

Public Affairs Officer

Salary: £29,000-33,000, depending on experience and pro-rated.

Terms: Part-time - either 2 or 3 days per week.

About Voice 21

Voice 21 is the national oracy education charity. We exist to empower every child to use their voice for success in school and life. Our work transforms learning and life chances through talk by increasing access to a high-quality oracy education for those that need it most. Follow the links to find out more about [why oracy is so vital](#) and the [impact Voice 21 has](#).

Your opportunity

Tackle a vital challenge, with great people. Voice 21 exists to transform childrens' learning and life chances through talk and we are aiming to be working with 2,000 schools a year by 2025. To reach this goal we recruit great people and give them real responsibility, training and support.

Output focused culture, with flexible working opportunities. We have an agile and flexible approach – our team can work when and wherever works best to deliver the requirements of their role. For staff working at home, we support them to create a workspace and provide technology that enables them to work effectively.

Real development opportunities. We believe in supporting people to develop the skills they need to be excellent – whether this means funding external training, finding a mentor to support them or giving them the time to learn from others in the organisations through our regular CPD sessions. We also offer paid study leave for team members taking part in formal studies outside of work.

Great benefits. 33 days holiday (inclusive of bank holidays) and additional Christmas closure period. Holiday entitlement increases linked to length of service, 5% employer contribution to pension, interest-free season ticket, cycle and technology loans, employee assistance scheme.

For more information on why we think you should apply for the role, see the “Why work for us” section at the end of this job description.

Your purpose

To build Voice 21's influence in political circles and to foster policy, legislative or regulatory changes which are conducive to raising the status of oracy in the education system, prompting more schools to work with us to improve their oracy provision in line with our-five year strategy to grow to reaching 1900 Voice 21 Oracy Schools by 2025.

Your responsibilities

Strategy

- Work with the Head of Engagement (External Relations), Director of Engagement and CEO to devise Voice 21's strategic and operational plans for public affairs, in line with our five-year strategy.

Public affairs

- Secure the support of key political stakeholders (including MPs, civil servants, regulatory bodies such as Ofsted, Regional Schools Commissioners and other sector-shaping figures) for our work, through written briefings, events and meetings.
- Provide secretariat and support work for the Oracy All-Party-Parliamentary Group (for which Voice 21 acts at the secretariat) and give its members the support, content and briefings they need to place oracy at the forefront of education policy debates.
- Produce briefings, presentations and other key documents to raise awareness of our work as required.
- Organise visits to Voice 21 Oracy Schools for key political stakeholders, to raise their awareness of oracy and our work.
- Form strong partnerships with like-minded organisations in the education sector to strengthen our calls to raise the status of oracy.
- Harness the influence of our 840+ Voice 21 Oracy Schools in supporting our public affairs strategy, ensuring the voice of our members comes through clearly in all our outputs and communications.

Your progression

Within 3 months, you'll have:

- Reviewed Voice 21's current public affairs activity, strategy and approaches.
- Introduced yourself to existing key contacts in the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, partner charities and other influential stakeholders.
- Organised impactful visits for MPs and other key stakeholders to visit Voice 21 Oracy Schools and used these visits to generate awareness of our work in education, policy and media circles.

Within 6 months, you'll have:

- Helped to devise and start implementing a new public affairs strategy to create the conditions in which Voice 21 can grow its reach across the education sector
- Produced a range of briefings and events to secure better engagement with our work at a political level.
- Worked with members of the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group and other key stakeholders to develop Voice 21's manifesto asks for the next general election, and garnered support for these from schools and other external organisations.

From 6 months onwards, we expect for you to be:

- Regularly delivering communications and events that strengthen relationships with key existing stakeholders and increase their engagement with Voice 21.
- Spotting opportunities as they arise in education policy to raise the profile of oracy and our work.
- A trusted and influential partner to our key political stakeholders - providing them with timely information, compelling communications and engaging events.
- Forging new relationships with key political stakeholders whose support and voice will help us to achieve our mission.

This job is for you if you...

- You are an excellent communicator, both out loud and on paper - your words leap off the page, your presentations turn spectators into supporters and your conversations create lasting connections.
- You are meticulously well-organised and can be counted on to deliver anything you are responsible for on-time, with a high-level of attention to detail.
- You have a detailed knowledge and understanding of politics, Parliament, and the legislative process in Westminster and the devolved administrations.
- You have a good understanding of the UK's education system, particularly the current debates in education policy and the most pressing issues that affect schools today.
- You have demonstrable experience of persuading people to commit to a cause you believe in.
- You love building strong relationships and thrive in a people-centric culture.

Who you'll work with:

- The Head of Engagement (External Relations) and Director of Engagement, as well as wider Engagement team (especially communications)
- Learning and Impact team- especially research and policy
- Operations - especially finance and organisational planning
- Senior stakeholders and supporters including existing donors

Where you'll work: Remote, with regular travel to our London Office and elsewhere and occasional overnight stays required.

Contract: Permanent, subject to successful probation review at 3 months.

Application details

To apply:

Please send your most recent CV and a document answering the questions below to careers@voice21.org with the subject "Public Affairs Officer application":

- Tell us why you want to work at Voice 21. What is it about us and our mission that excites you? (Max. 400 words).
- Making direct reference to the job description (both the 'Your responsibilities' and 'This job is for you if...' sections), please tell us the three main reasons why you would make an excellent Public Affairs Officer (Max. 400 words).
- Tell us about something you have achieved recently in a professional context that you are proud of (Max 200 words).
- Please specify where you saw the job advertised.

Please also click [here](#) to fill out our Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form

Closing date: 6pm, Sunday 16th October.

Interview date: Phone interviews are expected to be on w/c 10th October, with full interviews later that week or the week after. All interviews will take place over Zoom.

Start date: As soon as possible, but we will be flexible for the right candidate.



Questions: if you have any questions about the role, or would like to discuss it before submitting an application, please contact Alex Newton, Director of Engagement (alex@voice21.org)

Valuing every voice

Voice 21 believes that every voice should be heard and valued. We are committed to the equal treatment of all current and prospective employees and do not condone discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, or marriage and civil partnership. We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply and join Voice 21.

Why work for us?

We hope that we have given you a good sense of what life at Voice 21 is like and what the role entails - please see below for some more reasons to apply!

Holiday: 25 days annual leave plus additional Christmas closure period. Holiday entitlement increases linked to length of service.

Benefits: Employer contribution to pension (5%), interest-free season ticket, cycle and technology loans and work from home allowance.

Wellbeing: We provide an Employee Assistance Programme through Health Assured which provides all Voice 21 employees 24/7/365 support if needed.

The way we work: We have an agile and flexible approach – our team can work when and wherever works best to deliver the requirements of their role. For staff working at home, we support them to create a workspace and provide technology that enables them to work effectively. You will also have regular opportunities to get together as a whole staff and in your team, including away days, social events and other development events.

Development opportunities: We believe in supporting people to develop the skills they need to be excellent – whether this means funding external training, finding a mentor to support them or giving them the time to learn from others in the organisations through our regular CPD sessions. We also offer paid study leave for team members taking part in formal studies outside of work. If you want to volunteer as a school governor, trustee or in some other capacity for a mission-aligned organisation. We support our team to take on these commitments without taking annual leave.

Voices of Voice 21

We recently asked our team what they enjoy most about working at Voice 21. Below is a selection of their responses:

“I really enjoy working in an organisation that strives for innovation and is rooted in research of what actually works for teachers in the daily life of a classroom and a school curriculum.”

“At Voice 21, there is a strong culture of sharing expertise and this ensures that your voice is valued and ideas heard, no matter your role. Although a lot of the day-to-day work is virtual, relationships are strong.”

The very purposefully planned in-person meetings help these relationships to grow and flourish, as does the high level of collaboration in teams.”

“One of the many things I love about working at Voice 21 are the opportunities for professional development. Working in a small, fast-growing organisation has given me the chance to grow professionally and to expand my skill set in a supportive environment.”

“I find it inspiring being part of the Voice 21 team - being surrounded by passionate, mission-driven people makes me want to bring my best every day, because I know that my fab colleagues won't let a good idea gather dust - everything will be snapped up and built into something that helps us make a difference for the students in our schools.”

“Since working at Voice 21, I've been invited to take part in multiple projects and tasks outside of my ‘core role’, because we're encouraged to develop our areas of interest and expertise across the board. It's incredibly refreshing to work for an organisation that sees every employee as a key asset.”
