

CropLife UK**BUILDING A POLICY FUNCTION FROM THE GROUND UP.**

CropLife, the trade association representing the crop protection, pesticides and biopesticides sector in the UK, partnered with Murray McIntosh on a retained search. What began as a single appointment, CropLife's first ever Head of Policy, has since grown into an ongoing relationship covering Policy, Regulation and Communications, with Murray McIntosh returning for every subsequent hire.

The roles in question were not constrained by budget, timeline or location: salaries were competitive, and positions were fully remote, open to candidates nationwide. The principal challenge lay in the sector itself. Crop protection and biopesticides is a specialist and comparatively low-profile field, requiring candidates who could either demonstrate established sector expertise or prove they could operate within it.

Results**4****placements delivered****6 WEEKS****average time from brief to
appointment****100%****of positions filled with
CropLife's preferred
candidate**We delivered

- Head of Policy
- Communications and Business Specialist
- Policy and Regulations Manager x2

UNDERSTANDING A NICHE SECTOR.

Working with a specialised recruitment partner

Crop protection is a niche market, and CropLife's roles needed candidates who could be credible within it, though what "credible" meant varied by role. For Head of Policy, the successful candidate didn't have a direct sector background, but her academic grounding in plant science gave her the credibility the role demanded. The Policy and Regulations Manager role needed sector knowledge and regulatory experience as a baseline, plus the ability to grow into policy work. The Communications and Business Specialist role, by contrast, was junior enough that sector background wasn't required at all, however candidates needed to be credible on skills.

None of this came down to budget, timeline or location: salaries were competitive and positions were fully remote, open to candidates across the country. The constraint was one of awareness and fit, finding candidates who understood, or could quickly grasp, a genuinely specialist regulatory environment. The Policy and Regulations Manager role presented a further complication: a newly established post, created to sit between Regulation and Policy, with no internal precedent to define it, a brief previous agencies hadn't been able to deliver against.

A SEARCH BUILT AROUND AN EXISTING PROCESS.

A distinctive, candidate-first approach

Murray McIntosh built the search around CropLife's distinctive process. Shortlisted CVs came with a recorded video Q&A, set by CropLife's senior team, standing in for a first-stage interview. Candidates then had an informal, unassessed conversation with whoever at CropLife was available, to explore the role before deciding whether to go further. Those who did went straight to a single ninety-minute interview in central London, with food, drink and travel covered so candidates could arrive early and settle in. Senior staff sat in wherever relevant, reflecting how much team dynamic mattered in a business this size. Run end to end, the process averaged six weeks from brief to appointment.

AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

Capability secured for continuity

Every process Murray McIntosh has conducted for CropLife has concluded with the preferred candidate accepting appointment at first attempt. The Communications and Business Specialist was promoted to Communications and Business Lead within a year of appointment. When the original Policy and Regulations Manager departed following approach from a rival organisation, CropLife responded swiftly, and Murray McIntosh secured a replacement within approximately one month of the search reopening.

Candidate feedback throughout the engagement has been exceptional. Candidates travelling considerable distances have consistently reported feeling welcomed and given appropriate time to prepare.

The relationship with CropLife reflects Murray McIntosh's approach across the policy and public affairs sector: as a retained partner engaged consistently, search after search.

THE PEOPLE YOU NEED **DO EXIST.**

Just let us know how we can help you.

Murray McIntosh is the recruitment partner for businesses, trade associations, NGOs, Charities and regulators. We place experts in a range of niche policy subject matters in Policy, Public Affairs, Strategic Communications, Economics, Corporate Affairs and External Affairs with our clients to make change happen.

We are well-versed in recruiting professionals across multiple industries such as Energy & Utilities, Financial Services, Healthcare & Pharma, Transport, Education, Built Environment, Manufacturing. Akin to strategic communication practices, our recruitment process involves research, insight, consultation and evaluation to find solutions and keep up with market changes.

In an environment comprised of disruption, regulation and increased public scrutiny, the professionals that we represent, specialise in helping organisations assess and navigate the political landscape, and deliver real, meaningful change.



Get in touch



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