

create a better place



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: Permitting Officer
Job location: Sheffield
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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 are 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

[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: Non-negotiable starting salary of £23,248

Location: Sheffield

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



Hours of work:	37 hours FTE, Permanent Contract
Leave entitlement:	<p>Your leave allowance in this role will be 25 days plus bank holidays (pro-rata - if part time or an assignment).</p> <p>We 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.</p>
Pension:	<p>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.</p> <p>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% to 12.5%. 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.</p>

2. Salary and benefits continued

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
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also encourage you to keep developing your skills and professional knowledge throughout your career.

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.

3. The role

Role

Being a Permitting Officer is an important role at the Environment Agency. As a water resources Permitting Officer, you will assess applications for a range of environmental activities located all across the country. An abstraction licence sets out the responsibilities and limitations on the activities that we regulate. You will carry out technical assessments according to Environment Agency (EA) processes and regulatory obligations, to protect the environment and local communities.

You will be based at Quadrant 2 in Sheffield where there are teams of both water resources and water quality permitting officers. Water Resources teams determine applications for abstraction, <http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency>



impoundment and transfer licences from surface water (e.g. rivers) and groundwater. These licences can cover a multitude of different uses including agriculture and irrigation, hydroelectric power generation and drinking water supplies. Water resources permitting officers also handle drought permits.

The work will include:

- Determination of a range of licence applications in accordance to the Water Resources Act
- Engaging all types of operators (our customers) and building relationships both internally and externally.
- Where necessary, influencing operators/customers/applicants to use the best available techniques to protect the environment
- Using all of the information and resources available to you to make complex, risk based decisions, before justifying and recording your decision.

The day to day work can be very varied with new technologies, unusual locations and environmental settings to consider. The permitting process is very well laid out with training, mentoring and coaching available at every stage of the process until you become confident in the role. We have teams across the country so we need to ensure we are up to date with the latest advice and guidance, to be consistent in our decision making. There is the opportunity to specialise in different areas so you can be in charge of your own development and career path (see the Training and Development section for more info). We encourage occasional site visits for your applications, as it really puts the work you do into perspective.

3. The role (continued)

What skills do you need?

The role of a Permitting Officer is varied and you will need to demonstrate a number of key skills and personal characteristics. You will be expected to:

- Manage your time and organise your workload
- Meet team and personal performance targets
- Adapt your communication style to different people and situations

- Make, and justify, sound and timely decisions
- Build strong relationships with your customer
- Work independently when required, but also work well with your team to share your learning
- Be computer literate
- Enjoy working in an office environment
- Be passionate about the environment and have a willingness to learn about environmental regulation.

Top capabilities

As part of the application and interview process, we will be looking for you to tell us exactly how you demonstrate some of the following capabilities:

- Achieve results
- Take decisions and solve problems
- Communicates effectively
- Build and sustains relationships with others
- Influences and persuades others
- Works in teams
- Focuses on customers and partners
- Focus on efficiency
- Manage data and record information

Please refer to the Capability Dictionary appended to this candidate pack for further information on how these capabilities are demonstrated.

What experience do you need?

It is not essential that you have experience of environmental permitting, however, ideally you will have some experience or interest in the environmental sector and regulation. You will be skilled in data and information management and have the ability to gather and manipulate data by analysing it and tailoring it to your audience. You will be able to have difficult conversations with customers, and be confident in making risk based decisions based on the information you're given.

Whilst relevant work experience would be an advantage, it's less important to us than your ability to demonstrate the key transferrable skills and the personal qualities that we're looking for.

3. The role continued

What qualifications do you need?

Ideally you will be educated to A-level or above, preferably in a science or environmental subject.

What else do you need to know?

You will have the opportunity to get involved in incident response. If you choose to, you will receive training on a specific incident management role.

This is an office based role, but you may occasionally be required to travel to different locations for training, site visits or meetings.

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

Waste Permitting Officer – Jemma Blood



In my previous job, I often drove past the Nottingham Trentside offices and imagined what it would be like to work there. I graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Wildlife Conservation in 2012. In January 2017, I working started as a Permitting Officer within the EA. The amount of information we need to take in is challenging at times but I wouldn't have it any other way and it's an incredibly mentally stimulating role with new information to learn and new problems to solve on a daily basis.

The work itself is much more varied than I ever expected, it can range from assessing Fire Prevention Plans for waste sites; assessing the benefits of applications of waste to land for agricultural benefits; or completing habitat assessments ensuring protected species are considered and protected by the permits we issue.

As an employee of the EA I am treated with respect, feel valued and I have colleagues that genuinely care about my wellbeing. The EA is a welcoming community of likeminded people who are warm, friendly and completely dedicated to protecting the environment.

3. The role continued

Waste Permitting Officer - Mohammed Yahseen



After working in an administrative role for a few years, I decided I needed a change in what I was doing, mainly because my work was repetitive and I wasn't using any knowledge to carry out the job. So I applied for a grade 3 permitting officer role. When I started in this role there was a lot to learn which helped me in increasing my knowledge about the job and helped me in applying what I learnt when I started working on applications.

This is the best move I have made to date as no day is the same and it's not all administrative work. The main skills you need in this role are working with others and knowing where to look for what you need and keeping organised as the role is varied. The EA is a great place to work, as you can

work

flexibly at times when you need to and the main focus of the EA is always your health, safety and wellbeing which supports you in getting on with your work and being the best you can

Water Resources Permitting Officer – Lauren Cater



I've been working for the EA for just over 6 months. This time has gone by quickly - I have definitely enjoyed my time here so far! I was excited to begin my career with the EA and my role in Water Resources. It has been wonderful to work with like-minded, environmentally passionate people.

Life at the EA was a challenge at first due to the amount of training required. Once I began working on the permit applications, both my knowledge and confidence grew. Although it is an office based job, it doesn't lack in variety! Each application is different and I have dealt with a wide range of customers. There hasn't been a day go by where I haven't

learnt something new. With so many applications it is vital to prioritise and organise my own workload to ensure excellent service.

The role requires us to manage water resources and assess the impact on the environment. It is very rewarding, knowing I am helping to protect the environment through the decisions I make every day.

The EA is a great organisation to work for as there is always something to get involved in outside the day job. I am currently training for an incident role where you help out with local or national incidents. This provides a great opportunity to meet new colleagues and gain extra skills and knowledge.

3. The role continued

Water Quality Permitting Officer – Justin Orme



Since joining the EA I have worked within a really supportive team who have helped with my training and development. I have always had an interest in the natural world and I am keen to ensure it is preserved and improved.

My education background is in the area of digital communications and technology but the experience from my studies has enabled me to feel comfortable with the many systems, processes and technologies the EA uses. The role of technology is ever increasing and a core part of the role for the future.

In the short period I have been with the team I have already learnt so much. While the majority of our work is based in the office I have had the opportunity to visit a number of sites to see how the work we do translates into outcomes for the environment. This experience has helped me to understand how the work we do can ultimately make a positive difference.

I have also taken part in an environmental outcome day, it was a great team building exercise, fun and educational. It also allowed us to enhance a local nature reserve which was personally fulfilling. I also had the opportunity to engage with students at a local University sharing my own experience and encouraging them that there is a role at the EA for people from all backgrounds, and showing the willingness to learn can take you where you want to be.



4. Training and development

At the EA, 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 a good understanding of water resources legislation and further develop your personal effectiveness skills. You will undertake appropriate technical assessments of permits or abstraction licences with the right level of support. As you gain more knowledge and experience, you may get the opportunity to move between teams to support your professional development, depending on 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;
- Coaching and mentoring from more experienced staff, to assist you in determining applications for activities or sectors which are more complex than previously experienced;
- In-house training sessions, for small groups delivered by technical leads to address newlyemerging priority work areas; 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 permits or abstraction licences applications.

4. Training and development continued

Training Journey

New Starter Training

In the first six months, you will complete four main topic models – Induction, General Permitting, an area of permitting specialism (e.g. Waste or Water) and Personal Effectiveness skills.

What will the New Starter Training cover?

The new starter training modules will cover the following:

- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Environmental Permitting Regulations
- Environmental Risk Management
- Issuing and Maintaining
- Records Management and Data Protection
- Incident Response
- Customer service

Continuous Professional Development

Your learning certainly doesn't stop upon completion of the new starter training – you are only just getting started! You will learn an awful lot by continuing to work on permits or abstraction licences applications as no two are ever the same.

We all learn at different rates and in different ways, which means there is some flexibility in the pace and progress of your ongoing training. In addition, there is no prescriptive program for what a Permitting Officer is taught after they complete the new starter 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 encourage our officers to be proactive in developing themselves. You may come into the role with no prior specialist knowledge, 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 we need are inquisitive people with a real thirst for knowledge!

4. Training and development continued

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 abstraction licence 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 capability 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.
- We value being professionally qualified as this demonstrates continuous personal development. You can apply for Chartered Status if you meet the criteria for your relevant Professional Body. We support all our staff to gain a professional qualification by 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 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 Permitting Officer you will issue and maintain permits to protect the environment and support economic growth. As you gain more experience you will assist with providing pre-application advice to internal and external customers, whilst enhancing the EA's reputation.

Career progression

Career progression opportunities are good for Permitting Officers – many Permitting Officers develop their technical knowledge sufficiently to successfully apply for Permitting Officer roles at higher grades (up to Senior Permitting Officer level). As well working on more complex applications, they get involved in project work to shape and improve the Permitting service as a whole.

On occasion other Permitting Officers have developed themselves sufficiently over time through these roles, to progress to other roles elsewhere in the Organisation (such as Compliance teams and other areas of the business) in which they can share their permitting knowledge.



5. Is this the right career for you?

The 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 have put together the following list of situations you may find yourself in as a fully-trained Permitting Officer. You won't encounter these types of situations every single day, of course. But we would like to be honest with you so that you know if the role is something you will 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.

- You work on a number of complex permit applications, each very different. All have deadlines at a similar time. It can be difficult to prioritise which you should spend your time on.
- You have to make a risk based decision on an environmental permit application when you have conflicting information and / or there is no clear policy.
- You do not have sufficient information to progress a permit application despite already requesting further information from the applicant. You know that the applicant needs the permit to secure a contract. You need to decide whether you request the information again or return the application and ask them to reapply when they have the correct information, knowing that this may mean that they lose out on the contract.
- You will deal with applicants of varying levels of technical proficiency. Some will lack a knowledge of environmental issues and the skills necessary to run their sites in an environmentally responsible way. Others may be deliberately evasive and obtuse in their dealings with us, attempting to confuse and evade questions. You will need to be clear and direct in your communication style.
- You are struggling to get hold of an internal stakeholder. They have not returned your emails and calls, but you are unable to progress your existing work without their input.



5. Is this the right career for you? - continued

- An abstraction licence that is being renewed is allocated to you to work on, you discover the applicant's previous usage of the quantities on their licence have been historically been very low. You have to prepare yourself for a potentially difficult and challenging conversation with the applicant to decrease their abstraction volumes as this follows Environment Agency guidance.

One of the many great things about being a Permitting Officer is that you will genuinely make a difference for people and the environment. Here's what else you can expect in the day in the life of a 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.
- A continual and varied development programme to help you constantly grow your knowledge and skills – see the Training & Development section.
- Working with operators to make environmental improvements on site.
- Whilst your job is office based, you get the occasional opportunity to go on a site visit with your colleagues who regulate a site. This gives you an invaluable insight into how the site operates and helps you to issue a robust permit.
- Undertaking periodic permit reviews to ensure that all operators continue to meet the latest and strictest environmental standards.

6. Roles Available

Permitting Centres	Total Vacancies
Sheffield	1



7. Further information

This role is office based, although infrequent travel will be required to attend meetings, training or site visits.

For further information, please contact Simon Grantham on 0203 0258309 or email simon.grantham@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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 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

7. Further information continued

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>





8. 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 – of course, you can edit your details at any point.

8. 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!

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.

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

8. How to apply continued

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.

8. How to apply continued

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.

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 602 6099 or email 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.