



JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Advocacy & Communications Coordinator

Hours: Part-time 21 hours / week (0.6 FTE)

Salary: £19,656 (equivalent to £32,760 pro rata)

Contract length: 12 months, with a 6-month probation period

Location: Remote, with occasional in-person meetings in Leeds and London

Application deadline: 11:59pm on Sunday 8 May 2022

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Research for Action is looking for an Advocacy and Communications Coordinator for a campaign to put public interest at the heart of local audit. Accountability is vital for democracy, yet currently lacking in local government. The purpose of your work will be to improve local democracy through focusing on audit, accountability and governance structures.

Your job will be to increase the impact of our research by developing and implementing a campaign to ensure that public sector audit is given adequate recognition within currently ongoing audit reform.

Research for Action's work focuses on improving local democracy and public accountability. Through research and campaigning together with residents, we have helped save councils across the UK millions of pounds that otherwise would have been diverted from public budgets into the financial sector. Our work has identified serious failures in the local audit regime, and we have seen that current audit arrangements do not respect the public's rights to accountability. Although public interest should underpin public audit, it remains undefined and obscured. As the government is currently reforming audit regulation, this is a crucial opportunity to ensure public audit is recognised as crucial for a functioning democracy.

This contract is initially for 21 hours a week for 12 months. We will be seeking further funding to continue the role.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Advocacy: You will develop a campaign strategy and take responsibility for advocating to put the public interest at the heart of audit reform, which the government is currently planning. This work focuses on influencing the shaping of the new audit regulator: the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA), and will involve building relationships with Parliamentarians, regulators and other decision-makers. You will also be monitoring policy and regulatory developments and responding, often as part of a network of organisations that are campaigning in this area. The campaign messages will be shaped by our research, and you will contribute to planning how to maximise the impact of our findings and publications, whether through events or other communications.

Communications: You will publicise our work on social media and take on press work when needed, working closely together with other members of the team to create effective communications based on our findings. You will participate in networks of organisations working in this similar policy space.

Organisational: This is a new role in a small organisation and you will be instrumental in shaping it. Alongside the advocacy and communications role, you will also be required to take on some core tasks involved in running a non-hierarchical organisation, such as planning organisational strategy and fundraising. You will be the third part-time employee joining Research for Action, and play a key role as we continue to develop the organisation. Although your role is initially only for 12 months, we are looking for a co-op member to join us on a long-term basis and will be fundraising to continue the position.

Outside of core hours (negotiable with the rest of the team but likely mid-week), your working hours are flexible. The work will involve some busier periods where you will need to work outside of your usual hours, which will be compensated by quieter periods and time off in lieu. We welcome applications from disabled applicants and support flexible working, and will make adjustments to ensure that no one is excluded from working for us due to access needs or barriers created by society.

Research for Action's existing staff members are based in Leeds and London. You will work mainly from home with a possibility for a part-time co-working space. The role will involve occasional travel to Leeds and London to attend in-person meetings.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We expect the applicant to meet most of the essentials listed here, but nobody meets everything and you should feel confident to apply if you are interested in this job and have relevant experience in either paid or unpaid context. A university degree is not a requirement.

Essential

- Demonstrable experience of campaigning and influencing change
- A strong communicator with the ability to transform complex issues and policy approaches into simple messages to the public and press
- Public speaking confidence
- Experience of generating media coverage
- A strong ability to build and hold relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and decision-makers
- Experience of influencing decision-makers, and an understanding of the workings of central and local government
- Experience of and commitment to collaborative working, as well as an ability to take initiative and be responsible for managing your own tasks
- Ability to communicate effectively, collaborate and network with a wide range of different people including fellow co-op members, groups we work with, other campaigners, funders etc
- Interest in and willingness to contribute to running a small, non-hierarchical organisation and an affinity to values of solidarity, care, anti-oppression, collaboration and constant learning

Desirable

- Experience of website maintenance
- Fundraising skills and experience
- Experience of community organising or co-ordinating a local campaign

ABOUT RESEARCH FOR ACTION

Research for Action is a worker co-operative undertaking research to support social, economic and environmental justice. Founded in 2017, our work aims to bring about change: by identifying points of intervention, countering dominant narratives, making struggles and inequalities visible and disseminating alternatives.

Our work initially focused on bank loans called [LOBO loans](#). These were risky and expensive loans that hundreds of local authorities across the UK had taken out, and as a result were paying interest rates up to three times higher than if they had borrowed from the central government. As a result of our work, together with residents and other campaigners, councils have exited over a billion pounds worth of these toxic loans.

In our work, we have made extensive use of public accountability rights and discovered serious shortcomings in local government audit and accountability structures. The campaign you will be working on is focused on public interest in the audit reform and has close links to our other areas of work. We are co-ordinating a network of 'citizen auditors' who scrutinise their local councils' spending and decision-making, and researching best and worst practice within councils to improve our understanding of existing governance and internal audit arrangements within councils. We also have strong links with other organisations working on different aspects of local democracy.

As a worker co-operative, our work is based on values of collaboration and solidarity. Our intention is to challenge social injustice both through the projects we work on and the ways in which we work. We are striving to find working practices that enable us to put care, autonomy and anti-oppression work at the heart of the organisation. We value constant learning and good, open communication, recognising that prefigurative working practices are a constant journey.

Equality Policy:

We see equal opportunities principles central to our work. We strive to promote a working environment that is democratic, safe and respectful, and promote equality in all aspects of our work. We oppose all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexuality, marital status, religion, age or disability, and strive to combat all forms of individual and structural discrimination.

We acknowledge that people from certain backgrounds are under-represented in progressive movements and are committed to doing what we can to correct this. We would particularly like to encourage applications from people of colour / Black, Brown, Asian and other minority ethnic people. The successful candidate will be selected purely on the basis of how well they fit the person specification, as judged by their application materials and their interview performance. Where two or more candidates are judged to be of equal merit, priority may be given to a candidate from a background less well represented at Research for Action.

What we offer:

Annual leave of 28 days pro rata.

We have a training budget for all of our employees and encourage learning and development. We pay a 3% employer's pension contribution in line with statutory requirements.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send CV + cover letter to info@researchforaction.uk with the heading 'Job application' by 11:59pm on Sunday 8th of May 2022.

Please also fill in an equal opportunities monitoring form [here](#). This is completely anonymous and the answers will not be connected to your application in any way.

The CV should include two people who we can contact for a reference on your suitability for the role. Please specify the capacity in which they know you - this does not need to be from formal employment. We will only contact referees following the interview. The cover letter (maximum 2 pages) should describe your skills and experience against the criteria listed above, as well as why you are interested in the role and what attracts you to working in a non-hierarchical co-operative.

Interviews will take place in Leeds or London between Tuesday 24th and Thursday 26th May, and those invited to an interview will be informed by 19th May. We are able to provide a contribution towards travel expenses, and we will provide details to applicants invited to an interview. If the Covid situation is a barrier to you travelling to meet us in person, we can discuss interviewing you online.

If you have not heard from us by 19th May, unfortunately this means that your application has not been successful.

Accessibility:

Please let us know if you have any accessibility requirements which would enable you to participate in the recruitment process more fully or which we might need to consider in relation to the selection process. Any requests will not affect the decision making itself. Please let us know if you would like to receive this information in a different format.

Due to the UK's racist border policies we can only employ people who have the legal right to work in the UK. We are required by law to carry out checks before employment starts. Sadly we are unable to arrange or sponsor work visas for applicants.