



ROLE PROFILE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS LEAD



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POST:

Public Affairs Lead

SALARY:

£300 per day

CONTRACT:

6-month Fixed Term contract. 3 days per week (0.6 FTE)

LOCATION:

Hybrid working: One day a week in the London office (based in White City) combined with home-working and travel across our Youth Zone network as required.

REPORTING TO:

Director of Communications and Public Affairs

BENEFITS:

Agile working with flexibility in working hours; 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays (rising to a maximum of 30 days); birthday leave, additional annual leave purchase scheme; company matched pension; company sick, enhanced parental & adoption pay; Employee Assistance Programme, active and engaged networks to join (including Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) and access to Charity Worker discounts.



OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications from under-represented groups; in particular from Black, Asian, Mixed Race & other ethnically diverse individuals, people with disabilities, and members of LGBTQ+ communities. Our dedicated ED&I Group, with support from the Senior Leadership Team, is actively promoting and advancing diversity and inclusion at OnSide, ensuring a culture where everyone can be themselves and thrive.

ABOUT ONSIDE

Potential is everywhere. In every home on every street, from affluent suburbs to inner-city estates. The difference is that some young people get every opportunity to explore their potential. Others don't.

We're OnSide, a national charity that believes all young people should have the opportunity to discover their passion and their purpose. To find out what they've got and where it could take them.

We fund and build state-of-the-art, multimillion-pound Youth Zones in the country's most economically disadvantaged areas. We train the amazing people that run them. We offer continuing support via the nationwide OnSide Network, where they can learn and grow, share their stories and celebrate their success together.

These are brand new, purpose-built spaces fizzing with energy, and crammed with incredible facilities. They are staffed by skilled and dedicated youth workers who truly believe in young people - helping them see what they could achieve, and giving them the skills, confidence and ambition to go for it. This is life-changing support that helps tens of thousands of young people from a diverse range of backgrounds to thrive.

It's inspiring. It's empowering. And it works.

We know it works because we've been doing it for over a decade and we're in this for the long term. Every new Youth Zone is built on the know-how of the last. Every success story writes the first chapter of the next. And we're just getting started.

This is passionate, properly funded youth provision, with no ifs or buts. A unique partnership between young people and their community, local authorities and private business leadership, and a growing movement of supporters who believe that how we treat the next generation defines who we are as a society.

Because when we really invest in young people, we all benefit - from who they are now, everything they might become and achieve, and everyone they might touch and inspire. All they need is the chance to shine - an environment where they can be their best selves - and you just watch them go.

It's about opportunity.

THE ROLE

We are seeking an experienced and politically astute Public Affairs Lead (Head of level or equivalent) to manage and deliver OnSide's public affairs activity during a six-month period. While the position does not have any direct line management responsibilities, it will play an important leadership role within the organisation's public affairs function.

OnSide is in the final year of its strategic period, this role will focus on delivering to the existing strategy, taking the leading on Public Affairs initiatives within OnSide; working with CEOs and Coms Managers in the Youth Zone charities in the Network; and driving forward planned activity with key political and policy audiences.

The postholder will report to the **Director of Communications and Public Affairs** and will provide additional senior capacity within the team. The primary purpose of the role is to take ownership of day-to-day public affairs activity and operational delivery, enabling the Director to dedicate time to strategic priorities, organisational leadership, and longer-term

development work.

You will be expected to develop relationships with parliamentarians, government officials, sector partners and other stakeholders to advance understanding of OnSide's work and advocate for greater recognition and investment in youth provision.

The successful candidate will bring strong experience of stakeholder engagement, political and policy influencing, public affairs strategy, and the delivery of effective external affairs programmes within a complex environment.

JOB DESCRIPTION

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Public Affairs Delivery

- Identify in-year opportunities to raise awareness of OnSide's impact among policymakers and key decision-makers.
- Monitor political, policy and legislative developments relevant to youth services, education, health, levelling up, local government and related areas.
- Provide timely political intelligence and analysis to senior leaders within OnSide and the wider OnSide Network

Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain effective relationships with MPs, Peers, Ministers, Special Advisers, civil servants, local authorities and other key stakeholders.
- Develop stakeholder maps and engagement plans aligned to organisational priorities.
- Coordinate political and stakeholder engagement activities, including meetings, visits, roundtables and events.

Parliamentary and Policy Activity

- Draft high-quality briefings, consultation responses, speeches, correspondence, parliamentary materials and policy papers.
- Support parliamentary engagement initiatives and help coordinate activity around key political moments and policy announcements.
- Track relevant parliamentary activity and identify opportunities for engagement.

Youth Zone Advocacy

- Work with colleagues across OnSide and the Youth Zone Network to identify and develop compelling evidence, case studies and impact stories.
- Support visits by politicians, policymakers and influencers to Youth Zones across the Network.
- Translate operational insight and impact data into clear and persuasive advocacy materials.

Communications and Campaigns

- Collaborate with communications colleagues to ensure public affairs activity aligns with wider organisational campaigns and media activity.
- Contribute to the development of thought leadership content, reports, consultations and stakeholder communications.
- Help identify opportunities to position OnSide as a leading voice on youth work.

Events and Stakeholder Engagement

- Organise and deliver parliamentary receptions, roundtables, panel discussions, report launches and stakeholder briefings in Westminster and across the UK.
- Lead the planning and delivery of public affairs and stakeholder engagement events that enhance OnSide's profile and influence among key audiences.

- Manage OnSide's presence at major political and sector events, including annual party conferences.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitor and evaluate public affairs activity against agreed objectives.
- Maintain accurate stakeholder records and reporting systems.
- Provide regular updates to the Director of Communications and Public Affairs and the wider leadership team.

Promote equity, diversity, fairness and inclusion in all aspects of talent development.

Model behaviours of the OnSide culture; consistently defining ways to identify and reinforce behaviours that align with OnSide values

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the experience, skills, knowledge and aptitudes listed below throughout the recruitment process. However, if you don't meet every single requirement but feel you have strong and relevant transferrable skills or lived experience to draw from, we encourage you to apply anyway.

Why? Studies have shown that women, non-binary people and Black, Asian, Mixed Race & other ethnically diverse people are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet every single criteria/competency. OnSide are dedicated to driving change and to building diverse, inclusive, and authentic workplaces, so if you're excited about this role but your past experience doesn't align perfectly, **please tell us how your experience is transferrable**. You may be just the right candidate!

SELECTION CRITERIA
EXPERIENCE
Significant experience working in public affairs, government relations, policy, political engagement or a related field at Head of level or equivalent.
Experience developing and implementing public affairs or stakeholder engagement programmes.
Strong understanding of UK political and policymaking processes, including Parliament, Government and local government.
Experience building relationships with senior stakeholders and decision-makers.
Experience producing high-quality policy and public affairs materials.
SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND APTITUDES
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
Strong political awareness and judgement
Ability to analyse complex policy issues and communicate them clearly.
Exceptional relationship-building and influencing skills.
Highly organised with strong project management capabilities.
Ability to work independently, manage competing priorities and operate with senior internal stakeholders.
Commitment to evidence-based advocacy and collaborative working.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This role will be contractually based at our London (White City) office with hybrid working; in practice this will involve working one day a week in the office, combined with home working and travel across our Youth Zone network as required. It will also require occasional overnight stays. Homeworking risk assessments are carried out for all employees working from home.

OnSide will contribute towards reasonable travel costs for candidates invited to attend face-to-face interviews when they are travelling from outside the local area. This approach reflects OnSide's commitment to fairness and equality of opportunity.

In accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures, this position requires a **Basic** DBS check.



APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please submit a CV and a one-page cover letter via the OnSide website at [Work with OnSide - OnSide Youth Zones](#). While we encourage the responsible use of AI to support your application, your cover letter should be personally written and clearly set out how you meet the person specification.

In addition, please provide the following information:

- Confirmation you are eligible to work in the UK (documentary evidence will be required before a job offer is confirmed)
- Any reasonable adjustments we can make to assist you in your application or the selection process
- How you demonstrate your commitment to equity, diversity & inclusion.



CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

9am on Monday 19th October 2026

(We may close this role early if we receive a high volume of applications, so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.)

INTERVIEW:

(in-person in London) w/c 26th October 2026 (likely dates to be 27th or 29th October however TBC until the role is closed)

For information on how OnSide processes your data, go to
[OnSide Youth Zones Job Applicant Privacy Notice - OnSide Youth Zones](#)



OUR VALUES



YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST

Young people are at the heart of everything we do, inspiring and challenging us to deliver services that exceed their needs and challenge them to be the best they can be.

EXCELLENCE

We encourage ourselves and each other to be the best we can be through continuous learning and improvement, and a focus on finding solutions.



RESPECT

We act with honesty and integrity, celebrating diversity across the whole organisation and caring about each other, our young people and the Youth Zone environment.



AMBITION

We are passionate and driven in taking on new challenges, embracing new ideas and exceeding our ambitions for young people, the Youth Zones and our local communities.

COLLABORATION

We create and nurture strong, creative partnerships, working together to achieve better results and outcomes for young people.





THE DIFFERENCE WE ARE MAKING

As a Network we have an incredible impact on young people



£234M

INVESTED IN OUR NETWORK
TO SUPPORT YOUTH ZONE
DELIVERY AND PROGRAMMES



60K+

YOUNG PEOPLE ATTEND
YOUTH ZONES EVERY YEAR

404

STAFF HAVE BENEFITTED
FROM TALENT ACADEMY
TRAINING IN 2024/25



666K+

ENGAGEMENTS BY YOUNG
PEOPLE ACROSS
THE NETWORK



£221M

RAISED TO 'START UP' NEW
YOUTH ZONES NATIONWIDE



76%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE INCREASED
OR MAINTAINED SELF-
CONFIDENCE IN 2024/25

83%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE INCREASED
OR MAINTAINED THEIR
ASPIRATIONS IN 2024/25



78%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE IMPROVED
OR MAINTAINED THEIR
SOCIAL SKILLS IN 2024/25



£13+

SOCIAL RETURN ON
INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1
INVESTED INTO YOUTH ZONES



~£350M

OF SOCIAL VALUE GENERATED
ACROSS THE ONSIDE NETWORK
IN 2025/26