



RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK

Head of Advocacy

Applications open 19 October 2026

Closing date 16 November 2026, 9am

We are recruiting a Head of Advocacy to lead BID's policy, research and influencing strategy, connecting frontline legal evidence, research and lived experience with opportunities to achieve systemic change.

As a member of BID's three-person senior leadership team, you will help shape organisational direction and work closely with the Executive Director and Head of Legal Services. This pack explains our work, our priorities, the role and how to apply.

The opportunity at a glance

Job title	Head of Advocacy
Salary	£41,940 per annum (£52,425 FTE)
Hours	0.8 FTE / four days per week
Location	Finsbury Park, London; hybrid, three office days per week
Reports to	Executive Director
Start date	As soon as practicable
Application deadline	Monday 16 November 2026, 9am
Apply to	recruitment@biduk.org

We recognise lived experience as a powerful form of expertise. We are committed to centering the voices of those directly impacted by immigration detention, and we actively encourage people with lived experience to apply for this role.

About Immigration Detention

Immigration detention is the incarceration of people subject to immigration control in the UK, either while they await a decision about their right to enter or remain in the country, or while the Home Office seeks to remove or deport them.

Although it involves one of the most serious powers available to the state - the deprivation of a person's liberty - immigration detention is an administrative, not a criminal, process. People can be detained by officials acting on behalf of the Home Secretary without the safeguards that would ordinarily accompany a loss of liberty.

There are three features of the system that are fundamental to our work.

1. The initial decision to detain a person does not require the authorisation of a court and is not subject to automatic judicial oversight.
2. People in detention are not automatically guaranteed legal advice or representation.
3. There is no statutory time limit on immigration detention in the UK.

The consequences can be profound. People can spend weeks, months and, in some cases, years in detention, often without knowing when they will be released. Release does not necessarily end that uncertainty. People can be detained again, with the Home Office treating each episode as a separate period rather than reflecting the cumulative experience of repeated detention.

For some, detention therefore becomes a cycle of losing and regaining their freedom, with significant consequences for their lives, families and ability to exercise their rights.

Why BID exists

Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) exists to strengthen access to justice for people in detention and to protect their fundamental right to liberty. We provide free, expert legal advice, support and representation to people held in immigration detention centres and prisons across the UK. We operate a national telephone advice line across the week, deliver legal workshops in detention centres and prisons, and produce trusted self-help resources that enable people to understand their rights and prepare and pursue their own bail applications.

Where the risks are greatest, we provide direct legal representation, with a particular focus on people detained in prisons, parents separated from their children and exceptionally vulnerable people whose liberty is at immediate risk.

Our frontline legal work gives us direct insight into how the detention system operates and where it fails. We use that evidence to challenge injustice, hold government to account and advocate for systemic change – while working towards our ultimate goal: an end to immigration detention.

Our purpose and approach

BID's Core Purpose

At the heart of BID's work is a simple principle: a person's immigration status should not deprive them of their right to freedom.

Our core purpose is to:

- Support people to access freedom - so that people can live in the community rather than in detention.
- Ensure the rule of law is respected - by providing access to justice and holding government to account.
- Work towards lasting change - using our expertise, evidence and reputation to advance our vision of a world in which a person's right to freedom is not interfered with because of their immigration status.

How we work

Through legal services, research and advocacy, we:

- support people in detention to exercise their right to liberty;
- build public and political support for reducing the use of immigration detention;
- work to reduce the harms caused by detention;
- expose and address human rights breaches arising from detention;
- improve access to justice; and
- help build the movement for humane and progressive immigration policies that can replace immigration detention.

BID Operating Model

One organisation, shared priorities



Our values and commitment to inclusion

BID's values guide how we work, how we treat people and how we pursue our mission.

Respect

We treat everyone with dignity, fairness and compassion. We listen, value lived experience and foster an inclusive and supportive environment.

Resilience

We remain determined, adaptable and supportive through challenges. We look after one another, learn from setbacks and continue to advocate for the people we support.

Integrity

We do what is right, even when it is difficult. We act in our clients' best interests, challenge injustice and build trust through honesty, accountability and transparency.

Excellence

We aim for the highest standards in everything we do. We take ownership of our work, collaborate effectively and continually learn and improve to achieve the best outcomes for our clients.

BID's commitment to inclusive and anti-racist practice

BID is committed to justice, respect and human rights in all that we do. We challenge immigration detention and defend the rights of people subject to immigration control, grounded in fairness, equality and respect. We recognise the disproportionate impact of detention on people facing racism and structural inequality and are committed to being an actively anti-racist organisation. We foster a safe, inclusive environment where everyone is respected and able to contribute, and we work to ensure our internal culture reflects the principles we advocate externally.

BID's strategic aims, 2026–2031

Our 2026–2031 strategy sets out five priorities that move us towards our long-term vision of a world in which people's right to liberty is not restricted because of their immigration status.

Recognising the challenging environment in which we are working, our strategy combines an unwavering commitment to protecting the rights of people detained now with sustained work towards systemic change.

Increase access to justice for people in detention

Our core priority is to ensure that people deprived of their liberty can access high-quality legal information, advice, representation and support, enabling them to understand their rights, participate effectively in legal proceedings and challenge their detention.

End the detention of vulnerable adults

We will work to ensure that people whose circumstances make detention particularly harmful do not remain in detained, and that effective safeguards protect those at risk.

End immigration detention in prisons

We will work towards ending the use of prisons for immigration detention and ensuring that people are not held in prison under immigration powers.

Put the best interests of children first

We will work to ensure that the best interests of children are a primary consideration in all decisions about the detention and deportation of their family members.

Enable migrants to thrive in the community

Our longer-term ambition is for people subject to immigration control to live safely and with dignity in their communities, with the support they need to exercise their rights and participate fully in society.

Together, these priorities provide a framework for protecting liberty, strengthening access to justice, reducing the use and harms of detention, and building towards an end to immigration detention.

The Head of Advocacy role

Challenge injustice. Influence policy. Drive change.

Are you a strategic thinker, an experienced policy or advocacy professional and a leader who knows how to turn evidence into influence?

Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) is looking for a politically astute, ambitious and collaborative Head of Advocacy to lead our work challenging the policies and practices that underpin immigration detention.

This is an opportunity to shape advocacy at a leading human rights charity, influence government and decision-makers, and turn frontline legal evidence, research and lived experience into lasting systemic change.

You'll join us at a pivotal moment, as we deliver a new, ambitious five-year strategy and invest in strengthening our policy, research and advocacy capacity.

We're looking for someone who understands how change happens, where power lies and how to influence the decisions that matter.

About the role

As Head of Advocacy, you'll lead BID's policy, research and influencing strategy, bringing together legal expertise, lived experience, public affairs and communications to drive change.

You'll participate in identifying what needs to change, who has the power to change it and how BID can most effectively influence them.

You'll lead a multidisciplinary team, with three direct reports, building influential relationships and ensure our evidence and expertise reach the right people at the right time.

As one of three members of BID's senior leadership team, alongside the Executive Director and Head of Legal Services, you'll have significant responsibility for leading BID's team in alignment with our strategy and direction.

This role is particularly suited to someone with a strong policy or advocacy background, or a legal background combined with substantial policy experience.

You don't need to be a specialist in campaigning or communications. You'll work with colleagues who bring that expertise, providing the strategic direction that connects their work to BID's policy objectives.

Key responsibilities

1. Organisational and advocacy leadership — set the direction, drive the change

- Contribute to BID's senior leadership, organisational strategy, planning and risk management.
- Develop and deliver a focused policy and advocacy strategy, with clear priorities, timelines and measurable outcomes.
- Monitor political and policy developments, anticipating opportunities and risks across the migration sector.
- Make clear choices about where BID can have the greatest influence, balancing emerging developments with long-term priorities and limited resources.
- Identify the most effective routes to change, combining policy, research, public affairs, litigation, partnerships and communications where appropriate.
- Build strategic relationships with decision-makers, parliamentarians, sector allies and other influential stakeholders.
- Set the direction for BID's policy positions, advocacy messages and key arguments.
- Build collaboration across teams, evaluate advocacy impact and support relationships with funders of advocacy projects.

2. Policy and research — turn evidence into influence

- Lead BID's policy and research agenda, ensuring it advances clear advocacy objectives.
- Use frontline legal evidence, strategic litigation, research and lived experience to identify systemic problems and opportunities for policy reform.
- Develop authoritative, evidence-based policy positions and recommendations.
- Oversee research projects, policy briefings, consultation responses and parliamentary submissions, as needed.
- Work closely with the Head of Legal Services to connect legal expertise and casework evidence with wider advocacy.

3. Public affairs and influencing — reach the people who make decisions

- Lead BID's engagement with government, Parliament, policymakers and other key institutions.
- Build credible, influential relationships with parliamentarians, civil servants, legal organisations, NGOs and sector leaders.
- Represent BID in senior meetings, policy forums, coalitions and strategic partnerships.
- Identify opportunities to influence policy and practice through direct engagement, evidence and collective action.
- Work with the Executive Director on significant external relationships and high-level influencing opportunities.

4. Strategic communications and campaigning — strengthen our influence

- Set the advocacy objectives, audiences and key messages for BID's communications and campaigning work.

- Decide when public campaigning, media engagement or digital communications can strengthen policy influencing.
- Work with communications colleagues to ensure campaigns and content support BID's strategic priorities.
- Oversee significant advocacy communications, ensuring accuracy, consistency and impact.
- Act as a BID spokesperson where appropriate and support responses to sensitive or high-profile developments.
- Ensure crisis communication processes are followed, in collaboration with communications staff and the Executive Director.

5. Participation and lived experience — centre the people impacted

- Ensure people affected by immigration detention meaningfully inform BID's policy and advocacy priorities.
- Create opportunities for lived experience to strengthen research, policy development and influencing.
- Champion ethical, accessible participation that respects people's dignity, expertise and agency.
- Ensure appropriate safeguards around consent, confidentiality, accessibility and remuneration.

6. People and team leadership — bring expertise together

- Line manage BID's Policy & Research Officer, Fundraising & Communications Manager and Participation Officer.
- Set clear priorities, support professional development and enable colleagues to work effectively and independently.
- Lead cross-organisational projects that connect legal, policy, research and communications expertise.
- Work with the Volunteer Manager to make effective use of academic, research and specialist volunteers.
- Build a collaborative, accountable and supportive team culture.

7. Impact and effectiveness — make our work count

- Establish clear outcomes and meaningful measures of advocacy progress.
- Monitor policy developments, stakeholder engagement and evidence of BID's contribution to change.
- Evaluate effectiveness and adapt strategy in response to evidence and opportunities.
- Ensure resources are focused on activities with the greatest potential for impact.
- Report to the Executive Director, trustees and funders on progress, challenges and achievements.

Person specification

Who we're looking for:

- An experienced policy, legal or advocacy leader with sharp strategic judgement, political awareness and the ability to turn evidence into change.
- You may already lead policy or advocacy in a charity, legal or human rights organisation. Or you may be an experienced policy professional, or a lawyer with policy and influencing experience, ready to take on a broader strategic leadership role.
- You don't need expertise in every area of BID's work. What matters is your ability to understand complex systems, develop credible policy positions, identify opportunities for influence and bring people together to achieve change.

Essential skills and experience

- **Policy and advocacy expertise:** Experience developing policy positions, influencing policy or practice, and achieving change.
- **Strategic judgement:** The ability to turn complex problems into clear priorities, practical strategies and achievable objectives.
- **Political and policy awareness:** Strong understanding of policymaking, political institutions, decision-making processes and routes to influence.
- **Evidence-led thinking:** Confidence interpreting complex research, legal evidence and policy analysis to develop persuasive recommendations.
- **Research leadership:** Experience directing policy research, overseeing high-quality outputs and translating findings into action.
- **Public affairs and influencing:** Ability to engage credibly with policymakers, senior stakeholders and decision-makers.
- **Understanding of systems change:** Knowledge of how policy, research, legal action, public affairs, partnerships, campaigning and communications can work together to achieve change.
- **People leadership:** Experience managing and developing colleagues in line with HR best practice, setting direction and coordinating multidisciplinary work.
- **Excellent communication:** Ability to present complex policy arguments clearly, persuasively and with authority.
- **Delivery and judgement:** Strong organisational skills, sound risk awareness and the ability to balance immediate demands with long-term goals.
- **Commitment to human rights:** A strong commitment to BID's mission and the rights, dignity and agency of people affected by immigration detention.

Desirable experience

We'd particularly welcome experience in:

- Immigration detention, asylum, migration or human rights policy.
- Legal practice combined with policy development or advocacy.
- Strategic litigation and using legal evidence to influence systemic change.

- UK government, Parliament and public affairs.
- Policy research, consultation responses and parliamentary submissions.
- Coalition-building and influencing through partnerships.
- Participation and co-production with people with lived experience.
- Advocacy monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement.
- Senior leadership and organisational decision-making.

Why join BID?

Because this is an opportunity to shape change, not simply respond to it.

You'll join a committed team combining frontline legal expertise with ambitious policy advocacy to challenge one of the UK's most pressing human rights injustices.

You'll have the authority to set direction, build influential relationships and ensure BID's evidence and expertise help drive meaningful reform.

And you'll play a central role in shaping BID's future as a leading voice challenging immigration detention.

How to apply

Supporting statement

Please submit your CV and a supporting statement of no more than two A4 pages explaining how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements of the Head of Advocacy role.

Send to recruitment@biduk.org by 9am on Monday 16 November 2026.

We expect to shortlist w/c 16 November and interviews to be held in person from 26 November to 06 December 2026. We may not be able to respond individually to your application if you are not shortlisted, but thank you for your time given to applying.

We will use your supporting statement and CV to shortlist candidates against the essential criteria in the person specification.

Please address the following five areas in your supporting statement, using relevant examples from your experience.

Policy, advocacy and influencing: Describe your experience of developing policy positions, setting advocacy priorities and influencing decision-makers, including your understanding of how to achieve political and institutional change.

Research, evidence and strategic thinking: Explain how you have used research, legal evidence or frontline experience to identify systemic issues, develop recommendations and shape advocacy. Include any experience of leading research.

Leadership and management: Describe your experience of managing and developing staff, leading multidisciplinary teams and navigating challenging staffing matters or organisational change.

Strategic judgement and delivery: Give examples of setting and delivering strategic priorities, managing competing demands and making effective use of limited resources while responding to emerging opportunities and risks.

Motivation and commitment to BID: Explain why you want to lead BID's advocacy, what you would bring to the role and how your experience and values align with our mission.

We welcome applicants from policy, advocacy, legal, human rights and other relevant backgrounds. Previous experience in immigration detention is not essential, but you should demonstrate your ability to lead BID's advocacy work.

If you would like to discuss the role with BID's Executive Director, please send an email to Charlotte Buckley at recruitment@biduk.org. Please note that she returns from leave on Monday 09 November and will be able to respond to enquiries after that.