



Application Pack

Policy and Parliamentary Lead

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Policy and Parliamentary Lead at Close the Gap. This application pack provides you with information on the role, the benefits of working at Close the Gap, and how to apply.

If you require this information in another format to meet your access needs, please let us know at info@closethegap.org.uk.

1. About Close the Gap

Close the Gap is Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market participation. Our vision is for a Scotland where all women have a good working life. We work to achieve this by influencing policymakers to develop and implement gender-competent policy around women's labour market participation; developing research and insight into women's diverse experiences of employment; producing guidance, products, and services that will enable and influence employers to address the causes of gender inequality in their workplace; and designing guidance and tools to build capacity in trade union reps to advance women's workplace equality. Close the Gap has 25 years' experience of influencing change and delivering improved outcomes for women in Scotland.

We are a small team that thrives on working collaboratively across our areas of work and value the benefits this brings to the organisation and to staff.

As an organisation whose work is focused on labour market equality, Close the Gap offers the following benefits to staff:



- Flexible working options in hours, time, and location to support healthy work-life balance
- Time off in lieu policy
- A shorter working week of 34 hours
- Sector-leading employer pension contribution of 10%, with no mandatory employee contribution
- 28 days (FTE) annual leave
- 13 public holidays (FTE) including office shutdown between Christmas and New Year
- Enhanced sick pay
- Sector-leading enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption and parental pay, leave and other provisions
- Support for learning and development to enable staff to develop their knowledge, skills, and experience
- A focus on staff wellbeing, including access to confidential 24/7 employee assistance support and private healthcare, including an online GP, mental health and wellbeing support, and fast access to specialist care and diagnostics
- Support with travel costs through Railcards, where applicable
- Access to the Cycle to Work scheme
- A Living Wage and Living Hours accredited organisation

2. Job Description

Hours: 28 per week

Salary: £30,623 (£37,185 FTE)

Contract: Permanent

Pension: Sector-leading 10% employer contribution

Location: Hybrid working, with office space at the Close the Gap main office in Glasgow or in shared office space in Edinburgh. An expectation to work from the office one day per week.

Responsible to: Executive Director

Flexible working options are available for this role.



Equality statement

Close the Gap recognises that we have a responsibility to operate in line with our values. We know that structural inequalities constrain and harm the lives of marginalised communities of people such as women, racially minoritised people, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, migrant people, people who are single parents, and people of faith. This is particularly important for those who experience intersecting and compounding inequalities. As part of this, we are working to become an anti-racism organisation through a proactive review of our policies and practices, and are currently developing an anti-racism action plan.

We acknowledge that our team does not yet reflect the diversity of women's experiences in Scotland's labour market. We therefore particularly encourage applications from racially minoritised people and disabled people who are currently underrepresented in our team.

About the role

This is a senior policy and parliamentary engagement role requiring autonomous strategic thinking and confident stakeholder engagement. You'll be Close the Gap's lead on parliamentary relationships and policy development, working with considerable independence to shape our advocacy strategy and manage complex stakeholder relationships.

With Scottish Parliament elections in May 2026, this is a pivotal time to join us. You'll have the opportunity to build relationships with a new cohort of MSPs, strengthen our parliamentary engagement strategy, and directly influence Scotland's approach to women's labour market equality. This newly permanent role reflects our long-term investment in this critical function.

As a small organisation, we need someone who can be the authoritative voice for Close the Gap on parliamentary engagement and policy development - thinking strategically, identifying opportunities, setting priorities, and delivering high-quality outputs with minimal supervision. You'll work collaboratively with colleagues but will be expected to own your delivery areas,



exercise judgement independently, and represent the organisation confidently with senior stakeholders.

Main duties

Strategic policy development and advocacy

- Lead on Close the Gap's policy priorities relating to women's labour market equality, identifying opportunities to progress our advocacy work in innovative and strategic ways.
- Contribute to high-level policy discussions and strategic groups, representing Close the Gap's expertise and building influence with policymakers.
- Proactively monitor and analyse emerging policy developments, providing strategic insight to shape the organisation's policy direction.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with government officials, policy stakeholders, and partner organisations at senior level.

Policy analysis and production

- Produce high-quality policy analysis, consultation responses, parliamentary briefings, reports, and blogs that position Close the Gap as Scotland's expert voice on women's labour market participation.
- Create advocacy materials for diverse audiences, translating complex policy into accessible and compelling content.
- Ensure all outputs reflect an intersectional analysis of women's labour market equality



Parliamentary engagement and influencing

- Own Close the Gap's parliamentary engagement work, building and maintaining relationships with MSPs, committee staff, and political parties.
- Proactively identify opportunities to influence legislative processes and parliamentary activity relevant to women's labour market equality.
- Prepare and influence MSPs on debates, questions, and committee work through timely and strategic briefings.
- Build relationships with the new cohort of MSPs following the May 2026 elections, establishing Close the Gap's credibility and influence early in the parliamentary term.
- Monitor parliamentary developments and identify strategic opportunities for engagement.

External representation and relationship management

- Represent Close the Gap confidently at external events, advisory groups, and working groups, including delivering presentations.
- Build and manage a wide network across policy domains relating to women and work.
- Establish credibility quickly with new stakeholders and maintain productive relationships over time.

Other

- Work collaboratively as part of a small team while taking ownership of your policy and parliamentary portfolio.



- Carry out any other duties required by the Executive Director commensurate with the post.

3. Person specification

Essential

Experience and knowledge

- Substantial experience working in policy advocacy and/or public affairs, with demonstrated ability to work autonomously at a strategic level.
- Proven track record of building and managing parliamentary relationships in the Scottish Parliament, including direct engagement with MSPs and committee staff.
- Experience influencing legislative and parliamentary processes, with strong knowledge of how the Scottish Parliament operates in practice.
- Demonstrable experience being the lead or sole person responsible for a policy area or work stream, including shaping strategy and managing stakeholder relationships independently.
- Good understanding of women's labour market equality in Scotland, including the causes of the gender pay gap and intersectional analysis of workplace inequality.

Skills and abilities

- Exceptional written communication skills with the ability to produce high-quality policy analysis, briefings, and reports for diverse audiences.
- Confident and articulate verbal communication, including the ability to represent the organisation credibly with senior stakeholders, deliver



compelling presentations, and think on your feet in challenging situations.

- Strategic thinking and the ability to identify opportunities, and shape approaches that advance our policy priorities.
- Sound judgement and the ability to make decisions independently once established in the role, knowing when to seek input and when to proceed autonomously.
- Strong organisational skills and the ability to plan and manage multiple competing demands, prioritise effectively under pressure, and meet deadlines consistently.
- Proven ability to build credibility quickly with new stakeholders and establish productive working relationships.

Approach and values

- Commitment to women's labour market equality, anti-racism, and intersectional analysis.
- Ability to work effectively in a small team environment while taking ownership of your area.

Desirable

- Experience working in or with small third sector organisations.
- Experience of managing contracts.

To help you assess whether this role is right for you, the main demands are:



Autonomy within a collaborative team: You'll be Close the Gap's lead on parliamentary engagement and policy development in your area. While you'll work closely with colleagues and the senior team, you'll need to be comfortable taking initiative and working independently when required.

Confidence and presence: You'll regularly engage with MSPs, senior officials, and external stakeholders as Close the Gap's expert representative. This requires the confidence to establish credibility quickly, handle challenging questions, and represent our positions persuasively.

Strategic thinking: We need someone who naturally thinks beyond individual tasks to the bigger picture - identifying opportunities, spotting gaps, proposing approaches, and shaping our strategy.

Maintaining quality under pressure: Policy and parliamentary work often involves multiple urgent deadlines, high-stakes outputs, and work that's highly visible. You'll need to consistently produce high-quality analysis and briefings without extensive review, and maintain standards even when under pressure.

Managing the post-election landscape: The May 2026 elections mean you'll need to build relationships with many new MSPs quickly and confidently, identifying who to prioritise and how to position our work effectively in a new political context.

4. How to Apply

Electronic applications must be submitted using our online application form which you can find on our website at <https://www.closethegap.org.uk/jobs/>. If you are unable to use an online application process because of your access needs, please contact us at info@closethegap.org.uk.

The deadline for applications is Sunday 8 March 2026.

You will be notified by Tuesday 17 March 2026 if you have been selected for interview.



It is anticipated that the interviews will take place week commencing 23 March 2026.

The recruitment process

All applications received by the deadline will be scored by the selection panel. Each application will be given a score based on how well they meet the criteria set out in the person specification.

If we're inviting you to interview, we'll let you know by email.

Interviews will be held during the week that is noted above. We recognise that it may be difficult to attend at a fixed time if you have other commitments such as a caring role, so we'll endeavour to find a time that suits both you and the panel, wherever possible. If you're invited to interview, we'll ask you about your access needs.

You'll be asked to prepare a presentation and/or complete a skills-based task. Details of this will be in the invitation to interview email. You will also be asked to provide recent examples of your writing.

Candidates are usually interviewed by a panel of three people, usually two Close the Gap staff members and one external panel member with relevant expertise.

All candidates will be informed by email within a week whether they have been successful at interview. We'll also inform candidates where they've been unsuccessful at this stage.



Guidelines for completing an application form

Please read the job description and person specification carefully before applying for the role. Only candidates who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria will be considered for interview.

Applications must be submitted using the online application form on the Close the Gap website. Please do not send CVs or cover letters as these will not be considered.

Please read all the questions before starting your application. You can save your application at any time and return to it later.

We recommend using each essential criterion (and desirable where applicable) as a sub-heading in your application so you can clearly demonstrate how your knowledge, skills, and experience apply to each one.

Your application will be scored by how well you demonstrate that you meet the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification so it's important that you include examples and provide information on how you have gained and used your skills and experience.

Please do not simply state that you have a particular skill. Your examples can be from paid or unpaid work.

You may wish to refer to skills and experience gained outside employment such as studying, training, social activities, organising sports, community or voluntary work.

If you require the application form in another format to meet access needs, please contact us at info@closethegap.org.uk.



If you would like to discuss the role, please contact Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, at aritchieallan@closethegap.org.uk

If you have any questions about the recruitment process or the online application, you can contact us at info@closethegap.org.uk.

