

Head of Policy

Maternity cover July 2026 – August 2027

Do you want to change the world for vulnerable children?

The Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies UK (CVAA) aims to improve adoption policy and practice across the UK for the benefit of children, challenging the adoption system to deliver for children and work in their best interests. Alongside advocating for system change, CVAA works to support our member voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) across the four nations of the UK, stimulating innovation and ensuring they stay at the leading edge of practice. The active engagement of members and the building of collaborative alliances with others who seek positive change for children are essential to the effectiveness of our work.

The **Head of Policy** is a vital member of the small CVAA team, working closely with the CEO and Board of Trustees to champion the voluntary adoption sector and put children at the heart of everything we do. Due to maternity leave we have an exceptional and unique opportunity for someone who shares our passion to change the world for children, to gain valuable experience working at national level with senior stakeholders to contribute to system change, advocating for the power of adoption to change lives.

You will need strong people skills, experience of developing policy in consultation with stakeholders and using data to transform services and strengthen lobbying work. Most of all you need a cast iron commitment to change the world for vulnerable children.

CVAA works to challenge discrimination and disadvantage and welcomes applications from all communities, particularly those who are underrepresented in our sector, which includes but is not limited to people from Global Majority backgrounds, adoptees, men and those who identify as LGBTQ.

Key information

- Maternity Cover 1 year from July 2026
- Location - remote contract with occasional travel
- £40 – 45K depending on experience
- An enhanced DBS check is required for this role.

Applications

Please send a CV and letter of application, outlining your motivation for applying and the skills you offer, to Satwinder Sandhu (satwinder.sandhu@cvaa.org.uk) by 5pm on Friday 8th May 2026.

Both Satwinder (CEO) and Alice (Director of Strategy and Policy) are happy to have an informal chat about the role. Please email to arrange a convenient time to speak (satwinder.sandhu@cvaa.org.uk or alice.talbot@cvaa.org.uk).

Initial online interviews via Microsoft Teams will be on Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th May, with final in-person interviews scheduled for Thursday 28th May 2026 in London. Please let us know whether you cannot make any of these dates in your application.

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Policy (maternity cover)
Responsible to:	CEO
Direct reports:	Communications and Business Support Officer Data Analyst
Hours of work:	Full time (36 hours per week). CVAA aims to be a family friendly employer so flexible hours can be considered within the demands of the role.
Contract type:	Temporary (1 year)
Location:	Remote with occasional travel across the UK. The postholder will be expected to be in the office 1 day every 2 months, in addition to various meetings and events. All travel can be expensed.
Salary range:	£40-45,000 per annum, depending on experience
Annual leave:	25 days per year plus bank holidays
Pension contribution:	4%

About CVAA

The Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies UK (CVAA) is a membership charity of voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) and nonprofit adoption organisations across the four nations of the UK, governed by a Board of Trustees and independent Chair. CVAA is working to a three year [strategy](#).

About the Head of Policy role

The Head of Policy is a vital member of the CVAA team, working closely with the CEO and Board of Trustees to champion the voluntary adoption sector and put children at the heart of everything we do. We are seeking someone who shares our passion to change the world for children; who will be proactive and creative, working at national level with senior stakeholders, including government, to effect real change.

The post holder will use strong people skills and experience of developing policy in consultation with other stakeholders to bring CVAA members together to solve problems and to advocate to governments across the UK on behalf of children and the VAA sector. They will be a passionate advocate for adoption and for the voluntary sector, using excellent communication skills to work with organisations across the adoption and children's services sectors. They will oversee CVAA's annual data collection, being committed to the power of data to transform services and strengthen advocacy and lobbying work. They will be highly flexible and responsive to issues as they arise and take a collaborative approach to everything they do.

This post is responsible for much of CVAA's written output, including communications to members, policy briefings and reports, responses to consultations, press releases and commentary and quarterly Board papers. The active engagement and support of members is vital to the success of CVAA so the Head of Policy will be strongly committed to transparent communication with members and will work with Trustees and the CEO to develop creative avenues for member communication and involvement as the need arises. This includes working with the CEO and the team to deliver a number of annual events, travelling across the UK to meet members and understand the day-to-day work of adoption, leading a number of CVAA's collaborative forums.

We are looking for a strong collaborator with excellent interpersonal and communication skills, unafraid to roll up their sleeves and dive into whatever needs doing, supporting CVAA colleagues in the day-to-day work of the organisation, ensuring Trustees and VAA leaders are well-informed and connected to one another.

The role may suit a senior Policy Officer looking for their first leadership role or an experienced Head of Policy.

Purpose of the role

- To lead CVAA's policy work, including through developing positions on adoption policy issues with CVAA members, building strong relationships with external organisations, proactively influencing public policy and developing the policy services provided to CVAA members.
- To work with the CVAA team and Board to develop and deliver excellent member support services; leading working groups, ensuring effective communication channels and supporting advocacy and representation activity on behalf of the sector.

Main duties and accountabilities

1. **Leading the development of CVAA's policy positions through effective use of data, research, and intelligence-gathering; identifying workable solutions; supporting representation activity and advocating for members with external organisations, including the Department for Education and Governments in the three devolved nations of the UK.**
 - Developing the ways that members can engage in CVAA's policy work, including through formal governance processes, working groups, consultations, and surveys.
 - Supporting the CEO and Trustees in policy influencing activity.
 - Bringing experts together to understand problems and propose policy solutions in the adoption system.
 - Working closely with the Data Analyst so that policy work is informed by data, and policy priorities inform our data analysis.
 - Meeting regularly with the adoption team at the Department for Education, Regional Adoption Agency leaders, local authority leaders and other key external agencies.

- Initiating and managing policy projects and influencing activity as required, including undertaking research and intelligence gathering, synthesising key messages to effect policy change.
- Responding to government consultations and projects through written and verbal submissions.

2. Building relationships and developing policy synergies with likeminded organisations across the adoption and children's services sectors

- Meeting with policy officers/leaders in other organisations, including civil servants, researchers, Adoption England, Adoption UK, PAC-UK, National Adoption Service Wales and other charities in the sector to identify areas for collaboration.
- Building support for CVAA's policy objectives with organisations across the adoption and children's social care system.
- Working with other organisations to coordinate policy positions in response to, for example, government consultations.

3. Developing and leading CVAA's communications to members, key stakeholders across the adoption system and the public on policy issues

- Producing policy and communications outputs and overseeing the work of CVAA's Communications Officer.
- Writing and distributing key CVAA publications such as policy position papers, briefings and State of the Sector report.
- Oversight of CVAA's website, ensuring it is up to date with clear and relevant content on the adoption process and the benefits of adopting with VAAs.

4. Overseeing the development and delivery of high-quality services to the membership

- Working with the CEO and colleagues to coordinate key regular events including the Annual Conference and Board Away Day and Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Supporting CVAA networks of leadership, data, marketing and practitioner colleagues from across the membership.
- Working with the Head of Practice Development to develop the subscriber base and increase participation in CVAA practice events.

5. Supporting the team to deliver against organisational objectives

- Line managing the Business Support & Communications Officer and Data Analyst and supporting their work and development.
- Developing and managing work/project plans and keeping track of CVAA's work.
- Working closely with CVAA Trustees to report on CVAA's work and develop and deliver strategic priorities.
- Regularly updating and monitoring the CVAA Strategic Delivery Plan.
- Drafting Board papers and organisational policies.
- Supporting the CEO in recording and reporting financial information.

Person Specification

Experience	Essential	Desirable
Significant (minimum of three years) policy development and influencing experience, both proactive and reactive	X	
Leading the development of policy positions in consultation with large groups and/or stakeholders with a range of perspectives		X
Writing for publication	X	
Undertaking research and analysis to support policy development	X	
Influencing government/public bodies at a national, regional, or local level	X	
Significant public affairs and/or marketing and communications experience	X	
Delivering multiple priorities to tight deadlines with accuracy and impact	X	
Project and staff management	X	
Planning and delivering successful events		X
Educated to post degree level		X
Skills		
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	X	
Analysing and interpreting different types of evidence, including quantitative and qualitative data, anecdotes, surveys, and research	X	
Inclusive and engaging group facilitation	X	
Flexible problem solving in response to system issues	X	
Interpreting data for policy development	X	
Budget management		X
Excellent IT skills	X	
Knowledge		
Knowledge of the policy development process and how government operates	X	
Knowledge and understanding of the policy issues affecting the voluntary sector, children's social care and commissioning		X
Competencies/Attitudes		
Self-motivating and proactive using initiative and judgement to identify problems and solutions	X	
Collaborative. Committed to working as a team with CVAA staff, members and external partners	X	
Credible and confident; able to manage senior-level relationships with tact	X	
Very well organised, with strong planning and workload management skills, able to deliver multiple priorities to tight deadlines	X	
Able to work at speed, condensing large amounts of material into accurate key messages	X	
Passion and commitment to social change	X	
Demonstrable commitment to anti-discriminatory practice	X	
Willing to abide by CVAA policies and undertake training as required for the post	X	