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Changing the world
with women and girls

Job Description:

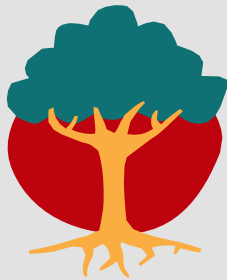
Maternity Cover: Head of
Policy and Research



Suya, Eva and Hellen, are members of the Loketa Women's and Girls Centre in the Imvepi refugee settlement, Uganda. The trio work as a voice for women in their community.

Thank you for your interest in learning more about positions at ActionAid UK.

ActionAid UK is an independent charity and member of Action Aid International, a global federation working for a world free from poverty and injustice. ActionAid UK focuses on women and girls because the denial of their rights is a grave injustice and one of the principal underlying causes of poverty worldwide.



Our vision

We believe in the individual and collective power of women and girls to create a just and fair world. A world imagined by social movements, particularly feminist and indigenous movements, centred around the care and wellbeing of people and the planet. A world in which women and girls, in all their diversity, can achieve their goals, fulfil their rights and define their future.

We are looking for employees who share our passion to fight gender inequality and will ensure women, girls and their movements are at the heart of our work. You would be joining at an exciting time as we launch a new 2025-2028 strategy which sets out our vision, mission and approach, implemented through the four strategic goals below.



Equity is central to our mission and values: we recognise and address disparities based on socioeconomics, gender, sex, age, sexual orientation, faith, race, ethnicity and disability. We particularly welcome applications from people of colour, individuals from working class backgrounds, with disabilities, and experience of working with women's rights organisations or movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, to enrich the diversity.

About ActionAid

ActionAid UK is a member of the ActionAid Federation, a federation of 43 national organisations with a presence in 71 countries worldwide. Globally, we want to see a system that is fair and just for all, that starts from a foundation of human rights, peace and security, balance with the rights of the natural world.

In the UK, our primary role is to raise funds to support the work of Federation members who work with over 3,000 partner organisations including social movements, youth networks and women's rights organisations to tackle inequality and injustice in their communities.

While a lot of ActionAid UK's work is supporting the Federation's humanitarian and development work through raising much needed funding, this isn't the whole story. We also tackle the root causes of global inequality and injustice by influencing UK Government commitments and policies on a range of interlinked issues including climate justice, decent and dignified work, fair public services, peace and security and an end to violence against women and girls. For more information, please find our [latest annual report here](#).



The team behind ActionAid's Girl-led Research Project spending time together.

Operational / External Title: Head of Policy and Research

Role Title:	Head of Policy and Research
Date of JD Review:	20/08/2026
Department:	Advocacy and Influencing
Team:	Policy and Research
Tenure:	Fixed Term: Maternity Cover (approx. 12 months)
Band & Range:	Band E
Location:	London
Reports to:	Deputy Director of Advocacy and Influencing
DBS check required:	Yes [DBS Roles]
Role requires travel:	Yes
Budget Holder	Yes
Direct Reports:	Yes
Indirect Reports:	Yes
Dotted line reports:	Yes
Does this role international require travel:	Yes

Internal Key Contacts:

Data Protection Officer; Technical Advisers, Policy Advisers, advocacy advisers, Advocacy team, Philanthropy and Partnerships Team, Media Team, Funding department, Project Management Office, AAUK Leadership Groups, Data Protection & AAI Federation.

External Key Contacts:

Women's rights organisations and feminist movements, Institutional donors, Consortia partners, contract leads, Private Sector, Academic institutions, Policy stakeholders, government, parliamentarians, multilateral institutions, and NGO networks.

Purpose Of the Role:

The Head of Policy and Research provides strategic leadership and direction to ActionAid UK's Policy and Research team, bringing together expertise across feminist research, women, peace and security, humanitarian action, climate justice, women's economic justice, and women's and girls' protection and leadership. The role is responsible for establishing a shared vision and priorities for the newly combined team, ensuring its research, policy and influencing work contributes to ActionAid UK's organisational strategy and commitment to supporting and amplifying women's rights organisations (WROs) and feminist movements.

The Head of Team will lead and support a multidisciplinary team of research, policy and technical specialists, bringing together their expertise and strengthening collaboration across the team's thematic areas. They will establish shared priorities and ways of working while recognising the distinct expertise and contributions of team members. They will provide strategic oversight of the team's research, policy and technical work, ensuring that evidence and programme learning inform ActionAid UK's influencing priorities, advocacy and campaigns.

Working across ActionAid UK and the wider Federation, the Head of Team will identify opportunities to strengthen the organisation's influence with donors, government officials, parliamentarians, multilateral institutions, academics and other policymakers. They will work closely with colleagues across advocacy, campaigns, programmes and fundraising to connect the team's expertise with wider organisational priorities, support programme development and identify opportunities for resource mobilisation.

A central part of the role is to champion and strengthen ActionAid's rooted partnerships with WROs, feminist movements and partner organisations in the UK and globally. The Head of Team will promote equitable partnerships, feminist and participatory research approaches and ActionAid's Humanitarian Signature, ensuring that the knowledge and priorities of women and girls and their movements inform the team's work. They will also support cross-Federation technical assistance, capacity strengthening and programme learning, connecting specialist expertise with research, policy and influencing opportunities.

As a senior leader within the Advocacy and Influencing department, the Head of Policy and Research will contribute to organisational planning, decision-making and strategic priorities. They will be responsible for managing the team's people, resources and budgets, creating an inclusive and supportive environment in which colleagues can collaborate, develop and perform effectively. They will play a key role in embedding the newly combined team's ways of working and ensuring its expertise and resources are focused where they can have the greatest impact on advancing the rights of women and girls.

Main Accountabilities:

People Management

- Lead the integration of the newly combined Policy and Research team, establishing shared priorities and ways of working that bring together and recognise the expertise and contributions of both former teams.
- Maintain open and professional relations with team members, promoting a strong team spirit and providing oversight and guidance to enable staff to successfully perform in their positions.

- Manage employee relations matters within the team, including performance, absence, conduct and grievances, working closely with HR to ensure issues are addressed fairly, consistently and in line with ActionAid UK's policies and procedures.
- Continually seek out ways to build the capacities of the team members, individually and collectively.
- Ensure that detailed, realistic and feasible work plans, with learning and development objectives, are developed, and modified as needed.
- Support the Team to collaborate across the department, organization, Federation and with partner organisations in the UK and globally.
- Manage the team budget and annual plan and participate in cross organizational leadership spaces.
- Actively participate in the Departmental Management Team, including co-organising departmental events, annual plans, and actions.

Policy and Research

- Develop the Policy and Research team's influencing plans, working collaboratively with colleagues across ActionAid UK, the wider Federation and partner organisations.
- Lead the development of feminist research, evidence generation and policy development across the team's thematic areas, ensuring that research and programme learning inform ActionAid UK's policy positions, advocacy and influencing priorities.
- Work with the Funding department to identify and secure funding opportunities for research, policy and influencing work across the team's thematic areas.
- Develop and oversee a multi-year research programme that maximises the use of research and programmatic learning, embedding feminist approaches and ensuring that evidence contributes to organisational priorities and influencing objectives.
- Lead the development and strengthening of research and learning partnerships, including with academic institutions, women's rights organisations, feminist movements and other partners across the Federation.
- Support the implementation of impactful global campaigns, including the global climate campaign, and contribute to the development of new campaigns that draw on the team's thematic expertise, policy and research priorities.
- Ensure ActionAid's feminist research guidelines are embedded across all policy and research initiatives, strengthening the documentation, sharing and use of programme evidence to inform policy development, research outputs and influencing work.
- Work closely with policy, advocacy and campaigning colleagues to oversee engagement and influencing at UK and global levels, ensuring that the team's policy and research expertise contributes to ActionAid UK's strategic priorities.
- Actively contribute to ActionAid UK's commitment to decolonising the sector and becoming an anti-racist organisation, embedding feminist and decolonial approaches within the team's research, policy development, partnerships and ways of working.

Technical Oversight

- Provide strategic oversight and direction to Technical Advisers leading cross-Federation technical support and capacity strengthening, including within ActionAid

UK-managed programmes, across the team's thematic areas. These include humanitarian action, climate justice, women's economic justice, and women's and girls' rights, protection and leadership.

- Strengthen collaboration between the team's research, policy and technical specialists, ensuring that technical expertise, programme evidence and learning inform research priorities, policy development and influencing work across ActionAid UK and the wider Federation.
- Support cross-Federation efforts to strengthen learning, monitoring and evaluation of ActionAid's Humanitarian Signature, ensuring that lessons and evidence inform future programme development, policy and influencing priorities.

Business Development

- Where expertise is unavailable in the Federation, support fundraising efforts including seeking out opportunities for resource mobilisation for research and programme policy work.

Representation

- Represent ActionAid UK at national and global for a including influencing events, with donors, media, participating in policy and practice forums, and- staying ahead of relevant global policy and practice decisions.

EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE & EXPERTISE

Essential Criteria:

- Significant experience of leading multidisciplinary teams, setting strategic direction, managing performance and supporting staff development.
- Substantial experience in feminist research, policy development and influencing, with a strong understanding of women's rights and gender justice.
- Strong knowledge of women, peace and security, feminist humanitarian action and related thematic areas, including climate and economic justice.
- Experience of developing equitable partnerships with women's rights organisations, feminist movements and other relevant stakeholders.
- Experience of working in international development or humanitarian contexts, including across different countries.
- Experience of providing strategic or technical oversight of women's rights programmes, research or policy initiatives.
- Proven experience of leading research programmes, including feminist and participatory methodologies, and translating evidence into policy and influencing.
- Experience of developing and delivering effective policy and influencing strategies in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.
- Experience of securing funding and developing proposals for research, policy, influencing or programme work, including for institutional donors.
- Experience of developing and delivering strategic plans, managing budgets and balancing competing priorities.
- Strong leadership and interpersonal skills, with experience of managing organisational change and bringing together different areas of expertise.

Desirable:

- Experience of living and working in the “Global South” and regions where we support Project and Programme.
- Experience of working for an INGO.
- Experience across the influencing cycle, including research, policy, campaigns, advocacy, media and communications.
- Experience designing and delivering successful influencing strategies or projects.
- Experience of MEL for influencing.

Our Values and General Requirements

All ActionAid UK employees are expected to demonstrate a commitment to our organisational values and ways of working, alongside the responsibilities specific to their role.

Our values and feminist principles

- Demonstrate a commitment to ActionAid UK's vision, mission and values, including our feminist principles and commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls.
- Uphold our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and contribute to our ambition to become an anti-racist and decolonised organisation.

Safeguarding

- ActionAid UK is committed to preventing all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, including child abuse and abuse of adults at risk, and responding robustly when these harms occur. We expect all ActionAid UK staff and associated personnel to share this commitment.

Digital skills and data protection

- Take responsibility for continually developing digital skills and knowledge relevant to the role and working environment.
- Comply with ActionAid UK's Data Protection and Processing Policy, relevant legislation and good practice in data management and processing.

[Click here for 'My Feminist Behaviours'](#)

This role profile sets out the current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed. However, all role profiles are regularly reviewed and updated accordingly in line with organisational needs.

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