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# Director of Policy, External Affairs and Research

**Location:** Home-based with travel

**Contract:**, Fixed term 24 months

**Hours of work:** 37.5 hours per week

**Salary:** c. £70,000

**Deadline for applications:** 6th April 2025

## **Applicant information**

## About us

**Libraries Connected -** [**www.librariesconnected.org.uk**](http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk)

Libraries Connected has 25 years of experience as the professional body representing 175 Heads of Library Services in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies. Libraries Connected takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practices, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service.

***Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We believe modern public libraries should be the cornerstone of the community and should deliver a diverse spectrum of local needs around information, learning, literacy, employment and digital skills, health, culture and leisure.***

Libraries Connected’s role is to:

* **Represent** the public library sector nationally, regionally and locally and to communicate the value of libraries to decision makers and to a limited extent to the general public.
* **Connect** partners to local libraries, by brokering national partnerships with a wide range of partners around the delivery of services and for the attraction of funds, by working together and making optimal use of resources.
* **Improve** the provision of local public library services by developing and disseminating standards of best practice, provide training and development for library staff, facilitating a network of library leaders across the UK.
* **Drive** innovation and new thinking around the important role of libraries in a modern society.

We are a small tightly knit team of 18 people, and work using a dispersed model according to values developed by the team.

At Libraries Connected, our ethics underpin everything we do and help us to ensure that we live our values, every day and in all areas of our work. This includes making sure that the people and organisations we work with share our values and our commitment to enriching people’s lives, and that we focus on the activities that will bring the most benefit to our members.

* **We are Supportive.** We respond to the varied, emerging needs of our members and their communities to enable libraries to learn from each other, and other sector leaders, so that they can safeguard and improve their services.
* **We are Inclusive.**We work with our members and partners to design and deliver our work and to determine our strategic priorities because we are committed to representing the diverse communities and libraries which we serve.
* **We are Open.**We are in constant communication with our members and partners on all levels to learn from their experiences, reflect on our practice and develop our services. We welcome challenge and new directions for our work.
* **We are Ambitious.** We believe that libraries are an essential part of the solution to a range of society’s needs. We promote innovation and collaboration to ensure that libraries are recognised locally and nationally.

## **About the role**

**Our Policy, External Affairs and Research Team**

We are a small organisation with big ambitions for the library sector.

As part of our ongoing growth, we are now establishing a new team to grow our work to advocate for the sector, influence policy, scan horizons, deliver research and analyse data.

This is an exciting opportunity to establish and recruit a new team, and to set our priorities for this area of work through our new strategic plan up to 2031. This role will be part of our Senior Leadership Team. It is initially for two years, but we hope we can generate income to sustain the role and the team as its scope expands.

Since we were established in 2018, we have worked hard to develop an influential relationship with government, grow our media presence and to develop evidence-based briefings for our members.

However, the Trustees are ambitious to increase the impact of our work in this area, so have now agreed we need to develop a new team to bring in specialist expertise and increase our capacity.

The team will incorporate our existing communications and advocacy team of two, and have provision for two further roles. The Director will have the opportunity to define and recruit the two new roles, in line with the priorities they set for the team’s work.

The team will lead our work in these areas:

* Policy: developing strong relationships with government (national, regional, local) in order to influence policy and funding streams to benefit public libraries.
* External Affairs: developing our media, social media and website presence, managing key stakeholder relationships, gathering political and contextual intelligence, producing briefings and fact sheets.
* Research: developing our data analysis capacity, leading our research strategy and developing academic research partnerships.

This team will work on three levels:

* National – with a focus on central government, national funders, devolved governments and partners
* Regional – with a new focus on combined authorities
* Local – supporting our member Heads of Service to advocate locally for the impacts they make and the resources they need.

## **Team structure**

## **Job profile**

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**Reports To:** CEO

**Main purpose:**

Your role.

* Lead and inspire ambitious policy, advocacy and influencing strategies to achieve policy change in the best interests of public libraries - through effective and aligned policy, public affairs and campaigning plans to influence change
* Develop our media and social media to grow our influence, whilst remaining as the authentic voice of public libraries
* Build and grow strategically aligned external partnerships and coalitions - adding value, yet maintaining Libraries Connected’s own presence externally.
* Develop a strategic plan for the new team, and support the development of our new corporate strategy for 2027-3, and recruit the new team.
* Develop a proactive stakeholder management strategy to:
  + Lead on our relationships with national governement, with a focus on developing new relationships with key departments including MHCLG, DSIT, DoE and DoH.
  + Lead the strategy for our relationships with combined authorities and the devolution agenda
  + Lead our engagement with local governement and anlysis of key policy drivers and trends impacting on libraries
  + Develop our relationships with allied organisations to crreate coalitions of influence
* Develop our research and data analysis strategy and develop academic and other research partnerships
* Lead our work on horizon scanning to identify challenges and opportunities for the library sector
* Play a proactive role in the Senior Leadership Team, support cross-organisational develoipment and support evaluation and legacy planning for our projects, in alignment with key national/regional priorities
* Be an authoratative representative for the organisation externally with paretners, at events and to the media.

**Key relationships**

* Works with the network of library leaders whose voice informs all our work.
* Works with the Chief Executive, Commercial Director and Programmes Director who together form the Senior Leadership Team*.*
* Works with the Board to support their strategic thinking.
* Works with the Regional Team to support their work with our regional networks and combined authorities.
* Works with colleagues across the organisation to support developments and strategic forward planning.
* Manages a team of four.

**About You - Person specification**

This is a new role for us so we are keen to understand from your experience how you can shape the role. You don’t need to meet all the skills and experience, but we would be keen to hear from you about what you feel you can bring to the role and how this matches to how we can prioritise this work.

**Knowledge/ Qualifications**

**Policy**

* Demonstrable experience of engaging with and influencing of policy development and legislation within UK government, good political understanding and contacts.
* Sound understanding of local and devolved government and the opportunities presented to libraries by the changing landscape.
* A strong understanding of how to shape the news and political agenda and influence the policy-making processes.
* Experience of “translating” policies to a sector or organisation, identifying the opportunities they present.

**External affairs**

* Substantial track record of stakeholder management at senior levels across government, the public and voluntary sectors.
* Proven ability to communicate and influence effectively at all levels and to demonstrate excellent listening skills.
* Good understanding of how media can influence change, and track record of growing an organisation’s media profile.

**Research and data analysis**

* Experience in developing research strategies, in building research partnerships or funding bids, and in commissioning research
* Ability to see stories in data and reports, to find and develop stories and to make stories simpler, more compelling and memorable.

**Management and leadership**

* Senior level experience within an organisation, including work with the Board and support for cross-organisational development in a collaborative and supportive manner.
* Adept at prioritising, to make most impactful use of time and resources.

**Behaviours/ Competencies**

* **Strategic Thinking:**

Ability to assess complex issues, identify potential impacts, and develop comprehensive policy strategies with long-term vision.

* **Communication Excellence:**

Articulating complex concepts clearly and persuasively to diverse audiences, including policymakers, stakeholders, journalists, our members and the public, both verbally and in writing.

* **Collaboration:**

Building strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, fostering consensus, and working effectively across teams to achieve our objectives.

* **Political Acumen:**

Understanding the political landscape across national, local and regional government, navigating diverse perspectives, and identifying opportunities to effectively influence policy decisions.

* **Research and Analysis:**

Conducting thorough research, analyzing data, and providing informed insights to support policy development, advocacy and fundraising.

* **Problem-solving:**

Identifying challenges, developing creative solutions, and adapting strategies to overcome obstacles.

* **Leadership:**

Inspiring and motivating teams to achieve their goals, providing clear direction and guidance.

**Circumstances**

* This role will be home-based.
* Travel within the UK will be required.
* It is possible to negotiate flexible working across the week.

**How to apply**

* Please send to [info@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:info@librariesconnected.org.uk) your CV and a covering letter, setting out relevant experience and telling us how you fit the requirements of the role description by midnight on 6th April 2025.
* We do not accept covering letters generated by AI.

**Working Hours:** Standard working hours are 37.5 per week, and a standard work pattern of 9 am to 5.30 pm with an hour for lunch. For this role, flexible working arrangements are possible if agreed in advance, with core hours of 10 am to 12 noon, and 2 pm to 4 pm.

**Holidays:** 25 days per year (for full time roles). Carry over of holiday from one holiday year to the next is only allowed in exceptional circumstances and if agreed well in advance.

**Pension:** Employees will be auto enrolled in an approved pension scheme that is managed under a Pension Master Trust arrangement. Libraries Connected will contribute 5% of qualifying earnings on top of employee contribution.

**Sick Pay:** Arrangements for payment during periods of sickness absence are as follows:

* 0 – 6 months service: Statutory Sick Pay only
* 6 months to 2 years’ service: 4 weeks full pay
* 2 years to 5 years‘ service: 4 weeks full pay & 4 weeks half pay
* More than 5 years’ service: 8 weeks full pay & 8 weeks half pay.