Associate Director, IPPR Scotland

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining IPPR Scotland as our new Associate Director.

This is an exciting time to join IPPR Scotland. As Scotland faces significant economic, social and environmental challenges, there is a real opportunity for bold thinking, fresh ideas and ambitious policy solutions that can help shape a fairer, greener and more prosperous future.

IPPR Scotland has a strong track record of producing influential research and shaping public policy and political debate. We are part of the wider IPPR family, the UK's leading progressive think tank, and work across political boundaries to develop practical, evidence-led solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing society. We are neutral on the question of Scotland's independence, but not on the question of Scotland's future.

We are now looking for an outstanding leader to build on this work and help shape the next chapter for IPPR Scotland.

As Associate Director, you will have a significant opportunity to influence our future direction, develop an ambitious programme of research and policy work, and strengthen our relationships and influence across Scotland. You will lead a talented team, build partnerships across politics, government, business and civil society, and help ensure that our ideas make a meaningful difference to public policy and people's lives.

We are looking for someone who brings intellectual ambition, strong political judgement and a commitment to progressive change, alongside the ability to inspire colleagues, build relationships and turn ideas into impact.

At IPPR, we are committed to being bold, collaborative, rigorous and inclusive in everything we do. We value different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives, and want to create an environment where colleagues can do their best work, develop professionally and contribute to our shared purpose.

We recognise that people take different routes into leadership roles, and we encourage applications from candidates who can bring a range of experiences and perspectives. We are also open to different working arrangements, including part-time working and job sharing.

Thank you again for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you.

Harry Quilter Pinner
Executive Director

About us

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is an independent charity working towards a fairer, greener, and more prosperous society.

We are researchers, communicators, and policy experts creating tangible progressive change, and turning bold ideas into common sense realities.

Working across the UK, IPPR, IPPR North, and IPPR Scotland, and through our pioneering participative research, we are deeply connected to the people of our nations and regions, and the issues our communities face.

We have helped shape national conversations and progressive policy change for more than 30 years. Today, our work drives social, democratic, environmental, and economic progress by securing:

- well-funded and reformed public services (health, care, housing, education) and social security that ensures everyone has access to the basics they need to flourish
- a renewed democracy which gives everyone a voice in society and passes power down to people, places, and communities, alongside a fair and compassionate immigration system which supports social integration
- a modern, green economy that delivers prosperity and justice to all people and places through actively shaping markets for social good and tackling concentrations of wealth and power.

LANDMARK RESEARCH

This year alone, IPPR Scotland has published three highly influential reports including More for less? Employment, productivity and reform in Scottish public services which challenged many of the assumptions underpinning the debate over public services reform in Scotland. More than a safety net: The welfare state as springboard to economic success and a better country, outlined the ways in which Scotland can learn from other countries with stronger welfare states and more dynamic economies. And our recent report, Rebuilding Scotland's New Politics set out compelling recommendations for the reform of the Scottish Parliament.

IPPR Scotland has also published highly influential research on Achieving the 2030 child poverty target and devolved social security policies, Securing a living income in Scotland: Towards a minimum income guarantee

Over the last two years, IPPR has made significant contributions to the AI policy debate. In "Transformed by AI" we estimated the degree to which the UK jobs market could be impacted by generative AI and outlined the various tools that could be used to manage it. This included the call for a job-centric industrial

strategy for AI. In "the new politics of AI" also called for a re-think of AI policy, to make it more mission aligned and linking it more to democratic deliberation. In "the direction of AI innovation in the UK" we produced a first-of-its-kind quantitative measure of AI innovation and highlighted where policy currently falls short.

Throughout IPPR's history, the Institute has incubated and launched a series of practical initiatives to test and demonstrate our ideas in practice, including Frontline, Think Ahead, and The Difference. IPPR also incubated Centre for Cities which became independent in 2007, and more recently Workwhile, which became independent in 2025.

Across the decades, generations of IPPR leaders, researchers and communicators have helped to transform the climate of ideas and propose practical policies to put them into effect, work which continues today. Our alumni community have gone on to work at the highest levels of the media, government, parliament, business and civil society organisations.

Job description

Job title: Associate Director, IPPR Scotland

Responsible to: Executive Director

Direct reports: Senior Research Fellow, Researcher and Communications Lead

Contract: Permanent

Hours: Full-time contractual hours are 37.5 hours per week. IPPR is currently trialling a reduced working week of 35 hours until 31 March 2027.

We welcome applications from candidates interested in full-time or part-time working arrangements, with a minimum commitment of three days per week. We are open to different working patterns and would be happy to discuss flexible arrangements.

Salary: £63,378 to £78,276 per annum full-time equivalent depending on experience, plus benefits. Salary will be pro rata for part-time arrangements.

Location: Edinburgh/hybrid working, with some travel to London

---

About the role

IPPR Scotland shapes public policy in pursuit of a fairer, greener, more prosperous Scotland. IPPR Scotland is part of the IPPR family across the UK, alongside IPPR North based in Manchester and the IPPR team in London. We are a charity, cross-party and neutral on the question of Scotland's independence - but not on the question of Scotland's future.

We are looking for an outstanding director to lead IPPR Scotland through its next phase, building on its strong track record of influential research and policy change.

This is a senior leadership role with responsibility for helping shape IPPR Scotland's strategic direction, leading its research and policy programme, developing influential partnerships, and ensuring our work makes a meaningful contribution to public policy and political debate in Scotland.

As the figurehead for IPPR Scotland, you will build relationships across government, politics, business and civil society, strengthen our external profile and lead our engagement with key audiences, while securing funding to support an ambitious and sustainable programme of work.

You will also lead and develop a talented team, fostering a collaborative and supportive working environment, and contribute to IPPR's wider organisational strategy and research priorities.

We recognise that candidates will bring different skills, experiences and perspectives, and we're interested in both what you've achieved and what you could bring to the role.

Responsibilities

Policy leadership, impact and profile

- Provide intellectual and strategic leadership for IPPR Scotland, working collaboratively with colleagues to set research priorities, develop its strategy and theory of change, and identify opportunities for meaningful policy impact.

- Identify emerging political, economic and social challenges facing Scotland, developing bold, progressive and evidence-led policy ideas capable of influencing government policy and wider public debate.

- Shape and oversee an ambitious programme of research, ensuring that projects contribute to a coherent strategy and deliver meaningful policy impact.

- Work collaboratively with colleagues across IPPR to identify opportunities for joint research, policy development and wider influence.

Stakeholder relationships and profile

- Build and maintain strong relationships across Scotland's main political parties and the Scottish government, ensuring that these relationships inform IPPR Scotland's work and that its research and policy ideas influence decision-making.

- Build and maintain stakeholder relationships relevant to IPPR Scotland's work, including in public, private and voluntary and community sectors, and identify and manage opportunities for partnership.

- Represent IPPR Scotland externally, promoting its research and policy ideas to policymakers, senior decision-makers, stakeholders and the media. Develop and maintain a strong external profile through public speaking, media engagement and written commentary.

Fundraising and partnerships

- Lead fundraising for IPPR Scotland, developing and delivering a strategy to secure a sustainable pipeline of funding aligned with its research priorities and the annual fundraising target agreed with the executive director.

- Develop compelling proposals for research-based projects, including in collaboration with colleagues across IPPR.

- Identify funding sources for our work and build relationships with funders in philanthropy, business and the third sector.

Research and project management

- Oversee the development, delivery and dissemination of IPPR Scotland's research portfolio, ensuring that work is ambitious, rigorous, well managed and delivered to a high standard.

- Lead selected research projects directly, including research design, analysis, writing and the development of clear policy recommendations.

- Provide intellectual guidance, constructive challenge and quality assurance across the team's research and policy outputs.

- Ensure projects are effectively planned, resourced and managed, with clear objectives, budgets and timescales.

- Maintain oversight of the team's programme of work, balancing immediate priorities with longer-term strategic opportunities.

- Ensure research findings are communicated effectively and translated into opportunities for policy influence and impact.

People leadership and management

- Lead, support and develop the IPPR Scotland team, providing clear strategic direction and creating an inclusive, collaborative and high-performing working environment across research, communications and external engagement.

- Ensure colleagues understand their responsibilities, priorities and how their work contributes to IPPR Scotland's objectives.

- Line manage staff effectively in line with IPPR's approach to good management, providing regular feedback, coaching, support and opportunities for professional development.

- Support direct reports in their own management responsibilities, helping them to develop leadership and management capability across the team.

- Hold meaningful performance and career development conversations, supporting colleagues to develop their skills, confidence and longer-term career aspirations.

- Promote wellbeing, inclusion and collaboration, encouraging an open and supportive culture in which colleagues feel valued and able to contribute.

Organisational leadership

- Provide overall leadership for IPPR Scotland, ensuring its research, external engagement, fundraising and operational priorities are aligned with its strategic objectives and IPPR's wider organisational strategy.

- Work closely with the executive director and senior colleagues across IPPR to ensure IPPR Scotland's priorities and perspectives inform the organisation's wider strategy and decision-making.

- Work collaboratively with associate directors and other senior colleagues to develop cross-cutting research, policy ideas, partnerships and opportunities for impact.

- Play an active role in IPPR's wider research and organisational leadership, contributing to intellectual debate, organisational planning and development, and fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture in line with IPPR's values.

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

Policy expertise and intellectual leadership

- Substantial knowledge and expertise in Scotland's devolved powers and the political process in Scotland, including a strong understanding of the challenges and public policy issues facing Scotland and opportunities for progressive policy change.
- Strong knowledge of at least one public policy topic that IPPR Scotland works on, such as economic justice; social security; decarbonisation and environmental policy; skills and education; or other devolved policy areas.
- The ability to provide intellectual and strategic leadership, developing ambitious, creative and evidence-led policy ideas and translating them into coherent programmes of research capable of achieving progressive change, particularly in the Scottish context.
- A strong track record of producing high-quality public policy research, with excellent analytical and writing skills and the ability to critically assess different research methods and evidence.
- Ability to develop creative and innovative approaches to complex policy challenges and strategic questions.

Policy influence and communication

- A strong understanding of the political and policymaking environment, with a demonstrable track record of influencing public policy or political debate through research, ideas and engagement with decision-makers.

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to explain complex ideas clearly, persuasively and accessibly to different audiences.
- The ability to represent IPPR's research or policy work externally, engaging confidently with policymakers, political parties in Scotland and beyond, stakeholders and the media or other public platforms, and acting as an effective spokesperson for IPPR.

Research, programme management and fundraising

- Significant experience of developing, leading and delivering complex research projects or programmes, including managing competing priorities, resources, budgets and deadlines.
- Experience of securing funding or making a significant contribution to successful fundraising, including identifying opportunities, developing proposals and building productive relationships with funders.
- The ability to build and maintain effective relationships and partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, funders, businesses and civil society organisations.

People and organisational leadership

- Strong people management and leadership skills, with experience of motivating, supporting and developing colleagues, providing constructive feedback and managing performance effectively.
- The ability to work collaboratively across teams, contribute to organisational priorities and create an inclusive, supportive and high-performing working environment.
- A strong commitment to addressing economic and social injustice and to IPPR's values of being bold, collaborative, rigorous and inclusive.

Terms of appointment

Joining IPPR means being part of a progressive organisation that values work-life balance, professional development and employee wellbeing. We offer generous leave, flexible working arrangements and a collaborative and inclusive culture. Our offices are in London, Manchester and Edinburgh, with many colleagues working remotely for part of the week.

Salary

£63,378 to £78,276 per annum full-time equivalent depending on experience, plus benefits

Appointments are typically made towards the lower end of the relevant pay scale. Our pay framework is designed to recognise and reward the knowledge, skills and experience colleagues develop over time. We support career development and progression through our annual performance review process, and our basic rates of pay are reviewed annually.

Contract period

This is a permanent contract.

Location and flexible working

We value the benefits of in-person collaboration and ask staff to spend at least 40 per cent of their working hours in our Edinburgh office, with the remainder able to be worked remotely.

We are committed to flexible working and welcome applications from people seeking different working arrangements, including part-time working and job sharing. We would be happy to discuss options during the recruitment process.

Annual leave

We offer 25 days of annual leave, plus bank holidays and five additional Christmas closure days each year. Annual leave, bank holidays and Christmas closure days are pro rata for part-time staff.

Pension

We recognise how important it is to help you save for your retirement and offer a defined contribution group stakeholder pension scheme with Aviva. IPPR matches employee contributions up to 5.5 per cent of salary.

Probation period

This appointment includes a six-month probationary period, during which the notice period is two weeks. Our probation process is designed to support your induction and development, ensuring you have the guidance and resources you need to succeed in your new role.

Additional benefits

Wellbeing support: We provide access to occupational health services, Mental Health First Aiders and a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme offering in-the-moment support and counselling, legal and financial advice, and specialist support and signposting services.

Family-friendly policies: We offer generous carer and parental leave alongside policies designed to support colleagues with caring and family responsibilities. These include up to 21 weeks of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave at full pay, and six weeks of paid paternity leave.

Flexible working: We support a range of flexible working arrangements, including flexibility around working patterns and hours. We also offer paid time off to deal with emergencies and unexpected events.

Learning and development: We are committed to supporting the learning and development of our staff through formal and informal development opportunities, on-the-job learning and up to five days of paid study leave each year. Everyone has regular career and development conversations with their manager, and we encourage colleagues to share their knowledge and learning across the organisation.

Union and staff networks: Staff have the option to join a trade union, and our staff-led networks provide opportunities to share experiences, connect with colleagues and help build an inclusive culture. Listening to colleagues' ideas about how and where we can improve is an important part of our values and how we work.

Giving back: We offer three days of paid special leave each year to take part in volunteering activities.

Equality, diversity and inclusion: IPPR is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community and from applicants with a range of professional and lived experiences. As an organisation engaging in critical debate about a wide range of progressive policy issues, we value the creativity and range of perspectives that a diverse team can provide.

How to apply

We hope you will consider applying.

To submit your application, please visit:

https://ippr.hrpartner.io/jobs/associate-director--ippr-scotland-1mvkz

Closing date: 6 December 2026, 23:59 GMT

First interviews will take place in Edinburgh on 14 December 2026

Equality and diversity monitoring

We would be grateful if you could also complete our equality and diversity monitoring form. This information is collected for monitoring purposes only and will not be considered as part of your application.

Requesting reasonable adjustments

We want every candidate to have a fair and positive experience and to be able to perform at their best throughout the recruitment process. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage - for example, information in an accessible format, additional time for assessments, or support during interviews - please contact us at **recruitment@ippr.org** as early as possible.

All requests for reasonable adjustments will be treated confidentially and will not affect the outcome of your application.

What happens next

We are committed to informing all applicants of the outcome of their application. However, due to the high volume of applications we sometimes receive, this may take some time. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide individual feedback to applicants who are not shortlisted.

If you are invited to interview, we may also ask you to complete a short-written task or prepare a short presentation.

We wish you every success with your application and thank you for your interest in IPPR.

Applicants guide: Right to work in the UK checks

Overview

UK employers are legally required to conduct Right to Work Checks. This is done to verify that their prospective employees have the appropriate and valid permission to work in the United Kingdom. This requirement is set out under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, specifically Sections 15 to 25, and is supported by Home Office guidance that is updated regularly.

You'll need to prove your right to work in the UK before you start working for us, whether permanent, temporary, part-time, or casual. How you do this depends on your nationality and what kind of permission you have to work in the UK. This process must be applied consistently to all candidates, ensuring non-discriminatory practices irrespective of nationality, race, or ethnicity.

To verify a job applicant's right to work in the UK, the employer is required to check and retain evidence of from a list published by the Home Office. You can access the list here. We are unable to accept applications from candidates that cannot provide documentary evidence of right to work in the United Kingdom, and we will not be able to confirm employment until this documentation has been produced. You must produce an original document – photocopies are not acceptable under the Act.

Please be aware that IPPR is not a sponsoring organisation. Therefore, you must already possess the right to work in the UK or be able to secure the right to work in the UK independently.

1 If you're a British or Irish citizen

If you're a British or Irish citizen, you can prove your right to work in the UK with either of the following:

- a British passport
- an Irish passport or passport card

Your passport or passport card can be current or expired.

If you do not have a passport or passport card, you can prove your right to work with one of the following:

- a UK birth or adoption certificate
- an Irish birth or adoption certificate
- a certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen

You must also give your employer an official letter or document from a previous employer or a government agency.

For example, you could use a letter from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the Social Security Agency in Northern Ireland.

The letter must show your name and National Insurance number.

2 If you're not a British or Irish citizen

If you're not a British or Irish citizen, you can prove your right to work with:

- a share code - you can get a share code online
- your eligible immigration documents

You can choose which option you use.

If you cannot prove your right to work

If you're not a British or Irish citizen, your employer can check if you can work with the employer checking service.

If you're a Commonwealth citizen, you may be able to get documents to show that you can work in the UK through the Windrush Scheme.

If you have any further queries about these provisions, please do not hesitate to ask.