



Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Education Policy Institute

Information pack

November 2025

This is a fabulous job. It provides stimulation, influence and the scope to extend influence over policy for children, young people and the education system. It's a job full of challenge and variety, sitting at the intersection of policy, practice and public debate. It's about setting agendas and designing and delivering research which makes a difference – especially for young people facing challenge and disadvantage. It demands imagination, intelligence and leadership. In the English education system, it is a job like no other.

Over the last decade, the Education Policy Institute has established itself as a key feature of the education landscape. Universally respected for its integrity, independence and the quality of its work, it has drawn the respect of politicians and policy-makers, of system leaders and teachers, of journalists and commentators. As we enter our second decade, we want to extend our influence and build the capacity of the EPI to influence change for good. We are looking to recruit a leader who will build on the exceptional successes of the first decade, but shape the organisation and its influence for the future.

The EPI is a small organisation but one with an outside influence. That means that this is also a demanding job – though much of the excitement lies in meeting the challenge. We are looking for a leader who can help us grow the organisation and its influence, who can project the values and importance of our work, who can lead and manage a team of extra-ordinary talent. We are looking for a leader who can build relationships across education and policy to further extend the influence of the EPI.

If this opportunity excites you, we want to hear from you.

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Chris Husbands
Chair, Board of Trustees

About the Education Policy Institute

The Education Policy Institute is an independent, impartial and evidence-based research organisation dedicated to promoting high-quality education outcomes for all children and young people—regardless of their social or economic background. Our mission is to improve education policy and practice by producing rigorous research and analysis that influences government decisions, informs practitioners and enhances public understanding of the education system.

EPI is a decade old, but in that decade it has established itself as the pre-eminent policy think tank on English education. At root, EPI is driven by a moral purpose to:

- Ensure that every child and young person in the UK has a world-class education, positive mental health and is able to contribute to a thriving society and economy; and
- Close the gap between disadvantaged pupils (including those with SEND, looked after children and other aspects of vulnerability) and their peers – a gap which is currently over 18 months (on average) by the age of 16 but which varies significantly across the country.

To realise our mission, we undertake research of the highest quality, and work hard to embed the research in policy and practice. Quality is critical to realising our mission: we know that in education policy, so much is contested that work needs to be of genuinely exceptional quality to command respect and extend influence. Over the last decade, through hard work and a gifted team, we have set the highest standards, and the result has been that the EPI is universally respected for the work it does. Over the next decade, we want to grow our work, to extend our influence and to accelerate progress towards realizing our mission.

About EPI's mission and values

Education can have a transformative effect on the life chances of young people, enabling them to fulfill their potential, have successful careers, and grasp opportunities. As well as having a positive impact on the individual, good quality education and child wellbeing also promotes economic productivity and a cohesive society.

Too many children, presently, don't get the education and support they need to make the most of their lives. The evidence of the gaps that exist is set out each year in our research on education in England.

Identifying and promoting good education policy is therefore crucial. But the policy debate is often occupied by contradictory views, which can be based on personal experience, anecdote, and political instinct. There is an urgent need for objective, impartial, and independent research that can influence and inform the education debate – rigorous research which is grounded in evidence.

The Education Policy Institute's aim is to help fill this space. You can find our most recent annual report at <https://epi.org.uk/annual-report-2025/> Our data-driven research and analysis sheds light on whether current policy is delivering a high quality, equitable education system, and identifies issues where further, or different, policy development is needed. We help identify the policies which can improve educational outcomes for all, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. Our work holds government, policy-makers, and education providers to account for their performance and impact. We bring together thinkers, policy-makers and leaders to debate and develop policy. We have a thought leadership role in shaping debate and identifying the issues where future policy needs to be directed.

An independent and influential organisation needs a team of experienced, talented and motivated staff to achieve this ambition. The Education Policy Institute is fortunate to have assembled a strong and diverse team to lead our research effort.

Our values

Our work is grounded on a set of values which are fundamental to the EPI.

- A strong moral purpose to our work
- A strong commitment to uncovering facts, evidence, and what is proven to work.
- Honesty and a commitment to transparency
- Collaboration, challenge and communication of ideas with each other.
- An enthusiasm for growing and developing the organisation
- Using our work at EPI as a vehicle for positive change

EPI's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

EPI is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. We particularly encourage applications from under-represented groups in research and policy, including people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled candidates, and those with lived experience of educational disadvantage.

About the role

- Location: Central London / Hybrid (2–3 days office-based per week)
- Salary range: £125,000-140,000
- Reports to: Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Contract: Permanent, full time, but flexible options can be discussed
- Closing date: 9 January 2026
- Interviews: London, early February 2026

EPI's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will provide strategic, intellectual, and operational leadership for EPI—ensuring the organisation continues to deliver world-class research, influence policy at the highest levels, and operate sustainably and effectively.

We want to recruit an experienced leader with a passion for education and social justice. We need to make the case ever more powerfully and to a wider audience, and with ever greater impact.

We are a small organisation, but with outsize influence. This is a role full of challenge and variety, demanding flexibility and imagination, intelligence and imagination, leadership and management. The job is extremely varied. A typical week in EPI might include:

- meeting with senior government officials, union and school leaders and corporate partners to disseminate EPI's work, raise its profile and create new fundraising opportunities;
- shaping EPI's research priorities, taking into account the political, policy and financial context;
- delivering keynote addresses and participating in panel discussions for a range of organisations and across the country;
- appearing on national broadcast media to present EPI research findings or to comment on education policy developments;
- working with the Executive Team to deliver our People Strategy, including new performance and appraisal arrangements, developing our learning and development offer and creating a professional and inclusive culture;
- working with the Finance Manager to review performance against budget and plan changes where they are needed;
- working with the Chair of Trustees to shape priorities and deliver strategy;
- working with potential funders to build and shape projects.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Lead an organisation of 20 people (and growing) to deliver EPI's charitable mission.
- Shape and deliver EPI's bold 5-year strategic plan and people strategy.
- Identify key policy priorities and emerging trends across education, skills and young people's wellbeing.
- Ensure EPI maintains its independence, credibility and research excellence.



Research oversight and impact

- Oversee the development of a robust research agenda aligned with EPI's values and mission.
- Uphold high standards of methodological rigour and impartiality.
- Ensure EPI's outputs influence policymakers, practitioners, and the media.
- Encourage innovation in research methods, data use and communication.

External relations and influence

- Serve as the public face and principal spokesperson for EPI.
- Lead EPI's media profile, responding at short notice to requests for expert comment and policy insight.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with government departments, parliamentarians, funders, unions and school leaders, and the wider education community.
- Represent EPI at conferences, and advisory panels.

Financial and organisational management

- Ensure EPI's long-term financial sustainability, including fundraising, income diversification and sound financial management.
- Oversee budgets, risk management and operational performance.
- Support and develop a high-performing, inclusive and motivated team.
- Work closely with the Board of Trustees on governance, compliance and accountability.

Person specification

We want to recruit an exceptional leader for an exceptional organization. You may have experience in shaping policy; you may have experience in leading research; you may have experience in engaging with system leaders. Your background is less important to us than what you bring: your passion and your values, your enthusiasm, your ability to communicate to a wider audience, and your leadership. But to help you, and to assist us, we have set out what we think is important for EPI's next Chief Executive.

Essential experience and skills

- Oversee the development of a robust research agenda aligned with EPI's values and mission.
- Uphold high standards of methodological rigour and impartiality.
- Ensure EPI's outputs influence policymakers, practitioners, and the media.
- Encourage innovation in research methods, data use and communication.

Desirable experience

- Serve as the public face and principal spokesperson for EPI.
- Lead EPI's media profile, responding at short notice to requests for expert comment and policy insight.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with government departments, parliamentarians, funders, unions and school leaders, and the wider education community.
- Represent EPI at conferences, and advisory panels.



Leadership attributes

- Ensure EPI's long-term financial sustainability, including fundraising, income diversification and sound financial management.
- Oversee budgets, risk management and operational performance.
- Support and develop a high-performing, inclusive and motivated team.
- Work closely with the Board of Trustees on governance, compliance and accountability.

Salary and benefits

- Salary range: £125,000-140,000
- 30 days annual leave (plus public holidays and the period between Christmas and the New Year)
- Employer pension contribution (up to 10%)
- Enhanced parental leave and family-friendly policies
- Cycle-to-work scheme
- This is a full-time role, but the Trustees are willing to discuss arrangements for flexible working with candidates, including those who would prefer to work part-time, with appropriate adjustments to the duties of the role



Application process

We hope this pack has excited you about this role and its potential. If you would like to apply, please submit a covering letter of no more than two pages which explains why you are interested in the role, how your experience aligns with the person specification, and your vision for EPI over the next five years.

If you would like an informal conversation with the Chair of Trustees, please contact Joni Kelly (joni.kelly@epi.org.uk) to arrange a time

Applications should be sent to: joni.kelly@epi.org.uk

Deadline: 5 p.m. 9 January 2026

Shortlisting: We aim to shortlist in the week of 19 January 2026

Final interviews: We aim to interview in early February 2026

