



MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Policy & Public Affairs
Officer

Permanent

Part-time

Belfast



Thank you for your interest in joining the superb team at the Mental Health Foundation.

This is a fantastic opportunity to join a growing organisation with an urgent and vital mission. We work to prevent mental health problems and support people to live with good mental health.

Mental health is one of the most important foundations for a long and healthy life. But we need real change at a national, community and individual level to tackle inequalities and help people support and protect their mental health.

For 75 years, we have been pushing forward the frontiers in our understanding of mental health. Interest has never been greater, and we are ambitious and committed to making the biggest difference we can, motivated by our conviction that everyone deserves good mental health. We bring together research, community programs, public information and advocacy working together towards our four strategic objectives that guide our work.

We are a people powered charity that has the financial resources to achieve a step change in our reach and impact. And we are building an organisation that lives its values and has a strong and diverse team that is dynamic, energetic and committed to working together.

There is much more to do, and we are looking for an exceptional Policy & Public Affairs Officer to enable the Mental Health Foundation to be the most effective it can be.

In this document we present information about the Foundation and about this vital role.

If you are up for the challenge, I hope you will get in touch.

Kind regards



Mark Rowland, CEO





WHO WE ARE

Everyone deserves good mental health

Mental Health Foundation is the UK charity focused on preventing poor mental health and building and protecting good mental health.

We're the home of Mental Health Awareness Week.

Mental health is one of the most important foundations for a healthy and long life, and we believe everyone deserves good mental health.

No-one living in the UK should be deprived of the opportunity for good mental health because of who they are, the community they come from or where they live.

Poor mental health is not inevitable. There are things we can do as individuals, in our communities and across society to help us all to live with good mental health.

Our values

- Side by Side
- Walking our Talk
- Determined Pioneers
- Making a Difference

We're challenging the way things are done and creating fundamental change in the UK's approach to mental health by:

- Researching and developing new and more effective ways to support good mental health
- Providing everyone with evidence-backed advice and resources they can trust
- Running national campaigns and working with local communities to nurture good mental health
- Working with organisations across the UK and influencing decision-makers at all levels, to take the valuable lessons we've learned and adopt solutions that are proven to work.

We work across the four nations of the UK with offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London.

Together, we can help everyone have better mental health. Join us.



ABOUT THE ROLE

Place of work:	Hybrid working remotely and at the Belfast offices: 14 College Square North, Belfast, BT1 6AS
Grade:	Grade E, Scale points 1 to 4
Salary:	Starting at £31,350 rising to £35,381 pro rata to 0.6 FTE
Contract type:	Permanent
Hours:	21 hours (part time) (3 days per week) Reduced to 19.2 hours on the same pay (to June '25) as part of our 32-hour week trial
Department:	Devolved nations team – Northern Ireland
Reports to:	Head of Northern Ireland
Responsible for:	Volunteers / Students / Interns on occasion as needed
Budget responsibility:	none

Job purpose

Supporting the development and delivery of the Foundation's policy and public affairs programme and working across the Foundation so that policy informs and supports our work. This role will include day to day management of a portfolio of policy and public affairs work, including occasional specific projects, and engagement with external stakeholders to pursue the organisation's policy objectives and help to achieve policy changes at a national and local level.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Strategic

- Lead on specific policy priorities, as determined by the Head of Northern Ireland.
- Work closely with the Head of Northern Ireland and the Policy and Public Affairs team to develop and deliver the Foundation's policy objectives through policy and public affairs work.
- Contribute to the development of the Policy team's strategy.
- Develop and maintain strong professional networks in support of the Foundation's policy work.
- Support the establishment and maintenance of effective partnership arrangements with other organisations, as agreed, to strengthen the Foundation's influence.

Operational

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of policy and legislative developments affecting public mental health and particular priority policy topics for the Foundation.
- Monitor the Assembly and wider policy environment weekly to identify opportunities for the Foundation to influence in accordance with our policy priorities.
- Develop and keep up-to-date profiles of all Members of the Legislative Assembly and, with the support of the Head of Northern Ireland, develop a network of MLAs who will influence the Foundation's policy priorities.
- Attend and contribute to All Party Groups as requested by the Head of Northern Ireland.
- Support the Head of Northern Ireland in the delivery of high-profile, well-attended public affairs events.
- Carrying out background research, developing influencing plans, responding to government consultations and providing briefings for politicians and other external stakeholders.
- Ensure the Foundation's stakeholders, including people with lived experience, are involved in developing policy work and strategy.
- Respond to requests for policy advice from Foundation staff, external organisations and members of the public, including people with lived experience.
- Produce policy material for the Foundation's website.
- Act as a representative of the Foundation at external meetings, events and conferences as agreed.
- Deputise for other team members in their absence or where requested.
- Carry out administrative duties as required.
- Travel occasionally within the UK to attend events, including party conferences.

Managerial

- Support and supervise volunteers and students where necessary.
- Deputise for the Head of Northern Ireland where requested.

Communication / Liaison

- Liaise with the communications team to develop press lines on our policy work.
- Liaise with colleagues across the Foundation in other departments as required ensuring they are provided with the policy information and support they require.

General

- To promote and support the achievement of the Foundation's mission, goals and values.
- To support the strategic aim of changing policy & practice.
- To act as a positive ambassador for the Foundation in all opportunities.
- To maintain a high standard of probity in professional, personnel and financial matters, maintaining good relations with colleagues and external partners and to act in accordance with the Foundation's staff code of conduct.
- To uphold and promote the Foundation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the value of lived experience.
- Safeguarding is everyone's business – Mental Health Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all its beneficiaries, those who surround them, its staff, volunteers, and anyone else who comes into contact with its services and therefore expects all trustees, staff, and volunteers to share this commitment.
- To engage in learning and development activities appropriate to the role.
- To have due regard to health and safety issues.
- To undertake any other duties as may reasonably be required.

This job description is not contractual and is liable to change over time.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth knowledge of policy development systems and processes in Northern Ireland.• Understanding of public affairs work in Northern Ireland.• Knowledge of the mental health policy landscape in Northern Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of the issues impacting minoritised communities in Northern Ireland and the UK.• Understanding of the social determinants of mental health.• Understanding of public affairs work in a UK context.
Skills and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable writing skills, including the ability to write precisely and quickly for various audiences.• Proven communication and interpersonal skills.• Proven ability to critically analyse complex legislative, policy and research documents.• Ability to work within and across various teams to deliver results.• Proven ability to organise events.• Skilled in policy horizon-scanning, stakeholder mapping and engagement.• Skilled in developing and sustaining partnerships with diverse organisations and individuals across the political spectrum.	

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in the policy field in Northern Ireland. • Experience of working with the Northern Ireland Assembly. • Experience working with groups who experience inequality and adversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working across the UK, and awareness of the differences between the four jurisdictions and the implications of these.
MHF requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to working in accordance with the Foundation's Essential Principles as laid out in the Foundation's Strategy. • Self-sufficient in use of information and communications technology. • Ability to self-manage a full and varied workload and meet deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Competencies for working at the Mental Health Foundation

We expect all employees to be able to use these competences to a high level in their roles.

During the recruitment process, at interview stage, we look for evidence of all these competencies.

- Expertise, knowledge and analysis
- Communication, influencing and promotion
- Relationships and partnership working
- Service focused
- Business aware
- Strategic thinking and decision making
- Leadership
- Adaptability and personal responsibility
- Innovative and creative
- Committed to personal development