

Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State (Scotland Office)

The Role

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland supports the Secretary of State in promoting the best interests of Scotland within a stronger United Kingdom. It ensures Scottish interests are fully and effectively represented at the heart of the UK Government, and the UK Government's responsibilities are fully and effectively represented in Scotland.

We are seeking a motivated and ambitious individual to join the Private Office Directorate as Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Scotland. The successful candidate's portfolio will focus specifically on science and technology, the environment and rural affairs, and culture and sport. However, this may be subject to change depending on business need and the priorities of the Secretary of State. They will work closely with the Secretary of State, Private Secretaries, Special Advisors and officials within the Scotland Office.

We are looking for someone with impeccable organisational skills, strong written and verbal briefing skills, confidence in their own judgement and strong political awareness. They will possess the ability to work independently at pace, driving progress on issues across Whitehall on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Scotland Office is a small department, and delivery often requires drawing upon wider cross-Whitehall networks and the ability to deliver through others.

This role provides exposure to strategic decision-making, as well as offering significant responsibility and autonomy. You will need to be flexible and responsive to ministerial direction, take pride in high-quality and timely work and have a proven track record for delivering in a pressurised environment. In return, we will offer you a collaborative and trusting working environment, with a strong team culture and clear sense of purpose and objective.

Private Office roles require you to work some unsociable hours – including weekends – when required. For this, a Private Office Allowance is payable to the successful applicant while in post.

Key Responsibilities:

- Delivering a sleek, professional and high standard of service to the Secretary of State in a high-pressure environment.
- Building working relationships with officials across the Scotland Office and developing an extensive cross-Whitehall network within your brief.
- Identifying potential issues at an early stage, being mindful of political sensitivities and keeping Ministers and senior colleagues across the department apprised.
- Taking responsibility and ownership for the quality of advice that goes to the Secretary of State. Working with officials during the policy process to communicate preferences and actively shape advice, using your network to support policy-making.
- Commissioning briefings and submissions, providing background and handling advice and producing thoughtful and high-quality box notes to guide decision-making and provide essential context.
- Working with officials and Special Advisors to translate the Secretary of State's asks into tangible and deliverable action.
- Working creatively and kindly, remaining cognisant of the resourcing pressures unique to a small Office.

Skills

Essential:

- Experience working in a pressurised, fast-paced environment which requires high levels of personal organisation and resilience.

Desirable:

- Experience working in a private office, either directly or through working as a locum.

Following the interview, there may be a further stage of the selection process where candidates will meet the Secretary of State.

Additional Information

If you would like to discuss this role further, please contact the hiring manager.

The role is at Grade HEO level and will be based in the Scotland Office in our London site, Dover House. The role comes with an additional stipend, known as a Private Office Allowance. The Scotland Office is not an employer in its own right. Staff recruited to work at the Scotland Office will be employees of the Ministry of Justice who provide employment services on our behalf, but this is not a role within the Ministry of Justice itself.

The relevant candidate would require SC.

Private Office Expectations

As the role is within a Private Office, the role requires an ability to work in a fast-paced environment and sometimes to work unsociable hours.

The role will be based in London, and will require:

- Regular in-person responsibilities
- Frequent travel around Scotland to support the Minister on visits and meetings with key stakeholders.
- Unsociable hours, including the team rota for weekend duty

As such, the role includes a Private Office allowance. The role is not suitable for part-time or job share.

Working Arrangements & Further Information

The MoJ offers Hybrid Working arrangements where business need allows. This is an informal, non-contractual form of flexible working that blends working from your base location, different MoJ sites and/or from home (please be aware that this role can only be worked in the UK and not overseas). All employees will be expected to spend a minimum of 60% of their working time in an office, subject to local estate capacity.

Some roles will not be suitable for Hybrid Working. Similarly, Hybrid Working will not suit everyone's circumstances. Arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the successful candidate(s) and subject to regular review.

For nationally advertised roles: All successful candidates will be appointed to the nearest viable office to their home postcode and on its respective pay scale. This will be at either a HQ building (subject to desk allocation, a Justice Collaboration Centre (JCC) or a Justice Satellite Office (JSO) – See Map. All employees will be expected to spend a minimum of 60% of their working time in an office, subject to local estate capacity).

For current MoJ employees, your base location will need to be changed to the nearest viable office (to your home postcode), either at a HQ building, JCC or JSO within the National Office Network and moved to its location's respective pay scale (any legacy arrangements/locations will need to be amended).

Some of MoJ's terms and conditions of service are changing as part of Civil Service reform. The changes will apply to staff joining MoJ who are new to the Civil Service. Staff joining MoJ from other civil service employers will

Application process

As part of the application process, you will be asked to complete:

- A CV setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements.
- A statement of suitability (750 words), where you should explain your motivation for applying for the role and how you meet the essential and, if applicable, the desirable criteria under the Skills and Experience section above.

The interview stage will be a blended assessment consisting of a series of questions against behaviours and strengths as part of the Civil Service Success Profiles.

- Seeing the Big Picture
- Communicating and Influencing
- Delivering at Pace

- Making Effective Decisions

The application process closes to applicants on the 20th of June. Interview dates are expected to be scheduled from the 24th of June and will end no later than the 3rd of July.

Expected timeline (subject to change)

Expected sift date – w/c 22 June

Expected interview date/s – w/c 29 June

Interviews - Your interview will be conducted in person

A reserve list may be held for a period of 12 months, from which further appointments can be made.

CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more information about this role, please contact Kaelan O'Bhate (Private Secretary to the Secretary of State) – kaelan.o'bhate@ukgovscotland.gov.uk