

Head of Public Affairs

Job description

It will take a society to beat dementia. Alzheimer's Society.



Who we are

Dementia is the UK's biggest killer. One in three people born in the UK today will develop dementia in their lifetime.

At Alzheimer's Society, we're the UK's leading dementia charity and the only one to tackle all aspects of dementia by giving help and hope to people living with dementia today and in the future. We give vital support to people facing the most frightening times of their lives, while also funding groundbreaking research and campaigning to make dementia the priority it should be.

Together with our supporters, we're working towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives.

Our values

Our values tell everyone who we are as an organisation.

Our values make sure that our focus is clear for the challenges and opportunities ahead and remind us of what we all stand for.

Our values are evident in everything we do, how we do it and how we work together.

These are not just words on a wall, we live these every day in all our work. We are determined to make a difference when and where it matters most, by being passionate, focussed and making a lasting impact for people affected by dementia.



Determined to make a difference

We're passionate, we're focused and we make a lasting impact for everyone living with dementia.



Trusted expert

We're listening, we're learning and we use experience and evidence.



Better together

We're open, we combine our strengths and we achieve more together.



Compassionate

We're kind, we're honest and we don't shy away from challenges.

Through our values we will make the greatest difference for people affected by dementia. Whether you are someone living with dementia, a family member or carer, a supporter, a donor, a colleague from another organisation, an employee or a volunteer, these four values will shape your experience with Alzheimer's Society.

Head of Public Affairs

Position in the organisation

Reports to Associate Director of Policy & Influencing
Member of our Policy and Influencing leadership team.
Part of our Research and Influencing directorate.

Purpose of this role

At Alzheimer's Society we are advisors, supporters, fundraisers, researchers, influencers, communicators, technical specialist and so much more. We are volunteers, we are employees, and together we are here to make a difference to the lives of people with dementia and their carers.

The Head of Public Affairs will play a leading role in Alzheimer's Society's political engagement across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The position exists to secure greater urgency, ambition and sustained political prioritisation for dementia, ensuring our evidence, policy positions and the experiences of people affected by dementia lead to decisions that improve diagnosis, treatment, care and support.

This is a senior, outward-facing leadership role operating in fast-moving and often uncertain political environments. The postholder will anticipate change, identify the moments when progress is possible and rapidly adapt strategy, messages and resources. They will understand the distinct institutions, political dynamics and opportunities in each nation, while creating a coherent three-nations approach that strengthens our collective influence.

The postholder will work with the Head of Influencing Campaigns, Head of Local Systems Influencing and Associate Director of Policy & Influencing to set the public affairs strategy, establish clear political outcomes and lead a high-performing team to deliver them. They will judge where power and influence sit, build trusted relationships with senior political and system leaders, convene coalitions and use parliamentary, governmental, media, campaigning and stakeholder routes to accelerate change.

Success will depend on close integration between evidence, policy, public affairs, campaigns, media and local systems influencing. The postholder will ensure our influencing is grounded in robust evidence and lived experience, politically astute, responsive to external change and focused on impact rather than activity.

We are looking for someone who exemplifies our values, someone who is: Determined to make a difference when and where it matters most. A trusted expert who believes in working Better together and demonstrates true Compassion.

Core remit

- Lead and develop a team of managers, officers and assistants, fostering a culture of high support, high challenge, pace, sound judgement and continuous learning.
- Own team planning, prioritisation, budget, performance, risk and impact reporting, ensuring resources move quickly towards the strongest political opportunities.
- Act as a senior adviser to the Associate Director, Executive Leadership Team and colleagues across the Society on political strategy, opportunities, risks and positioning.
- Represent Alzheimer's Society externally with authority and credibility, including with politicians, officials, system leaders, partners and the media.

Key accountabilities and responsibilities

Political strategy and prioritisation

- Deliver an ambitious public affairs strategy across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with clear political objectives, choices, audiences and measures of impact.

- Drive greater urgency and political prioritisation for dementia, making the case for dementia as a health and care priority and securing visible, sustained commitment from decision-makers.
- Identify and act on political opportunities across the three nations, tailoring approaches to their different institutions, policy landscapes, parliamentary processes and political cultures.
- Maintain a sharp view of where decisions are made and who can influence them, directing the team towards the relationships, interventions and moments most likely to unlock change.
- Turn organisational policy priorities into focused influencing propositions, stakeholder strategies and delivery plans that are politically relevant and capable of securing action.

Political intelligence and agility

- Provide timely, high-quality analysis of political developments, power shifts, policy windows, risks and stakeholder positions, translating complexity into clear recommendations for senior leaders.
- Lead the team to navigate rapidly changing political landscapes, adapting plans and messages quickly while protecting long-term strategic objectives.
- Build horizon-scanning and scenario-planning disciplines that enable Alzheimer's Society to anticipate change rather than react to it.
- Ensure the organisation is prepared for elections, changes of government or leadership, fiscal events, legislative programmes, consultations and other significant political moments across all three nations.
- Exercise sound political judgement in sensitive or contested environments, balancing pace, ambition, reputation, relationships and compliance.

Relationships, coalitions and external influence

- Help the organisation to build and sustain trusted relationships with senior politicians, officials, parliamentarians, health and care leaders, think tanks, professional bodies and sector partners.
- Create and lead coalitions that broaden support for our priorities, build consensus where useful and deploy constructive challenge where progress is too slow.
- Oversee high-impact parliamentary and political activity, including briefings, debates, inquiries, legislative engagement, roundtables, receptions and party conference programmes.
- Position Alzheimer's Society as a leading, authoritative and solutions-focused voice on dementia, using evidence, lived experience and policy expertise to shape political debate.
- Represent our priorities through speeches, events, professional networks and media activity, and support senior spokespeople to engage effectively with political audiences.

Integrated three-nations influencing

- Embed a genuinely three-nations approach, ensuring priorities and approaches reflect the opportunities and needs of England, Wales and Northern Ireland rather than defaulting to a single-nation model.
- Create strong connections between the work of national and local influencing so intelligence, relationships and evidence flow in both directions and reinforce shared outcomes.
- Work closely with Policy, Strategy, Strategic Evidence, Local Systems Influencing, Campaigns, Media, Strategic Marketing, Services and Fundraising to plan and deliver coordinated influencing activity.
- Ensure the perspectives and experiences of people living with dementia and carers shape political strategy, messages and engagement, with meaningful involvement throughout the work.
- Create feedback loops so political intelligence informs evidence and policy development, and emerging evidence is rapidly translated into influencing opportunities.

Impact, leadership and governance

- Set clear outcomes and indicators for public affairs activity, evaluate progress and report candidly on impact, learning, risk and changing assumptions.
- Lead the development, performance and wellbeing of the Public Affairs team, building political capability and supporting colleagues to make confident decisions at pace.
- Prioritise rigorously across competing demands, stopping or reshaping activity that is not contributing sufficiently to agreed outcomes.

- Lead and role-model compliance with lobbying, electoral, charity and data protection requirements, ensuring robust risk assessment and record keeping.
- Manage the team budget effectively and contribute to organisational planning, governance and reporting.
- Deputise for the Associate Director of Policy and Influencing where appropriate.

We are looking for someone who can...

- Live and role-model Alzheimer's Society's values and expected leadership behaviours.
- Work inclusively and ensure people affected by dementia can participate meaningfully in our work.
- Adhere to organisational policies, procedures, service standards and health and safety requirements.
- Take responsibility for personal learning and support the development of others.
- Travel independently on behalf of the Society, including occasional overnight stays where required.
- Undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the seniority and purpose of the role.

Person specification and selection criteria

Skills, knowledge and experience	Application (A) or Interview (I)
Substantial senior-level experience of developing and delivering public affairs, government relations or political influencing strategies that have secured policy, legislative or political change.	A/I
Deep understanding of political institutions, parliamentary processes and government decision-making, with knowledge of the differing political and policy environments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.	A/I
Proven ability to identify political opportunities, anticipate emerging trends and adapt strategy effectively within complex, uncertain and fast-moving external environments.	A/I
Good track record of translating evidence, policy priorities and lived experience into compelling influencing strategies, political propositions and stakeholder engagement plans.	A/I
Significant experience of building credibility and influencing at senior levels, including with politicians, advisers, civil servants, health and care leaders, sector partners and other key stakeholders.	A/I
Experience of leading, developing and motivating high-performing teams, including managing managers, driving performance and building organisational capability.	A/I
Demonstrable experience of evaluating influencing activity, measuring impact and using insight and evidence to shape priorities, resources and future approaches.	A/I
Knowledge of dementia and/or health and social care policy, together with an understanding of the role of charities and campaigning organisations in influencing public policy and political decision-making.	I

Competencies & personal attributes	Application (A) or interview (I)
Outstanding political judgement, with the ability to balance opportunity, risk, reputation, relationships and organisational priorities when making decisions.	A/I
Strategic thinking and planning skills, with the ability to translate long-term ambitions into clear priorities, outcomes and delivery plans.	A/I
Exceptional relationship-building and influencing capability, establishing trust and credibility with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.	A/I
Strong leadership capability, creating a culture of accountability, pace, collaboration, continuous learning and wellbeing.	A/I
Excellent communication skills, able to distil complex issues into clear, persuasive and audience-appropriate messages, both verbally and in writing.	A/I
Collaborative and inclusive approach, building effective partnerships across organisational boundaries and ensuring diverse perspectives and lived experience inform decision-making.	A/I
Resilient, adaptable and comfortable operating in ambiguity, maintaining focus and effectiveness in high-profile and rapidly changing environments.	A/I
Values-driven and committed to acting with integrity, professionalism and accountability, demonstrating a strong commitment to Alzheimer's Society's mission and values.	A/I

Our benefits



Financial Security

- Group Personal Pension Plan with Scottish Widows – with up to 8% employer contributions rate
- Life Assurance Scheme – two times your annual salary
- Society Plus and Smart Spending App – giving you unbeatable savings at hundreds of retailers



Health & Wellbeing

- Health Cash Plan
- 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme including online and face to face coocusselling
- Discounted gym membership with Society Plus
- Lived Experience Networks
- Mental health app and unlimited therapy



Personal Development

- Apprenticeships
- Leadership development programme
- Financial support towards relevant professional qualifications



Family & Dependants

- Enhanced family leave – 16 weeks paid for all parents
- Paid time off work for fertility treatments for both partners
- Paid carers leave
- Paid dependants leave
- Paid compassionate and bereavement leave
- Paid time off work to support those transitioning



Recognition

- Annual people awards
- Long service awards
- Thank you eCards
- Values Hero and Society Legend Awards



Work Life Balance

- Annual leave of 27 days increasing to 30, plus bank holidays
- Career breaks of up to 3 months
- Flexible working
- Wellbeing leave