

Unlock
for people with criminal records

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Recruitment pack

Policy officer: projects

Dear applicant

Thank you for taking the time to look at this recruitment pack and your interest in the role of Policy officer projects. The post is an important role for Unlock, as we grow our capacity to bring about systemic change for people who experience stigma, prejudice and discrimination as a result of their criminal record. Our five-year strategy sees us continue to sustain, develop and extend our work providing a voice and support for people who are facing stigma, prejudice and discrimination because of their criminal record.

We've achieved a great deal for the people we support and that is testament to the talents of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Through listening and engaging with people who face difficulties because of their convictions we have an impressive track record of identifying issues, finding solutions and putting them into practice. We also influence policy and create systemic change.

Whilst we are a small charity we punch above our weight; we're resourceful, impactful and work efficiently with like-minded organisations so that, together, we can achieve our aims. We are widely recognised as the go-to organisation in this arena.

We are looking for a Policy officer who is aligned to our aims and able to drive forward our policy projects, currently focused on removing barriers in employment and higher education for people with criminal records.

If you are motivated to help people move on positively with their lives and create a fairer and more inclusive society, this is the place for you. We are looking forward to meeting you.

Kind regards,

Angela Cairns
Chief executive

About Unlock

Our mission

Our mission is to advocate for people with criminal records to be able to move on positively in their lives. We:

- Support people with criminal records to navigate their way through challenging times
- Research and raise awareness of the systemic issues that people are facing
- Campaign for changes to legislation, policies and practices of government, employers and others.

Our vision

A fair and inclusive society where people with convictions can move on positively in their lives.

Unlock is an independent award-winning national advocacy charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record, often long after they have served their sentence.

We exist for two simple reasons.

Firstly, we help people to move on positively with their lives by empowering them with information, advice and support to overcome the stigma of their previous convictions.

To do this we, provide information, advice and support, through our [website](#), online tools and confidential peer-led helpline We help practitioners support people by providing [criminal record disclosure training](#). And we support [employers](#) and universities in treating people fairly.

Secondly, we seek to promote a fairer and more inclusive society by challenging discriminatory practices and promoting socially just alternatives.

To do this we [advocate for change](#), working at policy level to address systemic and structural issues. We listen to and consult with people, undertake research and produce evidence-based reports to inform policy makers and the public. We challenge bad practice, influence attitudes and speak truth to power. We co-founded and support the [Ban the Box campaign](#) and we are pushing for [#FairChecks](#), a fresh start for the criminal records system.



Unlock is an equal opportunities organisation committed to increasing diversity. Applications from candidates who are from racialised communities, have a disability or who are from a less privileged background, are particularly encouraged. We warmly welcome applications from all suitably skilled people regardless of background and we are especially keen to appoint people who have themselves met with and overcome the disadvantages of having a criminal record. A past criminal record is not a requirement for this role, nor is it a bar.

Terms of employment

Contract	Full time permanent
Salary	£29,801 per annum
Hours	37.5 hours per week. Normal hours are 9 am to 5 pm but we will consider flexible working requests. Occasional work outside of contracted hours may be necessary.
Location:	Home-based with visits to the Maidstone office as and when required, with a minimum of 6 per year. The role will also require travel to external meetings, mostly in London.
Holidays	20 days (with an additional day for each complete year served) + public holidays + 3 days between Christmas and New Year.
Pension	Automatic enrolment into Unlocks' contributory workplace pension scheme into which we contribute 6% of gross pay.
Probation period	6 months.

Job description

The role

Job title	Policy officer: projects
Reporting to	Director of policy and advocacy
Line management	N/A

Purpose of the post

Lead Unlock's policy-focused projects, currently 'Fair access to employment' and "Fair admissions to higher education." Both projects involve supporting and challenging employers to take a fair and inclusion view to the recruit/admission and participation people with criminal records. You will be working to prevent unlawful criminal record checks and influencing government policy in increasing the employment of people with a criminal record.

Main responsibilities and tasks

Activities

- Manage the day-to-day running of Unlock's work to improve access to employment and higher education, including:
 - Engage with employers, regulators and higher education institutions, giving support to them in improving policies and practices in their treatment of people with criminal records.
 - Working closely with our advice team (helpline, online support & case work), challenge employers, regulators and higher education institutions to improve policies and practices that have led to unfair treatment of individuals.
 - Work to prevent unlawful criminal record checks being done by employers, higher education institutions via the DBS.
 - Support the charities' work to influence government policy in our priority areas.

- Develop, maintain and update internal processes for demonstrating impact of work (e.g. internal reports, monitoring statistics, case studies, emerging issues and trends)
- Engage in policy issues where directly related to access to employment and higher education.
- Support the development of Unlock's wider policy work.

Communications

- Oversee the charity's communications with employers, including updating our website for employers (Recruit), developing new guidance, content, news posts and regular newsletters
- Contribute towards media work relating to access to employment
- Collate case studies demonstrating the need for, and the success of, Unlock's work, and highlighting those issues that require systemic change
- Liaise with relevant stakeholders to ensure the success of the work

Person specification

Attitudes and values

- Ambitious person that has a passion for making a positive difference and challenging inequality.
- Energetic and innovative in approach
- Enthusiasm for the aims and values of Unlock (E)
- A can-do attitude to solving practical problems (E)
- A commitment to Unlock's aims, values and approach (E)

Qualifications

- Degree or equivalent in social policy or related subject (D)

Experience

- Experience of project management (E)
- Experience of influencing policy and practice (E)
- First-hand experience of having a criminal record (D). (This position is **not** defined as a 'peer' position. A past criminal record is **not a requirement** for this role but **nor is it a bar**.)
- Experience of working with employers and / or higher education institutions (D)

Knowledge

- Recruitment processes and criminal records (D)
- Criminal records disclosure regime (D)

Skills and abilities

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills (E)
- Able to research, write and publish information aimed at a wide range of people (E)
- Ability to work in a small team with minimal supervision and self-motivated to excel (E)
- Ability to work constructively with a wide range of people, working in different ways – supporting, influencing and challenging where appropriate (E)

How to apply

To apply for this role:

- Download the job application form.
- Send your completed application form and an equal opportunity form by email to admin@unlock.org.uk with the subject line *Policy officer projects*.

We shortlist candidates by matching details on your application against the person specification for the role so please make sure your personal statement in the application form carefully addresses this. We're looking for clear evidence of your experience, skills and knowledge and we're interested in all relevant experience, including beyond paid employment, which might contribute to your ability to do the job. To help us recruit fairly we are using anonymous recruitment techniques. This means we will remove your name, gender and other identifying information when shifting and shortlisting candidates.

Closing date for applications is 12 April 2022. Shortlisted and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email by 22 April 2022. Due to our limited resources, we are unable to provide feedback if you are not invited to interview.

Interviews will take place on 29 April 2022 via Zoom.

If you have any questions about the application form or application process, please call 07358 204839 or email admin@unlock.org.uk.