

Data Centre Jobs in Policy and Regulation



It might seem strange that the data centre sector needs people to work in policy and regulation, but in fact this is a really important activity. Firstly, data centres are not well understood by people in government, whether that is local authorities or Whitehall, and we need someone to explain what data centres do and why they matter. People in government don't always realise that when they develop digital policies, these can't be delivered without digital infrastructure. Sometimes they develop regulations without even realizing that these

will affect data centres, because they've never heard of them.

Data centre operators also need to know what kind of regulations Government is planning - firstly so they can prepare and secondly so they can comment on proposals before they are turned into law – after which it is very hard to change things. This can involve lots of evidence gathering, explanations and detailed negotiations. We call this the policy dialogue. And of course the sector also needs people in government who understand data centres.



Sample roles

- Public Policy Executive / Associate / Manager / Director: Some larger data centre operators have their own team of people to keep a close eye on regulatory developments, to look out and respond to consultations and generally to be an advocate for that company.
- Sector Representative: Most sectors have national trade associations or NTAs who provide a collective voice for all the companies who are members. There is usually at least one trade association in each country that data centre businesses can join.
- Government Policy Advisor / Manager / Director: Government is always developing policy to try and help the UK prosper as a country and support businesses but at the same time protect individuals. It can be hard to juggle different priorities and interest groups. There is now a whole team of people in DCMs – the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who look after data centres.
- Regional or Local digital infrastructure development Manager / Director / Advisor: just like central government, local and regional authorities are looking to encourage industries that will create new jobs and digital infrastructure is good at doing this. Data centres will be just a part of these roles, however.

Who is working in data centre policy?

I'm Emma Fryer and I work for techUK. My job is providing a collective voice for dozens of data centre businesses in the UK and for the thousands of people who work in them. I do three things: I try to change things that might harm our industry – like new regulations that haven't been thought out carefully enough. I help operators deal with things we can't change – for instance alerting them to risks and compliance rules. Thirdly I explain data centres to government and journalists and I explain regulations to people working in data centres.



My favourite challenge is taking on a technical and complicated topic or problem and describing it in a way that anyone can understand. Outside work I like mountain biking and hiking and I breed stick insects, but only by accident – I started with 1 and now I have 40.