VACANCY IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT INFORMATION CENTRE (SPICe)

SENIOR RESEARCHER, BREXIT, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS UNIT

Permanent

Ref: 617860
Salary range: £42,066 to £52,679
Location: Holyrood, Edinburgh
Closing date: 2 December 2018

Working Pattern: This is a full time post. Our normal working week is 37 hours but we currently operate a wide variety of work patterns within SPICe, successfully balancing lifestyle choices with business requirements. All requests for part time or flexible working hours will be seriously considered.

About the Parliament

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) ensures that the Parliament has the property, staff and services it needs. It employs the staff who work for the Parliament. Parliamentary staff are not civil servants. They are independent of the Government and provide an impartial service to MSPs of all political parties. There are many groups of staff performing a variety of tasks. These roles range from clerks who advise MSPs on detailed matters of parliamentary procedure, to security and IT staff. The Clerk/Chief Executive is the Parliament’s most senior official. The Chief Executive has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Parliament runs smoothly and efficiently.

About the Post

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) supports the scrutiny and legislative functions of the Parliament by providing impartial, accurate and timely information and briefings to Members of the Scottish Parliament, their staff, and Parliamentary staff. It comprises a research, enquiries and collections service. SPICe forms part of the Research, Communications and Public Engagement Group and is led by three joint office heads.

The post holder will work within the Brexit, Environment and Rural Affairs Unit (a team of eleven including this post), and will have lead responsibility for providing research support to the Finance and Constitution Committee, to other relevant committees, and to individual Members and their staff on parliament
and constitution issues. They will also assist in the provision of research support on other topics as required by the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange.

The work will be driven by the demands of the Parliament and will include supporting other SPICe and clerking staff. For example, this may include contributing to the Parliament-wide response to strategic issues, such as the UK leaving the European Union.

This work frequently must be undertaken in situations where there is incomplete information and an innovative and robust approach is required. You can find SPICe outputs and resources on our website.

**Duties**

Specific duties will include:

1. Providing research support to parliamentary committees on parliament (Scotland and elsewhere) and parliamentary procedures, government (including operation of inter-government relations, codes of conduct and other procedural aspects), elections, legislation and other topics as required
2. Providing briefing material in anticipation of parliamentary business on parliament (Scotland and elsewhere), government (including inter-government relations and other procedural aspects), elections, legislation and other topics as required
3. Responding to enquiries from individual MSPs and their staff on parliament (Scotland and elsewhere), government (including inter-government relations), elections, legislation and other topics as required
4. Developing own subject knowledge and parliamentary awareness in order to more effectively provide high quality research services
5. Developing and maintain a wide range of contacts within the external analytical community, information providers and other stakeholders working in your subject areas, including relevant academic centres of expertise
6. Providing support to colleagues in the development of SPICe services, and in the work of the parliament as an organisation

**Skills, Knowledge and Experience Required**

You must be able to provide evidence to demonstrate the following in your application:

**Specialist Professional or Technical Skills**

- Knowledge and experience of parliamentary and constitutional affairs, and as outlined in the key duties above. This must include demonstrable knowledge of the operation and develop of devolution in the UK
• Knowledge of research methods, including strong analytical ability and how to approach enquiry handling

**Teamwork and Collaborative Working**

• Well-developed interpersonal skills including the ability to work effectively in a team and on own initiative, with a proactive and flexible approach to work.
• The ability to build effective relationships with colleagues at all levels and across the wider parliamentary service through open communication and constructive feedback.

**High Quality Service**

• The ability to communicate complex issues with brevity, accuracy and impartiality, including the ability to produce comprehensive and clearly written briefings.
• The ability to work under pressure and on own initiative to tight deadlines.

**Parliamentary and Political Awareness**

• Demonstrable and highly-developed knowledge of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, UK Government and UK Parliament
• Awareness and understanding of the wider European and international political context.

You should provide evidence to demonstrate these qualities in your application form.

**How to apply**

The closing date for receipt of applications is **2 December 2018**.

Please complete the application form and send it to jobs@parliament.scot or to the Scottish Parliament, Human Resources Office, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP (tel 0131 348 6500).

Interviews will be held week commencing 17 December.

Please also complete and attach our diversity monitoring form. The next stage will be an assessment and interview and you will be asked to provide evidence of the skills, knowledge and experience above.

**Salary**

The full-time salary range for this post is shown below:

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<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>£42,066</td>
<td>£44,927</td>
<td>£47,788</td>
<td>£52,679</td>
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You will progress at the rate of one scale point per year, provided you are performing your duties to the required standard. Your progression date will be the anniversary of taking up appointment. You will be paid monthly in arrears by Bank Credit Transfer directly into your bank or building society account on the last banking day of the month.

Reserves
We may hold a reserve list following the interviews.

Other Information

Hours
The way the Parliament works means that different groups of staff work varying hours and patterns. You may have to work longer hours when Parliament is sitting and reduced hours during recess periods. For this reason we have very progressive flexible working hours (FWH) arrangements. You will be required to work within these arrangements.

Notwithstanding your individual working pattern, if you are employed on a full time basis, you will be contracted to work 1,623.6 hours per year. This is the equivalent to a 37 hour week, excluding breaks, annual leave and public and privilege holidays. If you work on a part-time basis, you will be required to work the number of hours specified in your appointment letter.

Bandwidths are the hours within which staff may work and accrue time under the FWH arrangements. The bandwidth is from 7:00am to 8:00pm for all work areas and from 7:00am to 10:00pm for Sub Editors, the Deputy Editor and the Editor in the Official Report.

Annual Leave
Your annual leave allowance will be 30 days. Our annual leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August. If you take up your appointment during the course of the leave year, your annual leave allowance will be proportional.

In addition, you will also receive 11½ days public and privilege holidays. They are normally taken at fixed times of the year. If you are required to work on a public or privilege holiday overtime arrangements will apply.

If you work on a part-time basis, your annual leave and public and privilege holiday entitlement will be pro-rated.

As with working hours, there may be restrictions on annual leave when Parliament is sitting. In any event you may not take annual leave unless it has been agreed, normally in advance, with your line manager.
Pension
Unless you choose otherwise we offer the opportunity to join the Civil Service pension arrangements, which include a valuable range of benefits. We will make substantial employer contributions towards your Civil Service pension. More information can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions.

Age
The SPCB does not operate a retirement age policy. This means that there is no upper age limit beyond which you would be automatically retired and you are free to continue in employment for as long as you wish subject to the normal rules concerning as outlined in our staff handbook.

Travelling and Other Expenses
We pay travelling and other expenses if you incur them whilst on official duty. However, we will not reimburse the cost of normal daily travel between home and office.

Probation
You will be on probation for six months. Confirmation of your appointment is dependent on the satisfactory completion of this probation period, taking into account your job performance, conduct and attendance.

Outside and Political Activities
As an employee of the SPCB, you may not take part in any activity that would in any way conflict with the interests of the Parliament or be inconsistent with your duties and responsibilities.

You may not take part in national political activities, although you may seek permission to take part in local political activities. If permission is granted, it will be subject to the observance of general rules relating to possible conflicts between your official responsibilities and your political activities.

Health and Safety
The SPCB is committed to promoting health and safety as a priority issue. Its aim is to take appropriate and reasonable steps to ensure that it conducts its business in such a way that employees and other people who may be affected by its work are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

General Data Protection Regulation
For further details on how we will process your personal data please refer to the HR Workers Privacy Notice and SPCB Recruitment Privacy Notice.
The Application and Selection Process

Our recruitment policy is based on the principle of fair and open competition and selection on merit. Each application is assessed in the same way, against the same, agreed criteria for the vacancy in question.

Short-listing
Each application is given a score and a final short-list is agreed by the selection panel. The applicants that receive the highest scores will be invited to interview (with the exception of candidates who apply under the Disability Symbol Scheme who may be invited if they receive the minimum acceptable score).

Will you pay interview or assessment expenses?
Unless we have stated otherwise in the advert, we do not reimburse travel or other expenses you incur in attending an interview or assessment with us. We are happy to explore alternative arrangements if this causes you difficulty.

Progress of Vacancies
Keep track of what stage we are at with vacancies on our website.

Disability
We guarantee to interview any disabled applicants who meet the essential requirements for the job they've applied for. The essential requirements for this job are described under the section “Skills, Knowledge and Experience Required”. This means that if you meet any qualification or experience criteria that we have set, and are assessed as providing “acceptable” evidence of the skills and qualities asked for we will automatically invite you to interview. If you have a disability and would like to talk to us about any aspects of this job please get in touch using the phone numbers or addresses listed above.

Referees
Please do not send references or testimonials with your form. If you are successful, we will approach previous and/or current employers for a reference. We can only make a formal offer of employment once we have received these references. If you have no employment history we may approach any school, college or university you have attended.

Health Assessment and Security Clearance
If you are successful at interview you will be asked to complete a health assessment form. If necessary we may ask you to attend a medical assessment. Assessments are carried out by our occupational health supplier in the Parliament building. The reason why we carry out a health assessment
is to make sure that the job you have applied for is suitable for you. It is also to find out if we need to carry out any adjustments to help you do the job.

Security clearance is required for this post. If you are successful we will ask you to complete a security questionnaire. This form will explain our security vetting policy. We can only make a formal offer of employment once the security clearance process is complete.

Suggestions
We want all applicants to feel that they have been treated fairly, even if they are not appointed. If you have any comments or suggestions about the way in which this recruitment campaign has been handled, we would really like to hear from you.

Email Applications
On-screen applications should be e-mailed to: jobs@parliament.scot.
All e-mails are automatically acknowledged. Please note that evidence of sending an e-mail does not automatically mean that we have received it. If you do not receive our automatic response within 2 working days of submitting your application by email, please contact us immediately.

Visa and Work Permits
There are no nationality restrictions on who the SPCB employs. You must however check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment in the United Kingdom before you apply for a post. If you are successful at interview we will carry make a complete enquiry into your eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

Please note that this document is provided for information only and does not form part of the SPCB’s terms and conditions of employment.

Equal Opportunities
The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment and to eliminating unfair discrimination in its employment practices. It will seek to ensure that all job applicants and staff are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. No job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his: gender; gender identity; sexual orientation, marital or family status; racial group (includes colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origin), religion, religious belief, or a similar philosophical belief (or lack of any of these); disability (unless such treatment is objectively justified); age (subject to retirement practice age); part-time or fixed-term contract status (unless such treatment is objectively justified); and trade union membership status/activities.