

Director, UK Government

UKG26



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A note from the Institute's CEO

I am delighted that you are interested in applying to join us here at the Institute for Government.

As part of our team, you would have the opportunity to make a real impact in the world of government and politics, working in a fun, stimulating and challenging environment at the heart of Westminster. The Institute is always busy and our work is often fast-paced, and reactive to the events in government-as well as setting a proactive agenda on the things we most care about. We are proud to call as colleagues some of the most insightful, energetic and connected people involved in thinking about government across the UK.

Wellbeing is very important at the IfG and we have a friendly, supportive workplace culture. The IfG is committed to developing and maintaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive working environment – we recognise the benefit that having a team with a broad range of backgrounds and experience brings to our work.

I hope you'll consider applying to join our team.

Dr Hannah White OBE, CEO of the Institute for Government



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About the Institute for Government

Who we are

The Institute for Government is the UK's leading independent think tank making government work well for the people of the UK.

We work across the political spectrum and the public sector throughout the UK, pursuing changes which will improve the way government works. We provide expertise and fresh, evidence-based thinking which we share through our convening, professional development and research outputs.

How government works is one of the most important factors driving a country's social and economic performance and the health of its democracy. Our work programme focuses on the most important ways in which UK government can do better or currently falls short. We work to ensure that UK government holds power and exercises accountability at the right level, through legitimate and resilient institutions with high-quality leadership which is equipped to respond well to shocks and trends, including rapid technological change.





What we do

Our mission is to make government work well for the people of the UK through our rigorous research, expert analysis, active convening, professional support and fresh thinking.

We do this by:

- Conducting rigorous, independent research into the most important problems facing UK government, undertaking expert analysis of the evidence, and making bold and compelling recommendations for change.
- Convening enlightening conversations among people from across and beyond UK government – helping them think differently about how government can be better.
- Supporting people working in and with UK government to learn and develop professionally in order to play their roles more effectively.



Our work programme

During the first half of 2026, the Institute undertook a major review of its strategy. The creation of this role is one of the outcomes of this review. The review identified four priorities for our work over the next five years, which all our teams will work to deliver.

1. Effective power and accountability

Because the UK is too centralised, and responsibilities and accountabilities at different levels are often overlapping or unclear, we will prioritise work on where power is held and how accountability operates to make government work well. Our two focus areas for the first part of the strategy period will be:

- Mayoral government that works well
- A positive future for local government

2. Legitimate, resilient institutions

There is an important role for the Institute to play in examining the institutions that underpin government in the UK – from our legislatures to the civil service, to public services, asking whether they are structured and equipped to meet the challenges of today and the future. Our two focus areas for the first part of the strategy period will be:

- Institutions equipped for multi-party politics
- A public sector resilient to trends and shocks

3. High quality leadership

It is increasingly clear that many of the problems of UK government originate in, or are exacerbated by, poor leadership, and this is undermining public confidence in the ability of government to deliver. Our two focus areas for the first part of the strategy period will be:

- A pipeline of high-performance leaders
- Tackling falling trust in government leadership

4. Responding well to technological change

Understanding and responding to the risks and opportunities of rapid technological change –including but not limited to the development of AI, changes to the media ecosystem and the development of new markets and currencies – is an increasingly significant challenge for governments across world. Our two focus areas for the first part of the strategy period will be:

- Government's business model adapted to AI
- Governing well in a fragmented information ecosystem

About this role

As a result of our strategy review we have decided to make changes to the Institute's research team, consolidating some parts of our organisation. The Institute will, in future, have three Directors leading three large research teams – UK Government (UKG); Devolved and Local Government; and Public Services.

This UKG role is a rare and exciting opportunity to become a core member of the Institute for Government's senior team, building our new UK government team and leading a major part of our work programme. The new UKG team will focus its work on the ecosystem of central government and parliament –making its institutions, governance and people work better.

We welcome applications from experienced candidates of the highest quality.

Leading the work of the UK government team on all aspects of central UK government and parliament, you will work to our Executive Director for Research, and closely alongside our Executive Director for Impact, our Directors for Public Services and for Devolved and Local Government and colleagues across the Institute. A core aspect of the role will be building and overseeing multi-functional teams of colleagues from across the Institute for projects that advance our new strategic priorities for government in the UK, as above.

The new Director, UK Government will play a highly significant role in the new senior team, bringing their expertise and experience to bear on strategic decisions about the Institute's priorities and work programme. They will be a prominent external face of the Institute and their visible leadership of a team of committed and high-performing staff will be crucial in determining our success and impact over the forthcoming strategy period.

We are creating this role at a moment of great importance for government in the UK and for the Institute. Identifying the right candidate will be vital to our success in delivering our exciting new strategy. This strategy will make us bolder, more ambitious and more focused on what we want to change about how UK government works.

What you will do

The core responsibilities of the role include:

- As a core member of the senior team, working together with the executive team and other directors to shape the Institute's strategic priorities, and design and deliver a work programme that will enable the IfG to pursue those priorities across the government ecosystem.
- Building and leading our new UK Government team. This new team will focus its work on the ecosystem of central government and parliament – making its institutions, governance and people work better. You will lead a programme of high-impact work, using your knowledge and experience of government and wide and deep networks to deliver impact through research projects, convening key stakeholders, driving innovation and enhancing capability.
- Initiating, overseeing and contributing to projects, consistently demonstrating a sharp understanding of where the Institute adds value which aligns with our corporate mission. Ensuring projects are completed in a timely fashion – demonstrating the flexibility and willingness to seize opportunities for impact.
- Using qualitative and quantitative evidence to make an argument, and to maintaining a high standard of intellectual rigour and clarity. Personally, and by leading the team, producing clear, jargon-free and compelling products that maintain the Institute's reputation for high-quality research, non-partisan stance and independent approach.
- Initiating and organising aspects of our work beyond research projects. This includes convening the right people to develop new insights about good government and to increase our impact. A key part of the role is communicating with key audiences in person through public events and podcasts, as well as our annual party conference programme.
- Building your relationships and network to support the impact of the IfG across our strategic priorities. Proactively working to gain insider access and influence to pursue IfG priorities while maintaining independence and providing critical analysis.
- Being a prominent public face of the Institute, putting our recommendations credibly and persuasively orally and in writing to a wide range of audiences inside and outside government, as well as in broadcast, press, online and social media, focusing on achieving change and impact.

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- Maintaining a clear sense of direction and expectation of high-quality work in the UK government team. Managing and motivating a team of talented and committed staff; getting the most out of them and prioritising their personal development.
 - As a core member of the senior team, making a strong contribution to the leadership and management of the whole Institute, modelling behaviours that align with our corporate mission and taking responsibility for maintaining a positive culture of excellence, learning and inclusion.
 - Building partnerships for impact and funding across the Institute's programme.



What we are looking for

Essential skills and experience

We are looking for a collaborative team player, who is motivated by the Institute's mission and by driving their personal and team contribution to the Institute's strategic priorities, which they will play a key role in shaping.

We wish to appoint an inspirational leader with who can demonstrate credibility and judgment. You should be an experienced and confident manager, with a track record of delivering complex projects and successful outcomes through others.

You will be able to show personal intellectual leadership through your own work, writing and other public or private contributions to the effectiveness of government. You will be a compelling communicator, able to articulate complex ideas simply to a wide range of audiences – both orally and in writing.

We expect the successful candidate to have experience working in and around UK government, and a track record of producing high quality and influential work, with evidence of how this led to change happening in practice.

Desirable

Ideally you will be able to demonstrate successful experience of partnership and fundraising work, and at a minimum the willingness to build skills in this area.

You do not need to have worked in research, but will need to demonstrate awareness and ability of research principles and how to apply them in the context of the IfG's work programme.

Information for applicants

Employer

Institute for Government

Location

2 Carlton Gardens, SW1Y 5AA

Who can apply

Anyone who can demonstrate they have the relevant skills and experience.

The IfG will not provide visa sponsorship for new staff. Applicants should either:

- have an entitlement to work in the UK without a visa, or
- hold a relevant visa allowing them to work in the UK without employer sponsorship.

Start date

As soon as notice periods allow.

Terms

The successful candidate will join on a permanent contract subject to a three-month probationary period.

Salary

£100,000–110,000 per annum, depending on skills and experience.

Working hours

The usual working hours of the IfG are a five-day week of 37.5 hours (09:00–17:30 with a one-hour lunch break) but you will, as the occasion requires, work outside the standard hours.

Hybrid working

Full-time staff are expected to work from the IfG's offices in London for at least three days a week, including Mondays, with the option to work remotely for up to two days a week.

Benefits

Contractual

- 30 days of annual leave in addition to eight days of bank and public holidays for full-time staff.
- The IfG has a pension scheme which you will be auto-enrolled into in your third month of employment. The contribution is a minimum of 5% from the employee and a fixed 10% contribution from the employer.
- Death in service life assurance of 4 x salary is given to all staff.
- 20 days sick pay in the first year and thereafter 30 days per rolling 12-month period.

Non-contractual

- Staff may take two weeks each year when the requirement to work from the office in London does not apply.
- Lunch is provided when working in the office.
- Employee Assistance Programme and online 24-7 GP is available.
- Six months maternity leave at full pay.
- Six weeks paternity leave at full pay.
- Shared parental leave –some paid, subject to circumstances.
- Cycle to work scheme.

Equal opportunities

All job applicants and employees will receive equal treatment regardless of sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership, gender reassignment, age, disability, or religious beliefs.

The IfG collects equal opportunities monitoring information with applications. This information is anonymised and is not given to those involved in the recruitment process. It is used only for monitoring purposes and to help us better understand how we, as an employer, can ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Privacy policy

When you apply for a job with the IfG, we collect and process information (personal data) about you according to data protection law. You can find full details of our privacy policy on our website: www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/privacy-policy.

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter to recruitment@instituteforgovernment.org.uk.

The covering letter should outline, in no more than 2,000 words, your view of the contribution that the Institute can and should make over the next three years to UK government working well for the people of the UK, and the role you personally would play in achieving that mission.

The Institute has a policy which **covers the use of AI**. We would ask candidates to adhere to that policy in making their application. Use in background research is acceptable, but we would like the covering letter to be entirely your own work.

Closing date

Applications will close at 10am on Monday 27 July 2026.

Interview stage

We expect to hold the first interviews during the week commencing 27 July 2026.

Second interviews will take place in early-mid August as soon as possible after the first round concludes.

The interviews will take place at our office in Carlton Gardens. We will reimburse travel expenses for candidates in the UK but travelling from outside London.

Any questions?

If you would like further information about this recruitment round, then please contact us at recruitment@instituteforgovernment.org.uk.

We send out regular emails, including a weekly newsletter, about our publications and events. To receive these emails, you can subscribe on our website: www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/newsletter.



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