

Head of Policy

Recruitment Pack March 2019



Message from Sarah-Jane Laing, Executive Director



Our members represent a diverse community of land based businesses, passionate about promoting rural Scotland, and we've acted as their voice for over 100 years.

Our vision is to have the true contribution of rural land-based businesses recognised and valued, publicly and politically. We do this by championing and supporting rural businesses that provide economic, social and environmental benefit to the countryside.

If you are passionate about using your policy and leadership expertise to help rural Scotland thrive then we'd love to hear from you.

We're looking for a driven, inspiring and talented leader who can help us achieve our vision.

You will be responsible for managing a small but diverse policy staff team and leading work on the development of policy positions and provision of member advice. You will also play a key role in representing members' interests to politicians, Scottish Government officials and other decision makers.

As an organisation we've been making some exciting changes to prepare us for the future and our policy team is crucial to delivering these. So, if you're as positive and ambitious as us, then please get in touch.

Job Purpose

As a membership organisation, in one of Scotland's key sectors, our policy team is at the core of our work. This role requires combining technical skills in rural policy with leadership, vision and strategy. You will help rural businesses and landowners through the provision of advice and support as well as working to create a supportive policy and fiscal framework.

The postholder is also responsible for leading and inspiring the wider policy team to deliver its work to an excellent standard in a culture of continuous improvement. They will use their energy and dynamism to secure support from colleagues and members across the organisation and develop policy in an inclusive and solution focused manner.

Essential Information

Location: easily accessible offices by the River Esk in Musselburgh, with regular travel throughout Scotland and occasional travel to other locations in the UK, including some of the most beautiful locations in the country.

Reports to: Executive Director, Sarah-Jane Laing.

Direct reports: seven members of the policy team made up of four policy advisers, a legal adviser, environment assistant and policy assistant.

Other key contacts: SLE Chairman and Vice Chair Policy, Head of Communications, Head of Business, Board Chairman, Vice Chair Policy, Director of Scottish Moorland Group, Public Affairs Manager, Communications Team, National Policy Group, Regional Chairs and Regional Support Officers, other board members, retained communication/marketing/digital agencies.

Salary: starting salary in the region of £50,000 per annum.

Hours: 34.5 hours per week (9 – 5 Monday to Thursday, 9 to 4.30 on Friday), with some flexibility required.

Holidays: 30 days per year including 6 bank holidays, along with additional leave to cover office closure between Christmas and New Year.

Benefits: Generous training and CPD allowance, contributory pension, free parking at office, supportive and friendly working environment.

Main duties and responsibilities

Leadership

Ensure that SLE stays abreast of key policy changes and relevant external issues which could affect the membership and the wider sector.

Work with the Executive Director, Vice Chair Policy, policy team, National Policy Group and wider membership to develop a coherent and co-ordinated policy and research programme that supports SLE's objectives and increase its influence and effectiveness.

Provide leadership to the policy team and lead on policy related input to organisational strategy and decision making.

Work with the Head of Business and Events and Publications Co-ordinator to provide a wide ranging and valuable offering for our diverse membership

Work with the Executive Director, Chairman, Vice Chair Policy, Public Affairs and others to establish and maintain relationships with key politicians and decision makers.

Commission research and agenda setting pieces of work, reinforcing SLE's role as sectoral thought leaders and influencers.

Manage and report on all aspects of policy and advice activity.

Policy, representation and advice

Provide direct and indirect information and advice to members through a wide range of offerings from individual members queries to online blogs.

Develop and promote best practice across the business and property interests of the membership.

Be aware of policy developments in all areas where members have an interest to ensure that members are informed about changes in policy and regulatory framework.

Represent the membership in all stages of policy development and legislative processes.

Work with the communications team to produce material for use across all communications channel.

Liaise with partner and stakeholder organisations on opportunities for joint activities or on handling issues of mutual interest.

Other duties

Support, manage and develop the policy team.

Carry out any other activity as required to support SLE's work as appropriate to a role of this level and scope.

Identify measurable objectives and report on progress and delivery.

Provide policy input to key events and activity.

About you

We are looking for someone with at least five years' strong, recent experience in a policy role, with a good understanding across the breadth of rural policy issues. It would be helpful if the applicant could demonstrate deep and detailed understanding of at least one of our key policy areas: farming, forestry, housing, rural development, rural business, conservation and communities.

Other essential requirements are:

Experience of managing a small team of policy staff..

Experience of devising and delivering proactive policy strategies.

Experience of influencing policy or legislation.

Experience of providing advice/support.

It would also be helpful if you could offer:

Experience of political engagement.

Experience of working in a membership organization.

In terms of your professional knowledge and skills, we are looking for:

Excellent interpersonal and influencing skills for building and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Strong project, budget and people management skills.

Excellent problem-solving skills.

Excellent writing skills, especially for reports and policy documents.

Strong knowledge of the Scottish political landscape and good knowledge of relevant rural stakeholders.

Able to prioritise and manage multiple and sometimes conflicting deadlines or demands.

Solid grasp of Microsoft Office applications, particularly Outlook, Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

We are also seeking a range of personal attributes, including:

Flexible, in being able to support the wider team and deal occasionally with out-of-hours activities.

Able to work to tight deadlines and to support others in doing so.

Motivated, proactive and enthusiastic.

Comfortable dealing well with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Confident, tactful and diplomatic.

Calm and confident under pressure.

How to apply

Please send us your CV along with a covering letter outlining how you meet the requirements of the person specification and how your experience, skills and knowledge and personal attributes make you the ideal candidate for this role.

You may include any other information that you consider appropriate to your application.

Send your letter and CV to joyce.karch@scottishlandandestates.co.uk by **Monday 15 April**. For an informal chat please contact Sarah-Jane Laing, Executive Director on 0131 653 5400 .