

## Executive Director – Policy and Communications

**Directorate** Policy and Communications

**Reports To** Directly to the CEO

### Job summary

*The Executive Director of Policy and Communications will lead on Sport England's Policy, Campaigns and Communications function, providing strategic leadership across public policy, research, insight, communications, media relations and campaigns. The role will drive reputation management, stakeholder engagement with government and public bodies, and oversee the delivery of evidence-based campaigns and insights that support Sport England's mission and long-term sustainability.*

*This role is accountable for driving the Policy and Communication Directorate's performance, cultivating strategic stakeholder relationships, inspiring and developing employees in line with our Values and safeguarding financial sustainability and regulatory compliance. The role also ensures that our collective resources are effectively aligned to deliver key organisational outcomes and maximise value for money.*

*As a senior leader and member of our Executive Leadership team this role influences high-level decision-making, contributes to long-term organisational success, and fosters a culture of accountability, innovation, and shared purpose throughout the organisation.*

### **Role of the collective leadership team:**

*All members of Sport England's Leadership Team share collective accountability for the organisation's success and the delivery of Uniting the Movement. They empower staff, promote a positive and inclusive workplace culture, and champion cross-functional collaboration. Leadership Team members are expected to break down silos, encourage joined-up working, and inspire collective action in pursuit of Sport England's mission: ensuring everyone in England can benefit from sport and physical activity.*

### Dimensions

**Direct Reports** This role will have 4/5 direct reports and oversight for a Directorate (at least 30 employees).

**Budget** Full oversight of whole Directorate budget and full sign off in line with Sport England's policies (size of the budget is currently TBC).

### **Accountability**

- Significant budgets and people within a Directorate.
- Overall accountability for the successful delivery of a major part of Sport England's strategy, Uniting the Movement, and collective leadership accountability for all of Sport England's work.
- They will be accountable for delivering results against key performance indicators, including 360-degree feedback, staff engagement survey outcomes, and other

relevant metrics. These measures will be used to ensure continuous improvement, high quality outcomes and alignment with organisational values.

**Location** London Office or hybrid-based. Regular travel (often two to three times per week to our London office is expected)

**Key Contacts:** Board/Committees and/or senior leadership at partner organisations.

## Key Duties and Responsibilities

### Core Duties

#### Strategic Leadership

- Provide overarching strategic leadership for the Policy and Communications function, ensuring alignment with Sport England's mission, statutory obligations, and long-term sustainability.
- Lead a multi-disciplinary team covering communications (internal and external), public policy, research and insight, media relations, and campaign delivery.

#### Executive Counsel

- Offer proactive strategic communications advice to the CEO, Chair, Board, and senior leaders to enhance Sport England's reputation and influence across the sporting sector and wider society.

#### Public Policy Leadership

- Establish and lead a world-class Public Policy Unit to drive coordinated engagement with Sport England's mission and priorities across government and inform government policy.
- Lead on the development of policy for the wider sports sector drawing upon expertise from Sector Services and others and develop engagement programmes to ensure that policies are widely adopted across England.
- Oversee support for the Sector Services team to aid the translation of policy into practical standards and guidance for delivery.
- Oversee the management of a pipeline of policy development, with priorities aligned to Sport England's business priorities and trends identified by the Research & Insight team.
- Promote consistency, accountability and ethical standards in all public affairs and policy areas.

#### Communications & Media

- Oversee the development and implementation of a proactive external communications, media and digital communications strategy aligned with Sport England's mission.
- Lead the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management strategy that strengthens Sport England's relationships with key partners across government, industry, community and the public.
- Lead the promotion of investment by and through Sport England, working with DCMS, the National Lottery Promotions Unit, and other funders.

#### Research, Analysis & Insight

- Lead the creation of a world class Research, Analysis and Insight hub that collaborates with Investment, Partner Management and Sector Services to gather, commission and analyse data from across the organisation and other sources to provide robust, accurate and relevant insights that help inform strategic decision making and policy development.
- Build organisational capability in research and insight, and develop relationships with other institutions which can support decision making across Sport England e.g. universities, charities etc.
- Oversee the development of tools and resources that utilise Sport England's research and insight to tell the story of sport's development in England and promote the work of the organisation.

### **Campaign Delivery**

- Oversee the design and activation of innovative, evidence-based public and stakeholder campaigns (e.g., *This Girl Can*, *We Are Undefeatable*) that support Sport England's mission and government policy.

### **Financial and Resource Management**

- Take full accountability for the effective use of budgets and resources within the Directorate, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities.
- As part of the leadership team make investment decisions that demonstrate clear value for money and deliver measurable community impact.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to leverage external investment and strategic partnerships to achieve shared outcomes.
- Ensure full compliance with financial, legal, regulatory, and ethical standards across all areas of responsibility

### **Relationship Management**

- Build and maintain strong collaborative relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders, including senior officials in government, Chief Executives and others to drive shared outcomes and enhance collective impact.
- Influence decision-making at Board level and among senior internal and external stakeholders to advance strategic priorities and maximise organisational effectiveness
- Champion cross-functional collaboration by fostering joined-up working across directorates and teams, promoting shared learning and integrated delivery
- Represent Sport England at cross-government forums, working groups and external events, advocating for shared goals and influencing wider sector developments.

### **Leadership Accountability & Culture**

- Take full collective ownership of organisational outcomes, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and values.

- Provide direct leadership and support to senior management team members, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and values.
- Role model by demonstrating openness to feedback and continuous learning and improvement.
- Promote a culture of integrity, inclusivity and continuous improvement for self and teams.
- Provide visible leadership in sponsoring and championing key organisational initiatives to drive strategic alignment, foster cross-functional collaboration and ensure initiatives are embedded effectively across the organisation.
- Establish and maintain credibility to influence decision-making at the highest levels within stakeholder organisations, driving strategic outcomes.
- Build and sustain a network of professional relationships with senior colleagues, peers, and external partners to support the achievement of organisational objectives.
- Contribute to and actively support Sport England's Diversity and Inclusion Action plan and Equality objectives.

### **Line Management**

- Lead and manage senior leadership teams across your directorate to ensure operational excellence.
- Plan and allocate resources effectively, ensuring the right skills are in place to meet current and future demands.
- Set clear performance expectations, conduct regular performance reviews with your direct reports encouraging them to follow suit with their teams.
- Monitor team performance against KPI's and delivery targets, acting where necessary to ensure accountability and results.
- Encourage professional development through coaching, mentoring, and identifying learning opportunities.
- Build a positive, inclusive working environment that supports staff wellbeing and psychological safety.
- Support your team through change, ensuring clear communication, engagement and alignment with organisational transformation.
- Encourage innovation and growth by empowering teams to develop new skills and approaches.

### **Ad hoc**

- Contribute to organisational-wide projects as required, ensuring successful implementation and review.
- Work flexibly to carry out any other duties that are within the colleague's skills and abilities whenever reasonably required.
- Ensure compliance with the Employee Handbook and organisational policies to model high standards of conduct, promote consistency across the organisation and uphold legal and ethical responsibilities. This includes setting the tone for accountability and ensuring that all practices align with the organisation's values and regulatory requirements.

## Person Specification

### **The additional skills, knowledge and experience required.**

#### **Essential**

- 1) Proven experience in a senior leadership level in a similar role
- 2) Demonstrable strategic thinking and policy development skills
- 3) Excellent stakeholder engagement and partnership working abilities
- 4) Strong track record of inclusive leadership and team development
- 5) Exceptional communication, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement skills
- 6) Experience of navigating complex environments and leading through change
- 7) High level of political awareness and ability to operate in a politically sensitive environment.
- 8) Ability to assess and manage risk
- 9) Extensive experience in creating and managing budgets.

#### **Desirable**

1. Previous industry experience or knowledge i.e. 'previous experience in in the sport/charity sector'