



Policy Manager

**Recruitment Pack
August 2025**



Dear Candidate,

Schools North East is approaching its 20th year as the region's dedicated, independent voice for schools. Over that time, we have grown into a highly successful, dynamic, and influential charity, representing over 1,150 member schools in the North East and 400 specialist schools nationally. Our reputation as the Voice of North East Schools is firmly established – trusted by our members, respected by policymakers, and recognised nationally.

We are now entering the next phase of our journey. The educational, political, and economic landscape is shifting rapidly, and we are determined to ensure that the region's schools not only adapt but thrive. To do this, we are seeking exceptional, high-performing senior leaders to join our team, in policy and marketing; individuals who can match our ambition, bring fresh ideas, and deliver measurable results.

Joining Schools North East is not just about taking on a role, it's about taking a personal part in moving a respected, high-impact organisation to the next level of success. You will be joining a small but highly committed team with a big voice, a strong track record, and the ambition to do even more for the schools and communities we serve.

If you have the vision, drive, and leadership to help shape the next chapter of Schools North East, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Zarraga
Director, Schools North East



If you would like an informal conversation about this role please email Pauline Aitchison, Deputy Director: p.aitchison@schoolsnortheast.com to arrange a suitable time.



Salary: Senior Manager Band 5 – £40,775–£52,196, depending on experience
Location: Central Newcastle (with flexibility to work from home on Fridays)
Hours: Full-time, 36 hours per week
Holidays: 30 days plus Bank Holidays
Travel: Some regional and national travel, as required
Reports to: Director
Line Management: Policy Officer
Closing Date: 5pm Wednesday 27 August 2025
Interview Date: Wednesday 17 September 2025

To apply: Please submit your full CV, clarifying any gaps in employment, along with a cover letter clearly linking your skills and experience to the job description and person specification to recruitment@schoolsnortheast.com, FAO Pauline Aitchison.

Make a Difference with Schools North East

Schools North East is a dynamic, purpose-driven charity that champions the education sector across the North East. Representing a collaborative community of over 1,150 member schools, we are recognised nationally as the Voice advocating for North East schools, the Glue fostering collaboration, and the Bridge connecting education with the wider world. Now approaching our 20th year, we are entering an exciting new phase of development, strengthening our influence, expanding our reach, and enhancing the value we deliver to our members.

As Policy Manager, you will be a senior leader responsible for working with Directors to deliver our strategic policy and public affairs agenda. You will ensure alignment between policy, research, stakeholder engagement, and events, using evidence and insight to influence decision-makers at the highest levels. This is a pivotal, high-profile role requiring a dynamic, politically astute, and highly experienced strategic thinker with a deep understanding of how policy is shaped and implemented. We are looking for a values-led leader who can anticipate long-term trends and align strategies with the organisation's vision, taking account of the political, economic, and educational policy landscape. You will make bold yet considered decisions, taking calculated risks where appropriate, and responding promptly and effectively to critical events. You will lead by example, actively promoting SNE's values and vision both internally and externally, and influencing our strategy, direction, and culture to increase organisational effectiveness.

You will bring a collaborative, resilient, and adaptable approach, fostering a culture of learning and development that helps the team grow and succeed, while sharing your own expertise to support others. With exceptional communication skills, you will engage stakeholders with purpose and conviction, and ensure that policy work is evidence-led, impactful, and aligned with member needs. This is an opportunity to join a respected and ambitious organisation at a key point in its journey – and to play a personal role in shaping its next chapter of success.



Key Responsibilities

Organisational Leadership

- Contribute to the strategic leadership of Schools North East as a senior manager, ensuring marketing work supports the organisation's long-term mission and values.

Strategic Policy Leadership

- Lead the development and delivery of Schools North East's policy agenda, ensuring it reflects member needs and is grounded in robust evidence.
- Anticipate and respond to emerging political and policy developments, both regionally and nationally.

Public Affairs & Influence

- Build and maintain high-level relationships between the organisation and government, political stakeholders, and sector influencers to maximise SNE's influence.
- Represent Schools North East at external events, inquiries, and meetings, speaking with authority on behalf of our members.

Research & Intelligence

- Undertake research where appropriate to inform strategic priorities.
- Interpret and communicate external research to help support strategic priorities and inform policy work.
- Oversee the production of high-quality policy briefings, consultation responses, and position papers.

Campaign Leadership

- Design impactful campaigns that raise the profile of key education issues and strengthen SNE's role as a thought leader.
- Ensure alignment between policy priorities and marketing/communications activity.

Stakeholder Engagement & Networks

- Develop stakeholder networks, forums, and roundtables to inform policy positions and enhance influence.

Team Leadership & Collaboration

- Lead and mentor direct reports, setting clear KPIs and fostering a culture of excellence, innovation, and collaboration.
- Work closely with the Directors, Business, Events and Marketing teams to ensure policy activity supports and enhances core functions.



Person Specification

(A – Application, I – Interview, T – Task)

Essential:

- Significant experience (5-10 years minimum) in policy, public affairs, or related fields, ideally in complex or mission-led organisations (A, I).
- Demonstrable track record of influencing policy and engaging senior political stakeholders (A, I).
- Strong analytical skills and ability to interpret data and research to inform strategy (A, I, T).
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to write persuasive policy documents and represent the organisation externally (A, I, T).
- Experience managing people and developing high-performing teams (A, I).
- Proven ability to anticipate policy trends and respond strategically (A, I).
- Strong relationship-building skills across diverse stakeholder groups (A, I).
- Ability to manage multiple priorities under pressure and meet deadlines (A, I).

Desirable:

- Knowledge of the education sector and challenges facing schools (A, I).
- Experience in the charity or membership sector (A, I).
- Familiarity with the political landscape in the North East (A, I).