

Head of Policy and Impact

About Spear

We launched the award-winning Spear Programme over 20 years ago, and there are now 20 Spear Centres across the country, equipping unemployed 16–24-year-olds facing barriers to employment with the skills and mindset they need to secure work and thrive in the workplace.

About the role

As Head of Policy and Impact, you'll have a unique opportunity to shape both the future of youth employment policy and how we understand and improve what works for young people. You'll turn Spear's frontline experience and evidence into a compelling voice for change, building relationships with government and key decision-makers to influence policy, while leading our work to evaluate and strengthen our programme.

From engaging Ministers to overseeing a major external evaluation, you'll work across the organisation to ensure our impact is understood, our learning drives improvement, and our voice helps shape the solutions to youth unemployment. It's an exciting opportunity to combine strategic influence, rigorous evidence and organisational leadership to create change for young people at both an individual and a systemic level.

Role Responsibilities

Advocacy and policy strategy development

- Lead Spear's advocacy and policy strategy, developing and delivering effective approaches to influence government and other key decision-makers around our three main policy aims for tackling youth unemployment and NEET (young people not in education, employment or training): on trusted adult relationships, employer partnerships, and evidence-based signposting.
- Coordinate Spear's responses to government policy consultations and lead cross-team working groups to develop new policy positions or respond to emerging and urgent policy issues.
- Lead horizon scanning on youth unemployment and NEET policy, keeping abreast of relevant policy developments, research and political priorities, and ensuring insights are shared across Spear to inform our work and decision-making.
- Implement systems for measuring the impact of our advocacy and policy work.

Building Government relations and influence

- Build and manage influential relationships with key government stakeholders, including DWP civil servants, Ministers and their teams, as well as other relevant decision-makers and sector partners.
- Identify and prioritise opportunities to influence policy, making strategic decisions about Spear's engagement in Party Conferences, roundtables and other key events, and representing Spear at selected opportunities.
- Equip Spear's senior leaders to influence effectively, developing clear policy briefings, preparing colleagues for meetings with Ministers and other key contacts, and ensuring consistency in Spear's external messaging.
- Use Spear's profile and platforms strategically to drive policy change, including our events, report launches and thought leadership, working closely with colleagues in Communications and Corporate Partnerships to strengthen our messaging and showcase our policy influence and successes.
- Oversee visits to Spear centres by Ministers and other key stakeholders, working with the Leadership Team Assistant and colleagues across Spear to ensure visits are well planned and maximise opportunities to demonstrate our impact and influence.

Impact and evaluation

- Lead the Impact Steering Group, bringing together colleagues from across relevant teams to review data, identify trends and opportunities for improvement, prioritise areas for focused work, and drive action across teams.
- Oversee the Impact & Strategy Manager in supporting the group's work.
- Project manage the ongoing internal evaluation and development of the Streamlined Spear programme, working with the Impact Steering Group to analyse data and identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Prepare the streamlined Spear programme for external evaluation in 2029, by monitoring sample size, data completion and data quality to ensure these are on track.
- Work with a range of internal teams and our external evaluation partner to deliver and launch the report on our current external evaluation of the classic Spear programme in 2027.

Impact reporting and external engagement

- Co-ordinate the selection and provision of information for the annual Impact Report.
- Represent Spear at our own as well as external events, speaking about our work and impact to further our reputation as an expert practitioner in youth employment, and to build networks and connections for the wider organisation.

Developing a culture of impact

- Drive the development of an impact culture across all Spear functions.
- Help to educate and train teams across Spear in best practice relating to impact management, the wider youth employability landscape and how we position ourselves with key stakeholders.
- Keep Spear on the forefront of social impact thinking through broader reading & research.

Team Leadership

- Lead and develop the advocacy and policy team, providing line management, setting priorities and ensuring the team delivers high-quality work that advances Spear's strategic objectives.

- Oversee the Impact & Strategy Manager's work with Heads of Department each month to ensure that organisational goal and risk reporting processes are managed well and quarterly targets are met.
- Develop strategy and goals for policy and impact as part of the Spear annual planning process, and identify and monitor risks as they arise.

Active participation in Spear's mission and ethos

- Help build and develop Spear's ethos and Christian life including leading and contributing to daily collective and personal prayer meetings which are an integral part of Spear's operation.

Person Specification

- A practising Christian, passionate about personally representing the values and beliefs of Spear, and our mission to inspire and equip young people to overcome the barriers they're facing to enter and sustain employment
- Proven track record in developing effective advocacy strategy and tactics, including by consulting and buying in key stakeholders where needed
- Excellent communication skills; able to clearly communicate complex issues to different internal and external audiences
- Forward planner with excellent project development and management skills who works well under pressure
- Good understanding of impact management principles and familiarity with theory of change
- Strong analytical, numerical and strategic planning skills, with a high level of accuracy and attention to detail
- Excellent reporting and communication skills, including the ability to present information clearly and effectively using written, visual and data-driven formats

Desirable

- Impact management practitioner experience
- Proven experience of programme monitoring and evaluation.
- Strong Excel skills, and understanding of data bases
- Understanding of coaching and group facilitation tools, and an ability to engage a variety of different audiences

Key information

- **Salary:** from £50,000 dependent on experience
- **Contract:** Full time (4 days considered) Maternity Cover.
- Occasional out of hours work needed for events such as Spear Celebration.
- **Annual leave:** 28 days annual leave (including Christmas gift days) plus bank holidays