



# *Director of* External Affairs

Cycling UK

## Welcome



Dear Candidate,

We are the UK's cycling charity.

Our journey began in 1878, and we are still riding towards the same goal: to enable and inspire people from all backgrounds and abilities to experience cycling's joys and benefits. We speak up for everyone who cycles, working to ensure that cycling is a safe, accessible and attractive choice for travel, leisure and everyday life.

We are powered by our heritage and expertise, and by the passion of our supporters, campaigners, partners and more than 70,000 members. We believe deeply that more people cycling benefits us all -helping to create happier, healthier and greener lives, and stronger, more connected communities.

Over the past five years, Cycling UK has gone from strength to strength. Our influence has grown significantly, with award-winning campaigns, trusted policy expertise and confident media engagement helping to shape debate and decision-making across the UK. Alongside this, our ground-breaking behaviour change programmes now reach over 100,000 people a year in diverse communities across England and Scotland. As an organisation, we have grown in income and scale, while also investing heavily in our digital infrastructure, our systems and processes, and in building a strong, inclusive and values-led culture.

We are now almost two years into our ambitious organisational strategy, and this is an exciting moment to join Cycling UK as Director of External Affairs. With strong foundations in place, this role will be central to amplifying our voice, sharpening our influence and ensuring that cycling is firmly embedded in public policy, public consciousness and everyday behaviour across all four nations of the UK.

This is a pivotal leadership role, bringing together policy and public affairs, campaigns, communications, brand, marketing and stakeholder engagement. You will lead and inspire a talented, multidisciplinary team, and play a key role on our Senior Leadership Team - helping to set direction, model our values and contribute to the organisation's overall success. Through integrated, high-impact campaigning and communications, you will help ensure that Cycling UK continues to punch above its weight and deliver real, lasting change.

We see huge opportunities ahead, but also a fast-moving and complex external environment. To succeed, we need to remain adaptable, future-facing and confident in how we advocate, influence and engage. This role is crucial to ensuring that our campaigning, policy and communications work is strategically focused, well-resourced and delivers measurable impact.

You don't need to be a cyclist to work at Cycling UK, but you do need a strong commitment to our mission and ambitions. Our Senior Leadership Team is a close-knit and supportive group, and we are keen to welcome someone who brings energy, insight and constructive challenge; who is confident giving and receiving feedback; and who shares our passion for learning, collaboration and making Cycling UK the best it can be.

Whatever your background, whether from within or beyond the charity sector, we are looking for someone who is excited by the opportunity to lead bold, compelling external work, and to help shape a future where cycling is a normal, everyday activity for everyone.

We hope this pack gives you a clear sense of the opportunity ahead, and we look forward to learning more about you.

Sarah Mitchell

Chief Executive

# Introduction to Cycling UK



## Purpose of the Role

The Director of External Affairs is responsible for leading and amplifying Cycling UK's external voice, influence and reputation. The role brings together policy and public affairs, campaigning, communications, brand, marketing and stakeholder engagement to ensure Cycling UK is a powerful, credible and effective advocate for cycling across the UK.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Director of External Affairs plays a key role in shaping organisational strategy and culture, while leading a large, multidisciplinary team to deliver integrated, high-impact external work. The role exists to ensure that Cycling UK's campaigning, influencing and communications activity is strategically aligned, evidence-led and focused on delivering measurable change.

The postholder will be responsible for Cycling UK's internal functions, supporting the effective delivery of its [2024 – 2029 strategy](#) and sets out how we aim to create happier, healthier and greener lives through cycling.

Working in a fast-moving political and media environment, the Director of External Affairs will build strong relationships with decision-makers, partners and allies; represent Cycling UK at the highest levels; and help embed cycling at the heart of public policy, public debate and everyday behaviour. Through bold, compelling and inclusive external engagement, the role supports Cycling UK's ambition to enable more people to cycle and to create happier, healthier and greener lives.

# Role Description



The Director of External Affairs leads all of our external-facing work at Cycling UK, building on our award-winning campaigns and successful media engagement.

## Senior Leadership Team

- Play an active role in this leadership team and role model our organisational values.
- Work closely with senior colleagues in regular face-to-face and online meetings, taking part in team coaching and giving and receiving feedback.

## Leadership

- Lead and inspire a high-performing team with the following areas of functional responsibility:
  - Policy and public affairs
  - Campaigns, including our campaigner network (CAN)
  - Communications (including all content, media relations, magazine management, member communications, internal comms and digital communications).
  - Brand, marketing and stakeholder engagement.
- Set a vision for and lead a high-performing team of c.23, structuring and resourcing the department appropriately.
- Lead the development of Cycling UK's external affairs work to deliver on the priorities of our strategy, setting appropriate KPIs.

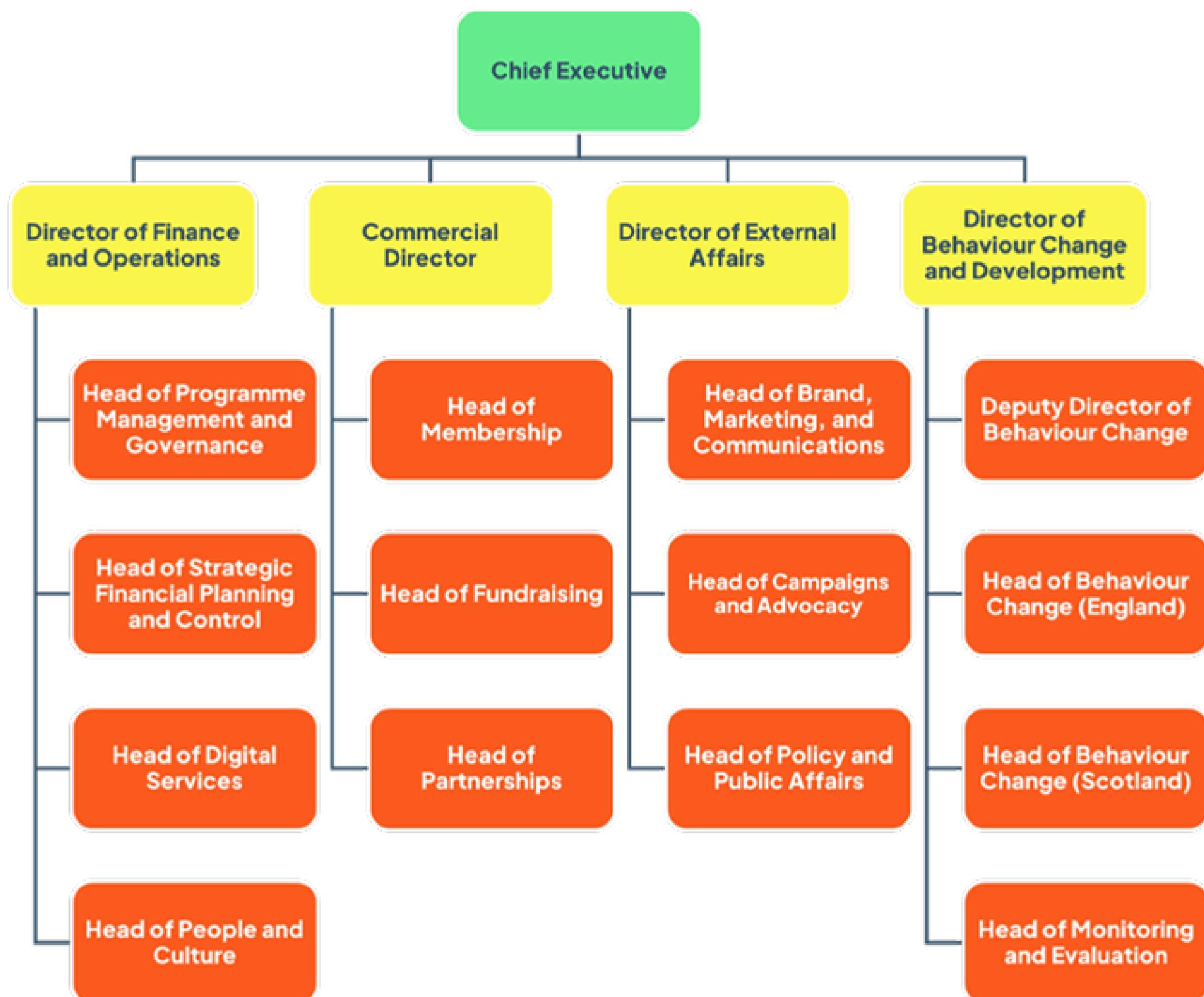
## Profile

- Build and sustain relationships with key stakeholders in politics, policymaking, the media, central and regional government and the non-profit sector to foster a network of strategic allies for Cycling UK's work.
- Represent Cycling UK in the media and at high-profile meetings and events as one of our organisation's spokespeople.
- Provide oversight of all public messaging including media, events and campaigns.

## Delivery

- Oversee the development of a brand, marketing and communications plan that builds a long-lasting value exchange with Cycling UK's warm audiences and helps increase, and diversify, our income.
- Oversee the iteration of the influencing plan and associated targets, combining policy development, advocacy, communications and campaigning with appropriate prioritisation and resourcing.
- Ensure that our priority campaigns are integrated across the charity, helping the organisation achieve its strategic objectives.
- Oversee a highly-effective policy and public affairs function. Provide strategic oversight of political intelligence-gathering, horizon-scanning and analysis of political developments and debates to advance the interests of Cycling UK.
- Strategic oversight and leadership of our communications and media relations functions. Oversee the development and delivery of Cycling UK's media relations strategy nationally and regionally to maximise our profile and campaigning impact.
- Line manage, develop and support the Head of Brand, Marketing and Communications; Head of Campaigns; and Head of Policy and Public Affairs.
- Responsible for planning and oversight of an annual budget of c.£1.5m.

# Our Leadership Team



# Person specification

The successful candidate may come from a range of backgrounds but will be able to articulate an excellent grasp of Cycling UK's policy and campaigning priorities and will be passionate about Cycling UK's mission and ambitions. An understanding of the charity sector will be an advantage, although this could also have been gained through trustee or voluntary work.

## Experience

- Significant experience at a senior level of leading advocacy, marketing or communications functions in an ambitious comparably-sized organisation.
- Successful experience of leading, motivating and developing people at all levels, with an ability to create a working environment in which people can thrive and where subject experts are empowered to deliver the organisation's objectives.
- An experienced and confident line manager able to nurture talent and establish high-performing teams.
- A track record of successful political influencing work, including building cross-party support, through relationship-building, advocacy and media work.
- Experience of developing meaningful impact measures for influencing work, and evaluating and continuously improving delivery.
- Demonstrable experience of developing and overseeing integrated campaigns and communications that deliver an organisation's wider objectives, including commercial income.

## Skills and knowledge

- A sophisticated understanding of how political change occurs, and a strong understanding of government in Westminster, the devolved administrations and local government.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and an adept networker experienced in building and drawing on a network of contacts within government or in politics.
- High-impact presenter, experienced in media interviews and public speaking.
- Ability to plan, deliver and measure the impact of complex strategic plans.
- Excellent written communication skills and a clear and confident public speaker.
- Good understanding of the key issues and the potential areas of focus for Cycling UK.
- Strong organisational development skills, able to identify and act on opportunities to drive performance in business process and operations.
- Numerate and able to manage budgets effectively.

## Personal attributes

- High energy and dynamic leader, able to inspire a team and to establish and act on strategic priorities.
- Highly organised and able to balance multiple conflicting priorities at pace.
- Digitally savvy and curious about applying new digital tools.
- Ability to contribute to the strong teamwork ethic of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) including providing constructive challenge to other members of SLT.

# Terms of appointment



## Salary

The salary for this role is c£83,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

## Location

This is a hybrid role, with in person SLT meetings taking place weekly in London and, whilst recognising that Cycling UK is a national charity.

## Pension

Scottish Widows automatic enrolment salary sacrifice scheme and Cycling UK offers up to 5% matched gross employee contributions. The statutory minimum that every employer must pay is 3%. Cycling UK has chosen to uplift this to 5% to match employee contributions.

## Annual leave

A generous amount of 27 days annual, plus 8 bank holiday days (pro rata for part-time staff) with the option of buying an additional week

## Additional benefits

2 Wellbeing days - two paid days (pro-rata for part-time staff) per year can be used as Wellbeing days each year to recharge and to take time to do those tasks needed outside of work. Please [click here](#) to view benefits.

# How to apply



We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to [this link](#) and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

**Closing date:** Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Preliminary interviews:** w/c Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

**Final Panel interviews:** w/c Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026