



Campaigning for Warm Homes

JOB DETAILS

POLICY & CAMPAIGNS OFFICER NI

BACKGROUND TO NEA

Policy Context

Ending Fuel Poverty: A Strategy for Northern Ireland was developed and launched by the Department for Social Development (DSD) in Nov 2004. (http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/ending_fuel_poverty_-_a_strategy_for_ni.pdf). It set targets, subject to the availability of resources to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010, and in non-vulnerable households by 2016. Unlike the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy these targets were subject to available resources. The strategy also established an inter departmental group to co-ordinate Government efforts across all departments and a Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (FPAG) involving health, fuel suppliers and older people's representatives to take a strategic view of policies and initiatives required to eradicate fuel poverty. The FPAG also has oversight of the Strategy, assessing effectiveness and the resources required.

This is a considerable challenge as Northern Ireland has the highest rate of fuel poverty in the UK with approximately one third of households needing to spend more than 10% of their income to maintain adequate temperatures in their homes.

NEA is the national energy efficiency charity that campaigns for affordable warmth and improved energy efficiency in the homes of vulnerable people.

Around 5.4 million of the poorest households in the United Kingdom cannot afford to heat their homes to the standard required for health and comfort. They have to choose between the miseries of living in a cold, damp home, the anxiety of getting into debt with their fuel suppliers or economising on other essentials such as food and clothing.

NEA aims to alleviate fuel poverty and help those who are poor or vulnerable achieve affordable warmth through:

- research and analysis into the causes and extent of fuel poverty and the development of policies which will address the problem;
- lobbying on the need for policies to alleviate fuel poverty in the UK to enable society's most vulnerable members to have warmer homes at a price they can afford;

- initiating and managing practical energy efficiency projects to demonstrate innovative ways of tackling fuel poverty and bringing the wider benefits of energy efficiency to local communities;
- delivering and developing domestic energy efficiency advice training to improve standards of practical work and the quality of energy advice.

To achieve these aims NEA works in partnership with Westminster, devolved Governments and authorities; with fuel utilities and housing providers; with health agencies; and with consumer groups and voluntary community organisations.

NEA has its headquarters in Newcastle upon Tyne and has separate offices in Belfast, working throughout Northern Ireland, and also in Wales. NEA works closely with its sister organisation, Energy Action Scotland, on tackling fuel poverty in Scotland.

Full details of NEA's work are available on the web site www.nea.org.uk, together with our subsidiary company Warm Zones c.i.c. www.warmzones.co.uk.

NEA is a Registered Charity – No. 290511.

STAFFING

At the present time NEA has five posts in Northern Ireland: the Director, the Development Co-ordinator, the Project Coordinator, the Community Project Officer, the Administration Assistant, and this post, the Policy & Campaigns Officer.

In addition, specialist support is provided by staff from NEA's Head Office in Newcastle upon Tyne. A full induction to the work of NEA and its staff will be provided for the successful candidate.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The salary is **£22001 - £26016 (Equivalent to NJC Scale 6-S01)**

(This is technically Pay Award pending from April 2009 onwards)

- Hours of work:** 37 hours per week, Monday to Friday on a flexi-time basis. Applicants must be willing to work away from home as required. In the event of work undertaken on evenings or weekends, and which may involve travel away from the office, time off in lieu of payment is given.
- Holidays:** 25 days, plus 3 additional days in the Christmas/New Year period, plus all public holidays.
- Pensions & other benefits:** NEA operates a non-contributory pension scheme, which, in addition to basic salary, creates a personal pension plan contribution of 14½% of salary. NEA also operates a death-in-service benefit scheme and a long-term sickness benefit scheme.
- Probationary Period:** All new NEA staff undergo a minimum six month probationary period.
- Relocation:** NEA is prepared to assist with inevitable costs, e.g. removal expenses, extra travel, solicitors, estate agency fees, etc. We will pay up to £500 for such costs, subject to production of receipts and evidence (such as quotations) that the sums claims are reasonable for the nature of the expense. This tax free payment will be viewed as a loan and will be repayable in the event that you elect to leave NEA in under 12 month's time.
- Office:** The offices for NEA Northern Ireland are on the third floor of a building in central Belfast. This building does not have a lift.
- NEA has a firm "No Smoking" policy.**
- Transport:** Whilst NEA's policy is to encourage the use of public transport wherever possible, there is recognition that this may not always be possible, particularly in rural areas. A mileage rate at the approved HMRC rate will be paid for agreed private car use.

Full terms and conditions will be made available to the successful applicant.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications should be submitted on an NEA NI application form (attached) and be accompanied by a letter outlining why the applicant is interested in the post, their qualifications and experience, which they feel are appropriate and any other relevant information.

Candidates are required specifically to address how they meet each of the essential and desirable requirements outlined in the job specification, providing examples and evidence where possible.

Closing date for all applications is **15 May, 2009 by 4.30pm. Electronic applications will be accepted** if sent to brenda.kerr@nea.org.uk by **4.30pm** but must be supplemented by a signed hard copy if called for interview.

Applications by CV will not be accepted as a substitute for the normal form.

Applications will not be acknowledged unless applicants enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Send postal applications to:

Mrs Brenda Kerr
National Energy Action
64-66 Upper Church Lane
Belfast
BT1 4QL

Please mark them as private and confidential and for the attention of Mrs Brenda Kerr (Ref Policy & Campaigns Officer).

NEA aims to be an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from all people who have the necessary skills and experience for the post.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be held on Wednesday, 27 May, 2009 and Thursday, 28 May, 2009.

If you would like an informal discussion about the post, please call Pat Austin (Director NEA NI) on 028 9023 9909.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Policy & Campaigns Officer (Belfast)

Responsible to: Director Northern Ireland

Responsibilities

1. Collating and disseminating statistical data and other material relevant to NEA's interests in Northern Ireland, both internally and externally, with particular reference to demographic information about poverty, consumer rights, welfare benefits, housing and energy efficiency.
2. Researching and preparing reports on energy consumer issues and responding to consultation documents issued by national and regional administrations, regulatory and consumer bodies, in conjunction with NEA's other Policy Staff in Head Office, and reflecting the unique circumstances of the Northern Ireland legislative setting and the All-Ireland Energy market.
3. Supporting the activities of liaison groups formed in the Stormont Assembly for the furtherance of fuel poverty related matters.
4. Monitoring proceedings in the NI Assembly, Westminster and European Parliament and producing briefings on current relevant policies for internal and external audiences, including MPs, MEPs, MLAs, Peers and their researchers,
5. Maintaining records of all local elected politicians and building up profiles of representatives to the administration, and other representative bodies.
6. Working with the NI Energy suppliers, Housing providers and Insulation installers in Northern Ireland to collect data on, and advising on the most appropriate application of energy efficiency measures and social offerings for low-income households.
7. Assist in the running of awareness raising events on Fuel Poverty issues.
8. Draft media releases on Fuel poverty issues in Northern Ireland, and assist the Director where needed in media interviews and monitor coverage.
9. Representing NEA at relevant coalition meetings and identifying issues and opportunities to develop partnerships with relevant consumer and campaigning bodies.
10. Providing advice and information as required by other members of NEA staff, trustees, members of the NI advisory group and strategic partners.
11. Researching, writing, commissioning and editing articles for NEA publications.
12. Other responsibilities as may be agreed from time to time.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Requirements

1. Minimum two years' relevant experience within a third sector organisation, NGO, charity, lobby group, public affairs department, politician's office or within a consumer body.
2. Research and information retrieval skills.
3. Excellent written and oral communication skills.
4. Experience of writing policy briefings and/or Press releases.
5. Thorough understanding of parliamentary procedures appropriate to the Northern Ireland Assembly.
6. Educated to degree level or relevant experience.

Desirable requirements

1. Knowledge of energy consumer and sustainable energy consumption issues.
2. Knowledge of the circumstances of the All-Ireland Energy market from both UK and Ireland perspectives.
3. Experience with PR work, Broadcast Media campaigns and events.
4. Commitment to NEA's work on the eradication of fuel poverty and promotion of sustainable energy.
5. Experience of dealing with the press and broadcast media.
6. Experience of running successful campaigns/public affairs programmes.
7. IT Office systems literate.