

Candidate Brief

Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility (Budget Responsibility Committee member)

Deadline for applications: Thursday 26 March, 12noon (GMT).

The information provided in this document is for background information only. As such it does not constitute the terms, whether expressed or implied, of any future contract of employment.

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Foreword

I am pleased to invite applications for the role of Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). This is one of the most significant public appointments in the UK's economic and fiscal landscape.

The OBR is enshrined in legislation to provide independent and authoritative forecasts of the UK's economy and public finances and the economy. Its forecasts and assessments underpin Budget and fiscal policy decisions, and its work is central to the credibility of the UK's fiscal framework. It also sets out the risks and sustainability of the UK's public finances including over the long-term. The Chair leads the OBR's strategy and work programme and will focus on the organisation's internal capability and the effective delivery of its core remit, while always safeguarding its independence.

We are seeking an outstanding leader with deep macroeconomic and/or fiscal expertise, strong public credibility, experience of working constructively across organisational boundaries, and the ability to lead a high-calibre analytical organisation. The successful candidate will bring sound judgement, integrity and the confidence to provide honest, evidence-based assessments, including where these may be challenging for government.

This is a demanding and high-profile role, but also a uniquely rewarding opportunity to contribute to the UK's economic stability, transparency and long-term prosperity. Please take the time to read through this pack, which provides further information and I hope that you will consider applying.

James Bowler
Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury

The Office for Budget Responsibility

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) was established in 2010 to enhance the accountability of the government, by providing independent and authoritative analysis of the UK's economy and public finances. As the government's independent forecaster, the OBR is responsible for producing the official economic and fiscal forecasts that support and inform the government's economic and fiscal policy.

The OBR is led by the three members of the Budget Responsibility Committee (BRC); the Chair and two Members. They have executive responsibility for the core functions of the OBR, including the judgements reached in its forecasts. The OBR employs around 52 members of staff and with a budget of around £6.4 million per annum and has considerable influence both nationally and internationally.

Work of the Office

The main legislative duty of the OBR is to examine and report on the sustainability of the public finances, which it is required to do 'objectively, transparently, and impartially'. The Office's analysis is key to informing the policy decisions made by ministers and maintaining fiscal transparency and the wider understanding of the UK's public finances. The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 and the Charter for Budget Responsibility set out the legal requirements of the Office, but it has complete discretion over how to deliver its core objectives.

Within its broad remit the OBR is specifically required to produce:

Economic and Fiscal Forecasts (The *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*)

The economic and fiscal forecasts produced by the OBR represent the Budget Responsibility Committee's (BRC's) collective view of the UK's medium term economic and fiscal outlook. It is based on the analysis produced by OBR staff and draws on the work and expertise of officials across government. These forecasts are published in the OBR's biannual Economic and Fiscal Outlook (EFO) publications.

Since the OBR's establishment, the government has chosen to adopt the OBR's forecasts as the UK's official forecasts, and they are used for the formation of government policy. The OBR has a statutory duty to publish at least two forecasts per financial year and the timetable is determined by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Typically, the OBR's forecasts are published alongside the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget in Autumn with a second forecast in the Spring.

Evaluating performance against the government's fiscal targets

The OBR is also required to produce an assessment of the government's performance against its fiscal mandate (fiscal rules) alongside the forecast commissioned for the Budget. Following the government's commitment to hold a single major annual fiscal event and in line with recommendations made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), at Autumn Budget 2025, the government announced that the OBR would only assess the fiscal rules once per year at the Budget when the government is formally setting out its fiscal strategy. At the spring forecast the OBR is required to provide a forecast on the economy and public finances without a formal assessment of the fiscal mandate.

Forecast Evaluation Report

The OBR is also required to produce a Forecast Evaluation Report (FER) each year to evaluate how its past forecast performance compares to subsequent outturn data. Investigating the causes of forecast and data outturn divergence allows the OBR to reflect and identify lessons for future forecast improvements and enables the BRC to explain the reasoning behind its judgements.

Fiscal Risks and Sustainability Report

The Fiscal Risks and Sustainability Report (FRS) is the OBR's annual publication focused on the long-term sustainability of the public finances and a comprehensive review of the fiscal risks thereto. The reports examine how government policy and economic trends are likely to affect the public finances over the coming decades and provides an assessment of the main macroeconomic risks to the long-term sustainability of the UK's fiscal position.

Welfare Trends Reports

The OBR's Welfare Trends Report (WTR) is a biennially produced report that sets out the trends and drivers of welfare spending and assesses the governments performance against the welfare cap. The WTR includes analysis on both the short- and long-term trends in spending on social security benefits and tax credits.

Other analysis

The OBR has discretion in how it fulfils its remit and additionally produces a wide range of working and technical discussion papers on topics relating to their analysis, modelling approaches, and duties.

Find out more www.obr.uk/

About the role

This is a high-profile and important role. Under legislation, the Chancellor of the Exchequer may only appoint a member to the BRC if that person has knowledge or experience likely to be relevant to the performance of the Office's duty.

We will seek a new Chair who can lead the committee's work, focus on delivering the core functions and internal capability of the OBR, including leadership to the OBR's staff, and work constructively with stakeholders in government and beyond. This is a high-profile and influential role, and candidates must command broad respect for their objectivity in dealing with issues of political sensitivity.

The specific requirements for this role include:

- **Independence of thought and undisputed integrity:** Candidates must be independently minded and be able to exert their influence as Chair of the BRC and when representing the OBR to government, Parliament and the public. Candidates must be able to form their own views and decisions, whilst working closely and constructively with other members of the Committee, the OBR Oversight Board and with stakeholders outside of the organisation. Candidates must have the ability to maintain discretion and engender trust in staff, peers and stakeholders providing support and assurance where appropriate.
- **Strong and proven economic and fiscal knowledge, including analytical ability:** Candidates must have the expertise and experience necessary to lead the OBR in the performance of its role to produce independent analysis of the UK's economic and fiscal outlook. They must be able to take account of, and balance, a wide range of factors affecting the UK's economic growth, productivity and fiscal sustainability in forming their judgements. In particular, they must be able to absorb large volumes of complex information and reach reasoned and robust conclusions both to deliver forecast judgements and organisational objectives. They should have a clear understanding of the work, priorities and challenges of the OBR and the wider context within which it operates, and a strong track record of leadership and delivery of economic and / or fiscal analysis, in the private, public or voluntary sectors, and proven ability to communicate effectively with a non-technical audience.
- **Interpersonal and leadership skills:** Candidates must possess strong communication and interpersonal skills to be able to provide effective strategic leadership of the OBR, to build and sustain strong, trusted and constructive relationships with Ministers, Parliament, Senior officials, and external stakeholders, and to be a credible representative of the OBR's forecasts. Candidates should demonstrate the ability to seek out and listen to a range of views and should foster a collaborative culture and effective relationships, while always maintaining the clear independence of the OBR. In addition, the Chair will be required to motivate the team of OBR analysts, lead the BRC and ensure that the OBR operates to its full potential. They will also be required to provide effective leadership to the OBR as an organisation, ensuring effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management and

governance, including information security, to ensure appropriate systems are in place to protect the OBR's outputs. The OBR must perform its duties objectively, transparently and impartially, and the BRC Chair is expected to lead the Office in a way reflective of this.

Desirable criteria:

- **Experience of forecasting:** a strong track record of delivery on significant economic and fiscal forecasting and analysis within the private, public or voluntary sectors.
- **Experience of policymaking:** understanding of the policymaking process would be desirable.

Terms of appointment

The Chair of the OBR is appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the consent of the Treasury Committee. Members of the BRC, including the Chair, are appointed as office holders at the OBR and it is HM Treasury that sets the terms of the appointment.

The appointment is expected to commence before the Budget (2026) subject to the consent of the Treasury Committee and to the requirements of both the successful candidate and the OBR.

Appointments to the BRC are for a five-year fixed term. There is the possibility of reappointment at the end of the term, subject to the Chancellor's discretion and subsequent consent of the Treasury Committee. BRC members, including the Chair, can serve a maximum of two terms. The BRC Chair is required to request the consent of the Chancellor prior to taking any appointment, employment, or other duties that might lead to a conflict with BRC responsibilities.

The full-time salary range for this role is £150,000 - £208,100 which will be negotiated prior to appointment. The salary will be uprated annually based on the change in the Consumer Prices Index in the anniversary month of appointment. In addition, the OBR will pay a sum equal to 20% of your monthly fee into your personal pension scheme each month, less statutory deductions if appropriate.

All BRC members, including the Chair are not required to hold UK nationality, but to fulfil their duties are expected to be resident in the UK.

The successful candidate will be required to undertake Baseline Personnel Security Standard checks in line with the Civil Service guidelines. Additional Security Clearance may also be required for certain roles. However, where this applies, candidates will be notified during the appointment process. Further information on National Security Vetting can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Most functions of the Budget Responsibility Committee are carried out in the Office's 102 Petty France Office in London.

How to apply

Please visit the GOV.UK '[Apply for a public appointment](#)' website, and either create an account or 'sign in' to your account, if you already have one. Once you are signed in you can find the role and select '[Apply for this appointment](#)'.

Read through the role description and follow the instructions to submit your application. You are required to submit:

- A comprehensive CV;
- A covering letter (no more than two pages) which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the criteria listed in the Person Specification.

Please note: You must complete all fields when setting up your account and submit your application for the correct role to be considered.

Equality of opportunity

The Office for Budget Responsibility and HM Treasury have strong commitments to diversity and equality of opportunity, and welcome applications from candidates irrespective of their background, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or age, providing they meet the required criteria.

All disabled candidates (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) who satisfy the minimum criteria for the role will be guaranteed an interview under the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS).

To be eligible for consideration under the DCS, you must be considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010. This means that you must have or have had in the last 12 months – a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes those whose disability has lasted, or is likely to last, for 12 months, or if the disability or condition is likely to progress or recur.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, or you are unable to apply online please contact HMT Public Appointments Team via email: hmtappointmentsteam@hmtreasury.gov.uk.

Recruitment process

The deadline for applications is: Thursday 26 March, 12noon (GMT).

Your application will be acknowledged shortly after receipt, and you will be informed via the gov.uk Public Appointments website regarding the progress of your application.

Once the closing date for applications has passed, applications will be sifted according to the candidate profile. Those applicants who have not been successful will be notified at this stage and a shortlist of the most closely qualified applicants will be invited to panel interviews, which will be held in London.

Interview dates will be confirmed in due course – like to be held in early May. The appointment is expected to commence in late summer and before Budget 2026 in the autumn, following recommendation from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and subject to the consent of the Treasury Committee pre-appointment hearing.

If you have any general or technical queries on completing the application, or if you feel you have reason for complaint about the appointment process or the manner in which your application was handled, please contact HMT Public Appointments Team, 1 Horse Guards Road, SW1A 2HQ or via email: hmtappointmentsteam@hmtreasury.gov.uk

Please note, as part of the vetting process, candidates will be subjected to due diligence. This will consist of reviewing your social media and any public attention.

If you are invited for interview, reasonable and necessary travel expenses (standard class) will be reimbursed. Those invited to interview will be advised on how to claim their expenses.

The Panel

James Bowler (Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury) will act as Panel Chair, supported by:

- Baroness Sarah Hogg (Non-executive member: Oversight Board Chair - OBR) - panel member
- Sir Gus O'Donnell (former Cabinet Secretary) - independent panel member

Code of Conduct for Board Members

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards. In support of this, all non-executive board members of UK public bodies must abide by the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. The Code sets out the standards expected from those who serve on the boards of UK public bodies and will form part of your terms and conditions of appointment.

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder.