

Policy and Research officer

Job Description and person specification

Role title: Policy and Research Officer

Salary range: £30,000 - £32,000 (per year, depending on experience)

Hours: Full time (37.5 hours per week)

Contract: Fixed term (12 months) with a view to extend, subject to funding.

Annual leave: 31 days (28 days + 3 days Christmas closure)

Location: London hybrid, with the option of remote-only work for an exceptional candidate.

Reporting to: CEO.

About the Work Rights Centre

Work Rights Centre is a charity founded by migrants, and for migrants. Every day our multilingual team of advisers support people who struggle with socioeconomic disadvantage to stand up to unscrupulous employers, apply for jobs, access benefits, and secure their immigration status. Since our foundation in 2016 we have supported over 3,300 individuals, recovered over £150,000 in unpaid wages, and helped more than 750 EU citizens to secure their status in the UK after Brexit. We're just getting started.

Our frontline team addresses the most urgent aspects of socioeconomic disadvantage. But to tackle it in the long-term, we need to change systems. This is why we are looking for a dedicated colleague to join our team, and drive our policy and research work with grit and grace.

Our policy and research work

The main aim of our policy influencing work is to create a world where no one lives in poverty. This takes nuance. Socioeconomic disadvantage does not have a singular cause, but intersects with immigration status security, access to welfare benefits, and the quality of employment. We seek to engage with stakeholders across each one of these domains. First, by providing clear accounts (briefing notes) of their role in migrants' precarity, and offering recommendations for how to do better. Second, by pursuing these recommendations in bilateral and multilateral relationships.

To date, we have used our frontline insights to produce several briefings which document the issues encountered by EU citizens after Brexit, and faced by Seasonal Workers on British farms. We worked with stakeholders across government, enforcement agencies, local authorities, and the third sector.

In the coming year, we will continue to monitor the impact of Brexit on vulnerable EU citizens (notably those with pre-settled status and on low-incomes), and document the issues deriving from the Home Office's visa-based response to the war in Ukraine.

Responsibilities

There are two main responsibilities in this position: contributing to our research work, and delivering on the charity's policy influencing agenda.

1. Research

We would like you to contribute to the production of our policy-oriented publications. This includes briefing notes, short blog posts, or responses to consultations. Usually, you will draw upon data from our extensive client management system (PowerApps), which captures demographic information, socioeconomic indicators, and specific issues related to our beneficiaries' immigration status, employment, and access to welfare benefits. This data is collected by our frontline team, and includes thousands of cases. Occasionally, you will also adjust the variables from our client management system or contribute to collecting primary data, to ensure that our evidence base remains well suited to our policy objectives. Working directly under the supervision of, and often co-authoring with the CEO, you will receive ample guidance on the format, tone, and desired impact of publications. But we expect you to trust your voice and analytical skills, and produce a good first draft. In practice, we count on you to:

- Plan the structure of publications, including the wider political economic context, the issues encountered by our frontline team, and what needs to change to address them;
- Analyse and visually represent data, including internal data from our client management system, and external statistics from trusted sources;
- Contribute to primary data collection when needed, by designing and distributing surveys, or conducting interviews;
- Review policy and academic literature as needed;
- Draft, revise, and adequately reference publications.

In every aspect of your work we expect you to uphold a high standard of factual accuracy and source attribution, and to keep your writing clear, concise, and intelligible to a general audience.

2. Policy

To make research impactful, we need to bring it to the eyes and ears of stakeholders with the power to implement our recommendations. This is why we want you to develop and cultivate relationships with policymakers and influencers. We trust you to:

- Stay up to date with policy developments which affect our beneficiaries;
- Contribute to maintaining a policy consultations calendar, planning our outputs accordingly.
- Monitor and develop our stakeholders map;
- Cultivate these relationships by taking part in 1:1 and group meetings, presenting our recommendations and acting as an ambassador for the Work Rights Centre at all times.

Flexibility. There is a lot to learn, and to offer, at the Work Rights Centre. The charity has grown substantially since our foundation in 2016, both in terms of casework, policy influencing, and media interventions. This relies on our ability to remain agile. We trust you to be responsive to our changing needs, and to adapt your workload and undertake any other duties that may be reasonably required.

Person specifications

Qualifications

- Graduate degree in social sciences or a related discipline - preferred, but we'll consider candidates with extensive relevant professional experience.

Knowledge and experience

- Good knowledge of the UK migration system, and key issues encountered by migrants.
- Three years' + professional experience working in a policy and/or research capacity.
- Experience of designing and undertaking research, analysing data and writing up findings.
- Experience of publishing evidence-based policy recommendations.

Skills

- Excellent data analysis skills, you are as comfortable presenting quantitative data as you are analysing interview transcripts.
- Excellent written skills, you are clear, concise, and never lack a call to action.
- Strong presentation skills, you are comfortable talking to an audience.
- Ability to deliver complex outputs, prioritising, and delivering in a timely fashion.
- Excellent IT skills, including Word and Excel.

Personal attributes

- Confident and resourceful, you can work to a high standard with minimal supervision.
- Enthusiastic and proactive, you are self-motivated by a strong sense of justice.
- You have a real commitment to the aims and values of the Work Rights Centre.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the migration policy ecosystem.
- Experience with data visualisation software (such as Datawrapper, or PowerBI).
- Knowledge of a language other than English.

Even if you are not sure whether you have all the experience, if you have the qualification, share our values, and trust your ability to make a positive contribution to our team, we encourage you to express interest. We encourage applications from candidates who have lived experience of the issues the charity set out to address. **NOTE:** applicants must have the right to work in the UK.

How to apply

Please send your CV and Cover Letter, including a link to at least one piece of published research or policy piece (eg: blog, report, briefing, or dissertation), to olivia.vicol@workrightscentre.org by Sunday, 28 May. Successful candidates will be notified shortly after the deadline, and interviews will be conducted from 29 May. We seek to appoint a candidate as soon as reasonably possible, and are prepared to accommodate hybrid working to ease their transition into the post.