Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland

Candidate information pack

A group of people standing next to a computer

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**A person and person sitting at a desk

Description automatically generatedWelcome Statement from Dame Sue Bruce, Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland**

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland.

The Electoral Commission was established in 2001 under the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK.

Over the next two years, the Commission will play its important part in delivering the Scottish Parliament election in May 2026 and elections to all of Scotland’s 32 councils in May 2027. The role is varied and interesting, working with parties, candidates and agents standing in elections, ensuring the transparency of political finance and public confidence in election campaigning. The Head of the Electoral Commission in Scotland also works with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams as they deliver the administration of the electoral process. The Commission also ensures our public awareness activities and engagement with Scottish civic society is delivered so that the Scottish voter has a clear understanding of how to take part in our democratic processes and can express their preferences at elections with confidence.

This is a key role for the Commission in which the Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland leads our work with Scottish Government in developing policy improvements to Scotland’s democratic processes and ensures we fulfil our commitments to the Scottish Parliament to which the Commission is accountable. Significant electoral reform is currently being undertaken both in Scotland and in the UK and you will have a role in implementing these important changes in the coming months.

You will be joining the Commission at an exciting time as we develop a new UK Corporate Plan and develop our first Scotland Corporate Plan. Our recent report on the UK Parliamentary General Election held in July 2024 covers many of the issues which will occupy the policy and operational space in the coming years. You will ensure that our work takes into account fully the Scottish political environment; that issues and lessons from Scotland are fed into the development of a UK-wide Corporate Plan and strategy and the forthcoming Scotland Corporate Plan.

The Electoral Commission is seeking an exceptional leader to play an essential role in delivering its Scottish activities in an independent and impartial manner. As the lead officer of The Electoral Commission in Scotland you will manage the Commission’s presence and deliver what is needed to ensure Scotland’s electorate has confidence in its democratic processes.

We are looking for an innovator who can inspire change and high performance, someone to lead an established and high performing team in Scotland which delivers in conjunction with other teams across the Commission a variety of services. You will join the Devolution, Governance and Law Directorate and will be part of the wider Commission senior leadership team

This is an exciting time to be at the Electoral Commission. If you want to join us in supporting the effective delivery of our democracy we would love to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Sue Bruce,

Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland

About the Commission

Our role

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We are responsible for electoral matters at the reserved and devolved level and account to the Scottish and UK Parliaments as well as the Senedd for our various functions. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity by:

* enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible
* regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches
* using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency

Further information on the work of the Commission can be found on our website [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/) .

Our vision and objectives

Our UK Corporate Plan for 2022/23 – 2026/27 embodies our vision that people trust, value and take part in elections. We are working to achieve this through our objectives:

* accessible registration and voting
* transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance
* resilient local electoral services
* fair and effective electoral law
* a modern and sustainable electoral system

and three key factors that will help us achieve those objectives:

* we demonstrate independence and integrity
* we are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued
* we are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively.

We are currently developing a new UK Corporate Plan following the recent UK General Election and the Scottish Parliament is currently legislating to require the Commission to create a separate Corporate Plan for our devolved functions.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity.

As a public body working across the UK, we want to represent the population we serve and welcome the positive impact a diverse workforce has on our organisation, our perspective, and the quality of our decision-making. As such, we emphasise our commitment to attracting a diverse field for this important role, including and beyond the protected characteristics.

Role description and Person Specification

Job Title: Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland

Directorate: Devolution, Governance and Law

Responsible to: General Counsel and Director, Devolution, Governance and Law

Responsible for: Scotland Team

Overall purpose of post

The lead staff representative of The Electoral Commission in Scotland managing the Commission’s presence and ensuring that its work takes full account of the Scottish environment, that issues and lessons from Scotland are fed into the development of a UK-wide corporate policy and strategy and that appropriate UK-wide corporate policy is implemented in Scotland.

Main Responsibilities

* To lead the Commission in Scotland, by developing, maintaining and managing senior level stakeholder relations, particularly with political parties, the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, Scotland’s Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers and other electoral practitioners, government officials, elected members, civic society and media by establishing, maintaining, developing and leading appropriate relations and forums.
* To lead the delivery of the Commission’s activities in relation to its accounting to the Scottish Parliament for its devolved functions.
* To work closely with the Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland and other Commissioners as appropriate in the furtherance of the Commission’s objectives.
* To lead the Commission’s Scotland Team in delivering all its functions and activities across our responsibilities both devolved and reserved.
* To lead, develop, manage and deliver the Commission’s policies and strategies in relation to Scotland, within the Commission’s UK-wide framework including responding to statutory and non-statutory consultations, scrutinising legislation and pro-actively promoting the adoption of Commission recommendations.
* To lead, manage and deliver the Commission’s statutory and non-statutory reporting function in relation to Scotland.
* To deliver the Commission’s media messaging in Scotland in relation to its Scottish activities by undertaking TV, radio and print media interviews as the Commission Scottish spokesperson.
* To lead and contribute to cross-Commission UK-wide projects, including as a project manager or programme board member as required, using the Commission’s project management methodology and carrying out budgetary responsibilities in line with Commission practice.
* To lead the Scotland Team input into UK-wide policy and practice reviews, research, and development of materials such as training and guidance manuals.
* To support electoral administrators and the Electoral Management Board across Scotland, through the provision of advice and guidance.
* To work closely with the Electoral Administration and Regulation Directorate on the regulation of party and election finance including supporting further transparency for donations and loans to political parties in Scotland.
* To develop appropriate communication and influencing strategies both as part of a UK-wide activity and Scotland only, working closely with the Communications, Policy and Research Directorate.

General

* To understand, and actively promote, the aims and objectives of the Commission as set out in its Corporate Plan(s).
* To be an active member of the Senior Leadership team, contributing to operational and strategic initiatives. Promoting and participating fully in a programme of ongoing organisational improvement that reflects the values and principles of the Commission.
* To work in accordance with the Commission’s policies including its equality and diversity policies, its performance appraisal process, its personal and team development process and its quality standards for written communications**.**
* To work co-operatively with colleagues across the Commission, and actively participate in opportunities to communicate within the organisation including attending team and directorate meetings.
* To comply with the statutory provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
* To perform any other duty as directed by line management.
* To provide effective line management to the Scotland Team.

* + Carrying out the Commission’s performance appraisal scheme effectively and to time
  + Working with team members to identify learning and

development needs, and to ensure these are delivered

* + Providing advice and support as required
  + Providing quality assurance for all Scotland Team output
  + Managing staff attendance
  + To work with the Commission’s facilities management to ensure the Commission’s office in Scotland is maintained appropriately.
* Manage a budget and ensure public sector funds are used efficiently

*This job description reflects the present requirements of the post and should not be seen as an exhaustive list of responsibilities. Duties and responsibilities may develop and change in consultation with line management.*

Person specification

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Competence, values & behaviours | Requirement | Essential or Desirable |
| **Authoritative**  Qualifications and training  Relevant experience  General and specialist knowledge /expertise | Good first degree or equivalent experience  Extensive experience of working within a complex organisation, government, a regulatory, national or regional body  **Thorough knowledge of the political and media context in which the Commission operates in Scotland**  Understanding and experience of budget and project management | Desirable  Essential  **Essential**  Desirable |
| **Independent and impartial** | **Political sensitivity, and awareness of political context in Scotland and the wider UK.**  The ability to contribute and respond to the needs of an evolving, independent organisation.  The ability to demonstrate impartial decision making. | **Essential**  Desirable  **Essential** |
| **Transparent** | Excellent judgement and clear decision making. | Desirable |
| **Making an impact** | **Ability to remain calm under pressure and deliver results, often within tight deadlines**  **Excellent problem-solving skills**  High level of creativity and conceptual thinking  Organisational, time-management and planning skills | **Essential**  **Essential**  Desirable  Desirable |
| **Engaged**  Effective relationships  Communication | **Excellent negotiating, influencing and relationship building skills**  **Strong communication skills to both internal and external stakeholders**  Experience of regularly dealing with senior stakeholders, including elected representatives, and print and broadcast media | **Essential**  **Essential**  Desirable |
| **Leadership and management** | **Strong leadership skills**  **Experience of team management** | **Essential**  **Essential** |

**Bold type indicates minimum requirements**

Terms and conditions of appointment

Remuneration

The remuneration for this appointment is £72,120.

Pension

If eligible, you may join either the Civil Service pension scheme with its associated benefits or a stakeholder pension. Before joining you should note any tax implications that may affect you in relation to the Lifetime Allowance. For further information see: <http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/>

Nationality

Applicants must be able to prove they are eligible to work in the UK.

Location

The Commission operates flexible hybrid working. The post is based in Scotland, but it is anticipated that you will, in addition to working in our Edinburgh Office, spend time in the Commission’s offices in Belfast, Cardiff and London. Travel around Scotland especially and the wider United Kingdom will be required.

Pre-appointment checks

Successful applicants will be required to complete a series of pre-appointment checks, including a DBS check, prior to appointment. The Commission may ask the successful candidate to complete Security Check clearance.

Conflicts of interest and political activity

In applying for the position of Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland you will be asked to sign a declaration relating to political activity.

The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (the Act), prohibits a person from becoming Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland if during the last five years they have:

1. Consented to being nominated as a candidate for a relevant election within the meaning of the Act or to being included in a registered party’s list of candidates at such an election. The list of relevant elections is:
   * member of the Scottish Parliament
   * member of the House of Commons
   * member of the Senedd
   * member of the Northern Ireland Assembly
   * member of:
     + any local authority in any part of the United Kingdom, including the Common Council of the City of London but excluding a parish or community council, or
     + the Greater London Assembly
2. Taken up any office or employment with:
   * a registered party or any accounting unit of such a party
   * a recognised third party under the Act
   * a permitted participant in a referendum as defined in the Act
3. Been named as a donor in the register of donations or in any statement of donations included in a return delivered to the Commission under the Act
4. Been named as a participant in the register of recordable transactions reported under Part 4A of the Act

In addition, consistent with the Commission’s Code of Staff Conduct, you would likely not be considered suitable for appointment if your past or present engagement in an activity might now call into question your political impartiality. Such would be incompatible with the need for the Commission to be seen as completely impartial, and for its Heads of Service to not be subject to actual or reasonably perceived political bias.

You will also be required to declare if a close family member or associate is closely involved with a political party. A close family member is defined as your spouse, civil partner, partner, children or stepchildren, parents, or any other person with whom you live in an enduring family relationship. An associate is defined as someone who is not a family member but with whom you have frequent or significant contact, or shared interests, and where a connection which is not disclosed might give rise to perceptions of a conflict of interest.

Throughout your employment/engagement with the Commission you would be required to conduct yourself so as not to raise any questions as to the political impartiality of the Commission.

How to apply

If you wish to apply for this post, please supply:

* As one combined document, a comprehensive CV (no more than three sides of A4) and a Supporting Statement (maximum three sides of A4), outlining how you meet the essential and desirable criteria in the Person Specification. Please note that the Supporting Statement is an important part of your application and is as much the means by which you will be assessed as your CV. Your combined CV and Supporting Statement should be uploaded via the [**Aspen People website – here.**](https://jobs.aspenpeople.co.uk/job/head-of-electoral-commission,-scotland-714.aspx)As part of the online application process, you will be asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring page. The information on this page will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes only. This information will not be treated as part of your application.
* Please also complete a Political Activity Form and email to [kbettoli@aspenpeople.co.uk](mailto:kbettoli@aspenpeople.co.uk). This form can be [downloaded from here.](https://jobs.aspenpeople.co.uk/job/head-of-electoral-commission,-scotland-714.aspx)

**The closing date for applications is Wednesday 8th January 2025.**

Overview of the recruitment process

Your application will be assessed on the basis of your CV and on the evidence for the post against the Essential and Desirable criteria in the person specification.

Please ensure that you provide written evidence in your supporting statement to demonstrate how you meet the criteria, with specific examples, outcomes and metrics to support the evidence you provide.

At the long-listing meeting, the selection panel will determine the candidates who will be invited for interview, taking account of the evidence provided by the candidates in their CVs and supporting statements.

If successful, you will be invited to an interview with a panel chaired by the Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland. **Interviews will be held on Thursday 23rd January 2025.**

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact **Catriona Mackie or David Currie** at Aspen People on **0141 212 7555.**