

## Introducing the Policy Futures Programme

The people and organisations who shape policy in Britain should be representative of the country we live in today. The Policy Futures Programme, a partnership between [Demos](#), [IPPR](#), and [The Ladder Group](#), aims to contribute to this by opening up a new, accessible pathway to careers in policy research. *This is a one-year, full time role starting in September 2025 – for more information, take a look at the job description and FAQs below:*

**Applications are open now – submit yours here:** [Apply to the Policy Futures Programme](#)

## What is a think tank?

Think tanks contribute to the political landscape in the UK by studying some of the most pressing issues in our society, and then developing policy solutions to tackle them. Think tanks use research and analysis to develop new ideas and proposals for the government and others who have the power to deliver change. They work with others including politicians, civil servants, charities, media, communities and business to get those ideas and proposals put into action. Some of the topics addressed by organisations participating in this programme include:

- **How to harness technological innovation** – to create more trustworthy technology, for which technological progress aligns with the needs and values of citizens. See Demos' work on this issue [here](#).
- **How to create a more collaborative democracy** – in which politicians, experts, communities and citizens work together to tackle the challenges facing our country. See Demos' work on this issue [here](#).
- **How to adapt to a changing climate and build the future economy** – by accelerating progress in reducing emissions and restoring nature, while also securing a fairer and thriving economy. See IPPR's work on this [here](#).
- **How to build public services that deliver what people need** – by understanding the changing demands on services and thinking creatively about doing things differently. See IPPR's work on this [here](#).

## What you'll do:

As a participant in the Policy Futures Programme, you join one of our participating think tanks, either **Demos** or **The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)**.

Your day-to-day might involve:

- **Research:** Reviewing academic and expert reports, supporting the design of surveys, helping interview focus groups, and collecting data from a wide range of sources for on-going research projects.
- **Data analysis:** Reviewing qualitative and quantitative data to identify trends relating to one of the issues your think tank focuses on.
- **Developing policy ideas:** Working with your peers to come up with policy solutions to regional and national issues based on the research and data available to you.
- **Report-writing:** Presenting data and policy ideas in clear written form for stakeholders, government and the general public, and preparing to talk about your conclusions within your think tank and to an external audience.
- **Supporting the delivery of events:** Helping organise and prepare for roundtables, presentations, and networking events promoting the work of your host think tank.

Over one year, you will receive training to develop key skills in research methods, policy development, communication and stakeholder engagement: tools that will allow you to kick-start a career in the policy research space.

You will also have the opportunity to participate in two external placements – one with another think tank, and one elsewhere in the policy and politics sector. This could include a charity, a local or regional authority, or even in national government!

By the end of the programme, you will have made a clear impact on an area that your host think tank focuses on, and developed skills that will allow you to start a career contributing to meaningful policy change – either in a think tank or elsewhere in the public, private, or third sectors.

#### **Who we look for:**

No prior experience is required, and we particularly encourage candidates who are looking for structured support, training and an introduction to the policy research sector to apply. We encourage you to apply if you think you have the following skills:

- **Research:** The ability to gather, analyse, interpret and review information to reach justified conclusions. You do not need to have carried out formal research projects. Your skills could be demonstrated through qualitative (non-numerical) or quantitative (numerical) research, or a combination of both. For example, this could be as part of your university degree, work experience, or personal projects.
- **Communication:** You should be able to confidently express yourself in written and verbal form, as well as adapt your communication style depending on your

audience. You should be willing to engage with a wide range of people from different backgrounds and cultures, and who hold different political beliefs.

- **Diligence:** You will have a keen eye for detail, be very well organised and have strong prioritisation skills.
- **Curiosity:** You must be eager to learn more about the policy and research sectors, keen to engage with current policy debates, and willing to take constructive feedback on board.
- **A desire to make an impact:** We are looking for individuals who are passionate about seeking solutions to some of the biggest issues facing UK society today.

#### **What we offer you:**

- A £30,000 salary, plus a range of benefits from your host organisation.
- A structured training programme enabling you to develop key skills for a future career involving research, policy, and stakeholder engagement.

#### **Eligibility:**

We encourage candidates with no prior experience to apply. We are excited to welcome applications from candidates who meet any one of the following criteria:

- You are about to graduate, or are a recent graduate who has completed a university degree in the past two years (preferably in a humanities, social science or STEM subject where you have developed your writing skills).
- OR you have completed an applicable degree apprenticeship.
- OR you do not have a degree, but have at least three years of other work experience you feel gives you the transferable skills above.

There are no restrictions on who can apply to the programme, but the key focus of this opportunity is to increase socioeconomic and ethnic diversity within the think tank and wider policy/political sectors – spaces where these backgrounds are significantly underrepresented.

We especially welcome applications from candidates who:

- Are from a low-income background;
- Attended a state school in the UK for some/all of their education;
- Are/were the first in their family to attend university;
- Are from an ethnic minority background; or

- Have taken non-traditional academic or professional routes, or who have experienced financial or social barriers to accessing traditional career paths in politics & policy.

### How to apply:

Submit your application via our online portal. Please upload a CV and short answer to the following questions (in no more than 200 words each):

- Why are you interested in the Policy Futures Programme?
- What is one part of your education, work experience, or extracurricular activity that prepares you to be successful in this programme?
- What is a current issue facing the UK that you would like to see a think tank focus on?

We are interested in your unique writing style and tone of voice, so **please avoid using AI in any of your written application materials.**

Applications close on **5 June at 11:59pm**. We conduct interviews on a rolling basis, so we encourage you to apply as soon as you feel ready. Successful candidates must have the unrestricted right to work in the UK.

[APPLY HERE](#)

### The Interview Process:

1. **Submit your application.** Complete the online application form before **June 5**. Applications may close earlier, so we encourage you to apply as soon as you are ready.
2. **Informational call.** If your application is selected, you will then be invited to schedule an introductory call with a member of The Ladder Group team. In this initial call, a recruiter will look to learn more about your background and give you a more detailed overview of the programme, as well as answer any initial questions.
3. **Video interview.** Strong applicants will then be invited to complete a video interview. This will cover the following main topics:
  - Your background and previous experience.
  - Your motivations for joining the programme.
  - Your research into the think tank sector.

- “Competency-based” questions to better understand your transferable skills. To prepare for this, you should practice using a clear format, like the [“STAR method”](#).
- 4. **Written task.** This is an opportunity to showcase your analytical and writing skills. You won’t need to prepare anything in advance for this task.
- 5. **Attend a final interview (June 18–20).** This final interview will be run in-person by a participating think tank, and will allow you to meet your potential colleagues and managers.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What projects will I be working on during the duration of the programme?*

- No two projects will be the same, but you can expect to be assigned to active research projects, campaigns, or programmes currently run by your host think tank. All programme members will also receive regular training on skills relevant to starting a career in the policy research space.

*Do I need any experience in a think tank, or conducting policy research, to apply?*

- No, not at all. The aim of the Policy Futures Programme is to create pathways for those from underrepresented backgrounds and limited experience in policy research to enter this sector. We encourage you to apply if you feel like you have demonstrated the skills in the job description through any combination of work, academic, or extracurricular experience.

*How can I stand out during the application and interview process?*

- We suggest setting aside time to research the think tank sector, IPPR, Demos, and the issues that each organisation covers.
- Practice speaking about why these issues interest you, and why you would want to spend time engaging with them as part of your full-time job.
- Think about times you have demonstrated the key skills listed in the job description. This doesn’t necessarily have to be in a full-time work environment. For example, you could have conducted research as part of a volunteer role for a university society, or honed your communication skills in a part-time job.
- Finally, practice talking through all of your notes – your experience, motivations and research into the sector – in a clear, structured way.

*Will every applicant get an interview?*

- We anticipate receiving a high volume of applications, so unfortunately not every applicant will be invited to an interview. We will aim to review applications and provide feedback as soon as we can.

*How will I be assigned to a specific organisation?*

- If you successfully pass the interview and written task stages, representatives from the programme will assign your application to one of the participating think tanks. This will be based on your experience, interests, and application form responses. This think tank will then reach out to schedule a final interview.

*Where will I be based?*

- You will be based in one of the offices of our participating think tanks. This year, these organisations are Demos and The Institute for Public Policy Research. Both organisations are based in Westminster and have a hybrid working model, so you should anticipate spending at least several days every fortnight in-office.

*When will I start?*

- Successful candidates will start in early September 2025 and participate in the programme for a full year.

*We believe that diverse experience and perspectives are essential to shaping effective policy, and we are committed to making the sector more open and inclusive. All applications will be assessed on merit. However, please note that in line with the Equality Act (2010), this opportunity's recruitment process will include positive action in order to address underrepresentation of socioeconomic and ethnic diversity in our sector and organisations.*