



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

**Director Internal Audit and
Investigations
Candidate Pack**

**Salary – Up to £162,500 per annum
depending on skills and experience**

**Closing Date: Monday 9th November
2026**



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Introductory message from Helena Vega-Lozano



Thank you for your interest in becoming our next Director of Internal Audit and Investigations at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

This is an important leadership role at an exciting point in

FCDO's development. We are a uniquely complex organisation delivering diplomatic, development and consular activity in environments ranging from major global centres to some of the most challenging and remote locations in the world.

That breadth makes effective assurance critically important. Our Internal Audit function is well established, highly regarded and supported by an experienced team. The opportunity for its next Director is to build on those strong foundations and lead the function into its next phase: making greater use of data and technology, developing more dynamic and forward-looking approaches to assurance, and ensuring that our Internal Audit capability continues to evolve as the organisation and the risks we face change.

This comes at an important moment for FCDO. Through FCDO2030, we are transforming the organisation to become

more strategic and adaptable, technology-enabled and high performing. Alongside this, we are strengthening our approach to risk management and controls across our global network.

The Director will have a close relationship with the Chief Operating Officer, our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and its Chair. The Directorate also encompasses our specialist investigations capability, including higher-risk fraud and safeguarding investigations.

We are deliberately looking widely for the right person. You may have built your career in government, but equally you may come from a major international business or another complex and highly regulated environment. Prior Civil Service experience is not essential. What matters is that you are an outstanding Internal Audit leader with the professional credibility, judgement, curiosity and ambition to help us build an increasingly modern and effective assurance function.

If that combination of challenge, public purpose and opportunity appeals to you, I hope you will consider joining us.

Helena Vega-Lozano
Chief Operating Officer
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Context

The Civil Service delivers public services and supports the government of the day to develop and implement its policies. Much of this work happens in our individual Departments. This role is based in the FCDO, which delivers to the UK's international priorities, leading the government's diplomatic, development and consular work around the world. We are supported by 12 agencies and public bodies, employing around 17,000 staff across 180 countries and territories across our diplomatic and development offices worldwide, which consists of 282 officially designated Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates, and Missions. Our UK-based staff work in offices in London, East Kilbride and Milton Keynes.

The FCDO's core role is to make a positive difference in a troubled and uncertain world in order to make the UK more secure and more prosperous. We use all our levers, expertise and the diverse skills of our people to invest effectively in enduring relationships and act with agility in response to our evolving priorities and emerging risks. We continue to position the UK as a responsible, reliable and effective international actor and partner, investing in the global relationships we need for the long-term. The FCDO is undergoing an ambitious transformation programme under FCDO2030, to become a more modern, open, delivery and outcome focused organisation. Digital transformation forms a central pillar of this ambition.

You can find out more about the organisation by looking at the [FCDO](#) page on gov.uk.



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Role

The Director of Internal Audit and Investigations is FCDO's senior Internal Audit leader, responsible for providing independent and objective assurance on the effectiveness of the Department's governance, risk management and internal control.

This is a stretching, high-profile and business-critical leadership position. Reporting directly to the 2nd Permanent Under-Secretary, you will lead a function of 78 colleagues across FCDO's three UK locations, providing independent assurance across a complex global diplomatic, development and consular portfolio operating around the world. You will provide an independent annual opinion on FCDO's governance, risk management and internal control and have a close professional relationship with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and its Chair.

You will inherit a capable and respected Internal Audit team and have the opportunity to lead the function through its next stage of development. A central part of your mandate will be to modernise how assurance is delivered: making intelligent use of data and technology, developing increasingly dynamic and risk-based approaches, and ensuring that Internal Audit can identify themes and emerging risks across FCDO's global network and provide timely insight to senior leaders.

The Directorate also encompasses FCDO's specialist investigations capability. This includes the Department's whistleblowing and reporting-concerns arrangements and independent investigation of higher-risk fraud and safeguarding matters. You will provide strategic leadership and oversight of this work, supported by experienced specialist leadership within the Directorate.

You will work closely with senior leaders across FCDO's corporate, policy and geographic teams while maintaining the independence and professional judgement fundamental to an effective Internal Audit function. You will also have an important relationship with the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) and the wider government Internal Audit profession.



Key responsibilities

The Director will lead a high-performing professional function and provide authoritative assurance across FCDO's global network. The role combines the stewardship of a strong existing Internal Audit capability with a clear mandate to modernise how assurance is delivered.

1. **Lead a strong, independent Internal Audit function** – Provide strategic and professional leadership to FCDO's Internal Audit service, delivering a high-quality, dynamic and risk-based programme of assurance across the UK and overseas network, in accordance with relevant professional standards.
2. **Provide authoritative assurance to FCDO's most senior leadership** – Provide an evidenced annual opinion on the effectiveness of FCDO's governance, risk management and internal control, together with clear and timely insight throughout the year. Report to the 2nd Permanent Under-Secretary and work closely with ARAC and its Chair, providing robust independent challenge while building trusted and constructive senior relationships.
3. **Develop a modern and increasingly technology-enabled approach to assurance** – Build on the strengths of the existing function, harnessing data, technology and appropriate AI-enabled opportunities to improve audit planning, delivery, insight and impact. Ensure that the audit programme responds dynamically to FCDO's changing risk environment and identifies systemic themes and emerging risks across the organisation.
4. **Lead a strategic, risk-based programme of assurance** – Ensure that the audit programme responds effectively to FCDO's changing risk environment, combining assurance across the overseas network with thematic and strategic work covering major corporate, programme and transformation activity. Identify systemic themes and emerging risks and translate these into meaningful insight for senior leaders.
5. **Provide strategic leadership of FCDO's investigations capability** – Oversee the specialist investigations function, including higher-risk fraud and safeguarding investigations, ensuring that investigations are independent, proportionate, sensitive and professionally rigorous. Draw on themes and learning from investigations alongside Internal Audit insight to support wider organisational learning.
6. **Lead the profession and develop organisational capability** – Provide visible and inclusive leadership to a high-performing team of Internal Audit and investigations professionals. Build a strong relationship with GIAA and contribute actively to the development of Internal Audit across government, working with relevant Arms Length Bodies and government partners to develop a more connected understanding of assurance, emerging risk and organisational learning.

A central challenge for the next Director will be to use technology and data to strengthen assurance across a network in which individual Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and Missions operate in very different environments and cannot simply be

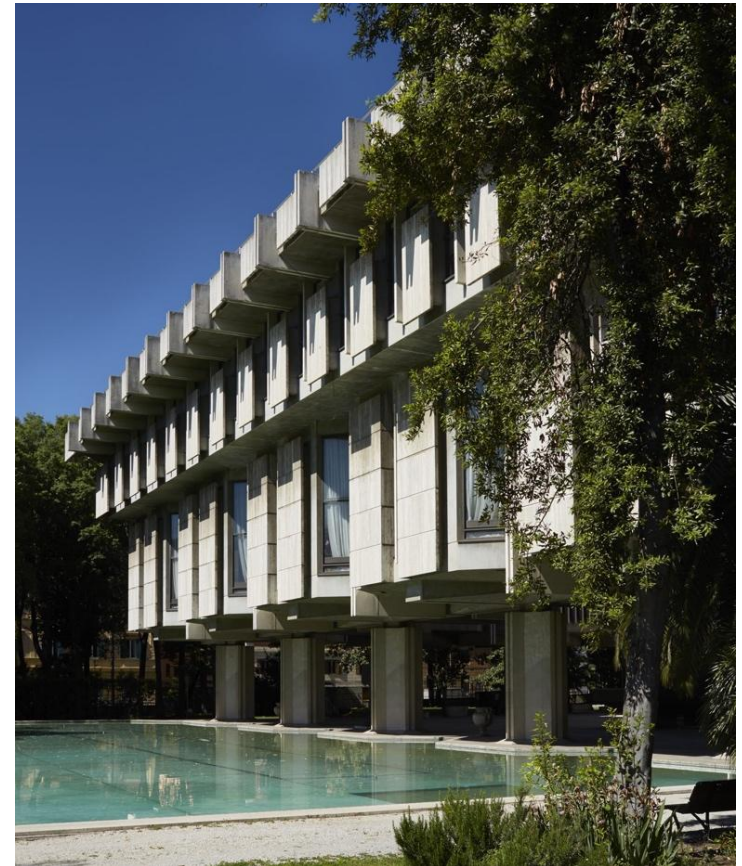
treated as interchangeable. The opportunity is to build on high-quality professional output while developing a more scalable, insight-led and future-ready operating model.

Person Specification

We are looking for an outstanding professional leader who combines deep Internal Audit expertise with the judgement, curiosity and ambition to help develop the function for the future. We welcome candidates from government, major international businesses and other complex or highly regulated environments. Previous Civil Service experience is not essential.

The Civil Service is open to talented people from any career background; we will always seek to identify transferable skills from the individual's experience. The **Essential Criteria** to succeed in this role and be selected are:

- **Internal Audit leadership and professional credibility** – Significant senior-level experience of leading a high-quality, strategic and risk-based Internal Audit function in a large and complex organisation, with the professional credibility and judgement to provide authoritative independent assurance to the most senior levels of an organisation.
- **Modernisation and innovation** – A track record of developing and improving Internal Audit capability, including using data, technology and innovative approaches to improve the quality, efficiency, responsiveness and impact of assurance.
- **Complexity and international or dispersed operations** – Experience of operating successfully within a large, complex and geographically dispersed organisation, with the ability to understand and provide assurance across multiple businesses, operations, locations and/or jurisdictions.
- **Leadership, influence and risk judgement** – Strong corporate and team leadership experience, including leading and developing high-performing professional teams and influencing senior stakeholders in complex and diverse environments. You will bring a deep



understanding of governance, risk management and internal control, together with the resilience and independence of judgement to provide constructive challenge at the highest levels.

- **Investigations and professional oversight** – Experience of leading or overseeing investigations, counter-fraud, safeguarding and/or comparable specialist activity, with the judgement to ensure appropriate independence, professional standards and organisational learning.
- **Professional qualification** – A relevant professional qualification in Internal Audit and/or Accountancy.

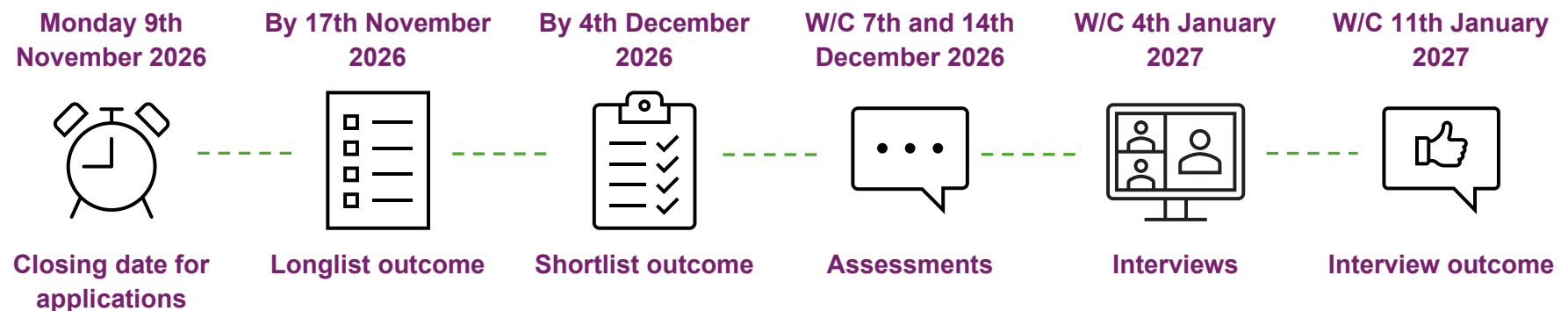
It is important that your application provides clear evidence and examples demonstrating how you meet these criteria.

You do not need prior experience of the Civil Service or detailed technical knowledge of foreign policy to succeed in this role. You will, however, need an interest in FCDO's purpose and the curiosity and learning agility to understand the government, diplomatic and international context in which we operate.

Our recruitment process

Civil Service recruitment processes at Director level are regulated by the [Civil Service Commission](#) and we follow clear guidelines to ensure that our recruitment is fair and open. We also design our recruitment processes to reflect our values-based approach to HR and to ensure that shortlisted candidates have the opportunity to meet key stakeholder(s) for the role, before they join us.

We expect the process for this role to be as follows (please note these dates are indicative):



Longlisted candidates will be invited to meet with Russell Reynolds Associates for a preliminary interview. Following shortlisting, candidates will undergo an Individual Leadership Assessment with psychological profiling and will be invited to an informal conversation with a senior FCDO leader. This conversation is intended to provide further insight into the organisation and role and does not form part of the formal assessment.

The interview panel will be chaired by Lea Paterson, Civil Service Commissioner. Other panel members will include Helena Vega-Lozano, Chief Operating Officer, Tim Jones, Finance Director and Jon Watts, Non-Executive Director and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair. Candidates will be asked to make a short presentation to the Panel on a topic relevant to the future leadership and development of FCDO's Internal Audit function. The topic will be provided in advance.

Interviews are expected to be held in person at FCDO offices in London. Full details will be provided to shortlisted candidates. References and open-source due diligence checks may be undertaken for shortlisted candidates. Unfortunately, we will not be able to reimburse you for any expenses incurred as part of this recruitment process.

Recognising that there are a number of steps in the process, we will do our best to arrange the sessions in a way that works for you. For information about acceptable and unacceptable use of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment see [Artificial intelligence and recruitment | Civil Service Careers](#).

How to apply

You must be a British Citizen at the point of application.

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates on behalf of the FCDO. To apply, please follow the link below quoting reference 2610-041L. The closing date for applications is **23:55 on Monday 9th November 2026**.

Please [click here to apply](#)

You will be asked to:

- Register your contact details.
- Upload your **CV** – setting out your educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history.
- Upload a **Statement of Suitability** – of no more than two pages explaining how your skills, experience and achievements demonstrate your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the Essential Criteria in the Person Specification.
- As part of the application process, you will be asked to complete a **Diversity questionnaire** [available here](#). The FCDO is committed to equal opportunities. Our officers are recruited on merit, through fair and open competition. We seek our strength through diversity and appoint suitably qualified individuals regardless of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, social backgrounds, age or disability. To help us ensure that our recruitment activity reflects the diversity of British society, we would be grateful if you could complete the diversity monitoring form. As part of the application process, you will be asked a number of diversity-related questions. If you do not wish to provide a declaration on any of the particular characteristics, you will have the option to select 'prefer not to say'. All monitoring data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be provided to the selection panel. The information you provide when submitting your application will help us monitor our progress towards the Civil Service becoming the most inclusive employer. All data is reported in an anonymous and aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application.

If you have any queries, please contact responses@russellreynolds.com and a member of the search team will contact you.

Detailed Terms and Conditions

Location

This role can be based in London, East Kilbride or Milton Keynes. Regular travel to our other offices will be required and FCDO policies on Hybrid Working (minimum 60% in the office) will apply. Occasional international travel will be required.

Salary

The salary for this role will be in the SCS Pay Band 2 range of £105,000 - £162,500 per annum depending on the successful candidate's particular skills and experience. Existing Civil Servants on level transfer will retain their existing base salary. Existing Civil Servants applying on promotion will have their substantive base salary increased by 10% or start on the minimum of the SCS PB2 scale of £105,000 per annum, whichever is greater. The FCDO does not recognise and will not import any allowances paid at your current department.

A non-consolidated, non-pensionable Location Allowance of £5,000 (FTE) will apply if you are based in London or £1,750 if you are based in Milton Keynes. Location Allowances will apply where staff are working in line with the FCDO's Hybrid Working Policy.

Pay Awards

All future pay awards are subject to guidance issued annually by HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office. The FCDO offers performance-related pay reviews on an annual basis, assessed against delivery in role.

Terms of Appointment

This is a full-time, permanent appointment to the Home Service of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and it is graded at FCDO Pay Band SCS2. We would like the successful candidate to take up the role as soon as possible, subject to Developed Vetting security clearance, pre-employment checks and approvals. The probation period is 3 months. Provided the period of probation is completed successfully, the appointment will be confirmed. However, if the standard required for confirmation of appointment is not met, the appointment may be terminated. Any former members of the Home Service/Diplomatic Service who are re-employed as substantive civil servants after a period of five years or more will be required to serve another period of probation. You will also be required to serve a period of probation if you are re-employed at a Band higher than that at which you left the FCDO.

Working Pattern

This is a full-time role (37 hours per week), but flexible working arrangements are welcomed and will be considered (including existing job share arrangements and compressed hours).

Restrictions

During the period of appointment there will be certain restrictions on political activities.

Pension

Your pension is a valuable part of your total reward package where:

- the employer makes a significant contribution to the cost of your pension.
- your contributions come out of your salary before any tax is taken.

This means, if you pay tax, your take-home pay will not be reduced by the full amount of your contribution and your pension will continue to provide valuable benefits for you and your family if you are too ill to continue to work or die before you retire. For more information, visit www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

If you are transferring from another employer who offers the Civil Service pension arrangements, you will continue to be covered by those arrangements for the duration of this appointment.

Appointees may choose to join the [alpha](#) or [partnership](#) schemes offered by the Civil Service Pension Scheme:

If you join alpha, an occupational pension scheme which provides a defined benefit worked out on a Career Average basis, details of the contributions you will pay are shown [here](#). Employer pension contributions cover the rest of the cost of the scheme.

Leave

Full time new entrants to the FCDO will be entitled to 25 days annual leave per annum, increasing by 1 day for each year of service up to a maximum of 30 days, plus 9 public and privilege holidays per year. Existing Civil Servants will retain their current entitlement. We offer competitive maternity, paternity, and parental leave.

Employee Assistance Programme

This provides a 24/7 confidential counselling service on such matters as financial problems, childcare, social security benefits, elder residential care etc.

Learning and Development

The FCDO recognises that workplace learning is vital to success and needs to be accessible to all. We strive to create the right environment to empower staff to take responsibility for their own learning and developing both personally and professionally.

You will have access to formal and informal learning opportunities to help you develop the right skills, competences and knowledge at the right time.

The International Academy provides a first class learning facility, ensuring that all staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to represent the UK and pursue the national interest.

Developed Vetting and Other Checks

This job requires Developed Vetting security clearance as a condition of employment. If you are successful at interview, you will be asked to complete a number of security questionnaires.

Employment references will also be obtained. There will be checks on your nationality and other matters, before a formal offer of appointment can be made, including checking applicant details against the Cabinet Office Internal Fraud Database (see section below).

Nationality and Residency

You will be eligible for appointment only if:

- You are a British citizen; **and**
- You have been resident in the UK for five out of the last ten years immediately prior to your application. Please note: at least one year of this must have been a consecutive twelve- month period, unless you have served overseas with HMG Forces or in some other official capacity as a representative of His Majesty's Government or have lived overseas as a result of your parent's or partner's Government employment.

You should be aware that a lack of sufficient background information might preclude you from being granted security clearance.

Equal Opportunity

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office is committed to equal opportunities. Our officers are recruited on merit through fair and open competition. We seek our strength through diversity and appoint suitably qualified individuals regardless of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, social backgrounds, age, or disability.

To help us ensure that our recruitment activity reflects the diversity of British society, we should be grateful if you could complete the equal opportunities section of the application form. However, you are under no obligation to provide these details. The Recruitment Section of the FCDO, those administering testing processes and the interview panel will not have access to the information you provide at any point during the recruitment process, nor will it be used as a selection tool.

Disability Confident Scheme for Disabled Persons

The FCDO is an accredited 'Disability Confident Employer' under the government's Disability Confident Scheme, which denotes organisations which have a positive commitment towards disabled people. We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the Essential Criteria for the role as outlined in the Person Specification in this pack. By 'Essential Criteria' we mean you must provide us with evidence in your application form which demonstrates that you generally meet the level required for each competency, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills, or experience defined as essential.

If you wish to apply for consideration under the Disability Confident commitment, please complete the appropriate section on the online application form. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability and this will enable us to make the appropriate arrangements, if necessary.

This vacancy is part of the [A Great Place to Work for Veterans](#) initiative. For further information on whether you are eligible to apply under this scheme please follow the link.

Our Values and Commitment to Safeguarding

The FCDO is committed to preventing any type of unwanted behaviour at work including sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). FCDO expects all staff to share this commitment through adherence to our safeguarding against SEAH policy. We place a high priority on ensuring that only those who share and demonstrate our values are recruited to work for us. All offers of employment for those who are joining the FCDO will be subject to satisfactory references and appropriate security vetting. We expect staff to disclose if they have had a substantiated claim of sexual exploitation, abuse and/or sexual harassment made against them, or if they have left a role under investigation in the last 5 years. By submitting an application, the job applicant confirms their understanding of FCDO's recruitment procedures.

Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles

The FCDO's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition, as outlined in the [Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles](#).

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should, in the first instance, contact External.Recruitment@fcdo.gov.uk. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the FCDO, you can contact the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners at info@csc.gov.uk

Further information

Flexible Working

This is a full-time role. We encourage flexible working requests, to help us role model this approach to the wider organisation. This could include some remote working, flexible start and finish times, job sharing or compressed hours. Please indicate what flexibility you would like in your application, and we will explore what's possible for this role with you.

Cabinet Office Internal Fraud Database (IFD) Check

From 29th January 2018, the FCDO started providing the Cabinet Office with information about employees who have been dismissed for fraud or dishonesty offences. This information is the individual's name, date of birth, national insurance number and a general description of the relevant misconduct. This also applies to employees who resign or otherwise leave but who, because of an adverse decision by the investigation panel, or decision maker, would have been dismissed for fraud or dishonesty had they continued in employment.

The Cabinet Office input this information onto a database – the Internal Fraud Database (IFD) – and retain it for a period of five years from the date of dismissal (or the date employment ended). It shares with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office the name, date of birth and national insurance numbers of the staff included on the IFD. Where an applicant to a department is successful in interview, the FCDO will, as part of its pre-employment screening, check applicant details against the information received from the Cabinet Office. Any applicant who is included in the IFD will be refused employment.

Conflict of Interest

To ensure the integrity of the judgements and decisions they make every day, all civil servants must make sure that no conflict arises - or could be perceived to arise - between their public duties and their private interests when joining, or leaving, the civil service. This is a requirement of our [Civil Service Code](#) and is designed to protect both individual civil servants and their employing departments. If you believe you have any interests that might be relevant (or be perceived as relevant) to your ability to undertake this role, please let responses@russellreynolds.com know early in the process. Such interests may be financial or may be related to the relationships you have with specific individuals, organisations, or employers.

Confidentiality

You will be subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

FCDO and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Personal data collected as part of this job application will be processed in accordance with the FCDO's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. You can read this [here](#). The Privacy Notice explains what personal data the FCDO holds about you, how we collect it, and how we will use and may share information about you.

The Civil Service Code

Information about Civil Service values can be found in the [Civil Service Code](#).

Business Appointments

Candidates should also note that on completion of the appointment, they will be subject to the Government's Business Appointments Rules, with the possibility of restrictions on future employment imposed by the Prime Minister, on the recommendation of the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. Further information about the Rules and restrictions likely to be imposed on former Permanent Secretaries can be found at the address below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/advisory-committee-on-business-appointments>

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to supporting the principle that everybody should have the same opportunities for employment, development and progression. This should be based on their ability, competence and suitability for the role. This means that no applicant should receive less favourable treatment on grounds of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, religion, transgender status, family or domestic responsibilities, or working patterns. Also, nobody should be disadvantaged by any specific conditions or requirements, unless it can be justified that these could affect their ability to undertake the role.

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to support disabled job applicants and ensure that you are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and assessment process. Reasonable adjustments could include allowing extra time during selection tests, ensuring that information is provided in an accessible format, or providing training.

If you feel that you may need a reasonable adjustment to be made, or you would like to discuss your requirements in more detail, please contact us in the first instance. If you wish to receive a hard copy of the information, or in an alternative format e.g., Audio, Braille or large font then please contact: responses@russellreynolds.com

Diversity & Inclusion

The Civil Service is committed to becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK.

We are committed to understanding, respecting, and representing as broad a range of views and backgrounds as we have in UK society. We know that diverse perspectives and experiences are critical to an effective, modern Civil Service.

Our vision is to ensure the Civil Service represents modern Britain and is a truly inclusive employer – an example to other employers. We will create an organisation where diversity is not only respected and valued – but celebrated.

What's in it for me?

We want to maximise the potential of everyone who chooses to work for us – regardless of background.

If you're interested in becoming a world class leader, developing your career with us – starting with this interesting and challenging role – or doing things differently and inspiring colleagues, then the Civil Service is the place for you.

Our passion for diversity and equality means creating a work environment for all employees that is welcoming, respectful, engaging, and enriched with opportunities for personal and professional development.

What's next?

You've taken the first step and looked through this job pack to understand the skills and experience needed to perform this role. Now join us in achieving our ambitions and let us help you achieve yours. See the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for more information.

