

Head of Regulatory Policy Water UK

August 2026

Introduction from the Chief Executive

Water is used by each of us every day, but until the last few years was rarely the subject of political debate. Greater scrutiny on the industry has created an unprecedented opportunity to challenge conventional wisdom and secure acceptance for contentious – but necessary – reforms. Joining Water UK provides the chance to develop ideas that are radical but progressive, and design strategies to have them adopted by decision-makers.

Since joining as CEO in 2023, and supported by our Chair, the former Cabinet Minister Ruth Kelly, Water UK has increasingly been at the centre of leading work to ensure that the water industry better meets the needs and interests of society. This has included major new transparency platforms, sweeping and detailed work on long-overdue reforms and building the detailed case for investment.

There is much more to do and, in the next few years, I have three main priorities.

First, we need to ensure that industry is well-placed to deliver a quadrupling of capital investment to 2030. This investment is urgently needed to renew infrastructure and restore trust. We work to ensure the rapid and effective delivery of improvements across the country.

Secondly, we must work with the UK and Welsh Governments on their major programmes of reform, which includes implementing their responses to the Independent Water Commission led by Sir Jon Cunliffe. Our aim is to develop major, well-evidenced and compelling policy ideas that better enable the sector to deliver on its long-term ambitions. Those ambitions include much better environmental

performance and the huge effort needed to secure water supplies against climate change and to support economic growth and new homes. To accelerate progress, we must also work with government to improve controls over sewage treatment and wider pollutants across society, which also enter water used for drinking water.

It is hard to overstate the potential of this sector reform programme in England and Wales. Since privatisation in 1990, there has been no major change to water regulation. With public and political expectations running very high, Water UK is uniquely well placed to shape the future of water for decades to come.

The third is to bolster our organisation's capabilities. This is because the industry looks to Water UK to analyse some of the most profound public policy challenges facing the country. We need to develop and deliver policies in partnership with some of the largest companies in the country, as well as the most senior decision makers across government, regulators and non-governmental organisations.

Therefore, recognising the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, and our members' commitment to Water UK, we are expanding the organisation.

If the kind of questions we're grappling with sound interesting, and you are excited about making a real difference on a subject that touches the lives of everyone in the country, I would love you to apply.

David Henderson
CEO
Water UK



Head of Regulatory Policy

Role description

The water industry is at a historic turning point.

Following the Independent Water Commission's Report in 2025, and policy commitments from the UK and Welsh Governments in early 2026, Water UK is helping deliver a fundamental reset in how water companies are regulated across England and Wales.

We are looking for a **Head of Regulatory Policy** to lead Water UK's work on some of the most significant questions facing the future regulatory framework.

The role will lead policy development across areas such as:

- **consumer policy** – including reform of tariffs and charges, affordability measures and support for vulnerable customers, as well as thought leadership on the future of customer service regulation in the water sector;
- **corporate governance** – including executive remuneration, the evolution of consumer involvement and oversight structures, and potential reforms to how water companies are held to account and governed following the Water (Special Measures) Act 2025;
- the **strategic planning frameworks** that determine how long-term challenges are identified, prioritised and funded through investment plans; and
- **institutional policy issues** – relating to the design of the new integrated water regulator for England and the creation of a new Water Ombudsman.

You will develop credible, evidence-based policy positions that improve outcomes for customers while supporting effective long-term planning, investment and delivery. You will need to understand how individual regulatory policies fit together and help ensure that reforms produce a coherent overall framework rather than a collection of separate interventions.

A central part of the role will be engaging with government departments, regulators, consumer organisations, parliamentarians, think tanks and other stakeholders. You will build and own relationships, understand different perspectives and ensure that Water UK contributes constructively and influentially to the debate about the future of the sector.

Working closely with senior leaders across the water industry and externally, you will shape Water UK's response to sector reform and the development of the next regulatory settlement.

There is also an opportunity to contribute to and help lead the debate on reforming cross-sector approaches to economic regulation. Water UK sits at the very heart of what may be the biggest wave of regulatory reforms since the privatisation of utilities in the 1980s, so the successful candidate will have an impact across regulated UK utilities and infrastructure delivery.

Head of Regulatory Policy

Responsibilities

You will be joining a growing Regulation Team at the forefront of Water UK's work to shape the future of the sector.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Lead national policy development, conducting a mix of deep analysis, engagement and creative thinking to bring new, well-considered and evidenced ideas into the reform debate. This will include the development and communication of positions internally and externally, and providing advice to Water UK colleagues on regulatory policy issues.
- Develop Water UK's positions on relevant aspects of sector reform, PR29 and the longer-term regulatory framework, considering how consumer, environmental, economic and financial objectives should fit together.
- Build strong and constructive relationships with government, regulators, consumer bodies, think tanks and other external organisations, using those relationships to influence policy and identify areas of common ground.
- Represent Water UK in meetings, working groups, roundtables, conferences and public discussions, communicating complex positions clearly and credibly.
- Convene member companies to develop shared positions, resolve differences and turn broad principles into practical proposals – supporting or chairing committees and/or working groups.
- Produce high-quality policy papers, consultation responses and briefings for Water UK's senior leadership, Board, members and external audiences.
- Lead projects, commission external research where needed and manage the delivery of projects where required, such as the alternative dispute resolution service overseen by Water UK or projects that deliver our policy priorities, such as improved data sharing between water companies and government departments.
- Increasingly act as an advocate and ambassador for ideas, including speaking at conferences and (potentially) with media.
- Optionally manage one junior colleague.

Reporting to the Director of Regulation, the successful candidate will work closely with colleagues across the Regulation Team and wider organisation (including the Policy, Public Affairs and Communication teams).

Skills and experience

About you

We are looking for someone with strong relevant experience in a regulated utility company, a regulator, a consultancy, a government department – or somewhere completely different for the right candidate.

Successful candidates must have good judgment and the ability to provide advice at pace and with confidence across a range of complex regulatory issues.

You will likely have:

- a strong understanding of regulation and public policy;
- experience of analysing complex issues and turning that into logical, well-evidenced verbal and written advice;
- the ability and confidence to work with quantitative evidence, analyse data and draw out insights and implications for policy and decision making;
- experience of tackling significant policy or strategic challenges, risks or opportunities – for example by evaluating or informing the decisions of utility companies, regulators or government;
- the ability to engage credibly with senior external stakeholders, including regulators, investors, consumer bodies, campaign groups and technical advisers;
- excellent written and verbal communication skills, including through briefings for senior colleagues; and
- the ability to lead complex workstreams, manage competing priorities and maintain momentum in a fast-moving policy environment.

Experience of the water sector is not essential. However, you should be able to develop a detailed understanding of the sector and the regulatory, political and financial environment in which it operates.

We also place a high value on understanding global comparators and the international dimension to investment decision-making; experience of regulation or public policy outside of the UK, or a willingness to learn, may therefore also be relevant.

About Water UK

Water UK represents all 17 of the water companies across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, our associate members include new market entrants and water providers in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Water UK members range from government-owned and not-for-profit companies to some of the UK's largest enterprises listed on the FTSE100.

Our job is to act as a force for good by understanding the biggest challenges facing the sector and solving them. Our activity ranges from developing long-term plans to suggesting legislation to running national behaviour change campaigns.

Some recent areas of focus include:

- [Securing investment](#) for dealing with the challenges facing the water industry, considering how they could better deal with specific problems such as the [ageing state of water infrastructure](#), and intervening in [regulatory appeals](#).
- Producing comprehensive submissions on behalf of industry to influence [reviews of regulation](#), [independent commissions](#) and [parliamentary inquiries](#).
- Working with influential think tanks and other groups to develop and promote policy ideas, such as reforms to [household charges and social tariffs](#).
- The increasing pressures to public water supply and the environment from drought. We are responding with work on [leakage](#), [new reservoirs and water transfers](#), and a national campaign to [reduce wasted water](#).
- Achieving faster progress on reducing sewage spills at lower cost to the customer (for example, by leading the [work on options](#), setting out a [plan of action](#) and campaigning to [reduce sewer blockages](#)).
- Improving the broader condition of rivers and seas (for example, by reducing pollutants from sewage works or [supporting the creation of new wetlands](#) and other nature-based treatment).
- Responding to new threats to drinking water, like microplastics and [persistent toxic chemicals](#).
- Providing better support for [vulnerable customers](#) and those [struggling with bills](#).
- Promoting education, [information](#) and understanding and working very closely with the most senior leaders across the UK's water companies, non-governmental organisations, investors, regulators and government departments – as well as international bodies and companies abroad.



Working for Water UK

Water UK is a small, friendly and high-performing organisation.

Our work is typically fast-paced and offers engagement with and exposure to very senior decision makers. There is an opportunity to have a real and enduring impact for customers and the environment. The work is high-profile, varied and interesting.

- A competitive salary
- A discretionary bonus
- Generous pension contributions
- Private medical coverage for you, a spouse and any children. This includes higher-tier protections for different conditions, 24/7 private GP coverage and reduced gym costs
- Private dental coverage for you
- 27 working days' holiday, with the option to 'buy' more annual leave in a tax beneficial way
- Other benefits

We are based in central London, close to St James's Park. All roles are offered on a hybrid basis with an expectation of 3 to 4 days a week in the office.

recruitment@water.org.uk

