



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

**Estates Director
Candidate Pack**

**Salary: Up to £145,000 per annum,
depending on skills and experience**

Closing Date: Monday 23rd March 2026



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Foreword



Thank you for your interest in the role of Estates Director at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The FCDO operates one of the most complex and distinctive property portfolios in the world. Our global estate plays a critical role in enabling the UK's diplomatic, development and consular work, supporting our people to operate safely, securely and effectively in a wide range of environments and contexts. The estate is a visible and physical manifestation of the UK's presence overseas.

We are entering a pivotal phase for the organisation. Through our FCDO 2030 programme, we are focused on becoming a more modern, resilient and delivery-focused department, equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex international landscape. The footprint, sustainability and

performance of our estate – and the confidence with which it is planned, governed and delivered – is central to that ambition.

The Estates Director will play a vital role in shaping and delivering this next chapter. Reporting directly to me and sitting at the heart of the Chief Operating Officer's Senior Leadership Team, the successful candidate will set the strategic direction for the estate and lead the delivery of a significant, multi-year programme of capital investment, renewal and transformation across a uniquely complex global portfolio. This is a role that requires strong judgement, commercial acumen and the ability to lead at scale, while balancing safety, security and long-term value in challenging international environments.

We are looking for an individual who brings deep experience of estates leadership and transformation, combined with the confidence to operate in a complex, international setting and a strong commitment to public service. In return, this role offers a rare opportunity to have a lasting impact, not only on a global estate, but on the effectiveness, resilience and reputation of the UK's international presence for years to come.

I hope this Candidate Pack gives you a clear sense of both the opportunity and the responsibility that come with this role, and I look forward to receiving your application.

Helena Vega-Lozano
Chief Operating Officer
Foreign, Commonwealth and 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 the UK internationally, 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 Posts. 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 take the long view, investing effectively in enduring relationships and acting with agility in response to 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 FCDO 2030, to become more strategic and adaptable, technology-enabled and high performing. The programme will include specific objectives and results related to the estate.

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



The Role

The Estates Director will lead the transformation and stewardship of an estate unique to the United Kingdom. The FCDO's £2.5bn global property estate spans 180 countries and comprises approximately 6,800 assets, including embassies, ambassadorial residences and staff accommodation.

This is a pivotal leadership role at a time of significant organisational change. The successful candidate will set the strategic direction for the FCDO estate and oversee the accelerated delivery of a major global transformation programme, ensuring the estate is secure, resilient, sustainable, and aligned with the UK's diplomatic, development and security objectives.

The role will focus on reshaping the estate to reflect the FCDO's global priorities and footprint in today's challenging international context. A central element of the role will be refreshing the global estates strategy alongside the leadership of a significant, multi-year capital investment and refurbishment programme across the global estate, encompassing new builds, major renewals and complex heritage assets. The successful candidate will lead a team overseeing health and safety performance and reducing carbon emissions whilst strengthening governance, assurance and delivery capability across a highly complex international portfolio.

This is a strategic leadership role, with the successful candidate setting direction and enabling delivery through strong teams, clear governance and effective partners. While accountability for performance sits with the Estates Director, success will be measured by the establishment of a resilient operating model and sustained improvement in delivery and value for money over time.

The Estates Director will be a core member of the Chief Operating Officer's Senior Leadership Team, working closely with the Chief People Officer, Director of Technology, Commercial Director and Finance Director.



A fundamental priority for the role is ensuring that the global estate provides a safe, secure and legally compliant environment for staff, visitors and partners, particularly in high-risk locations, and that health and safety considerations are embedded into all investment and operational decisions.

Key responsibilities

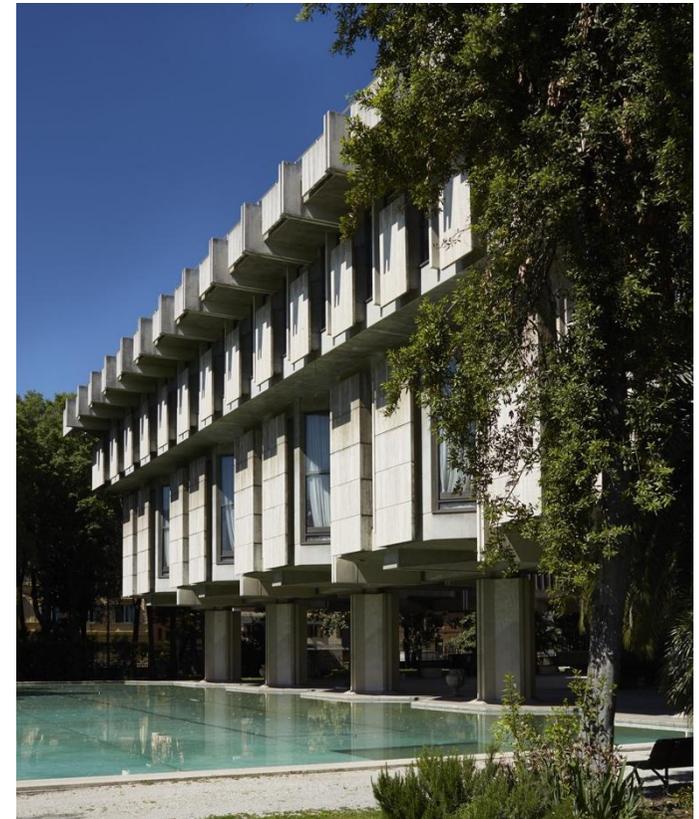
Delivery across the global estate is achieved through a combination of in-house capability and a wide range of commercial partners operating in diverse international contexts. The Estates Director will lead a senior leadership team and work through others to ensure consistent standards, strong assurance and effective performance management across this model.

The Estates Director will be responsible for:

1. **Developing and delivering the FCDO Estates Strategy to 2030 and beyond**, maximising value from the global estate by optimising utilisation, prioritising investment and project delivery across purchase, lease, new build and refurbishment, and identifying surplus or under-performing assets for disposal or alternative use.
2. **Providing clear and inclusive leadership to a diverse and geographically dispersed estates function**, ensuring the organisation has the capability and capacity required to deliver on its priorities, and leading and developing the senior management team through clear delegation, accountability and performance expectations.
3. **Designing and embedding a world-class estates operating model** that reduces risk, improves efficiency and strengthens governance and assurance across a complex, internationally delivered portfolio. This will include:
 - a. Strategic management of portfolio-level risk, including security, resilience and business continuity in high-risk locations.



- b. Establishing a best-in-class health and safety capability across the estate.
 - c. Delivering greening commitments and net zero pathways.
 - d. Ensuring full compliance with relevant legislative, regulatory and assurance requirements.
4. **Providing executive leadership for estates programmes and operations**, including major capital projects, facilities management and life-support contracts. This will include:
- a. Ensuring programmes and projects are delivered to agreed time, cost and quality expectations.
 - b. Working in close partnership with geographic directors and overseas missions.
 - c. Leading effective collaboration with internal stakeholders and external partners.
 - d. Setting and enforcing robust programme, project and contract management standards.
 - e. Overseeing development of business cases through appropriate HMG governance and assurance processes.
5. **Leading the financial and commercial stewardship of the global estate**, managing substantial capital and revenue budgets across a portfolio of approximately 6,800 assets, including embassies, ambassadorial residences and staff accommodation, and balancing maintenance requirements alongside a range of investment priorities. Championing the use of asset, performance and cost data to support prioritisation, assurance and long-term investment decisions across the portfolio.
6. **Managing strategic relationships with OneHMG partners** and other government departments across the overseas platform to ensure effective co-ordination, value for money and alignment of estates delivery.
7. **Providing authoritative advice and leadership on all estates and property matters**, offering timely, well-judged input to senior leaders on risk, investment, estates development, delivery and assurance. Collaborating with fellow property and project leaders across HMG to drive functional improvement, innovation and thought leadership.



Person Specification

We are committed to ensuring the FCDO remains a world-leading institution, offering roles that attract and retain exceptional talent from across the UK and internationally. We aim to recruit and retain the best people; those who are delivery focused and have a strong track record in high impact outcomes. This role is suited to a senior estates or infrastructure leader with experience of leading large-scale, complex estates transformation, either within government or in highly regulated or international environments.

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:

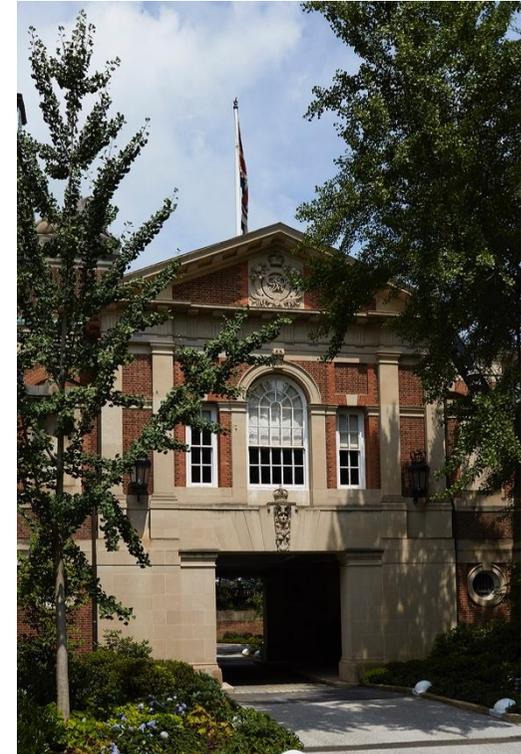
- **Estates leadership and strategic capability** – Demonstrable credibility as a senior enterprise leader responsible for large-scale geographically dispersed estates functions, with experience setting strategy, transforming operating models, and leading end-to-end delivery across complex portfolios, balancing operational performance with long-term organisational outcomes. This includes ensuring that the global estate provides safe, secure and legally compliant environments for staff, visitors and partners, and embedding health and safety considerations into all strategic investment and operational decisions.
- **Programme and project leadership at scale** – Proven experience leading major, multi-year estates, infrastructure or property transformation programmes, including complex capital projects, significant planned and reactive maintenance requirements, portfolio prioritisation, risk management, and benefits realisation, ideally across multiple sites and jurisdictions.
- **Financial Acumen** – Demonstrable commercial leadership capability, including responsibility for substantial capital and operational budgets, contractual negotiations, proactive management of third-party supplier relationships, development



and approval of major business cases, prioritisation of investment and assurance of value for money across large and complex estates and infrastructure programmes.

- **Delivery in complex environments** – Experience delivering estates or infrastructure outcomes in complex contexts, with a demonstrable understanding of security, resilience, safety, and assurance requirements, and the ability to adapt delivery models accordingly.
- **Influence, Partnership and Stakeholder Leadership** – A track record of operating at senior levels across industry and/or government, influencing Ministers or boards and executive teams, and building effective partnerships to deliver shared outcomes across organisational boundaries.
- Full (e.g. Chartered) professional membership/accreditation of a recognised property professional body, for example (but not limited to) RIBA, CIOB, RICS and/or an equivalent qualification. The individual may also be professionally qualified to a similar level.

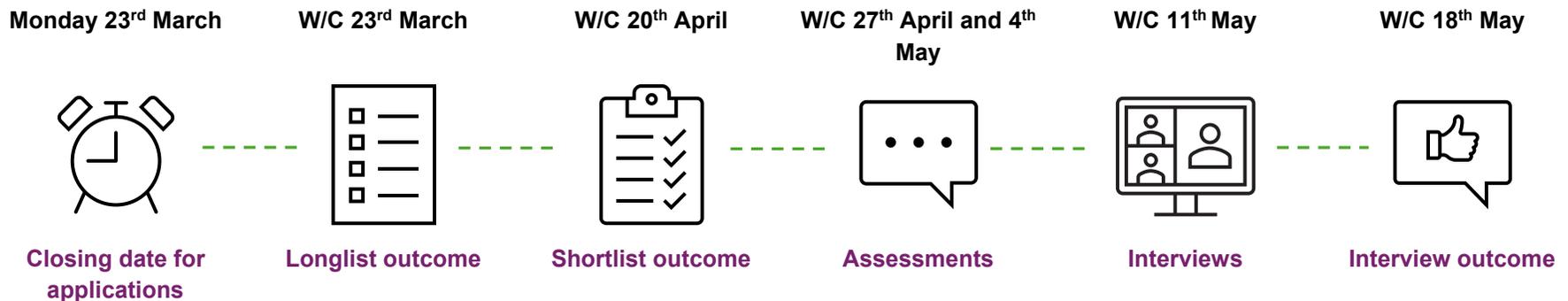
It is important that your application provides evidence and examples that meet these criteria. A deep technical knowledge of foreign policy and wider Government priorities is not critical; however, an interest and an aptitude for learning and an alignment with the desired outcomes of HMG will be expected.



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 (using staff engagement panels, for example) 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):



- **The closing date for applications will be 12:00 Noon on Monday 23rd March 2026.**
- Longlisted candidates will be invited to meet with Russell Reynolds advisers for a preliminary interview.
- A shortlist of the applications will take place w/c 20th April 2026.
- Across w/c 27th April and 4th May shortlisted candidates will be asked to:
 - Participate in a Staff Engagement panel with a selection of people from across the FCDO.
 - Undergo an Individual Leadership Assessment (ILA) with psychological profiling.
 - Meet with a key senior leader from the FCDO to learn more about the role. Please note, this is not part of the formal assessment process, and it will not be used to inform the Panel's decision in any way.

The interview panel will be chaired by **Lea Paterson**, Civil Service Commissioner. Other panel members will include Helena Vega-Lozano, FCDO Chief Operating Officer and up to two others.

Candidates will be asked to make a Presentation to the panel on Leadership, Vision and Transformation. The question will be provided in advance of the interview.

The interviews are expected to be held in person at FCDO offices in London. There may be the option to conduct the interview by Microsoft Teams for overseas candidates. If this is preferred, you should make this clear at the application stage.

Full details will be provided to shortlisted candidates. 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.

Please note that references and open-source due diligence checks (including into social media accounts) may be undertaken for all shortlisted candidates. Unfortunately, we will not be able to reimburse you for any expenses incurred as part of this recruitment process.

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.

[Please click here to apply](#) using job reference number **2601-086L**. You will be asked to register your details, answer any application questions and upload your CV and Statement of Suitability (covering statement). Should you wish to speak with someone before submitting an application, or if you have difficulty in accessing the online platform, please contact responses@russellreynolds.com in the first instance, quoting reference number **2601-086L**.

All applications will be acknowledged and considered by the selection panel.

Your submission should include:

- Your **CV**, with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history.
- A **Statement of Suitability** (no longer than two pages) explaining your personal skills, qualities, abilities and experience relevant to the requirements of the job in support of your application with particular reference to the essential criteria in the person specification. It should also describe your vision for the job and how you would propose to approach this if appointed.
- A completed [Diversity Questionnaire](#). 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.
- A **Declaration of Interest form** [available here](#).

The closing date for applications is 12:00 Noon on Monday 23rd March 2026.

Detailed Terms and Conditions

Location

This role can be based in either our London HQ in King Charles Street or our East Kilbride HQ. 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 £100,000 - £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. Candidates applying on promotion will have their substantive base salary increased by 10% or start on the minimum of the SCS2 PB2 scale of £100,000 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. Location Allowances will apply where staff are working in line with the FCDO's Hybrid Working Policy. All future pay awards are subject to guidance issued annually by HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

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.

Existing Civil Servants

Where a post is advertised externally, and an existing Civil Servant is successfully recruited to the position, there is no increase in salary if on level transfer. For staff applying on promotion, you will receive a 10% increase on your current base salary or the SCS grade minimum of the higher grade, whichever is the greater.

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 expect that the successful candidate to start in the autumn subject to Developed Vetting security clearance and approvals. The probation period is six 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 one 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 12-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 minimum criteria for the role as outlined in the Person Specification in this pack. By 'minimum criteria' we mean you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competency required for each competence, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills, or experience defined as essential.

If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident commitment, you should select this option in your application. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.

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.