

## **Shona** **International Officer - Data Protection Policy Dept**

I'm Shona, I'm an International Officer. I work within the Data Protection Policy department, and I've been with the ICO for about two years.

The International team sits within Data Protection Development and deals with anything that has an overseas element to it, we're the main point of contact for European and International Data Protection Authorities, and we co-operate with them on policy issues.

My role is a really varied one. I do lots of different things day-to-day. I work very closely with my colleagues in Data Protection Development projects, so I could be working on drafting a Code of Practice. I also spend lots of time preparing to go to meetings abroad and doing any follow-up work that arises from that. I spend a lot of time in contact with foreign data protection authorities, finding out about what they do and how they do it, and giving them information about what we do here in the UK.

I think one of the main skills required to work in the International team would be excellent communication skills, and also an awareness of the opportunities and challenges presented with working with international colleagues. It's also really important to be confident enough to represent the office internationally, and to be able to work on your own initiative without much guidance.

One of the best benefits which I think is particularly relevant to the Data Protection Policy department is the opportunity to go on secondment to other European institutions which deal with similar issues to us. A few of my colleagues have taken those opportunities in the past, and placements can range from six months to two years. I know they've really benefited from them and it's helped them to develop their careers, and I think it's great that the ICO is very supportive of that type of thing.

I'd recommend the ICO as a place to work because you can really challenge yourself and work on a wide variety of projects. The work can be very complex, but the support is there to see you through and to help you meet your goals.