

RESEARCH AND POLICY LEAD

Job Description

RESPONSIBLE TO: Executive Director

MAIN PURPOSE OF POSITION: The Research and Policy Lead will be responsible for developing and implementing research activities and policy advocacy strategies that support UNJUST's vision to challenge systemic racism in the criminal legal system and dismantle discriminatory processes, policies and practices. The role involves working closely with community partners, sector stakeholders and decision-makers to influence policy change at local and national levels.

SALARY: £35,000 – £40,000

CONTRACT TYPE: Full-time, Fixed Term for 24 months

HOURS: 35 hours per week, flexible working offered.

BASED: Brixton, London; Hybrid role.

ANNUAL LEAVE: 31 days per year, including public holidays, office closure in December, a Wellbeing Day and a day off for your birthday.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop and deliver impactful research on the criminal legal system which centres and promotes racial equity.
- Ensure UNJUST's research and policy advocacy is informed by evidence and the lived experience of affected communities.
- Undertake interviews, desk research, data collection and data analysis.
- Track political developments, horizon scan for policy windows, and identify opportunities for UNJUST to influence change.
- Develop evidence-based policy positions and lead on drafting briefings and submissions to government consultations, parliamentary inquiries, select committees, and other influence opportunities
- Support and amplify the centring of lived-reality experiences by involving impacted communities in research, policy development and campaigning.

- Build and sustain relationships with impacted individuals, communities, policymakers, elected officials, civil servants, parliamentary groups, and other stakeholders.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation, particularly in community engagement and communications, to integrate policy messaging into advocacy materials and public statements
- Contribute to campaign planning and delivery to shift public and political narratives.
- Represent UNJUST to external stakeholders, including coalitions, working groups, roundtables and forums
- Travel locally, nationally, and internationally as required.
- Undertake administrative duties as relevant to the role
- Maintain accurate stakeholder and engagement records; uphold data protection standards

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Support funding applications and contribute to donor reporting evidencing policy impact
- Uphold UNJUST's mission and values in all aspects of your work.
- Act in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and equality principles.
- Contribute to a positive and inclusive working environment.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties as required.

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Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience in policy, social justice, or criminal justice reform.
- Experience in policy advocacy and influencing change at local and/or national levels.
- Experience developing and implementing successful campaigns.
- Experience working collaboratively with racialised or marginalised communities.
- Experience engaging with policymakers, stakeholders and sector partners.
- Strong understanding of policing and criminal justice policy, particularly racial justice and human rights.
- Familiarity with the political and policy landscape across the UK.
- Understanding how to embed lived experience into policy and advocacy work.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to tailor content for different audiences.
- Ability to build and maintain relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Strong organisational skills, able to manage multiple priorities and projects independently.
- Motivated by social justice and UNJUST's mission.
- Collaborative and inclusive, with an anti-racist approach to working.
- Adaptable, resourceful and proactive.
- Ability to travel nationally and internationally.
- Trustworthy and able to maintain confidentiality.

Desirable Criteria

- Lived experience of the criminal legal system or close connection to impacted communities.
- Experience contributing to funding applications or donor reporting.
- Understanding safeguarding, data protection, and ethical storytelling.
- Ability to analyse and synthesise policy, data and evidence.

UNJUST is committed to tackling systemic racism and discriminatory processes, policy and practices within the UK's criminal legal system. We work at the intersection of lived experience, research, law, advocacy and community power to expose the root causes of injustice, reimagine equitable systems and bring about transformative outcomes.

Our work challenges the over-policing, criminalisation and harm disproportionately experienced by Black and racialised communities – and centres the voices of those most impacted as the drivers of change.

Founded on principles of realism, empathy and collective action, we believe in creating space for truth-telling, accountability and radical hope. Through community-based programmes, participatory research, creative storytelling and strategic campaigning, we aim to shift power, policy and perception. We are proud to be a bold, visionary and values-led organisation working to build a future where justice is truly just.

Organisational Values

- Realism – grounded in the lived realities of those impacted by systemic injustice.
- Empathy – listening to and honouring the voices of others.
- Visionary – daring to radically imagine and pursue a just future.
- Activism – inspiring action that leads to change.
- Collaboration – building together, not in isolation.
- Trust – working with integrity, accountability, and respect.