

Job Advert: Senior Policy Researcher

The Pensions Policy Institute (PPI) is the UK's leading independent authority on pensions and retirement policy. We conduct rigorous, impartial research and analysis from an evidence-based, long-term perspective. Our work is used by government and across Westminster, industry, and consumer groups. It informs major decisions that affect millions of people's lives in retirement.

The Role

Following the current post holder's promotion to Head of Research, we are seeking an experienced researcher to join the PPI's newly integrated research team.

This is a senior research role requiring a high degree of autonomy, professional judgement, and personal accountability. The successful candidate will be expected to manage significant research projects from inception through to publication with a high degree of autonomy, to build and manage stakeholder relationships, as well as contribute ideas and expertise to the development of the PPI's research programme, and represent the organisation externally.

While all researchers at the PPI contribute to high-quality policy research, the Senior Policy Researcher is expected to work with limited day-to-day supervision, take ownership of projects, and proactively identify solutions to challenges as they arise.

The role would suit an experienced researcher who is ready to take responsibility for project leadership, stakeholder engagement, and research development, while continuing to develop their expertise in pensions and retirement policy.

PPI Research Work Programme

The PPI undertakes several different kinds of research through its annual work programme, which is developed by the Deputy Director in consultation with the Head of Research. Research may be directly commissioned or may arise from research areas developed by the PPI for which funding has been secured from sponsors or grant funders.

The Senior Policy Researcher will work closely with the Head of Research to identify and develop new research opportunities, assess project feasibility, and contribute to the development of research specifications and funding proposals.

The postholder will be expected to exercise independent judgement in shaping research approaches, identifying emerging policy issues, and ensuring that projects are delivered to the PPI's high standards of quality, impartiality and evidence-based analysis.

Location

While the PPI operates a hybrid working model, the contractual place of work for this role is our Central London office on the Strand. Staff are required to attend the office for project or team meetings and to be present for launch events. On average, this equates to approximately once a week, though staff may choose to come in more frequently if they wish.

As many of our team members and stakeholders are London-based, maintaining a regular presence in London is important for effective collaboration and relationship-building. The role is intended to be full-time, although we are happy to explore flexible working arrangements that support both the organisation's needs and the successful candidate's preferences.

Employee Benefits:

- 25 days annual leave plus Christmas closure
- Membership of the PPI's Group Personal Pension (initial 8% employer contribution with an additional matching contribution for every 1% employee contribution up to 4%)
- Group Income Protection and Life Assurance
- Continued professional development
- Payment of professional membership fees
- Employee Assistance Care Programme
- Carers leave
- Leave for volunteering

Diversity and Inclusion

We aim to build, develop, and retain a talented workforce that represents a variety of backgrounds, skills, and experiences. We welcome and actively encourage applications from anyone who feels they'd be a good fit for our organisation, regardless of race, religion, colour, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, neurodiversity or any other protected characteristics.

Application process

We want the recruitment process to give you the opportunity to share your skills and experience, and to find out more about the PPI. Before applying you are welcome to get in touch and arrange an informal chat, please email recruitment@pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk.

Closing date for applications: 25 November 2026

We review applications on a rolling basis and encourage early applications, as candidates who meet the essential criteria may be invited to interview before the vacancy closes.

Interviews

There is a possibility of earlier interviews for applicants who meet the essential criteria. **Scheduled interviews are expected to take place virtually on 03 and 04 December 2026.**

The recruitment process may include a further **in-person meeting**, provisionally scheduled for **09 December 2026**. We therefore ask applicants to keep this date available where possible. Candidates may also be asked to provide documentation to verify their right to work in the UK and relevant academic qualifications at this stage of the process.

Please inform us if you intend to be away during this period.

How to apply

If you are interested in applying, you must refer to the full job description and essential criteria and apply through the link to Spider Recruitment, you will need a CV detailing your work experience and a cover letter (no more than two A4 sides) telling us:

- How you meet the responsibilities and criteria required for the role.
- Your motivation for applying for the role and how you would benefit the PPI.
- Your notice period.

Please note that applications submitted without a cover letter will not be considered for shortlisting.

Click here to apply or copy and paste into your browser

<https://jobs.spiderrecruit.co.uk/jobs/senior-policy-researcher-london/4930-1/>

As part of the recruitment process you will be asked to submit two samples of your written work, and you may be required to complete an assessment.

AI tools may be used to support preparation for the recruitment process. However, all application materials submitted must accurately reflect your own skills, experience and work. Candidates must not use AI-generated responses during interviews, assessments or any other exercise forming part of the recruitment process.

We can accept videos or recordings for those who have difficulty typing.

If you require any reasonable adjustments during this recruitment process, please get in touch to discuss this in more detail.

The successful candidate will be required to provide evidence of the right to work in the UK and two referees. One should be the current/most recent employer and/or prior employer but they will not be contacted without prior consent.

The PPI takes the security of your data seriously. It has internal policies and controls in place to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused, or disclosed, and is not accessed except by our employees in the proper performance of their duties.

For further information or a conversation about the role before applying visit

www.pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk or Email recruitment@pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk.

Job Description: Senior Policy Researcher

Team:	Research Team
Direct reports:	None
Reports to:	Head of Research
Contract Type:	Permanent
Salary:	£40k - £50k (depending on experience)

Role expectations

While all researchers contribute to the delivery of high-quality research, the Senior Policy Researcher is expected to demonstrate independence, sound judgement, and accountability for project delivery. The successful candidate will be able to lead substantial pieces of work with limited supervision, manage stakeholder relationships confidently, and contribute to the development of the PPI's future research programme and organisational capability.

Responsibilities

- Manage research projects with a high degree of autonomy, ensuring outputs are delivered to agreed quality standards, timescales, and stakeholder expectations.
- Manage multiple external and internal stakeholders including project sponsors and funders.
- Conduct literature reviews and desk-based research.
- Analyse and interpret data from a policy perspective and develop robust conclusions from analysis.
- Work closely with modellers to determine appropriate methodologies for the production of data and projections.
- Draft high-quality PPI reports, briefings, consultation responses, articles, press materials and presentations.
- Present on a variety of retirement and pensions topics, including research findings and policy implications, to internal and external audiences.
- Represent the PPI in discussion groups, seminars, conferences, stakeholder meetings, and media engagements, communicating research findings and policy implications clearly and accurately to a range of audiences.
- Act as a spokesperson for the PPI, where appropriate, including contributing to media interviews and commentary related to the PPI's research.
- Identify and develop ideas for new areas of research and contribute to securing funding opportunities where appropriate.
- Share knowledge and expertise with colleagues and provide informal mentoring and support where appropriate.
- Manage competing priorities effectively and exercise sound judgement in balancing organisational and project needs.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the PPI to support organisational objectives.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive, and you will be expected to undertake additional duties and responsibilities as and when required.

Essential qualifications and knowledge for this post:

- Degree-level qualification in social policy, economics, public policy, social science, or another relevant discipline, together with substantial relevant research experience. A postgraduate qualification would be advantageous.
- Sound knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- A working knowledge of the UK pension system (or the ability to acquire this knowledge quickly) or the UK social security system.

Essential skills required for this post include:

- Proven experience of independently leading significant research projects from scoping through to publication, including managing stakeholder relationships, and competing project demands.
- Excellent research skills, including desk-based, literature and policy research, with the ability to apply research findings to complex policy questions.
- Demonstrable ability to manage multiple projects, competing priorities, and challenging deadlines.
- Proven ability to interpret statistics, modelling outputs and complex evidence, and translate these into clear policy implications.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision, exercising sound professional judgement, and taking ownership of outcomes.
- Excellent report-writing, drafting and data presentation skills, including the ability to communicate complex issues clearly in plain English.
- Experience of managing stakeholder relationships and balancing differing interests and perspectives.
- Strong organisational and project management skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills and demonstrable team-working qualities.
- Experience of presenting research findings to a range of audiences, including non-technical audiences.
- Ability to identify problems proactively and develop practical solutions.

Desirable skills required for this post include:

- Networking skills, including experience of building relationships with funders, and stakeholders.
- Established networks within the social policy research community, government departments, or the pensions, retirement, or financial services sectors.
- Experience of securing research funding, writing successful project or grant proposals, and managing contracts.
- Experience of mentoring, coaching or supporting the development of colleagues.
- Knowledge of parliamentary, governmental, or regulatory policymaking processes.

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to the PPI's independent, impartial, evidence-based approach to research.
- Attention to detail and a commitment to producing high-quality outputs.

- Clear and confident communicator.
- Positive, organised, proactive and solution-focused approach.
- The ability to think critically and adapt to evolving situations.
- Willingness to contribute broadly within a small team.