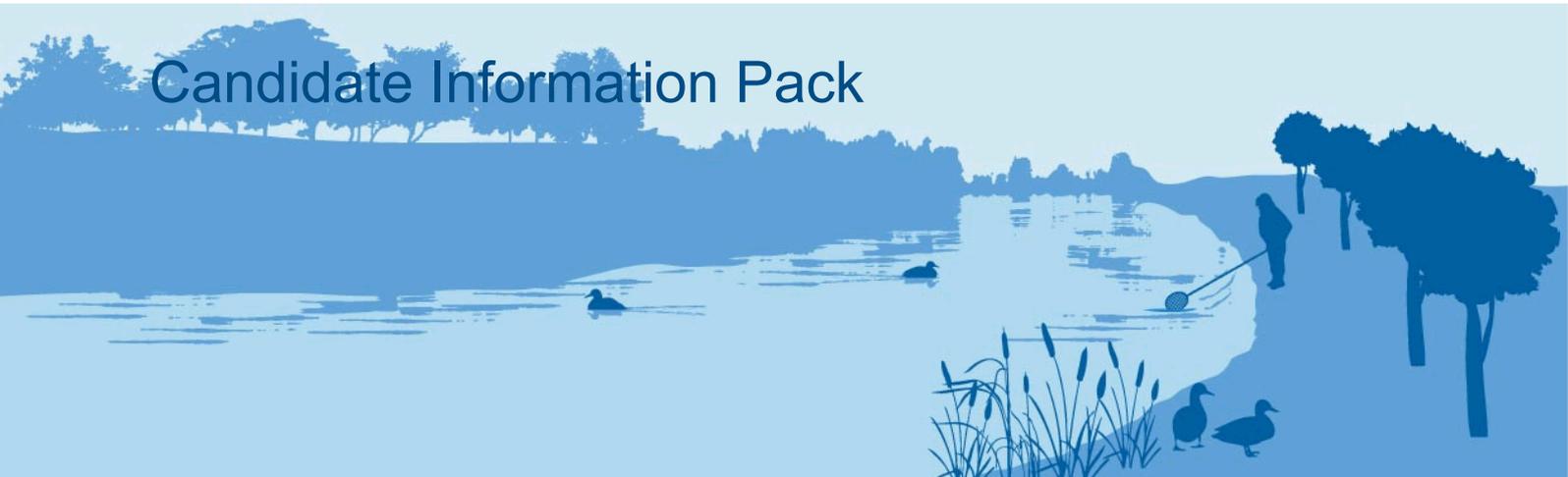


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# Senior Permitting Officer

Candidate Information Pack



Job title: Senior Permitting Officer Waste  
Job location: Bristol  
Date: 19 March 2018  
Reference: 7841

# Contents

1. Our organisation
2. Salary and benefits
3. The role
4. Further information
5. How to apply





# 1. Our organisation

## Our organisation

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment. Acting to reduce the impacts of a changing climate on people and wildlife is at the heart of everything we do. We reduce the risks to people, properties and businesses from flooding and coastal erosion. We protect and improve the quality of water, making sure there is enough for people, businesses, agriculture and the environment. Our work helps to ensure people can enjoy the water environment through angling and navigation. We look after land quality, promote sustainable land management and help protect and enhance wildlife habitats. And we work closely with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. We can't do this alone. We work with government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and communities to make our environment a better place for people and wildlife.

Of course, none of this will be possible without the professionalism and dedication of our staff. We're committed to helping our people to find new ways of working and to maintain our focus on creating a better place for people and wildlife. For more information on the Environment Agency and what we do, please visit:

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus)





## 2. The role

### Role

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic Senior Permitting officer to join one of our National Permitting Service's waste teams based in Bristol.

You'll be assessing applications for a range of complex environmental permits located across England, in line with Environment Agency processes and regulatory obligations.

With the desire to provide mentoring and coaching support to others, you will ensure that they deliver high quality decisions on environmental permit applications to tight deadlines.

To achieve this, you'll have excellent interpersonal skills to develop and maintain excellent working relationships with internal and external customers. You must be prepared to have difficult conversations with your customers and be able to clearly explain your decisions.

In exchange for your hard work, you'll have the opportunity to further develop your skills, expertise and career in this fast-paced environment, for example by becoming a national lead, heading up a permit review programme or leading on a business improvement project.

We would like to hear from candidates who feel they have the right attributes to be successful in a permitting environment.

## Knowledge/Qualifications

- a degree (or equivalent) in a science or humanities subject
- specialist technical knowledge of at least **two** of the following: waste treatment, landfill, metals, oil and gas, noise, odour, dust, habitats, fire prevention plans

## Skills/Abilities/Experience

- Experience in environmental management and environmental risk assessment
- Willingness to work collaboratively with internal and external partners to build technical resilience, share best practise and knowledge and improve efficiency
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong influencing skills
- Ability to make sound and timely decisions

## Desirable requirements for the role

- Experience of environmental permitting such as providing pre-application advice, assessing applications, regulating against permits, reviewing permits, making permit applications
- An understanding of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR)
- Chartered membership of a relevant institute or (for Environment Agency staff only) Practising Environmental Regulator.

## Top capabilities

As part of the application and interview process, we'll be looking for you to tell us how you:

- Take decisions and solve problems
- Coach others
- Influences and persuades
- Focuses on efficiency, innovation and quality

Please refer to the Capability Dictionary appended to this candidate pack, for further information.

## What else do you need to know?

- These roles will be office based, although infrequent travel will be required to attend meetings, training or site visits.
- While we welcome applications for those requiring part time and flexible career opportunities, you must be able and willing to work flexibly.

## To help bring the role to life, here are some views from current Senior Permitting Officers:



**Dave Wright**  
**Bristol Waste Team**

I am a Senior Permitting Officer in the Bristol Waste Permitting Team. I've been working in the waste management field since 1991 with Avon County Council, the Environment Agency and Bristol City Council and now again in the National Permitting Service with the Environment Agency.

In that time I've seen a lot of what the waste management industry can offer and am now using this experience to help the waste team in Bristol properly permit waste application it receives. Much of my work involves coaching and mentoring less experienced members of staff, a role which is very fulfilling. I have enjoyed my second spell with the Environment Agency and have seen how the organisation has matured since its creation in 1996.

As part of my role I have received training in noise and acoustics from the Institute of Acoustics. Noise is one of the environmental issues we need to consider in permitting our facilities. Following the training I am now a lead on the issue for the waste regime. In this role I am expected to deliver training, organise the permitting officer noise leads, and help permitting officers review noise assessments and plans submitted for review with applications.

I am impressed at the level of commitment to the Environment from all the staff working here and the training offered to staff to improve themselves and really be the best they can be. The organisation is also very inclusive and I believe anyone can improve and thrive if they want to here, as there are plenty of opportunities for staff to develop and grow.



**Tamara Hemsley**  
**Warrington**  
**Installations Team**

As a Senior Permitting Officer, I am responsible for determining complex permit applications for landfill and installations - I have carried out this role for over 12 years now. I am involved in determining applications covering a variety of different sectors, however at the moment my work is mainly concentrated on the landfill and waste treatment sectors. The work is really varied and we have to keep up to date with changes to legislation and best practice guidance which keeps the job very interesting. I have just started the role of landfill sector lead, which will enable me to become more involved in changes which occur across the sector and also in training and development.

As a permitting officer, we work with others to deliver outcomes, using a project management approach, developing positive relationships and by providing timely support. I enjoy answering queries and helping and mentoring other members of NPS. Communication, problem solving and decision making are some of the keys requirements for this role.

The Environment Agency is a great place to work, the people are friendly and passionate about what they do. There are many opportunities for personal development and training, which is an important aspect of our role and is supported by NPS. Furthermore as I have a young child I am able to work flexibly to fit in around childcare and to ensure I maintain a good work/life balance.

# Training and development

At the Environment Agency, it is fundamental to our success that our staff have the appropriate knowledge and understanding in order to effectively deliver our work. We will therefore invest significantly in providing you with excellent training opportunities.

Our training and development programme has been designed to ensure that you develop and maintain a good understanding of Environmental Permitting Regulations and further develop your personal effectiveness skills. You will develop your technical knowledge by receiving training in areas of permitting specialism, relating to different activities and sectors within Waste and Installations. You will undertake appropriate technical assessments of Environmental Permits, mostly independently but occasionally with support. As you gain more knowledge and experience, you may get the opportunity to assist other teams to support your professional development, or if required by the business need.

## What will the training be like?

The training will be a combination of:

- On the job training, computer based learning and formal classroom sessions;
- In-house training sessions, for small groups delivered by technical leads to address newly-emerging priority work areas;
- Coaching and mentoring from other staff, to assist you in determining applications for activities or sectors which are more complex than previously experienced; and
- Structured site visits with compliance officers to observe permitted activities 'in the field'.

This training process provides you with an overview - a platform for you to build your knowledge upon using live Environmental Permit applications.

## Training Journey

### Initial Training

In the first few weeks you will receive a condensed training package, providing an overview of the following:

- Our Permitting process
- Environmental Permitting Regulations
- Environmental risk management
- Records management and data protection
- Incident response
- Health, safety and wellbeing

## **Continuous Professional Development**

Your learning certainly doesn't stop upon completion of the initial training – you are only just getting started! You will learn a huge amount by continuing to work on Environmental Permit applications as no two are ever the same.

There is no prescriptive program for what a Senior Permitting Officer (SPO) is taught after they complete the introductory training. Your learning will be somewhat influenced by the work that we are requested to deliver by our customers. We need to make sure that we are best able to deliver a service that exceeds the needs of our customers and that our staff have the required technical skills to help us achieve our potential and maximise our productivity.

We strongly encourage our officers to be proactive in developing themselves. You may come into the role with a broad overview of several knowledge areas, but there will be plenty of opportunities for you to specialise (according to your interest or your ever-developing work experience). Even if you are a specialist already, there is always opportunity for you to diversify as we deal with such a huge range of technical areas.

## **What will Continuous Professional Development be like?**

This training will help you develop your knowledge on a variety of technical areas, which you will apply to your permit determinations. Your development will be structured through the following tools:

- A Technical Development Framework (TDF), which enables you to track and plan your development journey. TDFs take the high level technical capabilities for your job and describe the specific technical activities, tasks and indicators relevant to your role at each competency level. Progression through the TDF represents your developing skills and knowledge.
- Achieving 'Practising Environmental Regulator (PER)' status, for officers who meet a prescribed level of capability within the TDF. This title is endorsed by industry certification bodies.
- Alternatively, you can apply for Chartered Status if you meet the criteria for your relevant Professional Body. You will benefit from the EA paying for your annual subscription to your one chosen Chartered Professional Body.

This is a demanding but rewarding training and development programme, in which there <http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency>

is always more opportunity to learn. To succeed you will need to be self-motivated and take active ownership of your personal learning and development.

### **What will I achieve?**

As a Senior Permitting Officer you will issue and maintain complex and sometimes contentious permits, to protect the environment and support economic growth. You will also work with internal and external customers to assist in providing pre-application advice, whilst enhancing the Environment Agency's reputation.

As well working on applications, SPOs typically adopt a technical area of specialism in which they lead and develop others within NPS. In addition to this, SPOs get involved in project work to shape and improve their team, their regime and NPS' approach to permitting and regulation as a whole.

### **Opportunities for career progression**

Career progression opportunities are good for SPOs. In the past they have developed their technical knowledge sufficiently to progress to a Principal Permitting Officer role. Alternatively, you may be interested in a role outside of NPS, in an area team (focussing on regulation) or in a national team, setting the standards for NPS and area alike. There is also the option to move into a management role.

## **Is this the right career for you?**

The Senior Permitting Officer role is varied and demanding, but it is very rewarding too. As with all jobs, some people are better suited to the role than others.

To help you decide if this is the right career for you, we've put together a few examples of situations that you might find yourself in as a Senior Permitting Officer. You won't encounter these types of situations every single day, of course. An honest description of the role and tasks will help you to decide if it is something you'll enjoy doing. If you are not sure whether the job is really for you, ask yourself – and be honest – about how you would react to these situations having received the relevant training and development.

- Attending a pre-application site meeting to discuss with an operator if their new or novel technology represents best practice and achieves the desired environmental outcomes.
- Supporting a colleague whose determination is subject to an Ombudsman complaint by reviewing their determination and gathering evidence to demonstrate that our decision making was robust and in accordance with our guidance.
- Supporting colleagues by interpreting and explaining complex quantitative risk assessments, including the outcomes of modelling assessments.
- Working with other areas of the organisation to plan a Sector Permit Review; helping to ensure the project has sufficient planning and resource allocation to be delivered on time and to budget.
- Delivering difficult messages to customers such as informing an operator that the abatement equipment they have had installed, at considerable cost, is not fit for purpose and needs to be modified/replaced.

One of the great things about being a Senior Permitting Officer is that you will be able to see how you've made a difference. The decisions that you'll make will have an outcome and a clear impact on the environment and on business. Here's what else you can expect to get involved in as a Senior Permitting Officer:

- The opportunity to work on a huge range of permit applications - varying in industry type, size and complexity – no two sites are ever the same!
- Helping to improve technical resilience in NPS by identifying training needs and liaising with team leaders to implement a programme of development to fill knowledge gaps.
- Continuously looking for ways to improve our processes and being responsive to feedback from our customers to ensure we strive to deliver the best possible service.
- Working with operators to make environmental improvements on site such as increasing stack height to reduce air emissions, cleaning up contaminated land, reducing use of raw materials or improving water quality through better treatment.
- The opportunity to develop yourself by taking on local or national lead roles, working in partnership with industry, to shape, develop and implement ways of working for a particular industrial sector.

# 5. Salary and benefits

Join us in this role and you will enjoy the following benefits:

**Grade Rate:** £34,330 (pro-rata if part time)

**Location:** Bristol

**Hours of work:** 37 hours FTE permanent

**Leave entitlement:** Your leave allowance in this role will be 27 days plus bank holidays (pro-rata for part time workers).

We also offer up to two days paid environmental outcome days each year. These give you the opportunity to take part in community activities with a clear environmental outcome for people and wildlife.

**Pension:** We will enrol you into the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF) on commencing employment, if your employment contract is for 3 months or more. The EAPF is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is a career average scheme, which means you will build up benefits based on your pay each scheme year, rather than your final salary.

We will base your pension contributions on your actual pay and you will receive tax and national insurance relief on your contributions. The pension contribution rates currently range between 5.5% and 12.5%. Whilst you are in the scheme, we will also pay an employer contribution into your pension pot. We currently pay 17.5%, so this is a very generous scheme.

**Work/life balance:** We support flexible working hours and practices to help you strike a good balance between your work life and your personal life. We will also encourage you to keep developing your skills and professional knowledge throughout your career.

**Diversity:** We are committed to diversity and inclusion. We want all our staff to feel valued and respected and to see this as a great place to work. Diversity: it's in our nature.



## 6. Further information

For further information, please contact:

Samantha Haddock, Permitting Team Leader – 0203 0254710 – [samantha.haddock@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.haddock@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Please note that this role will be office based, although infrequent travel will be required to attend meetings, training or site visits.**

The Environment Agency values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

We aim to create and maintain a diverse workforce (including our Board and Executives) that better reflects the UK's economically active population. Therefore, we particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), disabled, female and LGBT+ candidates who are under-represented across our workforce.

We will consider flexible working patterns for all our vacancies, including job share. Please highlight any information regarding preferred flexible working arrangements on your application.

### **Eligibility to apply and continuity of employment**

Employment agency workers and contractors are considered to be external candidates and should therefore only apply for positions that are being advertised externally. They are also not eligible to claim continuity of employment should they be successful in securing a position with the Environment Agency.

If you have been a member of a Regional Flood and Coastal Committee in the last 12 months we will not be able to continue with your application based on agreed appointment rules related to

employing ex-RFCC members. We would welcome an application from you once the 12 month period have passed.

Please note that Environment Agency employees are not civil servants so you may wish to check your eligibility for continuity of employment by contacting your HR department. All eligible bodies are listed in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc) (Modification) Order 1999

## Pre-employment Checks

We apply the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check when recruiting staff to our posts. This includes a basic criminal records check.

For the great majority of roles in the Environment Agency this will be sufficient and only certain roles will require a higher level of clearance. Should this be necessary, you will be advised of this during the recruitment process.

Positions based at our London office or roles that require frequent travel to London require CTC level security clearance. This will be confirmed to you during the recruitment process.

## Want to find out more?

To find out more about what it's like to work at the Environment Agency, please visit:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/recruitment>



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YouTube

# 5. How to apply

We use an online recruitment system. To make the application process simple and straightforward, and so that you know how it works and what we need from you, we've put together a few hints and tips.

The first thing you need to do is sign up to our online recruitment system. You'll need a valid e-mail address to log in and apply for jobs, as all communication from us will be via e-mail. You can do this via the vacancy you are interested in by selecting '**Apply**' at the bottom of the advert. Once you've clicked this link you'll then be asked:

1. Do you have the right to live and work in the UK?
2. Do you have the required qualifications or equivalent experience, which were stated in the job advert?
3. Are you currently an employee of this organisation?

Simply answer yes or no and then continue with your application. You'll then see the 'Register' page. Simply complete the details and select 'Submit Registration' and register to the system. You only need to sign up to the system once; you'll just be able to login next time. You can then carry on with your application.

When it comes to the actual application, you need to fill out each section. Please be aware that the system will **automatically time out** if you are inactive for more than 20 minutes. This will result in any unsaved information being lost, so please make sure you save what you are doing regularly. Once you've finished, your details and information will be saved on the system for any future applications – of course, you can edit your details at any point.

When you apply to the Environment Agency for a job we will ask you to provide your personal data on our application form. We need this information so that we can establish your identity and your right to work in the UK. You can read our Data Protection Statement on the application process page of our recruitment system. It is also available for reference on each page of the actual application.

## Capability questions

We're keen to know what makes you right for the job you're applying for and why we should invite you for an interview. The capability questions are your chance to convince us! You should demonstrate how your skills, qualities and experience meet the requirements of the job (as described in the job advert and this candidate pack). Instead of simply telling us, show us: use real life examples of where you've used a certain skill or how you've practically applied your experience.

There's a 250 word limit per question. It's a **crucial** part of the selection process so

<http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency>

make sure you dedicate plenty of time to completing this part of the application form. Think about what we need to know about you and what you'd bring to the role and our organisation.

## How to prepare your answers for a capability based application

Capabilities are high level descriptions of key behaviours, skills and knowledge that underpin effective performance. They are the behaviours, skills and knowledge employees must have, or must acquire, to achieve high levels of performance. Please refer to the **Top Capabilities** document (attached to the vacancy) that describes our capability framework in further detail.

Capability questions target a specific skill, so we will be looking for some key components in your answer:

- an indication that **you** understand the importance of that capability to the role for which you have applied
- evidence that **you** understand the fundamental skills associated with that capability
- an **example** that highlights your possession of that capability
- an awareness from **you** of how the critical skills will be used to good effect in the new role

## The STAR approach

STAR stands for:

- **S**ituation
- **T**ask
- **A**ction
- **R**esult

The STAR approach is a universally-recognised communication technique designed to enable you to provide a meaningful and complete answer to questions asking for examples and it has the advantage of being simple.

### Step 1: Situation or Task

Describe the situation that you were confronted with or the task that needed to be accomplished. With the STAR approach you need to set the context. Make it concise and informative, concentrating solely on what is useful to the story. For example, if the question is asking you to describe a situation where you had to deal with a difficult person, explain how you came to meet that person and why they were being difficult. If the question is asking for an example of teamwork, explain the task that you had to undertake as a team.

### Step 2: Action

This is the most important section of the STAR approach as it is where you will need to demonstrate and highlight the skills and personal attributes that the question is testing. Now that you have set the context of your story, you need to explain what **you** did. In doing so, you will need to remember the following:

1. Talk about yourself, not the rest of the team.
2. Go into detail.
3. Steer clear of technical information, unless it is crucial to your story.
4. Explain **what** you did, **how** you did it and **why** you did it.

## What, how and why

When we shortlist your application, we would like to know how you reacted to the situation. This is where you can start selling your skills. For example, you may want to describe how you used the team to achieve what you wanted and how you used your communication skills to keep everyone updated on progress, etc.

This is probably the most crucial part of your answer. We want to know that you are using a variety of transferrable skills in order to achieve your objectives. You must be able to demonstrate in your answer that you took specific actions because you were trying to achieve what you wanted, and that things didn't happen simply by chance.

When discussing a situation where you had to deal with conflict, a good answer might provide an example of how you intervened to diffuse the situation, how you approached it with consideration for both yourself and others. For example:

*"I could sense that my colleague was irritated and I asked him gently to tell me what he felt the problem was. By allowing him to vent his feelings and his anger, I gave him the opportunity to calm down. I then explained to him my own point of view on the matter, emphasising how important it was that we found a solution that suited us both."*

This answer helps us understand what drove your actions and reinforces the feeling that you are considering the needs of others before acting. It provides much more information about you as an individual and is another reason why the STAR approach is so useful.

## Step 3: Result

Explain the positive outcome of your action(s) – how it all ended. Use the opportunity to describe what you **accomplished** and what you **learnt** in that situation. This helps you make the answer personal and enables you to highlight further skills.

## An example

For example, a strong answer to this capability question might be constructed in the following way:

"Can you tell us of an occasion when you demonstrated strong leadership in order to produce a positive outcome?"

1. Consider an introductory sentence or two about the importance of strong leadership in general terms.
2. Explain what strong leadership looks like to you. Make this personal to you; express an opinion on leadership rather than regurgitate leadership theory.
3. Talk about how you exhibited strong leadership. Draw upon a couple of real life examples which shows good evidence that you have the skills that you say you do.
4. Don't dwell too much on the details of the situation – word count (and time in interviews) is limited; we want to hear about what you did and how you contributed, added value, and drew on your skills, and how your leadership intervention was critical.
5. Discuss how these skills would transfer to the new position that you are applying for.

The key in answering all capability questions is that you are required to **demonstrate** that you have the right skills by using an example (or examples) based on your work or life experience, and not just talk about the topic in a theoretical, general or impersonal manner.

## How we shortlist

We will shortlist your application based on the information you've provided in your application form. If you choose to attach your CV (this is not necessary), please note that your **CV is not visible to us at the shortlisting stage**.

## Application questions

For some roles, we'll ask you some specific questions, like if you have a preferred work location. If you're disabled and you'd like to be part of our Guaranteed Interview Scheme, you can add this information in here.

## Equality and Diversity

We're committed to reflecting the communities we serve and we'd like you to tell us about yourself and your background.

## Submitting your application

Once you've filled out and completed everything, you'll be prompted to submit your application. Simply click the button and you're done. If, at any stage, you have questions or problems, please contact the recruitment team on 0845 602 6099 or email [ea\\_recruitment@sscl.gse.gov.uk](mailto:ea_recruitment@sscl.gse.gov.uk)

## Sign up for job alerts

If you have been unsuccessful with your application you can set up email alerts for future vacancies. You will automatically receive an email when a job that matches your criteria becomes available. To do this simply click on '**create a new job alert**', enter your job criteria and save.

