

UNISON

General Secretariat Manager

REF: GS/13

JOB BRIEF

Introduction

UNISON is Britain's leading public services trade union, with over 1.3 million members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. We employ 1200 staff, approximately 370 at our national centre in Euston, central London and the remainder in our twelve regions across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

The Role

1. The General Secretariat Manager is a key role with responsibility for providing policy advice, guidance and support to the General Secretary and senior lay officers as appropriate; providing support and guidance to Senior Regional Officers and to work with other National Officers to represent the Union with outside organisations. The role includes:
 - Providing policy advice and guidance, as appropriate, to the General Secretary, the General Secretariat Group (GSG), appropriate lay committees and other senior officer group meetings and conferences.
 - Preparing responses to government consultation documents and legislation on behalf of the General Secretary.
 - Providing advice, guidance and support to departments and regions, including Senior Regional Officers and other staff, as appropriate, on matters of national, and/or secretariat policy and procedures.
 - Ensuring that equal pay and equality considerations are central to all areas of work undertaken by the unit and that they appear at the forefront of policy initiatives.
 - Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and International activities, as required by the General Secretary.
 - Develop and maintain relations with appropriate external organisations including political parties, policy development organisations, employer representative groups and other trade unions.

- Undertake research and provide advice, assistance and information to facilitate negotiations at a national and regional level where appropriate and relevant to their area of responsibility.
 - Representing UNISON on national negotiating and government bodies, as appropriate on behalf of the General Secretary and/or the GSG
 - Monitoring and advising the General Secretary and the GSG on any political developments that may impact on the union's activities.
 - Responsible for the efficient operation and functioning of the General Secretary's Unit.
2. UNISON structures its work programme to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic lay member structures. The General Secretariat Manager together with other Senior National Officers will be responsible for contributing to the prioritisation of work plans and programmes arising out of the four key objectives determined by the National Executive Council:
- Meet the organising challenge posed by austerity measures, notably public expenditure cuts and increased outsourcing
 - Protect and secure decent employment, pay and pensions for UNISON members
 - Develop our national campaigns in support of quality public services and forge alliances with other trade unions and community organisations
 - Ensure UNISON communications infrastructure and internal management systems are efficient and effective
3. The General Secretariat Manager together with other Senior National Officers are key deliverers of operational plans which ensure that the resources for their areas of responsibility are directed towards the achievement of the NEC's objectives and priorities. Plans identify priorities and establish progress or performance indicators to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of all work and achievements.

The key aims of the union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:

- Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and community.
- Promote, safeguard and facilitate participation by all members in the union's democracy, with special regard to women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.

- Provide effective standards of service in the areas of representation and advice, information to members on the work of the union, the provision of financial benefits and the maintenance of educational facilities for members.
4. The General Secretariat Manager will have knowledge of working in an industrial relations and politically sensitive environment and some experience of negotiations or of working at a senior level in similar democratic organisations where consensus views are sought.
 5. While the General Secretariat Manager post is a demanding position, requiring attendance at meetings outside of the conventional working day, UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos. Post holders will therefore prioritise their working arrangements in such a way as to demonstrate by example their personal commitment to these aims in partnership with senior lay officials.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Grade: 3

Hours: 35 per week

Location: UNISON Centre, London (Some flexibility)

Reports to: The General Secretary

Responsible for: Head of the GSO

Overall Summary

This is a high-profile role working at the heart of the union to directly support the General Secretary, and the General Secretariat and with responsibility for developing and implementing a broad range of policy and service delivery initiatives.

As the General Secretariat Manager, you will be a critical bridge between the General Secretary and the National Executive Council; the wider lay body; together with policy experts, other departments and our Regions. You will also be expected to lead on key areas of the General Secretary's portfolio being their primary point of contact and providing robust policy advice and guidance to the General Secretary.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Policy Development

- Possess a clear understanding of complex policy issues, particularly around the public services agenda and the current political and economic challenges UNISON faces in these areas.
- Responsible for progressing the General Secretary's priorities, ensuring these are communicated effectively with timely and high-quality advice, and using your influence where needed, to provide guidance on General Secretary preferences.

- Use your relationships, judgement and understanding of the wider context in which the post exists to support the General Secretary in their work and to make a significant contribution to the process and substance of informed decision making.
- Identify the main issues in complex problems and provide a clear understanding of them and their impact on all stakeholders in order to provide informed advice to the General Secretary.
- Responsible for the commissioning and coordination of information, reports, and briefings on matters of importance from across the Union for the General Secretary.
- Providing policy advice and guidance, as appropriate, to senior lay committees, officers and other meetings and conferences, on behalf of the General Secretary and the GSG where appropriate.
- Providing support to the General Secretary in responding to government consultation documents and legislation.
- Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and international activities, as required.

Delivery of General Secretary's Priorities & Objectives

- Responsible for working with appropriate stakeholders to deliver the objectives set by the General Secretary and to report on progress as and when issues and decisions have been resolved.
- Apply your understanding and interpretation of the broader political context to your work, collaborating closely with special advisers to ensure political issues are considered – always providing balanced and impartial advice.
- Support the work of the General Secretary by preparing briefings and information for debates, questions and speeches which reflect UNISON's aims and objectives and which meet the priorities identified by the General Secretary; and to work closely with the Presidential team, the General Secretariat and other key leaders within the union similarly, when required to do so.
- Undertake research and provide advice, guidance and information to facilitate informed and meaningful discussions at national and regional level.
- Responsible for ensuring that appropriate research, advice and guidance is available to the General Secretary in preparation for meetings with political leaders, employers, employer organisations and other trades unions and representative bodies.

Communications

- Responsible for developing and maintaining effective communication strategies across a wide range of senior officers and other important stakeholders.
- To act as a principal contact with external organisations, including with Government, the Official Opposition, Devolved Governments, LGA, third sector organisations and the TUC.
- To formulate, draft, and sign off social media content on behalf of the General Secretariat, speaking with the authority of the General Secretary and on behalf of the Union.
- Working with senior colleagues to plan and devise strategic interventions on behalf of the General Secretariat and the wider Union.
- To draft speeches and other presentations for delivery to a wide range of audiences and which may be delivered in a multitude of settings, internal, external, domestic, and international.
- Provide an effective channel of communication for the Presidential team, the NEC, senior members of staff, other key stakeholders and with the public.
- Confidently engage with stakeholders and colleagues at all levels to convey clear messages on behalf of the General Secretary.
- Responsible for ensuring the submission of papers to various committees, sub-committees and working groups are undertaken in accordance with established procedures.
- Participating in appropriate meetings at all levels across the union.
- Ensuring that the interests of UNISON are always promoted when communicating on a national or regional basis

Managerial/Financial

- Management of the General Secretary office administrative support staff.
- Ensuring effective organisation of work, identifying priorities and providing assistance and guidance to support staff.
- Ensures effective mechanisms to manage and develop staff and involve them in decision making.

- Management of the General Secretariat budget.
- Authorising expenditure on items within UNISON's financial standing orders and practices and relevant guidelines.
- Working with the GSO admin team in preparing budgetary submissions and ensuring that activities are undertaken within the budgets allocated for activities and for assessing the financial implications of proposals and activities.

Administration

- Preparing reports, agendas, minutes and correspondence, as appropriate.
- Operating within the administrative arrangements and timetables set, including ensuring the maintenance of suitable files and records.
- Undertaking all work within the aims and objectives of UNISON, particularly as regards initiating and developing equal opportunities strategies and programmes.
- Deputising, as required, for senior officers.
- Undertaking any other duties relevant to the key tasks and responsibilities identified above.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

Assessment code

A – Application Form

PI – Panel Interview

ST – Selection Test

Heading	Selection criteria	Assessment
1. Strategic / Development	1.1 Ability to advise and support the General Secretary in strategic planning, organisational development and management change.	A/PI
	1.2 Commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities.	A/PI/ST
	1.3 Commitment to and understanding of UNISON's aims and values and trade unions.	A/PI/ST
	1.4 Ability to support and take forward the union's core activities of negotiating, recruiting, representing and organising.	PI
	1.5 Possess a broad understanding of current economic and political issues.	PI/ST

2. Managerial	<p>2.1 Ability to lead and manage a diverse, multi-functional team.</p> <p>2.2 Ability to contribute to the relevant management team.</p> <p>2.3 Ability to manage teams to deliver specialist services.</p> <p>2.4 Ability to select, develop and manage staff and their performance.</p> <p>2.5 Ability to develop, implement and manage work programmes including setting standards, monitoring and evaluating progress.</p> <p>2.6 Ability to manage and prioritise work under pressure.</p> <p>2.7 Ability to project manage and co-ordinate the work of others.</p>	<p>A/PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p>
3. Financial	<p>3.1 Ability to formulate, monitor and control budgets.</p> <p>3.2 Ability to ensure value for money and the effective use of resources.</p> <p>3.3 Ability to manage contracts with external providers of services.</p>	<p>A/PI</p> <p>A/PI</p> <p>A/PI</p>
4. Administrative	<p>4.1 Ability to develop efficient management and administrative systems.</p> <p>4.2 Ability to support to relevant office and lay committees.</p> <p>4.3 Ability to operate information systems.</p>	<p>PI</p> <p>PI</p> <p>PI</p>

5. Communications/ Coordination/ Facilitation	<p>5.1 Ability to effectively communicate across a range of audiences.</p> <p>5.2 Ability to write and present reports.</p> <p>5.3 Ability to represent the unit on external bodies.</p> <p>5.4 Ability to articulate UNISON policy with a range of audiences.</p>	<p>A/PI</p> <p>A/PI</p> <p>A/PI</p> <p>A/PI</p>
6. Specialist / Technical	<p>6.1 Specialist knowledge and understanding of complex policy issues.</p> <p>6.2 Ability to prepare accurate and clear policy briefs and policy campaign material.</p> <p>6.3 Knowledge of the workings of the domestic trade union movement.</p> <p>6.4 Extensive knowledge of UNISON, its policies and democratic lay structures.</p>	<p>A/ST</p> <p>A</p> <p>A/ST</p> <p>A/ST</p>