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**Research and Engagement Officer**

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| **Job Title:** Research and Engagement Officer | **Salary: £30,000** 35 hours per week (applications for part-time hours will be considered) |
| **Responsible to:**Research Manager | **Location:**Working from home initially, then UU Jordanstown and possible remote working  |
| **Contract:**12 months (with possibility of extension) | **Start date:**As soon as possible |

Pivotal is looking for a Research and Engagement Officer to join our growing team and work with us on commissioned research projects.

Pivotal is an independent think tank looking at economic and social issues in Northern Ireland. We are ambitious for the future, seeking to promote 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 the public, policy makers, politicians, academics and others. We take a participatory action model approach to research to ensure that stakeholders are involved from early conception to final conclusions.

We engage a wide range of people in debate about public policy, particularly those whose voices are rarely heard. We complete research, run events, facilitate discussions and engage via social media.

We are looking for a Research and Engagement Officer to work on a COVID-19 project with the ESRC-funded International Public Policy Observatory (IPPO), and also on a project concerned with economic and social opportunities for young people in Northern Ireland. Amongst other tasks, the postholder will collect primary data within the community, complete literature reviews, engage in data analysis, and disseminate and communicate evidence amongst the Northern Ireland policy community and elsewhere.

This role is based at Pivotal’s office at Ulster University Jordanstown, although initially will be home-based given Covid restrictions. There will be an expectation of occasional working outside normal hours depending on business need.

The appointment will be made for 12 months initially, with the possibility of extension.

For more information about Pivotal, go to [www.pivotalppf.org](http://www.pivotalppf.org)

**Projects**

The postholder will be responsible for delivering significant parts of two main projects, working with colleagues at Pivotal and QUB and elsewhere:

1. Working with the Economic and Social Research (ESRC) funded International Public Policy Observatory concerning the social, economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 on public services, and helping local decision-makers develop strategies to address these impacts. This work will involve extensive engagement with public servants across the range of government functions in Northern Ireland, initially focusing on the areas of mental health in secondary education, elder care, and housing.
2. Participative research projects into young people’s economic and social opportunities. Pivotal is leading three new projects with young people in Northern Ireland:
	1. An investigation into education, skills and training options for 14-19 year olds in Northern Ireland.
	2. Retaining and regaining talent - a study of educational migration in Northern Ireland to explore why some young people leave Northern Ireland and do not return.
	3. Vision 2040 – an exploratory study of the aims and aspirations of young people for the future.

**Job role**

Main responsibilities

* Lead on establishing contacts and building networks for data collection in the public policy community and with schools/youth organisations
* Develop and deliver research programmes using a range of research methodologies
* Lead data collection and analysis within research projects
* Review policy and academic literature
* Disseminate and communicate research evidence to policy-makers
* Support administrative duties and general team responsibilities within Pivotal

External engagement

* Build and maintain networks with research participants
* Engage with researchers in other research organisations and higher education institutes across the UK and Ireland
* Act as an ambassador for Pivotal, helping build our reputation and influence
* Work effectively with Pivotal’s team members, Senior Research Fellows and other colleagues at Queen’s University and Ulster University

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. 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 and maintain its good reputation.

The post holder will:

* Strive to preserve good working relationships with staff, volunteers, clients 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.

**Research and Engagement Officer – Person specification**

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

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| **Educational and Professional Qualifications** | \*Essential | A third level qualification  |
| **Desirable** | A higher degree (MSc, or PhD) in a relevant discipline. |
| **Previous Experience/****Training** | \*Essential | At least two years’ experience in completing research to a high standard. |
| Essential | Experience of working as a team member to produce a research outcome.  |
| \*Essential | Experience of processing data to a high standard for internal or external stakeholders to improve outcomes. |
| Desirable | Experience of completing primary research within community settings.  |
| Desirable | Experience of using quantitative or qualitative analysis programmes, e.g. NVIVO, Qualtric or SPSS.  |
| **Research Activities** | \*Essential | Evidence of the ability to prepare research findings for a range of stakeholders through written and/or oral presentations. |
| Essential  | Experience of completing qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies within research. |
| \*Essential | Experience of engaging with influential stakeholders including public servants and others in the public policy making community to contribute to change.  |
| Desirable | Evidence of using research to create change.  |
| **Job Related Activities** | \*Essential | Awareness of the various datasets relevant to public policy research and analysis in Northern Ireland. |
| Essential | Willingness and ability to work remotely. |
| **Inter-Personal Skills** | Essential | Commitment to the aims and values of Pivotal <https://www.pivotalppf.org/about-us/our-values>  |
| \*Essential | High level of written and verbal communication skills. |

Areas marked \* will be assessed at application stage and the remaining competencies will be assessed at interview.