

Ussel

Chief Executive Officer

Ref: CEO/03/2025

Closing date:

Friday 28th March 2025 at 12 noon.

(Interviews will take place 15th & 17th April 2025)

WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR, WILLIAM LEATHEN

I am delighted that you are considering applying for the post of Chief Executive of Ulster Supported Employment Limited (Usel). We believe that this post provides a unique opportunity to help change the lives of thousands of local people with disabilities or health conditions by providing them with onsite employment or helping them to move closer to, find, sustain and progress into employment.

Founded in 1962, as an Arm's Length Body of the Department for Communities, Usel has had a profound impact on the lives of many across Northern Ireland society. We recently celebrated our 60th anniversary as Usel, and the 150th anniversary since the establishment of The Belfast Association for the Employment of the Industrious Blind.

We annually support thousands of customers with a range of disabilities and health conditions across Northern Ireland to participate in the labour market, working with an extensive and diverse group of partners across the Public, Private and Third sector to deliver quality employment services.

We now wish to appoint a Chief Executive who will help shape our future and ensure that we continue to make a positive impact on people, families and communities. We believe that the role of Chief Executive of Usel is one of the most challenging but rewarding roles in Northern Ireland.

Our next Chief Executive will be an exceptional strategic leader, with a keen focus on high levels of performance, delivering quality public services, and ensuring effective governance. They will be committed to our people and will champion our values.

As Usel continues to focus efforts on growing, the business' ability to network and partner effectively is a critical skill. The need to identify strategic partners and partners who have a desire to collaborate is a key business driver. Usel's ability to develop sustainable business relationships with partners across Northern Ireland, outside NI and across the main sectors in which the Company operates (private, public, voluntary and community sectors), is a key business activity.

This information pack and the associated links will give you an insight into the role and the organisation. If this opportunity excites you, and you believe you can help the Usel to achieve its vision, we look forward to receiving your application.

William Leathem
Chair of the Board



KEY INFORMATION

The online application form and job information documents can be accessed through the GetGot Portal on Usel's website: <https://usel.getgotjobs.co.uk/>

Completed applications must be submitted *online through <https://usel.getgotjobs.co.uk/> no later than 12 noon on **Friday 28th March 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted. It is up to candidates to ensure that their completed application has been received by the closing time and date. If you have any queries about technical aspects of the application form, please contact Louise Beagan on 028 90356600 or lbeagan@usel.co.uk

Candidates who require an alternative copy application form should request this directly from HR (see details below) and it must be received by Tuesday 18th March 2025 no later than **4pm**.

The points of contact regarding this vacancy are:

Louise Beagan (HR Manager)
Email – lbeagan@usel.co.uk
Phone – 02890 356600

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **Annual Report** – we report and comment on our performance during each financial year in our Annual Report, which are available for 2022/2023.
- **Corporate and Business Plan** - 5-year strategic plan (2022-2027) articulates our vision, priorities and outcomes and includes ways that we will measure success in delivering our four outcomes. USEL has developed a road map for the strategy which brings together the purpose, values and behaviours and themes into defined objectives to be achieved over the life of the plan. Usel continues to embed the core methodology across the organisation with business and team performance managed via a range of key performance indicators. The Plan is supported by one year business plans.

THE ORGANISATION

Established in 1962 to fulfil an act of Parliament to promote paid employment for disabled people, Ulster Supported Employment Limited (Usel) is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and operates under the direction of the Department for Communities (DfC), and on a day-to-day basis Work and Wellbeing Division. The company is a private, not for profit Company, limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital, domiciled in Northern Ireland.

The Company is a registered charity under Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 with effect from 20 March 1996.

Usel is Northern Ireland's largest supporter of people with disabilities or health conditions into employment. We change the lives of thousands of local people with disabilities or health conditions by providing them with onsite employment or helping them find a lasting career with external employers.

The organisation must ensure that it generates revenue and margin to provide cash flow and working capital for its future development and sustainability. That means exposure to the normal commerciality of doing business in the open market: Prospecting for customers and clients, bidding for service contracts and operating in a manner that allows Usel to make and sell products at a commercial rate.

Usel exists solely to provide employment to people with disabilities and health related conditions and it is in pursuit of that mission that it operates Social Enterprise business models.

CULTURE AND VALUES

Our Values
We Champion Ability
We Love What We Do
We Grow Together
We Make a Difference



Usel.
Championing Ability.



USEL - WHAT WE DO

Corporate Services Division

The Corporate Services Division (including admin and management staff) comprised of 26 staff on 1 April 2024 and delivers a range of support functions:

- Finance
- HR
- ICT & Compliance

Manufacturing and Recycling Division

This division comprised of 52 staff on 1st April 2024 who deliver in range of manufacturing, recycling operations and fulfilment works. This division operates a supported employment model and is currently supported with a grant in aid from our sponsor department.

The Manufacturing Branch of the division comprised of 15 staff on 1st April 2024 areas of activity within manufacturing focus on:

- Industrial Sewing
- Fulfilment works.

The Circular Economy Branch of the Division comprised of 37 staff on 1st April 2024 the Circular Economy division delivers in key areas:

- Mattress recycling
- Confidential paper shredding
- Paper recycling
- Contract bailing services.
- Furniture recycling
- Sub Assembly of bus signs

Employment Services Division

This division comprised of 96 staff on 1st April 2024 who deliver across a range of pre-employment, employment support and vocational training programmes and hospitality.

The Employment Support branch will comprise of 48 staff on 1st April 2024 delivering the following programmes:

- Employment Support Scheme
- Workable NI
- Empower (UKSPF)
- Training for Success & Apprenticeships NI (Specialist Disability Support)
- Skills for Life and Work (SFLW)

The total number of individuals with a disability or health condition support per year is more than 1,100.

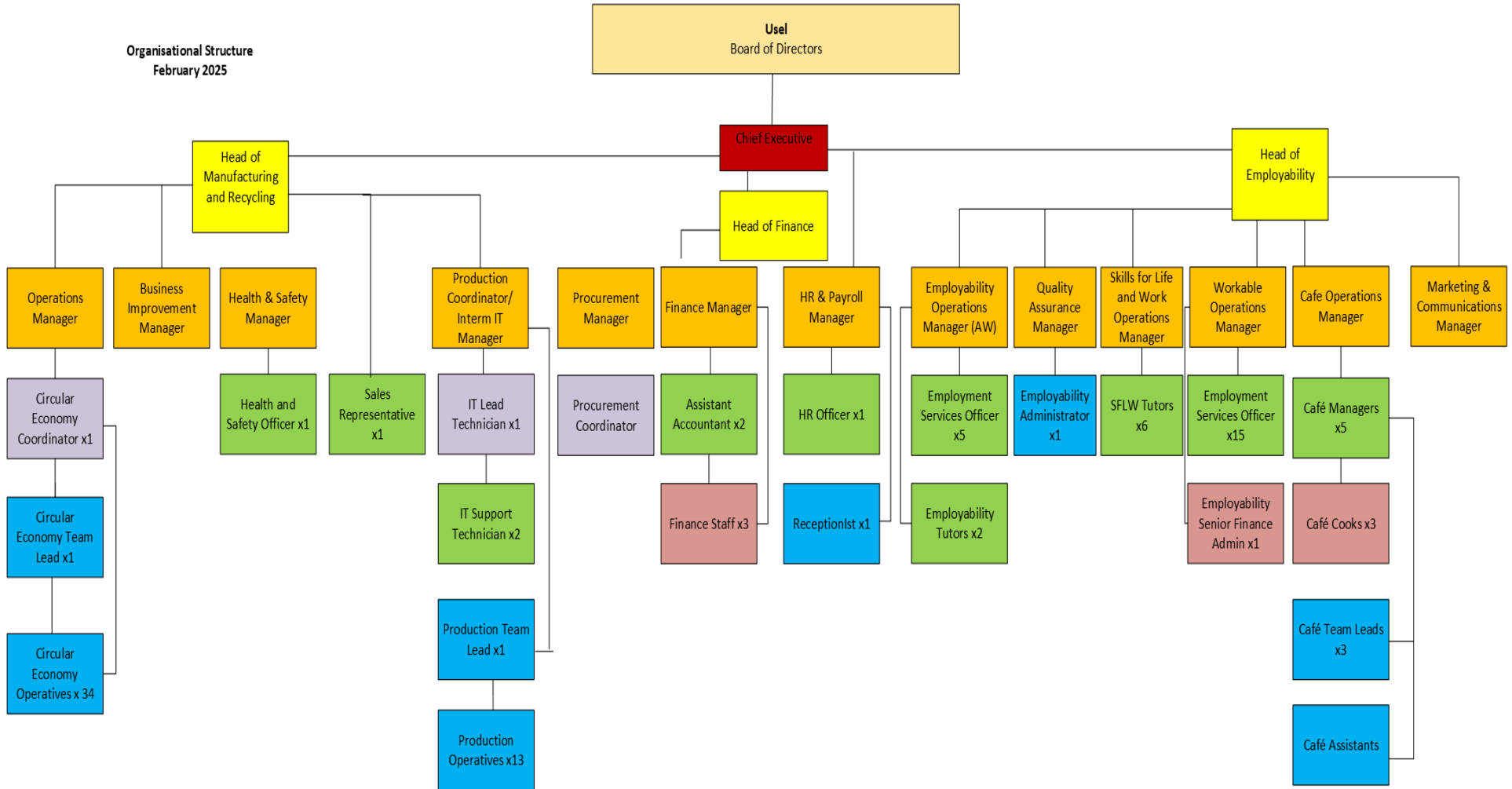
The hospitality branch comprised of 48 staff on 1st April 2024, the majority of staff is part-time casual to work through the busy Spring/Summer season. We operate an “Ability” coffee shop / café in the following venues:

- The Foundry, Shankill Road, Belfast.
- The Stables, Lady Dixon Park.
- Belfast Zoo (contract term expired December 2024 not renewed)



ORGANISATION CHART

Organisational Structure
February 2025



JOB DESCRIPTION

- Job Title:** Chief Executive Officer
- Salary:** NICS Grade 5 points 1-5: £79,237 to £85,685 per annum (appointee will normally start at bottom of the scale, dependent on experience).
- Reports to:** Board of Ulster Supported Employment Limited and DfC.
- Main Purpose:** The post holder is responsible to an independent Board for ensuring effective strategic planning, leadership, performance, partnership working, resource management and good governance in line with strategic functions, Ministerial targets, Government policy, DfC policies and priorities and Board Objectives.
- As the designated Accounting Officer, the post holder is responsible, through the Accounting Officer in DfC, to the NI Assembly. The Chief Executive provides assurance to the Board and DfC regarding systems of internal control and must promote and be a model for ethical behaviours and our core values.
- Duration:** Permanent

Applicants must apply through Usel's website: <https://Usel.getgotjobs.co.uk/>

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CEO) ROLE

The primary responsibility of the CEO is to support the Board in its duty to ensure that Usel is an efficient, effective and accountable organisation.

The CEO will have day-to-day responsibility for the company and will be the main point of contact between Usel and the Department on day-to-day matters.

The post holder will:

- Advise the Board on the discharge of its responsibilities and statutory duties as set out in Usel's Management Statement and in any other relevant instructions and guidance that may be issued by Sponsor Department, the Department of Finance or the Northern Ireland Executive, identifying and progressing matters requiring decisions, scrutiny, or action.
- Ensure, as Usel's Accounting Officer, delivery of the highest standards of financial probity, governance, and accountability on behalf of Usel and the Permanent Secretary, reporting against such standards as required to the sponsor Department.
- Support the Board, and lead the staff, in the development of its vision, strategies, policies and forward planning process.
- Undertake corporate and operational planning.
- Ensure that effective corporate governance and business arrangements operate in Usel, regularly reviewing systems to deliver continuous improvement; and
- Represent Usel with external stakeholders.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Partnership Working

1. To provide the required leadership, vision and strategic direction to ensure that Usel delivers against its statutory functions, Government priorities, Ministerial targets, DfC priorities and Board objectives and that the Usel continues to help change the lives of thousands of local people with disabilities or health conditions in NI.
2. To assist the Board in developing and to ensure achievement of Usel's strategic objectives and associated business plans, in partnership with key stakeholders and ensure the Board are kept informed of any changes to the regulatory or policy environment which may require changes to policy or procedures within Usel.
3. To represent Usel effectively, working collaboratively with strategic partners and stakeholders, such as DfC and other government departments, local councils, other ALB's and public bodies, 3rd sector organisations, private organisations, customer networks to ensure that Usel fulfils its role as the main employer of disabled people in Northern Ireland.
4. To ensure the development of corporate strategy and the annual business planning process to enable the delivery of Usel's vision, considering the operating environment and examples of good practice and ensuring alignment to key priorities such as the Programme for Government and DfC's strategic and business plan.
5. To ensure that innovative approaches to service delivery are researched, developed and implemented in order to continue to meet Usel's objectives and to lead change and improvement programmes as appropriate using the principles of good programme and project management.
6. To maximise Usel's contribution to improve the overall wellbeing of the people with disabilities and health conditions in Northern Ireland, collaborating with others as appropriate, for example, to deliver collaborative solutions, improved social and economic outcomes.
7. To lead and develop a high performing and cohesive Senior Leadership Team to deliver against corporate objectives, protect and enhance Usel's reputation and maintain and build public confidence.
8. To be a role model for Usel's Core Values and the associated behavioural expectations required to ensure high levels of performance, in a conducive working environment, ensuring effective communication with employees, Trade Unions and other key internal and external stakeholders.

Performance and Resource Management

9. Closely monitor operational performance to ensure that Usel is appropriately structured and resourced to enable the effective and efficient delivery of corporate objectives and that Usel delivers a value for money and high-quality public services to those with disabilities and health conditions and stakeholders.
10. Ensure robust financial management within Usel to ensure that all public funds made available to USEL are used for the purpose intended by the Assembly, and that such monies together with Usel's assets, equipment and staff, are used economically, efficiently and effectively.
11. Ensure excellence and value for money in the procurement and delivery of contracted services in line with DoF policies and procedures.
12. Identify, develop and secure new business opportunities in line with strategic objectives, business plans and budgetary parameters which support organisational growth and sustainability.
13. Ensure the development and provision of appropriate performance metrics to enable the effective management of organisational performance and effective scrutiny and decision making by senior management, the Usel Board and DfC.
14. Ensure the continued development of a culture of high performance, customer orientation and continuous improvement across the organisation.
15. Ensure the development and implementation of appropriate policies and working practices that support the delivery of Usel's corporate objectives.
16. Champion a culture of engagement, equality of opportunity, learning and development, health and safety and ensure effective employee relations are maintained in Usel.

Corporate Governance and Accounting Officer

17. Ensure that a robust Corporate Governance framework is in place to reflect the changing needs of the organisation and that it is implemented in-line with Usel's responsibilities as a Non-Departmental Public Body of DfC.
18. Ensure that Usel has robust systems of internal controls, that these are fully complied with, and that Usel appropriately identifies and manages risk.
19. Ensure that Usel aligns to the requirements of the NI Charities Commission.
20. Ensure the continued financial stability and viability for the organisation and ensure that all financial covenants are met.



Usel.
Championing Ability.

21. Ensure that Usel complies with all relevant legislation and Departmental requirements e.g., MPMNI, Public sector procurement rules, Section 75 NI Act 1998, Health and Safety at Work 1978 (as amended).
22. As Usel's Accounting Officer, ensure that Usel activities achieve high and reliable standards of regularity and propriety and that Usel always acts in the public interest with due regard for probity and value for money.
23. Ensure and role model the highest standards of probity and good conduct in Usel and that the associated behaviours expected with good governance are understood by all employees.
24. Fulfil other specific duties associated with the role of Accounting Officer such as personally signing and providing assurance on organisational accounts, the annual report and governance statements.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria
<p>Essential</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstratable experience at senior management* level in a large, complex, multi-professional, demanding and performance orientated environment, as an integral member of the organisation's senior management team. 2. Demonstratable senior management experience of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategic Leadership and planning - Successfully developing and delivering against strategic plans and corporate objectives, aligned to Government Policy, in a challenging financial context and aligning to best practice in Public Governance and Accountability. b) Governance and Accountability: Analysing and interpreting complex corporate problems and information, making sound judgements, advising and influencing a Board (or Governing Body level) whilst managing risk and ensuring good governance. c) People and Resources: Effectively engaging and motivating teams through an inclusive and encouraging working culture, utilising robust reporting and monitoring tools, and delivering against corporate objectives, within challenging budgets. d) Partnerships: Working in partnership with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders to achieve successful outcomes and meet corporate objectives, whilst developing productive working relationships. e) Managing Change: Leading corporate change programmes, demonstrating sustainable performance improvements and high-quality services, whilst maintaining and enhancing corporate governance, working relationships and employee morale. f) Commercial Acumen - Delivering commercial success through the ability to foster an agile and commercially viable organisation while meeting the highest standards of governance and public accountability. 3. Can demonstrate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Experience of effectively working with, advising and influencing the Board (or Governing Body level) on complex delivery matters. b) A comprehensive understanding or previous experience of the role of Accounting Officer. c) Previous experience in budget creation, managing an annual budget and practical experience of statutory reporting of financial performance. d) The required behaviours to effectively fulfil the role of Accounting Officer for USEL.



4. Have access to a form of transport which enables them to fulfil the full requirements of the post. (if the effects of a disability preclude an individual from holding a driving licence, then the candidate should indicate how they could meet the mobility requirements for the post).

Desirable

1. Possess a degree or equivalent level qualification.
2. Can demonstrate a deep understanding of disability, and its context within the Northern Ireland Labour Market.
3. Have at least 2 years senior management level experience in the Public Sector, Local Government or voluntary and Community Sector.

*Senior management is defined as experience at Director, Head of Service or Chief Executive level in an organisation with a minimum of 50 staff and a budget of at least £3m.

SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Conditions of service are contained within Usel's Policies and Procedures. This summary is an indication of the conditions of appointment and is not intended to be exhaustive. Further information is available at a link below

Salary

The current salary offered will be within the scale £79,237 to £85,685 per annum (appointee will normally start at bottom of the scale, dependent on experience).

Working Week

The appointee will normally work a 35 hours per week, typical working week: 8.15am-4.30pm Mon-Thurs, 8.15am-12.15pm Friday. However, the working week may be variable and will compromise the hours necessary to fulfil the obligations of the post.

Holiday entitlement

You will be entitled to 27 days annual leave increasing to 30 days with service along with 12 days bank holidays per annum.

Location

Base site will be Usel Head Office (182-188 Cambrai Street, Belfast, BT13 3JH). The post holder will be expected to work throughout Northern Ireland as required. The post may entail some travel throughout Ireland and internationally. The successful applicant will require access to an acceptable form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full. The Usel Board may also consider hybrid working were work commitments will facilitate.

Other benefits of working for Usel

As a staff member of Usel you will also benefit from:

- Free onsite car parking
- Fully accessible workplace for all
- Inspire Workplace Counselling Service
- Health & Wellbeing initiatives
- Flexible working opportunities
- Life Assurance
- Staff discount in Ability Cafes

Pension

You will be entitled to join Usel's defined Contribution Scheme operated by NOW Pension. The employer contribution is currently 4% and as an employee you will pay a rate of 4%. This is a contributory scheme with the contribution rate linked to salary.

Bankruptcy/disqualification

The successful candidate will be designated as the Accounting Officer for Usel. Consequently, any issues of bankruptcy, disqualification etc. will prevent a candidate from being considered suitable for appointment as Chief Executive/Accounting Officer.

Probation

Appointment is subject to completion of a 6-month satisfactory probationary period.

Notice Requirements

Subject to any provisions contained in legislation, the appointment may be terminated by 3 months' notice given by either party.

Canvassing

Canvassing, in any form, oral or written direct or indirect will lead to discrimination.

Pre-Employment Checks

The successful candidate will be offered employment subject to satisfactory completion of all the pre-employment requirements detailed on page 17, Stage 4.

SELECTION PROCESS - the details of the Selection Process are outlined below.

Stage 1 – Application Form & Shortlisting

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **Friday 28th March at 12 noon**. Please note that applications will not be accepted after the closing date or time. It is up to each candidate to ensure that his/her application has been completed by the closing time stated. Candidates who require an alternative copy application form should request this directly from Usel.



Stage 2 – Short listing

Shortlisting of applications will be completed against the criteria set and only those who meet the criteria will be invited to the next stage – Interview.



Stage 3 – Interview

There is a minimum standard at interview to be obtained. Please note the Panel reserves the right to hold additional interviews if required. The panel reserve the right to conduct stage 2 and 3 at the same time or merge these stages depending upon candidate numbers. The Interview will mainly consist of competency-based questions where the candidate will be expected to meet the experience and skills required for the position. A presentation may also be required which will be communicated on invite to interview. First stage interviews will take place on 15th April & 17th April 2025.



Stage 4 - Pre-Employment Checks & Health Assessment

The successful candidate will be offered employment subject to satisfactory completion of all the pre-employment requirements detailed below were required.

- A. References - Offers of appointment are conditional upon receipt of two satisfactory written employment references.
- B. Access NI Enhanced Disclosure Check through a Registered Body
- C. Documentary evidence that you are eligible to work in the UK
- D. The salary offered will be within the scale NICS Grade 5 scale points 1-5 £79,237 to £85,685 per annum. The actual starting salary offered will be commensurate with the experience, qualifications and competencies of the successful candidate.
- E. Verification of educational/vocational qualifications and professional memberships that you detailed on your application form.
- F. Verification of the educational/ vocational qualifications and professional memberships that you detailed on your application form. This may include any relevant original examination certificates.
- G. Bankruptcy/disqualification check

RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the recruitment will be as below. This schedule may change for operational reasons.

Shortlisting Date **Tuesday 1st April 2025**

Interview Date **Tuesday 15th April 2025 & Thursday 17th April 2025**

Recruitment Procedure

The recruitment and selection of the Chief Executive will be in accordance with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Recruitment and Selection process.

Equal Opportunities

Usel is committed to providing equality of opportunity. All employees, actual or potential, will be treated fairly and selection of employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability.

If you require any assistance/reasonable adjustments during any stage of the selection process due to a disability, please contact Usel by emailing recruitment@usel.co.uk.

Changes in Personal Circumstances

Please ensure that you inform Usel of any changes in personal circumstances (contact details as above). If you decide at any point during the recruitment process to withdraw your application, please inform Usel as soon as possible.

Appeals

Please note that candidates cannot appeal any stage of the selection process. Feedback may be provided on receipt of a written request.