Job Information

Fixed Term - British Sign Language (BSL) Development Officer (Ref: 621585)

To apply you should read this information about the job, [the application process](#) and send in your CV and a written statement providing evidence that you have the skills required.

The closing date for completed applications is 12 March 2019

About the Parliament

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) ensures that the Parliament has the property, staff and services it needs. The SPCB is made up of the Presiding Officer and four MSPs who are appointed by the Parliament. It makes decisions on a wide range of issues to do with running the Parliament. It also 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. You can find out more about the Parliament on our [website](#).

About the Post

This appointment is temporary, pensionable and based in Edinburgh. It is a part time post of 18.5 hours per week. The appointment will be fixed term for 2 years.

Public Information and Resources (PIR) is part of the Research, Communications and Public Engagement Group, which draws together the main functions of externally communicating the role and work of the Parliament, its actions and decisions, as well as parliamentary research and information services.

The team consists of the Head of Office, Production Manager, Production Assistant, Public Information Supervisor and 5 Public Enquiry Officers (PEOs).

PIR handles all enquiries received from the public (including young people, professionals and other organisations) on the Scottish Parliament. The team also receives enquiries on related subjects that need to be referred to other organisations.

PIR manages the design and digital production contract and is responsible for producing and distributing a variety of information resources for the public and for internal audiences. Team members are involved in the development of such resources, using different media and (through contractors) in a range of languages and formats. PIR also administers the Parliament’s complaints and language policies and the use of the corporate identity.

The office welcomes innovation and inclusion. It is working to improve the information about the Parliament available in all requested languages and formats. For many years PIR has been involved in arranging translation of information and interpreting for users of British Sign Language. The office led in the development of the Scottish Parliament’s statutory BSL Plan.
and is now seeking to recruit a BSL Development Officer to provide assistance in the implementation of this Plan.

**Duties**

Reporting to the Head of Public Information and Resources, the post-holder will balance two main responsibilities:

1. **Act as the principal point of contact between the Parliament and BSL user communities in Scotland.** This will be very much a pro-active role requiring an individual with good knowledge of BSL user communities, a high level of BSL skills and the ability to communicate effectively with BSL users of all ages across Scotland, including Deafblind BSL users and hard to reach BSL groups. This will include:

   - developing links with BSL officers or officials in organisations and charities throughout Scotland which work with BSL constituents and communities
   - liaising directly with Deaf clubs and similar social groups for D/deaf and Deafblind people to raise awareness of the Scottish Parliament’s BSL Plan and communicate to groups how they can get involved with the work of the Parliament

2. **As the Parliament’s expert on BSL,** the post-holder will be responsible for advising on the delivery of the Parliament’s BSL Plan. The post-holder will, therefore, be required to work closely with all offices in the Parliament and with the [parliamentary officeholders](#), as required, to raise awareness and develop services for BSL visitors and the wider BSL community. This will include:

   - answering enquiries from BSL visitors and other members of the public about the Scottish Parliament and related issues
   - ensuring enquiries are handled in a helpful and professional manner within agreed timescales and that accurate records are kept
   - developing a thorough understanding of the roles of the Scottish and UK Parliaments and Governments and keeping up to date with parliamentary business and current affairs
   - involvement in resource and service creation, development and promotion such as information resources in BSL, including digital (such as animations, apps and website content); and (with Web and Social Media) proposing Public Information content for the BSL Facebook channel
   - creating and issuing regular posts in BSL (with Web and Social Media) on social media channels
   - other administrative tasks, which may include:
     - financial processing
     - administering and reporting on BSL policy processes, for example in relation to the BSL Plan
     - managing and/or liaising with contractors for BSL interpreting and translation and the production of BSL video
   - providing advice to Parliament staff and MSPs on procedures and good practice in relation to BSL translation and interpreting
   - promoting awareness among MSPs and staff of the Parliament's BSL Plan and participation in the Happy to Translate and contactSCOTLAND-BSL schemes
Qualifications and Experience

If the post-holder does not have BSL as their first language, the role will require someone with a Level 6 Certificate in BSL Studies, and the ability to use complex BSL in a range of work and social situations.

The post-holder will also be able to demonstrate experience of working in a BSL environment and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with people at all levels in both BSL and written English.

If the post-holder does not have BSL as their first language, it will be essential that the post-holder will have had at least 3 years’ experience of using BSL at an advanced level and of working with BSL user communities. The post-holder will also have a clear understanding of the needs of BSL user communities and of the challenges that this role brings. The post-holder needs to be authoritative and credible for staff and Members in the role of the Parliament’s BSL expert.

Skills and Knowledge

BSL skills are crucial to this role as is the ability to act as an interface between BSL users (including those who do not understand or use English as a first language) and parliamentary staff, officeholders and MSPs and their staff.

Communication skills, both in written English and BSL, will therefore be important in terms of communicating and negotiating with senior managers and staff across the Parliament, including parliamentary officeholders, senior staff groups and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

Linked to this, the post-holder will require a clear understanding of the parliamentary context within which they will be working, including an understanding of the parliamentary and constituency roles of MSPs.

As the Parliament’s expert on BSL, the post-holder will be expected to make recommendations on the allocation of work and resources, and on the prioritisation and delivery of the action points in the Parliament’s BSL Plan.

The post-holder will require:

- the ability to communicate effectively with BSL users and to communicate the needs of BSL user communities to relevant staff within the Parliament and to officeholders
- The ability to negotiate the development and delivery of services, including budget implications, with staff across the Parliament and with officeholders
- The ability to write clearly and to produce papers recommending courses of action
- The ability to evaluate the effectiveness to the BSL Plan in delivering services required by BSL user communities
- The ability to develop quickly a high level of parliamentary knowledge and political awareness

Salary

If you are successful, you will normally be offered a starting salary at the minimum of the applicable grade range shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£13,197.50</td>
<td>£14,620.50</td>
<td>£16,362</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 the appointment in the grade. 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.

**Interviews**

During the interview we will have 2 Parliament Staff as board members along with a BSL user and a BSL interpreter. You will have a short-written test lasting 30 minutes followed by an interview lasting about 40 minutes when you will be asked to answer questions in BSL.

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**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 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 Performance, Attendance and Conduct.

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

You can apply in writing by submitting your CV and a written statement outlining your skills and experience or by BSL video outlining your qualifications, skills and experience.

Written applications should be no longer than 3 pages; videos should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Please email your CV and written statement or video to jobs@parliament.scot. If you wish to send a video, we can accept emails up to 150MB only (including attachments). If your video file is larger, please email it to us through a file transfer service such as We Transfer.

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 24 hours of submitting your CV and written statement by email, please contact us immediately.

Alternatively, you can mail your CV and written statement to The Scottish Parliament, Human Resources Office, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.

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 out 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.