

**Senior Researcher – job description**

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| **Job Title:**  Senior Researcher | **Salary:**  £35,000-£38,000 depending on experience |
| **Responsible to:**  Director | **Responsible for:**  Junior research staff including interns |
| **Contract:**  Full-time, two year fixed term contract (with possibility of extension) | **Application deadline:**  Wednesday 14 December 2022 at 12 noon |

Pivotal is looking for a Senior Researcher to join our team. This is an exciting and unique opportunity to play a key role in Northern Ireland’s independent public policy think tank.

Pivotal aims to inform and influence public policy in Northern Ireland. We are ambitious for the future, seeking to promote evidence-based policy solutions that improve the lives of everyone who lives here. Pivotal is not politically aligned, and acts in the public interest for the common good.

Pivotal uses research, data and evidence of what works to influence public policy. We work together with policy makers, politicians, academics, the public and others.

We engage a wide range of people in debate about public policy, particularly those whose voices are rarely heard. We do research, publish reports, provide analysis, run events, facilitate discussions and engage with media and social media.

We are looking for an experienced and energetic Senior Researcher to become part of our team. Reporting to the Director, the postholder will produce research to contribute to Pivotal’s work programme, as well as accessing and using research, data and evidence from others.

This is a full-time job based in Belfast (hybrid working), although applicants requesting a different work pattern will be considered. There will be an expectation of occasional working outside normal hours depending on business need.

The appointment will be made for two years initially, with the possibility of extension subject to funding being in place.

To apply, please complete the application form providing full details of how you meet the criteria in the person specification for the role. Do not submit a CV or any other documentation. Please also complete the equal opportunities monitoring form.

The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Wednesday 14 December 2022. No applications will be considered after this time. Interviews will be held in early January 2023.

For more information about Pivotal, go to [www.pivotalppf.org](http://www.pivotalppf.org) . If you have questions about this role, please email [info@pivotalppf.org](mailto:info@pivotalppf.org) .

**Job role**

Main responsibilities

* Develop and manage a programme of research to help achieve Pivotal’s aim of improving public policy in Northern Ireland
* Produce and commission a range of research outputs
* Use research, data and evidence produced by others to contribute to Pivotal’s work
* Communicate research findings in an accessible and engaging way
* Manage the work of the research team, including supervising junior team members
* Contribute to the management and leadership of Pivotal, and play a full role in the staff team

Specific responsibilities

**Lead Pivotal’s research programme**

* Develop and manage the delivery of Pivotal’s research programme across a range of public policy topics
* Produce clear and accessible research outputs which present robust evidence and analysis in a range of formats
* Lead the commissioning of research from other organisations and individuals
* Monitor data, research and evidence produced by other organisations, and use it to inform Pivotal’s work
* Supervise more junior team members including interns and placement students

**Communications and policy development**

* Communicate research findings in interesting and engaging ways, with an emphasis on reaching a wide audience
* Communicate clearly and effectively in a range of different written formats, including reports, briefings, blogs, events and social media
* Present research projects and findings clearly in-person, for example at meetings, events and evidence sessions
* Use research to contribute to Pivotal’s analysis of how data and evidence should influence policy

**External engagement**

* Act as an ambassador for Pivotal, helping build up our reputation and influence
* Build up a network of contacts to contribute to Pivotal’s work
* Lead for Pivotal on sourcing and assessing data, evidence and research produced by others
* Participate in planning and delivering Pivotal events, particularly the presentation of research findings

**Management and supervision**

* Manage Pivotal’s research projects to ensure top quality outputs are produced on time and within budget
* Supervise more junior research team members to help them give their best and develop to their full potential

Other responsibilities

The main responsibilities and specific duties above give a broad outline of the functions of the post. However, these duties must be approached in a flexible manner, particularly since Pivotal is a small organisation, often operating in a fast-moving environment. The post holder will be expected to adapt to changing circumstances and undertake other duties appropriate to the post. The outline of responsibilities may change from time to time.

The post holder must operate at all times to the highest standard of personal behaviour, leading by example to demonstrate Pivotal’s values (in particular, political independence) and maintain its good reputation.

The post holder will:

* strive to preserve good working relationships with staff, volunteers, contacts and the Trustees, keeping the appropriate key staff members well informed of significant matters relating to the organisation.
* work in accordance with Pivotal policies and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection and confidentiality.
* respect existing work practices and procedures, undertake relevant training and development activities, and respond positively to new and alternative systems.

**Senior Researcher – Person specification**

Candidates must demonstrate that they have the following skills and experience:

Essential criteria

1. A third level qualification in a relevant discipline (e.g. economics, social policy, social research, politics, public policy) plus a minimum of two years’ relevant paid research experience.
2. Leading research projects of different types, including defining the scope, identifying suitable research methods, delivering the project, communicating the findings, and reviewing effectiveness.
3. Using research to develop public policy recommendations.
4. Communicating research findings and policy recommendations to multiple audiences in engaging and creative ways, both in writing and in-person.
5. Experience and expertise in qualitative and quantitative analysis, using a range of methods and tools to gather, analyse, use and present data. Familiarity with the different datasets relevant to public policy research and analysis in Northern Ireland will be needed.
6. Experience of supervising individuals and/or teams to help them contribute fully and develop their potential.
7. Ability to work independently and to tight deadlines in a challenging environment, including managing multiple workstreams and working flexibly to support others as part of a small team.
8. Passion for improving public policy in Northern Ireland and a commitment to the aims and values of Pivotal, including political independence. <https://www.pivotalppf.org/about-us/our-values>
9. Proficient in use of Microsoft packages.

Desirable criteria

1. Experience of using traditional and social media to communicate research findings, including creating social media content.
2. Understanding of the public policy process, and experience of engaging with civil servants and political representatives.
3. Experience of commissioning research from others

Please note that the desirable criteria may be used by the panel for short-listing if required.