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Senior 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: Senior Permitting Officer - Installations
Job location: Bristol
Date: 19 March 2018
Reference: 7840

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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

[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: £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 - if part time or an assignment).

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.

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 18.5%, so this is a very generous scheme.



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 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

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a number of enthusiastic Senior Permitting Officers to join one of our National Permitting Service's regulated industry teams based in Bristol, Solihull or Warrington.

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

- Degree (or equivalent) in a science or humanities subject
- Specialist technical knowledge of at least **two** of the following: combustion, chemicals, food and drink, waste treatment, landfill, refineries, metals, intensive farming, cement and lime, paper and pulp, incineration, oil and gas, noise, odour, dust, air quality, habitats, fire prevention plans, best available techniques (BAT)

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:

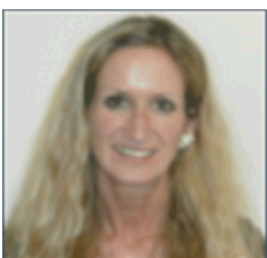
- Take decisions and solve problems
- Coach others
- Influences and persuades
- Focuses on efficiency, innovation and quality

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:



Being a Senior Permitting Officer has given me the opportunity to get involved and learn in detail about a number of industrial sectors. We periodically review all permits in a given sector and this process gives you an in-depth knowledge of our sites across that sector. I have been lucky enough to do this for Incineration, Paper & Pulp, Combustion and Refineries so I'm learning new skills all the time. This has also allowed me the chance to work closely with other parts of the Environment

Agency and with the operators of the industry.

I've also worked on a number of applications which have attracted a high level of public interest. This has given me the opportunity to organise and attend public information events. This allows me to explain the importance of our role face to face which helps break down any barriers. It is the variety of the work which keeps me focussed and stimulated, alongside working as part of a national team which is equally as committed.

Kirsty White, Installations, Warrington

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



I joined the Environment Agency (EA) and National Permitting Service straight from University in 2009. At that point I had little or no 'UK based' experience having moved from my native country of Nigeria in 2002; my experience was mainly academic but I was desirous to learn and apply new knowledge and skills.

Before joining the EA I had a clear idea of wanting an organisation that place the environment at the heart of everything they do. Coming from an ethnic minority background, I wanted an organisation that promotes equality and diversity; that places high premium on the talents of the

staff and with systems that encourage individual growth and aspiration. Looking back after 9 years, I think that it is fair to say that I made the right decision. I have seen diverse growth in my career and professional development but this is not the only thing that have kept me 'glued' to the job. Perhaps, the greatest things that have kept glued are the people that I work with and the understanding that I am part of the team (#TeamEA) that are constantly working hard to leave the environment in a better state for the next generation.

From the teams to individuals and managers, I can say without doubt I have enjoyed every moment of my stay with the EA. I have had the privilege of working with various teams across the EA as Permitting Officer, Technical Advisor and now as Senior Permitting Officer. There is a great work culture here that allows individuals 'to aspire and be the best that they can'. There is always opportunities to learn and apply one's learning. The work/life balance here is excellent and would be of interest to anyone with great aspiration and with a 'young and growing family' like me. I have found it highly delightful.

Francis Nwafor, Installations, Nottingham



As a Senior Permitting Officer with many years of permitting experience I get involved with a variety of issues relating to permitting making each day different to the next. I respond to permitting queries from permitting officers and Area compliance officers, determine applications that range from a simple transfer to a new complex power station and those of high public interest, mentor and support permitting officers, provide training to colleagues across National Permitting and contribute to drafting of internal guidance. Although my background and experience is primarily in waste and landfill, I am able to develop in different sectors through formal training, self-learning and "on the job" training by determining

applications in those sectors. I am currently developing my skills and knowledge in the combustion sector which complements my role as an air quality specialist for my team. There is always something new to learn about.

I have always been passionate about environmental protection and this role enables me to gain satisfaction from my permitting decisions which have allowed business to operate and grow, but in a way that does not harm human health or pollute the environment.

The Environment Agency is a great organisation to work for, with amazing people with a common purpose and opportunities for everyone. It is inclusive and flexible which has allowed me to work part-time when my children were small and increase my hours as they became more independent.

Miriam Townshend, Installations, Nottingham

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



As a Senior Permitting Officer, I get involved with a wide range of permitting issues including giving pre-application advice, interpreting complex quantitative and qualitative risk assessments, and determining High Public Interest applications. I work on a number of industrial sectors which match my background, experience and interests. The work is very varied and I pride myself on providing excellent customer service; enabling businesses to operate and grow, whilst protecting the environment and human health.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is providing coaching and mentoring support to other officers, to enable them to develop their technical ability and really fulfil their potential. I recently gained my Practising Environmental Regulator (PER) accreditation and I am supporting other officers in doing the same. Beyond the 'day job', training and progression is supported by our managers to be an integral part of the role.

I am really proud to work for organisation as inclusive as the Environment Agency where opportunities are available regardless of your age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. We are ranked 18th in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2018 as we truly do promote Equality and Diversity in the workplace.

Mark Barry, Installations, Warrington



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 National Permitting. 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 National Permitting. 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.

Tamara Hemsley, Installations, Warrington

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 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.



4. Further information

For further information, please contact:

Mel Bischer, Principal Permitting Team Leader – 0203 0254540
melanie.bischer@environment-agency.gov.uk

Chris Morris, Principal Permitting Officer - 07786 661893
chris.morris@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 who wish to join a workforce which embraces difference and welcomes everyone.

We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and female candidates who are under-represented across our workforce.

We will consider flexible working patterns for all our vacancies, including job share, so please include clearly any information regarding your preferred 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>





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 – 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.

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

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.

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.