) and understanding and working very closely with the most senior leaders across the UK's water companies, non-governmental organisations, investors, regulators and government departments – as well as international bodies and companies abroad.



Working for Water UK

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

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

1. Competitive salary
2. Discretionary bonus of up to 25% of salary
3. Private medical insurance and dental coverage
4. 27 working days' holiday, with the option to 'buy' more annual leave if you wish
5. Pension scheme – employee 5%, employer 6%
6. 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 with an expectation of 3 to 4 days a week in the office.

