

# UNISON

## Job Brief – Policy Officer

### Introduction

1. UNISON is the UK'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 Policy Unit provides advice and assistance on policy development and campaigns across the full spectrum of political issues. Members of the team take responsibility for covering one or more of the essential areas identified by the union within public services and government policy. Team members are currently vital to the key defence of public services, austerity, pay, welfare reform and pensions campaigns.

The Unit services the National Executive Council - Policy Development and Campaigns Committee, and also provides support for the Service Group Liaison Committee and Campaign Fund.

### The Role

2. The Policy Officer is part of a team with responsibility for providing policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; providing leadership support and guidance to bargaining units, regions and branches and representing the Union with outside organisations, including public speaking and the media. The Policy Officer is responsible, within assigned areas, for:
  - Providing policy advice and guidance, as appropriate, to the National Executive Council, other committees and service group meetings and conferences.
  - Initiating, organising and undertaking campaign activities at all levels and participating, as required, in UNISON-wide campaign activities.
  - Initiating, developing, co-ordinating and implementing recruitment and organising plans and activities as part of policy campaign development.
  - Responding to UK government consultation documents and legislation.
  - Undertaking research and providing support and assistance to bargaining units, regions and branches and advising regional and national staff, as appropriate, on matters of policy.
  - Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and International activities, as required.

- Maintaining relations with other trade unions, campaign groups and appropriate government departments and agencies
  - Representing UNISON on government bodies and non-government agencies, as appropriate, at national levels.
3. UNISON structures its work programme to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic lay member structures. Policy Officers are 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 recruitment and organising challenge posed by austerity measures, including public spending cuts and increased outsourcing
  - Protect and secure decent employment, pay and pensions for UNISON members, promoting equality and challenging discrimination
  - Campaign in support of public services, building our political influence and forging alliances with unions and community organisations
  - Ensure that the union's information and communications infrastructure and internal management systems are efficient and effective to meet the changing needs of our membership
4. The Policy Officer is a key deliverer of the operational plan for the PDCC, which ensures that the resources for their areas of responsibility are directed towards the achievement of the NEC's objectives and priorities. The plan identifies PDCC priorities and establishes progress or performance indicators to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of all work and achievements.
5. The key aims of the union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:
- i) Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and in the Community.
  - ii) 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.
  - iii) 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.
6. To further these aims, the Policy Officers role is, to provide policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; to provide leadership support and guidance to bargaining units, regions and branches; to represent the union with outside organisations, including public speaking and the media.

7. Policy Officers have/maintain considerable knowledge of key public policy areas and experience of lobbying/consultation with government.
8. While the Policy Officers 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.
9. The role of the Policy Officer is generic and the allocation of their areas of work is the responsibility of the Head of Policy. Areas of work are interchangeable and are regularly reviewed in discussion with policy officers to meet the needs of the organisation and service to national departments, regions, branches and members.

**UNISON**  
**POLICY OFFICER**  
**POLICY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS**  
**COMMUNICATIONS, CAMPAIGNS AND POLICY**  
**REF: CCP/29T**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Grade: 3

Hours: 35 per week

Location: UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY

Reports to: Head of Policy

**Overall Summary**

The Policy Officer's role is to formulate and develop policy; to provide information and advice to UNISON's National Executive Council; policy support and guidance to regions and branches; and to represent the union to outside organisations. Officers are members of a team but should also be able to use their initiative in providing advice to officers and lay member structures and take individual responsibility for the carrying out of their functions in accordance with UNISON policies and agreed unit guidelines.

**Key Tasks and Responsibilities**

**Policy Development and Campaign Work**

- Providing policy advice and guidance, as appropriate, to NEC, other lay committees and conferences.
- Initiating, organising and undertaking campaign activities at all levels and participating, as required, in UNISON-wide campaign activities.
- Providing support and assistance to service groups, self organised groups, regions and branches on national policy matters.
- Responding to government consultation documents and legislation
- Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and international activities, as required.
- Initiating, developing, co-ordinating and implementing recruitment and organising plans and activities linked to campaigns.

## **Communications**

- Participating in appropriate meetings at all levels across the union.
- Collating, analysing and disseminating information, including conducting surveys, answering enquiries, writing reports and policy papers for officers and lay members, publicity and educational materials etc. as appropriate.
- Representing UNISON, its members and aims and objectives to external bodies, governmental departments and other appropriate organisations and individuals.
- Communicating on a national and regional basis, and representing the interests of the union.
- Making speeches and presentations in a wide variety of settings.
- Initiating and undertaking appropriate training activities.

## **Managerial/Financial**

- Ensuring effective organisation of work, identifying priorities and providing assistance and guidance to support staff.
- Authorising expenditure on items within UNISON's financial standing orders and practices and relevant guidelines.
- 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.

## **General/other**

- 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.

**The Candidate**

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate an ability to provide key policy advice and guidance to the union including lay member structures; provide leadership support and guidance to regions and branches and represent the union in dealings with external organisations.

The candidate will possess an excellent mix of competencies and skills to enable UNISON to influence and progress its political agenda.

**Assessment code**

**A – Application form**

**PI – Panel interview**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Selection criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>1. Thinking</b>	1.1 The ability to contribute to and influence strategic initiatives and solutions in a large and complex organisation	<b>A &amp; PI</b>
	1.2 Excellent analytical skills including ability to analyse complex information including legal, statistical and financial information.	<b>A &amp; PI</b>
	1.3 A high level understanding of, and ability to operate in, the political environment	<b>A &amp; PI</b>
	1.4 A commitment to personal and staff development that supports the union's objectives	<b>A &amp; PI</b>

<p><b>2. Interpersonal and Communication</b></p>	<p>2.1 Highly developed interpersonal skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and ability to motivate</li> <li>• Commitment to corporate working</li> <li>• Ability to work with senior management</li> <li>• Team Working</li> <li>• Mentoring and coaching</li> <li>• Handling difficult relationships</li> <li>• Handling complaints</li> <li>• Ability to work in partnership with lay members</li> <li>• Ability to develop co-operative working, both internally and externally</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Experience of promoting ideas in difficult situations and managing conflict</p> <p>2.3 Experience of influencing people at all levels internally and externally including the ability to influence and respond to national media using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Presentation skills</li> <li>• Writing speeches, correspondence, reports, newsletters etc</li> </ul> <p>2.4 Ability to work with national committee structures</p> <p>2.5 Awareness of and the ability to use Information and communications technology</p>	<p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A</b></p>
<p><b>3. Initiative and Independence</b></p>	<p>3.1 Track record of using initiative and independence over a broad area of activity involving decision making and discretion</p> <p>3.2 Experience of strategic campaigning</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrable experience of implementing decisions</p> <p>3.4 Demonstrable ability to research and prepare policy reports, including responding to government consultations</p>	<p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p>

	<p>3.5 Demonstrable ability to represent the union</p> <p>3.6 Demonstrable ability to work effectively with the Lay member structure</p>	
<b>4. Staff and Resource Management</b>	<p>4.1 Motivating and encouraging innovation including the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegate and supervise work</li> <li>• Build teams</li> </ul> <p>4.2 Demonstrable leadership skills gained in a trade union environment</p> <p>4.3 Ability to work on and manage projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and evaluation</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Evidence of contributing towards budget management including monitoring progress and resource control</li> <li>• Setting clear objectives</li> </ul>	<p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p>
<b>5. Physical Skills</b> <i>(with reasonable adjustments where required)</i>	<p>5.1 Keyboard skills</p>	<b>A</b>
<b>6. Relevant Knowledge</b>	<p>6.1 Understanding of and commitment to UNISON'S aims and objectives including the principles of equality and democracy</p> <p>6.2 Knowledge of key areas of employment law and collective bargaining</p> <p>6.3 High level understanding of current political issues</p> <p>6.4 Understanding of UNISON's organising and recruitment agenda</p> <p>6.5 In depth understanding of the role of trade unions and the national and local social and political environment in which the union operates</p>	<p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p>



	6.6 Knowledge of ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite.	<b>A</b>
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