



Glasgow Disability Alliance
Promoting Equality, Rights and Social Justice

Policy, Participation and Research Officer

Job Description and Person Specification

About GDA

GDA is a multi-award-winning disabled people's organisation (DPO) controlled by over 6000 disabled members; the largest groundswell of disabled members in Europe. With foundations in Glasgow, GDA also supports disabled people in surrounding areas and has national reach and influence, frequently partnering with national organisations and acting as a strategic advisor to public authorities such as Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, NHS and Scottish Government.

Our work over 25 years is built on foundations of Human Rights and Community Development: individual and collective community empowerment, based on peer support, developing and drawing on disabled people's own strengths by:

- Building individual capacity: delivering Lifelong Learning & Personal Development; Wellbeing supports; Digital Inclusion and cost reduction support; Welfare Rights information, advice and representation; and support to navigate social care and wider services.
- Building Collective Capacity: knowledge building and consciousness raising to understand rights and identify structural inequalities; movement building to amplify collective and marginalised voices of disabled people; delivering support to articulate and share lived experience, participate in dialogue, deliberation and collective advocacy & challenge inequality and exclusion.
- Collaborating for change with local and national government, communities and third sector: sharing insights, research and evidence as well as bringing disabled people together with powerholders to shape policy and co-design accessible services and decisions which affect us.

Our mission is to promote and uphold equality, rights and social justice for disabled people. **Our vision** is that disabled people participate in and lead their own lives, connecting with peers, services, opportunities, contributing to families, communities and wider society.

GDA brings diverse and marginalised disabled people together. Our common bond is our shared experience of disabling barriers and of working for solutions to break these down. We are a leading example of a **community of identity**, united around a

sense of belonging and trust, shared experiences of exclusion and inequalities and with a common and shared purpose to overcome these and achieve improved equality and human rights.

GDA is proud to be part of the disabled people's Independent Living Movement, founded on the **social model of disability**. This liberating model is a way of understanding “**disability**”: impairments and conditions are a normal part of life – inequality is not. Disability results from the barriers we face, living in a society that was not designed with us in mind- a society which disables us. Equality is not about fixing disabled people's bodies or impairments – but removing the barriers in society.

GDA Voices and Policy Development

As well as providing services and supports on an individual level, GDA works at a strategic level amplifying the voices of disabled people; sharing lived experience; and supporting participation in dialogue which challenges inequality and exclusion.

GDA collaborates for change with local and national government, communities and third sector organisations, sharing insights and evidence. All of GDA's policy development uses highly participative methods to ensure we are accurately reflecting the views of our members.

GDA's Voices networks bring together our members to build skills, confidence and connections, using their collective voice to influence and make real change for disabled people in Glasgow and beyond.

Peer support is vital for building disabled people's confidence, positive identity and collective voice. GDA has supported a wealth of peer groups to develop and thrive within our membership, reflecting the diversity of Glasgow's disabled people and ensuring safe supportive spaces where voices and collective identity can flourish:

- GDA's Drivers for Change – over 200 members dedicating extra time and energy to speaking out, campaigning and collaborating for change.
- GDA's Social Care Expert Group – over 100 members who need or use social care using their experience and expertise to fix Scotland's broken social care system.

GDA takes an intersectional approach and has networks made up of:

- Disabled Women.
- Young Disabled People.
- Older disabled people.
- BAME disabled people.
- LGBT+ disabled people.

Policy, Participation and Research Officer

Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title: Policy, Participation and Research Officer

Contract: Permanent / dependent on future funding

Salary: £29K

Reports to: Policy and Participation Manager

Hours: 35 hours per week

Location: GDA Office, Templeton Business Centre; and at local community venues.

Outline of the Role

The Policy, Participation and Research Officer will work alongside the GDA Voices Team and at the direction of our Policy and Participation Manager.

You will develop and undertake desk-based and participatory research; support ongoing dialogue and engagement with GDA members; and gather and analyse data to help develop and shape policy in line with GDA's strategic work.

You will support colleagues to design and produce events, resources and communications; capturing and sharing insights and learning to increase awareness of issues impacting disabled people and offering solutions and collaboration to local and national governments.

The Policy, Participation and Research Officer will have strong research and writing skills, be confident in handling research data, drafting accessible content and working with a range of stakeholders.

You must be highly organised and able to work on your own initiative, as well as collaboratively with the Voices team, wider GDA colleagues, and disabled people.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Research and Evidence Gathering

- Conduct research projects in line with organisational needs and priorities, including analysis of engagement event outputs.
- Conduct desk-based research collection and synthesis.
- Undertake research to support the delivery of the Scottish Government's Disability Equality Plan.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of research developments in relevant areas.
- Maintain quality information and analysis for Voices activity; ensure these are

updated regularly and readily available to the Policy and Participation Manager and the CEO.

- Support Voices Team colleagues to facilitate capacity building, consultation and co-design sessions with GDA members.
- Maximise opportunities to gather disabled people's lived experiences and other evidence which seeks to influence policy direction and offer solutions.
- Support the development and conducting of GDA member surveys to be fully accessible.
- Support opportunities for disabled people to participate in research and policy activities as equal partners, inputting their experiences and solutions.

Dissemination and Communications

- Produce evidence-based reports, consultation responses, parliamentary briefings and other communications independently and in collaboration with colleagues.
- Prepare research reports for publication with support from colleagues.
- Work with GDA members and colleagues to publicise research and policy work and opportunities for involvement.
- Ensure that communications and briefings relating to policy and research work are accessible and available to disabled people.
- Position policy outputs to influence decision-makers and maximise opportunities for disabled people's involvement in decision making.
- Contribute to the delivery of GDA's communications strategy, developing content sharing key policy messages, e.g. via our social media platforms and e-bulletins.

General

- Comply with GDPR at all times, maintain accurate records of all project activity, contributing to and leading monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Develop project plans and timeline along with Policy & Participation Manager, CEO, and Depute and produce reports as required.
- Work collaboratively with GDA colleagues, contributing to the positive, proactive and supportive culture of GDA.
- Assist with development opportunities for GDA, as requested and directed by Line Manager and/or CEO.
- Subscribe to the ethos, vision and mission of GDA, taking individual and collective professional responsibility to champion equalities and human rights.
- Work at all times with integrity and to the highest professional standards.
- Ensure that services are provided in accordance with GDA's Policies.
- Undertake other duties as may be required by the CEO or GDA's Board of Directors consistent with the overall aims of the post, project workplan priorities.

Person Specification: Policy, Participation and Research Officer

Skills and Abilities

1. Excellent communication - verbal and written, with attention to accessibility.
2. Human Rights related policy development and analysis.
3. Research skills – qualitative and quantitative.
4. Ability to analyse complex, lived experience data and research to formulate policy recommendations.
5. Ability to write reports, produce communications and convey complex information in a variety of engaging and relatable ways, appropriate and accessible to a wide range of audiences.
6. Interpersonal skills - relationship building, stakeholder management, networking and negotiation skills.
7. Facilitation, group work or training skills.
8. Organisational skills including co-ordinating programmes and events.

Knowledge and Experience

1. Understanding of barriers disabled people face (either through personal or professional experience).
2. Understanding of Social Model of Disability, and the Independent Living Movement.
3. Knowledge of policy areas most relevant to disabled people.
4. A strong practical understanding of community led approaches and participative policy making.
5. Understanding of connections between the interrelated barriers faced by disabled people and policy/service design.
6. Experience of policy development and/or influence.
7. Experience of utilising online platforms to communicate with wide audiences, e.g. Zoom, social media, MailChimp, websites, etc.
8. Experience of approaches that mitigate the power dynamics within policy and participation work which may cause harm and oppression.
9. Experience of collaboration and representation with wide range of stakeholders.
10. Experience of project coordination, report writing and record keeping.

Personal Attributes and Attitude

1. Self-motivated, proactive and ability to work on own initiative under pressure and to tight deadlines.
2. Commitment to ethos of GDA and a passion for working with disabled people to overcome barriers and achieve positive changes in their lives.
3. Commitment to equality, human rights and Independent Living.
4. Compassion, empathy and humility; determination to foreground and elevate disabled people's own voices and expertise.
5. Willingness to multi-task as part of a small team.
6. Flexible and adaptive to change.
7. Enthusiasm, ability to motivate others, connect with people and share GDA messages.
8. Willing and able to work evenings and weekends occasionally when required.