

Job Description: Head of Policy & Public Affairs

Duration: Permanent

Location: Hybrid working. Hybrid – working at home with an expectation to travel to our office in Victoria, London at least twice a month, and regular additional travel across the UK.

Reporting to: Chief Impact Officer

Department: Impact

Purpose of the job

The Head of Policy & Public Affairs is responsible for leading UK Youth's influencing work with Westminster, devolved administrations, and local government. They will lead our advocacy for ambitious and actionable policies that will help unlock youth work for all young people. They will ensure that our policy recommendations are informed by the strongest available evidence, meaningful youth involvement, and the expertise of youth workers. Working closely with the Policy Manager and our Senior Leadership Team, they will develop strong relationships with external stakeholders within the youth sector and government to gain buy-in for our policy priorities.

Why work at UK Youth?

UK Youth wants all young people to be equipped to thrive and empowered to contribute at every stage of their lives. Youth work can be life changing (and even life saving). We have developed a strategy to unlock youth work so that every young person in the UK can benefit. We work with others to ensure that the youth sector is strengthened and that provision is youth-led, evidence-informed, and delivers high-quality outcomes.

UK Youth plays a unique role in addressing the lack of investment in the youth sector, the lack of cross-sector understanding in how youth work makes a difference, and the limited opportunities to embed effective solutions. These factors lead to mass inequality of access to youth services for young people. Come and be part of this change.

Responsibilities

Public affairs

- Design and implement UK Youth's public affairs strategy
- Advance and protect the interests of youth work through high-quality public affairs leadership, with a particular focus on parliamentary and partnership influencing activity with members of UK Youth's network.
- Identify opportunities for UK Youth to publicly intervene on key policy priorities – including responses to government consultations, speaking at events, meeting with key influencers, etc
- Manage the procurement and contract management of work with external consultants, as required, to develop compelling strategic comms messaging and collateral to support influencing work on our policy recommendations
- Produce briefings and speaking notes for UK Youth leadership and trustees relating to important policy issues and external events

- Provide analysis and regular updates on key policy developments for our UK Youth staff and our external networks
- Maintaining regular contact, in person and in writing, with politicians, civil servants, and staff in local authorities and regulatory bodies to brief them on matters relating to UK Youth's policy objectives
- Support colleagues in our Communications team to respond to breaking news relating to UK Youth's policy priorities
- Build strong working relationships with policy professionals across the youth sector and identify opportunities to work in partnership, where appropriate
- Represent UK Youth at meetings and events – helping to disseminate insights from our work and improve cross-sector understanding of youth work
- Lead UK Youth's involvement in key influencing events, such as party conferences, with oversight and support from the Head of Public Affairs
- Work closely with the Communications team to support the development of influencing plans that promote our policy messages on public channels

Policy

- Proactively monitor political and policy developments that relate to young people and youth work
- Work with colleagues across Impact Function to understand trends and innovations in the youth and outdoor learning sectors that have implications for policy
- Ensure that there is a clear record of UK Youth's policy positions on key issues, along with rationale and suggested messaging
- Lead inclusive policy development processes to generate ambitious and actionable policies that will help unlock youth work for all young people – collaborating with young people, youth workers, partner organisations, and internal stakeholders (where appropriate)
- Lead work with external topic experts and thought leaders, where appropriate, to develop the most effective and credible policy recommendations
- Collaborate with colleagues across the Impact Function to develop policy recommendations that are informed by the strongest available evidence, meaningful youth involvement, and the expertise of youth workers
- Take responsibility for ensuring that UK Youth's policy recommendations promote equity and anti-oppression in the youth sector and beyond
- Author external-facing policy reports and briefings on topics relating to UK Youth's work

Team leadership

- Work with the wider Impact Team to ensure young people and youth workers in our network are at the forefront of policy and influencing work, and policy reflects the views of our network.
- Deputise for Chief Impact Officer and work closely with colleagues to cover for each other, as required.
- Lead the continuous improvement of the charity's approach to policy and public affairs
- Design and deliver training & capability building relating to youth policy and public affairs to teams across the charity and to partners in the youth sector

- Set and manage budget for all policy and public affairs activities, and report on these in accordance with project, funder, and organisational financial management requirements.
- Work with External Relations colleagues to secure funding for policy and public affairs activities, and support relationship management with funders
- Line manage, develop, and support direct line reports
- Procure and contract manage freelancers and consultancy support, where appropriate.
- Collaborate with colleagues from research & evaluation teams to ensure that policy activities are robustly evaluated and learning is acted upon
- Ensure that there are accurate CRM records of policy and public affairs engagements across the organisation and our networks, providing regular reporting on insights and impact.
- Work with the Chief Impact Officer and Assistant Director of Impact to shape the charity's annual business plan and budget.
- Work collaboratively with leadership colleagues across the charity to drive continuous improvement of ways of working between teams.
- Undertake any other duties and reasonable requests that are in keeping with the nature of this post.

Head of Department behaviours and expectations

All staff at UK Youth will demonstrate their commitment to our mission to ensure all young people are equipped to thrive and empowered to contribute at every stage of their lives. You will also be able to fulfil the following expectations and behaviours:

- Be committed to safeguarding principles, and be willing to put the welfare of children and young people at the forefront of your work.
- Demonstrate an understanding and belief in the inclusion of all staff, partners and young people irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, age, religion, ability, identity, and experience.
- Actively promote and embed an understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Role model and reinforce collaborative working, build productive relationships to find solutions and influence decisions.
- Be able to set clear expectations, articulate what good performance looks like, and set strategic direction to ensure high-quality work from colleagues you work with.
- Empower and energise teams to achieve goals and communicate a compelling vision and direction in their area of responsibility.
- Enable a culture of learning from mistakes and continuous learning.
- Create an environment where wellbeing can be openly discussed.
- Role model and foster innovation and creativity.

Person Specification: Head of Policy & Public Affairs

Experience

- Extensive experience of working in policy and public affairs – preferably with young people/youth sector
- Extensive experience of developing and delivering high impact influencing strategies/campaigns
- Proven experience working with senior leaders in securing financial or political support through high-level meetings with senior figures in Government and the Civil Service
- Proven experience of policy development (including research, consultation and development of proposals) based on internal and external agendas
- Experience of coalition influencing and partnership approaches to public affairs
- Experience of working effectively at a senior management level, including representing an organisation externally, building and maintaining relationships, promoting ideas and influencing decision makers
- Experience of successfully leading a team to transform and embed new ways of working, with a proven track record of inspiring and motivating a diverse team
- Experience of managing multiple stakeholders and programmes and implementing systems to share insights internally and externally
- Experience of using a CRM to manage engagement with a range of stakeholders (Microsoft Dynamics experience desirable)
- Experience of engaging with young people and youth work professionals

Knowledge, skills and understanding

- Empathy for and understanding of the needs of young people
- Strong understanding of the youth sector, the challenges faced by young people, and the impact of youth work
- Strong understanding of government and parliamentary processes across the UK
- Strong political instincts and ability to provide high level, non-party political advice to the Senior Leadership team on the political context and its implications for the charity.
- A good understanding of network principles to build and engage cross-sector networks to take collective action
- Strong people management skills
- Knowledge of events management (for example party conference, receptions/launches, All Parliamentary Party Group meetings etc.)
- Knowledge and networked in the youth sector, namely parliamentarians and governmental bodies, third sector and youth sector organisations or partners
- Proven ability to build and manage relationships with stakeholders at all levels, including: politicians, policy makers and young people
- Proven ability to convey complex information in an accessible manner to a variety of audiences
- Excellent programme management and development skills with proven ability to plan and manage multiple, projects and activities to deadline and budget
- Excellent written and verbal communication, including the ability to communicate effectively with political stakeholders.

- Excellent time management and strong organisational skills
- Strong attention to detail, accurate spelling and good writing, proofing and editing skills
- Strong desktop IT skills including using packages such as Microsoft Dynamics, Outlook, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Canva, and Trello

Personal qualities

- Inclusive, collaborative and approachable leader who can inspire followership
- A pro-active approach, self-motivated and enthusiastic with very high levels of initiative and imaginative thinking
- A passion for young people and the youth sector
- Excited by systems change rather than systems improvement
- Excellent interpersonal skills and good at developing relationships
- Excellent influencing and persuasion skills
- High-level organisation, attention to detail, and time management skills
- A 'can do' and flexible approach with the ability adapt to changing priorities, including a willingness to travel and work irregular hours when necessary
- Able to take personal accountability for key work areas and understand individual accountabilities within work areas back to inform planning and decision making.
- Able to take a solution focussed approach
- Be committed to safeguarding principles and be willing to put the welfare of children and young people at the forefront of your work
- An understanding and belief in the inclusion of all staff, partners and young people irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, age, religion, ability, identity, and experience

This post is subject to receipt of two satisfactory references, an enhanced DBS check, and right to work in the UK. Please note, this job description is subject to change. With any significant change, we will ensure this is discussed with you before any final approvals and or commitments.