

create a better place



# PRINCIPAL PERMITTING OFFICER

## Candidate Information Pack

Please consider the environment and only print this document if you really need to.

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



**Job title:** Principal Permitting Officer  
**Job location:** Horizon House, Bristol  
**Date:** March 2019  
**Reference:** 10061

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# 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 are committed to promoting equality and diversity in all we do, and to valuing the diversity of our workforce, customers and communities.

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)

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#)





## 2. Salary and benefits

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

**Grade Rate:** £44,477 (pro-rata if part time)

**Location:** Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AH

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

**Leave entitlement:** Your leave allowance in this role will be 27 days rising to 30 days, plus bank holidays (pro-rata if part time).

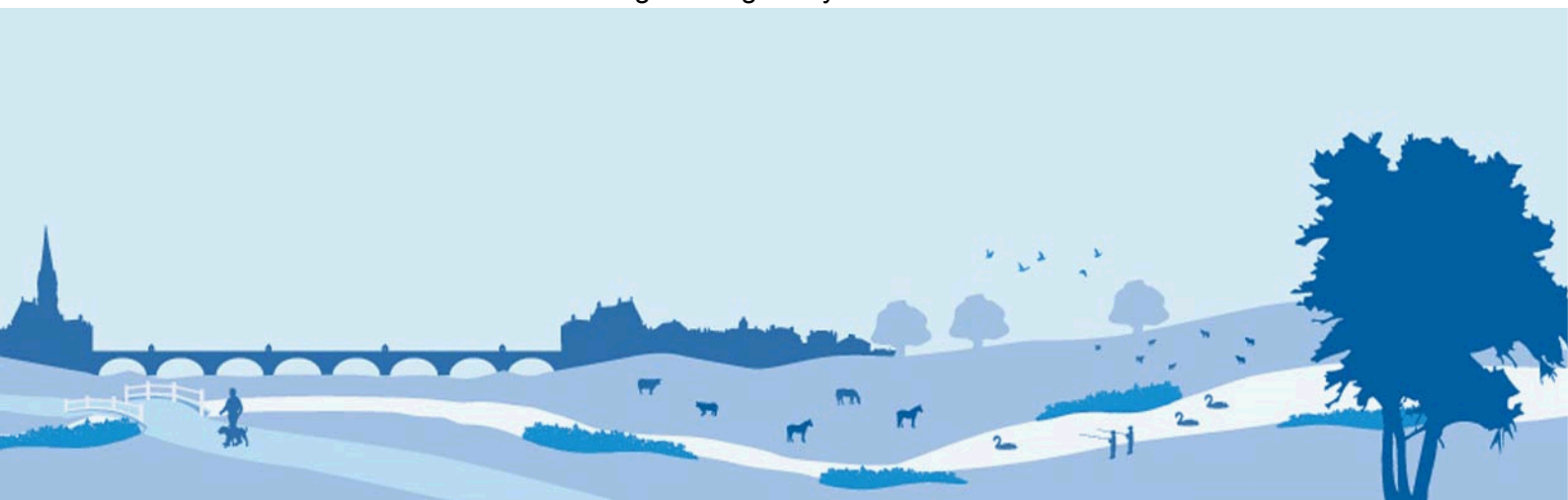
We also offer up to two days paid environmental outcome days each year. These give you the opportunity to take part in community activities with a clear environmental outcome for people and wildlife.

**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 from 5.5% to 12.5%. The current contribution for this pay scale is 6.8%. Whilst you are in the scheme we will also pay an employer contribution into your pension pot. We currently pay 18.5%, 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.



## 2. Salary and benefits continued

### **Maternity/paternity:**

We offer an excellent family leave package. We have enhanced the provisions for maternity pay above statutory entitlement and these include:

- Up to 39 weeks of maternity pay, of which 18 weeks are at full pay
- The ability to take shared parental leave, which can be up to 50 weeks, of which up to 37 weeks are paid
- Continued payment of your contractual benefits (with the exception of pay – whilst on leave you will be paid at the relevant rate for each type of leave)

We also offer paternity, shared parenting, adoption and other family leave.

### **Diversity:**

We are committed to diversity and inclusion. We aspire to be the best employer in the country for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and want all our staff to feel valued and respected and to see this as a great place to work. From our EDI executive champions to our EDI employee networks, everyone has a part to play to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation. Diversity: it's in our nature.

We have excellent staff support services including counselling and a wide range of very active staff-led support networks including Women's Network, Mental Health Network, Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network, LGBT+ Network, Cancer Network, Carers' Network, Faith Network and many more.

Mental health charity MIND has voted us number one in its Workplace Wellbeing Index for two years in a row.

We have also been in the top 100 employers in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index since 2008.



## 3. The role

Our advert describes the day to day activities of the role, the team it operates within and the skills / experience we're looking for from applicants. This information should be read in conjunction with the job family role profile that we've provided.

In the Environment Agency, our roles are grouped by grade and similar characteristics into one of seven job families. Job families describe the work undertaken in broad terms. This enables us to use generic profiles to broadly describe 80% of the key accountabilities, skills and experience for each job family at each grade.

The role of Principal Permitting Officer fits into our Environment & Regulation job family at grade 6.

This is a technical leadership post with no direct reports.

### **What skills and experience do you need?**

You should have an excellent working knowledge of environmental regulation, including significant technical knowledge of at least one industrial sector such as combustion, incineration, chemicals, waste and food and drink. Knowledge of air, odour or noise emissions would also be desirable.

You will also be able to:

- Communicate complex technical issues to a range of internal and external parties
- Develop, maintain and share technical expertise to improve technical resilience throughout the organisation
- Influence outcomes by establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with key stakeholders and other parties who may have conflicting views
- Make risk based decisions in a pressurised environment often with incomplete or conflicting information
- Work individually and through others to deliver results on time and within budget and to required standards

First class communication skills are a must and you'll also understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration. You must be able to manage multiple priorities and competing demands.





## 3. The role continued

### What qualifications do you need?

Ideally you will have a scientific background relevant to the role or equivalent experience. Membership of a professional organisation such as Institute of Chemical Engineers, Chartered Institute of Waste Management, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment etc. is not essential, but may be an advantage.

### What training and support will you receive?

You will receive the necessary training and development to ensure that you have the skills needed to perform the role of Principal Permitting Officer to a high standard. We want all our staff to grow in their role. We would expect you to spend about 10% of your time on your personal development. This will include a mixture of on the job training, shadowing, mentoring, reading, e-learning, video conferences and, where appropriate, attending classroom training, seminars and conferences. We have a wide range of technical and personal training materials and courses available through our Learning Zone with budget for targeted external training. Typical examples of development opportunities in this role include:

- Support with obtaining Chartered status
- Site visits to increase resilience in a new sector
- Personal presence and influencing skills training

### What's it like to work at the Environment Agency – our culture

Our [action plan](#) sets out how we will protect and improve the environment and the culture that we want in our organisation. There are seven behaviours that characterise how we all work.

**We think big!** Tackling the challenges facing our environment needs bold thinking and a big picture approach. **We seek partnership** and work with a wide range of people and organisations to identify the best solutions and balance competing interests **focusing on the outcomes** we want to achieve to create a better place. We encourage sustainable development, innovation and progress, saying “**Yes, if** the right safeguards and protections for the environment are in place.” We work as **one team** supporting and trusting each other to do the right thing, **embracing difference** and working to ensure everyone is included in what we do. **Stay safe and grow:** we invest in the wellbeing and development of our staff.



## To help bring the role to life, here are some views from current Principal Permitting Officers and one of our key internal stakeholders:



### **Abraham Ejim, Principal Permitting Officer, Nottingham**

I've been a permitting officer in the Environment Agency's National Permitting Service since 2009. I am currently a Principal Permitting Officer in the installations team at the Nottingham Permitting Centre. One of my key roles is to provide technical support to colleagues and develop technical knowledge within the permitting teams.

Being a Principal Permitting Officer can be overwhelming sometimes especially where there are no right or wrong answers to a complex proposal or technical query. Getting to the right answer involves working with other teams within the Environment Agency which is a key component of the role. I think the best part of the role is the satisfaction of developing colleagues and seeing permit applications determined with pace and in a timely manner so that businesses can continue to operate whilst ensuring the environment and people are protected.

Aside from determining complex permit applications, the role also provides me with an opportunity to represent the Environment Agency at public events such as conferences or public meetings and interact with people, explaining the role of the Environment Agency and discussing how we can work in partnership to achieve great environmental outcomes.

So, if you are looking for challenging and yet exciting work, continuing personal development and the opportunity to work with other partners to protect the environment and people, the Environment Agency is the place to be!

### **Andy Bett, Principal Permitting Officer, Warrington**



I joined the Environment Agency as a Principal Permitting Officer after more than 25 years of day-to-day process plant support in the chemical industry but other PPOs have come through permitting or from other parts of the Environment Agency. The mix is useful because together we form a group representing all five installation permitting hubs to drive continuous improvement in the permitting process, particularly the technical aspects. That often leads to opportunities to work with, and influence, people from all across the organisation.

As the technical support for the team leader and other team members I enjoy the training and coaching aspects of the role, particularly explaining some of the more scientific concepts in everyday language. To that end I have also designed and delivered a range of training courses.

I am also the permitting national chemicals sector lead and an active permitting officer in a range of sectors, so the work is really varied and stimulating. I am a problem solver by nature but often all that is needed as a PPO is to be willing to turn your hand to whatever needs doing.

We deal a lot with stakeholders outside the Environment Agency which I find one of the best parts of the job but which can sometimes be frustrating. However, I can always rely on the help of my colleagues who are the most committed and supportive team I have ever worked with and really care about making a difference.

### **Charlie Sholl – Senior Advisor, Manufacturing Industry and Control of Major Accidents & Hazards (COMAH) team.**

*Charlie led on the review of the refineries sector, alongside one of our Principal Permitting Officers.*



I am a chemical engineer and have worked for the Environment Agency for 16 years, firstly as a Regulatory Officer and then for the last five years as an Advisor for Regulated Industry. I like my role because it is very varied; one day I can be discussing environmental standards with Defra and the next visiting a large industrial site to provide advice to the operator. There are few workplaces where you have the opportunity to work with such a diverse group of people with so many different skills and areas of expertise, there is always something new to learn about. I believe in sustainable industry and I take pride in the part that I and my colleagues play in helping British

industry to continuously improve its environmental performance.

I work part time and I have always found the Environment Agency an employer that genuinely embraces flexibility for its workforce, recognising the value of a good work/life balance.

Personal development is an important part of working here. As my role requires a combination of technical and personal skills, my personal development has reflected this. I have been on courses relating to safe flaring, attended a European conference on the future of Europe's refining industry and participated in the EA's Technical Leadership Programme. There are also many opportunities to get involved in areas which are not part of your every day job, from incident support roles to staff support networks, such as the staff group, that looks at ways to make our working environment a positive place.



## 4. Further Information

The Environment Agency values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community who wish to join a workforce which embraces difference and welcomes everyone.

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 part time working, job share or compressed hours. Please include clearly any information regarding your preferred working arrangements on your application.

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

For further details about the role and / or the assessment process, please contact:

Mel Bischer, Principal Permitting Team Leader on 0203 0254540 or by email at:  
[melanie.bischer@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.bischer@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Chris Morris, Principal Permitting Officer on 0203 0254144 or by email at:  
[chris.morris@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:chris.morris@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### **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.



## 4. Further Information continued

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.

For applicants who currently work in local government or other bodies listed in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999, you may be eligible for continuous service for the purpose of calculating any future redundancy payment. In addition, if you can demonstrate that you have worked at the Environment Agency immediately before joining the Civil Service and are now being re-employed by the Environment Agency within a period of three years of leaving, you may also count your Civil Service employment for the purpose of calculating your service related entitlements as outlined above. If you are unsure of your status then you should contact your own HR Team.

### 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>



facebook







## 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. Make sure you have all the information you need about the vacancy. For some jobs, you'll be asked to download a candidate pack, like this one, where you'll find specific application instructions.

The first thing you need to do is sign up to our recruitment system. You will need a valid e-mail address to log in and apply for opportunities, 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:

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

Simply answer yes or no and you can carry on 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.

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 60 minutes. This will result in any unsaved information being lost so 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.



## 5. How to apply continued

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.

### **Competence Questions / Statement**

We're keen to know what makes you right for the job you're applying for and why we should ask you in for an interview. The competence questions / statements are your chance to convince us! For further details on what is required, please find attached our Capability Dictionary.

You should demonstrate how your skills, qualities and experience meet the requirements of the job (as described in the job advert and candidate pack). And 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 competence including spaces. It's a really important part of the selection process so make sure you keep your statement relevant and concise. Think about what we need to know about you and what you'd bring to the role and our organisation.

### **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.



## 5. How to apply continued

### **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. Please note that when we review your application, this is done using a 'blind sift' process. During the blind sift we cannot see your name, age, gender or length of service within roles. This ensures we minimise any unconscious bias during our shortlisting process.

### **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.

Please be aware that once you've submitted your application, with the exception of the 'Personal Details' section you will not be able to edit your application further. If you decide to withdraw your application, you will not be able to submit another application for the same vacancy.

If, at any stage, you have questions or problems, please contact the recruitment team on 0845 241 5350 or email [ea\\_recruitment@sscl.gse.gov.uk](mailto:ea_recruitment@sscl.gse.gov.uk)

### **Setting up '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.