



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

# Appointment of Marine Management Organisation CEO 2025

Saxton Bampfylde



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

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# Introduction from Les Philpott, Chair, Marine Management Organisation

I am pleased to invite applications for the role of Chief Executive Officer at the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

As England's marine regulator, the MMO plays a vital role in enabling economic growth and supporting clean energy missions, as well as protecting our precious marine environment. We operate in a complex and evolving regulatory landscape, working across government departments with a diverse mix of industry partners.

This is a time of significant opportunity and challenge. With increasing demands on England's seas, UK government net zero and biodiversity ambitions, and a drive to simplify regulation, the MMO must lead with confidence, clarity and purpose to deliver its vision of a prosperous future for our seas, coasts and coastal communities.

Critical to achieving this, the MMO's next CEO will unite and inspire the organisation and its partners. The Board is seeking an outstanding, progressive leader with a bold strategic outlook and excellent leadership skills.

You will need to be capable of managing a complex agenda of regulatory transformation, navigating competing pressures, from supporting and enabling nationally significant infrastructure projects to safeguarding our marine ecosystems, while delivering against a challenging financial backdrop.

You will be a confident advocate for MMO, influencing at the highest levels to promote our organisation's position as a key enabler of cross government priorities.

You will forge strong relationships across the Defra Group and wider government, including but not limited to the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

Importantly, you will recognise the opportunities available to MMO to deliver in partnership with our marine industries ensuring the organisation manages the marine environment in a way that is sustainable, responsible and commercially viable.

If you are passionate about leading a respected public body and want to play a key role in shaping the future of England's marine environment and industries, I look forward to receiving your application.

## Les Philpott, Chair



To learn more, view our video :  
[MMO – bringing our strategy to life.](#)

# Working in Partnership

The MMO works in partnership across government, the private sector, delivery partners, and third-sector organisations to protect and sustainably manage England’s seas. Our aim is to keep the marine environment healthy, productive, and biologically diverse, supporting both nature and people to thrive.

We collaborate closely with stakeholders from marine development, fisheries, and environmental sectors, as well as coastal communities, local authorities, and the public. These relationships are vital to shaping a sustainable future for our marine environment.

As an arm’s length body of Defra, we play a key role in delivering on marine and fisheries policy. We also support sustainable economic growth, enabling responsible access to marine resources for infrastructure, offshore wind and other developments. Key strategic partners include industry, The Crown Estate, local authorities and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Our network of offices in Newcastle, York, London, and 15 coastal locations enables us to work directly with local communities and businesses. This helps ensure our decisions reflect real-world needs and are shaped by those closest to the sea.

# Highlights of our Work

MMO has continued to be an outcome focused organisation that makes a lasting positive difference.

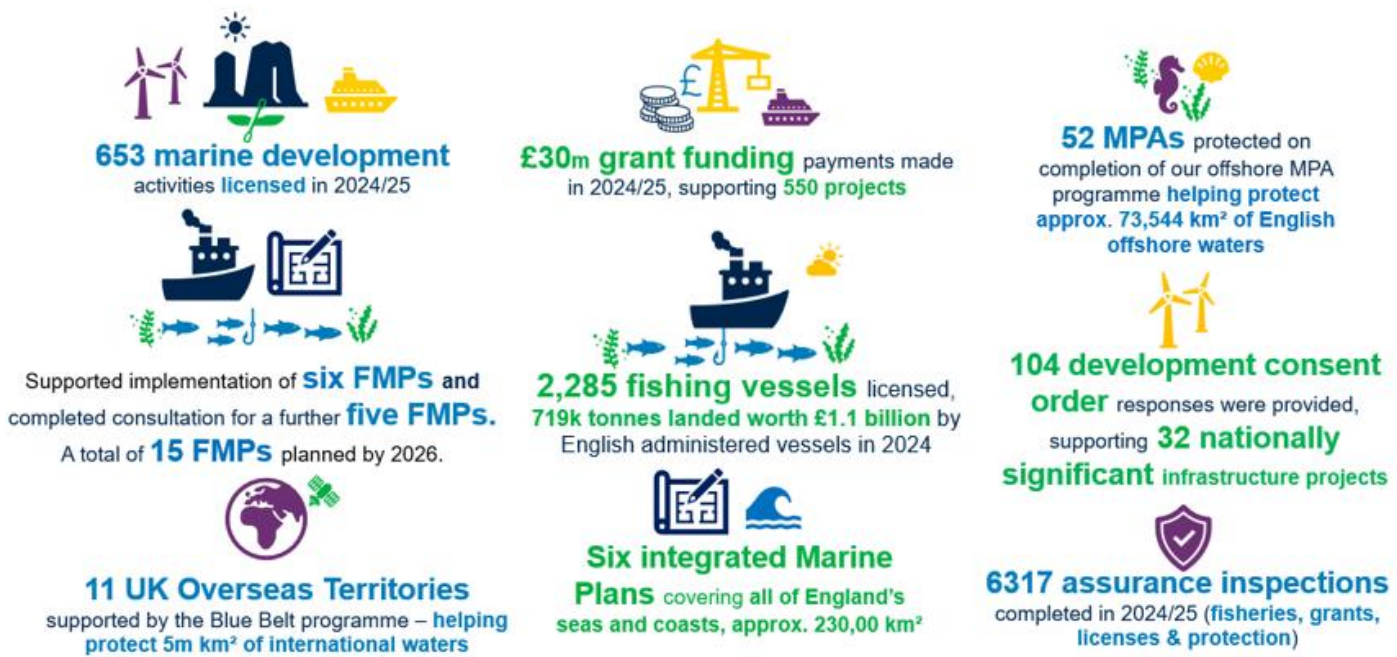
Key recent highlights of our work include distributing over £30 million in grant funding to support nearly 550 industry-led projects in 2024/25. In the same period, MMO licensed over 650 marine developments boosting the marine economy.

As England’s principal marine regulator, we continue to focus on enabling and assuring sustainable marine activities, having conducted 6,317 assurance inspections last year across fisheries, grants, licenses and marine protection.

MMO leads the regulatory activity to protect 52 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in English waters through the accelerated MPA plan. Through its global marine initiatives, MMO has contributed to the protection of nearly 5 million square kilometers of international waters.

Our expert services support the fishing industry and include MMO’s support for annual quota negotiations, managing quota outcomes, granting 2,285 vessel licenses across England, with a total landings of seafood valued at £1.1billion.

**Some further recent highlights can be seen below:**





# Useful Links

## MMO

Marine and Coastal Access Act:

[Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

MMO Framework Document:

[MMO framework document – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

MMO Annual report and accounts:

[Marine Management Organisation Annual Report and Accounts](https://www.gov.uk)

## Government and Policy Context

Delivering economic growth and nature recovery: an independent review of Defra's regulatory landscape:

[An independent review of Defra's regulatory landscape: foreword and executive summary – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

HMG Missions:

[Make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

HMG Missions:

[Kickstarting Economic Growth – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Defra Secretary of State Priorities:

[Defra Secretary of State at Summer Stakeholder Reception – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Fisheries Act 2020:

[Fisheries Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023:

[Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

25-Year Environment Plan:

[25 Year Environment Plan – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

UK Marine Policy Statement:

[UK marine policy statement – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



# Diversity and Inclusion

## **The MMO is committed to becoming an inclusive employer**

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 Public Sector. Our vision is to ensure the MMO 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 MMO is the place for you.

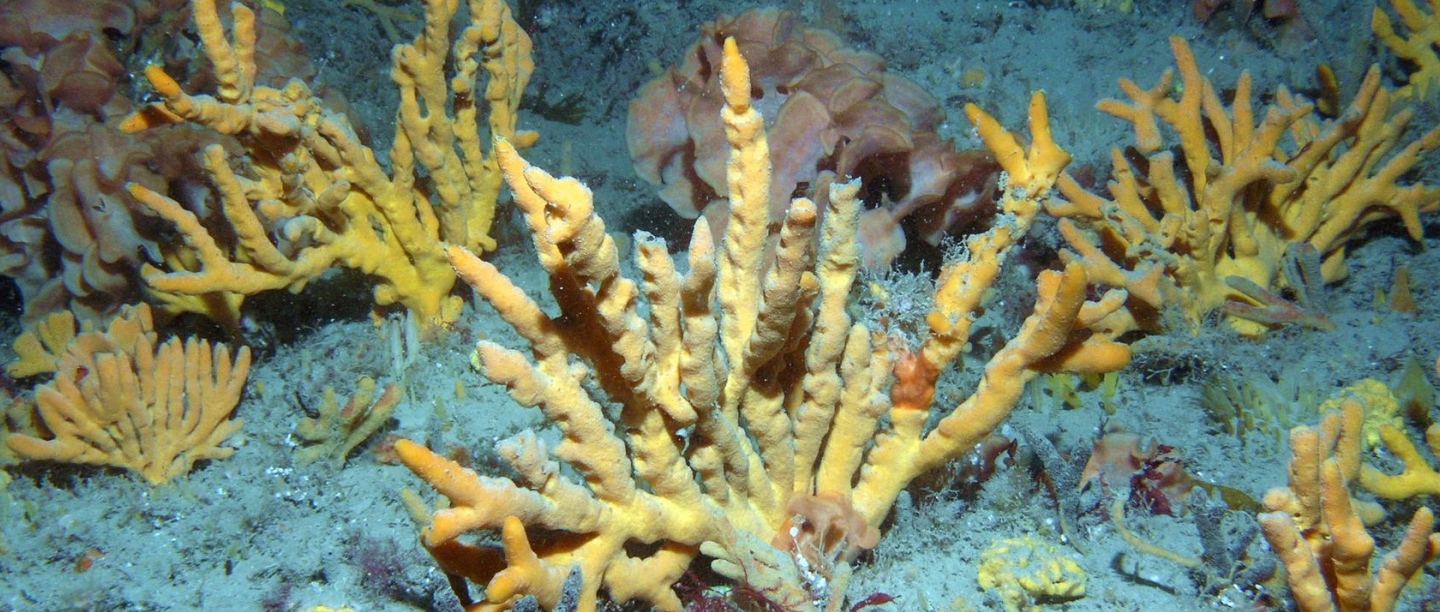
## **What's Next?**

You are taking the first step and looking 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.

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







## The Role

**Job Title:** Chief Executive Officer

**Salary:** £120,000 – £140,000

**Contract Type:** Permanent

**Location:** Flexible

This role is open to national applications. The CEO will be expected to maintain a regular presence at the MMO Head Office in Newcastle upon Tyne, spending a minimum of two days per week on site. The position also requires regular travel to MMO locations including coastal regions and London.

## Role Summary

The Marine Management Organisation plays a vital role in safeguarding one of our planet's most precious resources – our ocean. As the principal regulator of England's seas, the MMO is at the forefront of enabling sustainable economic growth while protecting marine ecosystems. Its purpose is rooted in a deep responsibility: to ensure that our seas remain clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse for generations to come. This is a mission of national and global significance, offering a unique opportunity for a visionary leader to make a lasting impact.

The MMO operates at the heart of some of the most complex and high-profile decisions facing the UK today – from licensing offshore wind farms and regulating marine infrastructure to developing and driving more sustainable fisheries and responding to environmental emergencies. As a cross-cutting body delivering for multiple government departments, the MMO is uniquely positioned to shape the future of marine management. The next CEO will guide this vital work through a period of rapid geopolitical change, ensuring the organisation plays a central role in advancing the UK's clean energy ambitions and driving sustainable economic growth.

This is a defining moment for the MMO. The organisation is poised for transformation, and the CEO will be instrumental in shaping its future. With the authority to lead strategic change, build high-performing teams, and strengthen relationships across government and industry, the CEO will drive innovation, digital capability, and operational excellence. This is a rare and exciting leadership opportunity for someone with the vision, energy, and commitment to lead a nationally significant organisation into its next chapter.

## The Chief Executive

As Chief Executive of the MMO, you will report directly to the Chair and work in close partnership with them to provide strong, visible leadership for the organisation. Although not a statutory member of the MMO Board, you will operate in practice as though an Executive member, contributing actively to Board discussions and collective decision-making. You will hold overall responsibility for the executive leadership, strategic direction and operational performance of the MMO. As the Accounting Officer, you will be accountable to both the MMO Board and the Principal Accounting Officer at Defra, upholding the highest standards of financial probity, effective governance and integrity. Your leadership will be central to maintaining public trust and delivering value for money across all MMO activities.

You will work closely with the Board to shape the organisation for the future, ensuring it is equipped to deliver its statutory duties while also advancing its ambition to become a world-class marine regulator. This includes driving progress on key government priorities such as the Clean Energy Mission, Environmental Improvement Plan, the UK's 30-by-30 biodiversity commitment. You will lead the organisation through change, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and accountability.

The CEO will be responsible for leading a geographically dispersed workforce of

around 500 staff and managing an annual budget of approximately £40 million. You will need to demonstrate strong change leadership and people management skills to guide teams through a period of significant transformation. This includes maintaining delivery of existing statutory functions while implementing new marine and fisheries policies and adapting to evolving regulatory demands.

As the public face of the MMO, you will build and maintain trusted relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including Defra, other government departments, public bodies, industry partners, and the public. You will ensure that MMO's work is well understood, its impact clearly communicated, and its partnerships productive and aligned with shared goals. A collaborative and open relationship with the MMO Board will be essential to your success in this role.

Finally, you will play a key role in shaping the future of marine governance in the UK. As Defra continues to explore new models for efficiency and effectiveness across its public bodies, you will lead MMO's contribution to this agenda. This is a unique opportunity to lead a nationally significant organisation at a time of great challenge and opportunity, ensuring that England's seas are managed sustainably for the benefit of people, nature, and the economy.





# Key Tasks and Principal Accountabilities

## Leadership and Change

Critical to the post is a proven ability to set a clear vision, and leading transformation with strategic decisiveness and resilience to ensure long-term success. A strong candidate will demonstrate the ability to:

- **Lead change** demonstrating leadership of complex transformations, including restructuring, developing values-based culture, and digital innovation, while maintaining organisational stability.
- **Articulate vision and direction** clearly to diverse internal and external audiences, fostering trust, and managing resistance through transparent and empathetic engagement.
- **Shape and structure the organisation** to ensure the capacity and capability for MMO to deliver its aims and objectives. Lead the development of credible, evidence-based proposals for future resourcing needs.

## Working with Others

- **Collaborate openly with the Board across Defra Group** to shape and deliver the organisation's strategic direction, ensuring alignment and transparency in decision-making.
- **Be an inspirational, enthusiastic role model** to all MMO's people. Exhibit the values and behaviours expected in the organisation and be at the forefront of initiatives to enhance the culture of the organisation. Set out the skills for the future including productivity gains from using AI and digitally enabling customers.
- **Engage, co-create with, and influence a broad range of stakeholders** across the marine management sector to build collaborative delivery partnerships
- **Be a leader in the marine management space**, enthusing stakeholders to be involved and play their part in the aim for clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically





## Delivery

- **Drive high-quality, data-informed decision-making** that balances enabling sustainable economic growth with environmental protection, ensuring regulatory services align with government priorities and current and future technologies.
- **Establish, apply and oversee robust planning, governance, and performance systems** to ensure statutory obligations are met, risks are managed, and progress is measurable and transparent to the Board and stakeholders.
- **Lead operational excellence and continuous improvement**, ensuring efficient day-to-day delivery, value for money, and productivity gains through innovation, partnerships, and digital transformation.

## Financial Stewardship and Governance

- **Act as a responsible Accounting Officer**, ensuring financial probity, value for money, and effective risk management, with transparent reporting and strong internal governance.
- **Collaborate with Defra to implement sustainable funding models**, including appropriate cost recovery for regulated services, aligned with public value and policy goals

- **Ensure compliance with governance frameworks**, including timely and accurate financial and non-financial reporting, and adherence to internal controls and delegated authorities.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Relationships

- **Represent and advocate for the organisation** across a diverse and complex stakeholder landscape, building trusted, high-impact relationships with senior leaders in government, industries, partner bodies and wider civil society.
- **Foster collaborative partnerships** that align with government priorities and support shared goals for the marine environment, enabling joined-up delivery and innovation.
- **Champion customer service excellence and transparency**, promoting a strong understanding of the organisation's role and value while ensuring stakeholder needs are met with professionalism and responsiveness.





To succeed in this role, you will be an inspirational organisational leader, committed to fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion and collaboration. With an ability to motivate colleagues at all levels and a strong track record of leading large operational delivery teams, you will be a strategic leader, inspiring confidence in others to deliver outcomes in a complex, regulatory and politically nuanced environment. You will bring the credibility to work effectively with Ministers, the Board, senior stakeholders and industry, working collaboratively to build trusted relationships across levels. You will have the agility to lead through transformation while building a high-performing, empowered organisation and you will demonstrate a clear appreciation of the respective roles of Chief Executive, Chair and Board in securing the organisation's continued success.

Your written application will be assessed against the following criteria:

## Essential Criteria

- Proven ability to set a clear vision and strategic direction, while anticipating, communicating, and mitigating significant operational, policy, and delivery risks.
- Extensive senior leadership experience in a multidisciplinary organisation, with a strong record of delivering operational excellence, fostering an inclusive, empowering culture and inspiring widespread operational delivery teams to perform at their best.
- Proven change management skills, with the ability to work collaboratively to drive transformation through digital innovation, a streamlined workforce, and robust governance, ensuring MMO services are fit for the future.
- Skilled in building trusted relationships and working in genuine partnership across organisational boundaries, with exceptional communication and influencing skills and the credibility to engage senior stakeholders across government and beyond
- Significant experience managing and delivering against substantial and complex budgets while modernising services and capabilities with a strong track record of driving business performance.
- Proven ability to work effectively with and be directly accountable to a Board, demonstrating a strong understanding of corporate governance and the judgement and integrity required to support effective Board decision-making and scrutiny.
- The personal resilience to operate in a high profile and highly scrutinised environment.



## Skills and Attributes

- A collegiate and visible leader who inspires trust, builds engagement, and brings people with them.
- Strong communicator with the ability to convey complex messages clearly and credibly across diverse audiences.
- Strategic thinker with the confidence to challenge assumptions, speak truth to power, and drive innovation.
- Politically astute and personally resilient, able to represent the organisation externally and manage internal complexity.
- Committed to inclusivity and wellbeing, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and diverse perspectives.



# Benefits and Terms and Conditions

Join us in this role and you will enjoy the following benefits:

<b>Leave entitlement</b>	Your leave allowance in this role will be 30 days annual leave plus options to bank additional leave. You will also be entitled to 8 days public holidays per year, plus 2.5 privilege days
<b>Performance pay</b>	The CEO will be eligible for discretionary non-consolidated performance payments determined by the Remuneration Committee of the MMO Board, under the terms of any Cabinet Office guidance senior Civil Service pay framework Currently this is a maximum of £17,500.
<b>Pension</b>	You will have the opportunity to join Civil Service pension arrangements, which include a valuable range of benefits. To find out more about Civil Service pensions, see the Civil Service pension's website.
<b>Hours of work</b>	You are normally required to work a five-day week of 37 hours. However, the individual would be expected to work such additional hours as may from time-to-time be reasonable and necessary for the effective performance of their duties. In view of their seniority and managerial duties and responsibilities, the individual would be regarded as a "managing executive" for the purposes of the Working Time Regulations 1998.
<b>Salary sacrifice schemes</b>	Bicycles – This scheme allows you to sacrifice part of your salary and instead receive the reduced amount as a voucher to pay for a bicycle to cycle to work. As a result, you can save money because the salary you sacrifice for a voucher is free from both tax and National Insurance contributions.
<b>Employee discount schemes</b>	Our staff benefits provider offers a wide range of employee retail discounts.
<b>Health cash plans and insurance</b>	MMO has agreed competitive rates with a number of health insurance/cash plan providers.
<b>Professional subscriptions</b>	MMO encourages and reimburses membership in relevant bodies where it is an essential requirement of the role.
<b>Employee Assistance Service</b>	MMO's Employee Assistance Programme provides professional support and guidance for people experiencing work related emotional, health and social problems.
<b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	We are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and respected and see this as a good place to work. MMO has a responsibility to ensure that we have an inclusive culture where discrimination, harassment, bullying and prejudice will not be tolerated. Our selection process is determined on ability and regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.
<b>Trade union</b>	MMO has entered into a partnership agreement with its recognised <sup>13</sup> Trade Unions Prospect, PCS and FDA.

# Benefits and Terms and Conditions

<b>External interests and compliance</b>	<p>The post holder must disclose promptly to the MMO Board in writing all interests in any business other than that of MMO and will notify the Board immediately of any change in external interests.</p> <p>Except with the written consent of the Board (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld) the post holder will not during their employment under this contract be directly or indirectly engaged (on their own account or on behalf of or in association with any other person) in any trade, business or occupation other than the business of MMO.</p>
<b>Disclosure and confidentiality</b>	<p>The role carries with it a requirement that certain information about the individual's salary and pension entitlements will be disclosed in the annual accounts of MMO.</p> <p>Confidentiality will cover key information about MMO and that of its employees, sponsors and key contacts which is secret, confidential or commercially or politically sensitive and which may not be readily available to the business community, press or to the general public and which, if disclosed, will be liable to cause significant harm to MMO, its sponsors or its key contacts as well as being subject to the Official Secrets Act 1989.</p> <p>In circumstances where a new or outside appointment would require the individual to use or divulge confidential information belonging to MMO then they are required to obtain the agreement of the Chair of the MMO Board before accepting any offer of employment outside MMO or which would start within two years of leaving its employment. The Chair will not unreasonably withhold their consent.</p>
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	<p>If the post holder or their spouse have any business interest or potential conflict of interest with the activities of MMO or Defra, you will be expected to declare this at a later stage. You will also be asked to inform us if you have any indirect association of this kind through any other family member or partnership.</p>



# The Selection Process

Our selection process is designed to be insightful and supportive, giving you a clear view of the organisation while allowing MMO to understand your strengths and leadership style. The selection panel for this role will be chaired by Les Philpott, MMO Chair.

The selection process will be as follows;

- **The closing date for applications will be midday on Wednesday 22 October 2025**
- A longlist of the applications will take place during the week of 29 October 2025.
- Longlisted candidates will be invited to informal interviews with Saxton Bampfylde.
- A shortlist of the applications will then take place during the week of 3 November 2025.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the following sessions, currently anticipated to take place between 10 November and 5 December 2025. Please note that these dates are indicative only:
  - An **Executive Assessment** with Saxton Bampfylde  
Led by an experienced occupational psychologist, this stage seeks to explore your leadership approach and behaviours
  - A **Colleague Engagement Panel**  
You will meet a cross section of colleagues from across the organisation in an informal, conversational setting. This offers an opportunity for colleagues to get to know their prospective leader, while providing you with insight to MMO's people, culture and values
  - A **formal interview, including a presentation question**  
Your structured interview will be assessed against the [Civil Service Competency Framework](#), Level 6 and will include a short presentation. The following competencies will be assessed at interview;
    - Setting Direction**  
Making Effective Decisions (Lead)  
Changing and Improving
    - Engaging People**  
Building Capability for All  
Collaborating and Partnering
    - Delivering Results**  
Managing a Quality Service

Further details about the selection process will be provided to shortlisted candidates.



# How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Marine Management Organisation on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through the website at:  
[www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **GBNYA1**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload your application.

The closing date for applications will be **midday on 22 October 2025**. Your application should include:

- Your CV, with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history.
- A covering statement of no more than two sides of A4 (Arial, 11pt) explaining why this appointment interests you, and how you can evidence your suitability for the

role, with particular reference to the criteria referenced in the 'the person specification' section.

- As a mandatory part of the application process, we ask candidates to complete equal opportunities monitoring information. This will help us to follow the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, that employers should monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. All data is reported in an anonymous and aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application. The Marine Management Organisation is a Disability Confident Committed Employer, and applicants with disabilities who opt in are guaranteed interviews where they meet the essential requirements of the role as set out in the candidate pack
- A Candidate Supporting Information Form (Annex A).

# FAQs

## **Can I apply if I am not currently a public servant?**

Yes. This role is open to suitably qualified people in the external market, to civil servants and those in accredited Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

## **Is this role suitable for part-time working?**

This is a full-time role.

## **What is the position on relocation, travel and subsistence?**

In addition to the time spent in the Newcastle Office, the postholder will have the option to work from other MMO locations. Travel and subsistence to the Newcastle Office will be treated as ordinary commuting and will be the responsibility of the individual.

Prospective candidates should note that relocation expenses are not available for this post.

The MMO is a flexible employer and although we do not offer home working contracts, many of our people currently work in a hybrid manner, spending at least 40% of their time in the office.

## **Can I claim back any expenses incurred during the recruitment process?**

No. Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you, except in exceptional circumstances and only when agreed in advance.

## **What nationality do I need to hold in order to apply?**

The role is open to UK, Commonwealth and European Economic Area (EEA) and certain non-EEA nationals. Further information on whether you are able to apply is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules>.

## **Is security clearance required?**

No. However the successful candidate will undergo Baseline Personnel Security Standard, pre-employment checks aimed to provide an appropriate level of assurance as to the trustworthiness and integrity of prospective employees.

## **What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?**

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; by 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: [louise.mccarthy@saxbam.com](mailto:louise.mccarthy@saxbam.com)

If you cannot apply online, please post your application recorded delivery to –

Louise McCarthy  
Saxton Bampfylde  
9 Savoy St, London  
WC2E 7EG

## **What should I do if I think that I have a conflict of interest?**

Candidates must note the requirement to declare any interests that might cause questions to be raised about their approach to the business of the department. If you believe that you may have a conflict of interest, please contact our advising consultants Saxton Bampfylde before submitting your application.





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Management  
Organisation

Saxton Bampfylde