

SWITCHBACK

Policy and Public Affairs Officer Job Description



Join us at Switchback.

We enable young men to find a way out of the justice system and build a stable, rewarding life they can be proud of.

www.switchback.org.uk | [@switchback_ldn](https://twitter.com/switchback_ldn)

Registered Charity Number 1125100 | Company Number 06615923

About Switchback

Switchback was established in 2008 on the basis that it's often not the lack of opportunity, but rather a lack of confidence, knowledge and continuity of support that prevents prison-leavers from overcoming challenges and realising their options.

Since 2008 we've helped hundreds of young men, Switchback Trainees, leaving London prisons to build stable, rewarding lives they can be proud of. We provide intensive 1-to-1 support alongside real-work training after release. Our support begins in prison and lasts as long as it takes, delivered by a team of full-time professional Switchback Mentors who help Trainees make choices that reinforce their initial commitment to change.



Real-work training leading to a job after release is just one part of the Switchback process. We challenge and encourage Trainees to take control and make real, lasting change – a fundamental shift in mindset and lifestyle. This is new territory for most: a frank, non-judgemental relationship with someone there for them on a daily basis, helping to navigate the turbulent transition from prison to community.

While nearly half of people released from prison nationally are re-convicted within a year and many are back inside within weeks, **for Switchback Trainees the figure is just 9%.**

You will be joining a small, dynamic team at an exciting time of growth as we seek to draw on our evidence to inspire change across the justice system and beyond. Switchback's work has been recognised in recent years with a number of accolades:

- Winner **Longford Prize** 2019
- Shortlisted **Charity of the Year**, Charity Times Awards 2019
- Shortlisted **Outstanding Organisation** Criminal Justice Alliance Awards 2017
- Winner **Robin Corbett Award** for Prisoner Re-integration 2016

'People only do what they know, and that depends where you grow up. To me, I knew how to sell drugs. In my community it's just normal to do crime. Switchback taught me and pushed me so much. I've learned to forget about crime. I've been shown a different route'

Jordon, Switchback Trainee.

Read more about Jordon's journey [here](#).

Our Values

Switchback's five values cut through everything we do:

1. **Human.** Keeping Trainees at the heart of everything we do. We build trust, confidence and independence in all areas of a Trainee's life.
2. **Authentic.** Rolling with the ups and downs of real life. We prize integrity and honesty. We don't sell a dream; we're realistic about what it means to genuinely start over and the huge courage needed to change. We provide a space to learn from mistakes.
3. **Committed.** Our commitment to Trainees is consistent and continuous, and for as long as it takes. We reject quick fixes. We do what we say we're going to do and coach our Trainees to do the same.
4. **Ambitious.** We have high expectations and assume strengths, resources and abilities in Trainees. We don't do things for people – we challenge and encourage our Trainees to take control.
5. **Pioneering.** We challenge Trainees and ourselves to move outside our comfort zones and we encourage adventure to learn and grow. As a charity we constantly seek to reflect and improve.



“When I first came into Switchback I'd feel so uncomfortable I could hardly speak. Switchback totally changed how I thought about myself. I've learned that it's not about taking the fast route, taking the long route is more beneficial in the end. I've done so much more than I thought I could.”

Elton, Fashion student & former Switchback Trainee.

Read more about Elton's journey [here](#).

Terms & conditions

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| Job Title: | Policy and Public Affairs Officer |
| Starting salary: | £25,000 - £30,000 per annum |
| Contract type: | Permanent |
| Hours: | Full time (35hrs) OR part time considered for outstanding candidates. We can offer flexibility on how your hours are worked. |
| Location: | London (Spitalfields, E1) combined with some homeworking. |
| Reporting to: | Sam Boyd, Director of Impact and External Affairs |
| Benefits: | Holiday: 25 days plus bank holidays (pro-rated for part time), rising with service to 30 days. Holiday buy-back scheme after 2 years (up to 10 days extra). Pension: 3% salary sacrifice met by a 5% contribution from Switchback. Employee training budget. Flexible working policy and family-friendly benefits. Cycle to Work bike purchase scheme. |
| Application deadline: | 10am on Monday 20th September 2021 |
| Interviews: | First round: Fri 24 th September 2021 Second round: Thu 30 th September 2021 |
| Start date: | ASAP |

How to apply

Please read the full Job Description. Then email the following to jobs@switchback.org.uk with the subject **Policy and Public Affairs Officer**:

1. Your CV
2. A **cover letter** explaining, in no more than **600 words**, why you want to work for Switchback and why you are the right person for this role.
3. A completed **equalities form** [available here](#) (this will be treated anonymously for monitoring purposes and separated from your application entirely).

Switchback is committed to diversity in all that it does and aims to build a team representative of London's diverse population, celebrating the differences that people bring with them as a vital resource to achieve our ambition and purpose. At this time we're especially keen to hear from men, people from Asian backgrounds, and/or people with lived experience of the criminal justice system. All appointments are made on merit.

About the role

Are you looking for an exciting new challenge in the world of policy and public affairs? Switchback is an award-winning small charity supporting young Londoners to make real, lasting change after prison. This is a unique chance to join our impactful, fast-growing team in East London and help achieve our big ambitions to transform the UK's criminal justice system.

As Switchback's first **Policy and Public Affairs Officer** you'll work closely with our Director of Impact and External Affairs to develop and deliver our influencing strategy, placing the voice of prison leavers at its heart. This will involve engaging Switchback Mentors and the young men we support (Switchback Trainees) in research and policy development, and writing compelling briefings, reports and consultation responses to inspire change. You'll monitor the political context and spot opportunities, helping to engage key stakeholders to shape debate, while ensuring that Switchback Trainees play a central role across all our influencing work.

We're looking for someone who is proactive and passionate about Switchback's purpose, and would relish the chance to get stuck in across a range of policy and public affairs activity in an ambitious team with room to grow. You'll have at least two years' experience in a policy, public affairs or similar role, and be ready for your next step towards something truly meaningful: working with young prison-leavers to shape real change in the UK's broken justice system.

Key Responsibilities

Policy and Research

- Write high-quality, compelling briefings, consultation responses, correspondence, research reports and other material to support Switchback's policy activity.
- Support the Director of Impact & External Affairs with development and delivery of a policy and influencing strategy to achieve meaningful change in the justice system.
- Support the Director of Impact & External Affairs with developing Switchback's policy priorities and positions based on our frontline evidence and Trainee insight.
- Plan and undertake research, gathering internal and external evidence to support our policy activity, working effectively with Switchback Mentors, Trainees and others to do so.

Public Affairs

- Pro-actively monitor political and parliamentary activity to help Switchback understand the landscape and pursue opportunities for influencing political debate and government policy.
- Support with identifying and engaging key stakeholders to build Switchback's profile and influence, including MPs, ministers, officials and others.
- Support with identifying and building working relationships with other organisations to support our policy aims such as key charities, think tanks and businesses.
- Support with policy event planning and organisation.

Trainee Involvement

- Work with Switchback Mentors to engage Switchback Trainees in all our policy activity, helping to amplify the voice of lived experience in policymaking.
- Support the management and development of Switchback's [Experts by Experience Board](#) of former Trainees, boosting their role in Switchback's policy work.

- Support the development of additional opportunities for Switchback Trainees to play a greater role in our policy work, such as through managing a new Policy Intern.

Person Specification

Essential:

- At least 2 years' experience in a policy or public affairs role or similar.
- Experience of working to achieve change in government policy.
- Good understanding of the policy process and the workings of government and parliament.
- Good writing skills and ability to present complex information clearly.
- Experience of research and analysis of policy documents and government data.
- Strong communication skills and ability to engage frontline staff and young prison-leavers effectively and with empathy.
- Passionate about Switchback's purpose and values as a charity.
- Comfortable with basic IT systems and programmes including basic MS Excel skills.
- Ability to work flexibly and proactively in a small team with big ambitions to drive change.

Desirable:

- Knowledge of the criminal justice system and/or other relevant social policy.
- Prior experience of user engagement/research or working with young people.
- Lived experience of the criminal justice system or the realities of poverty in London.
- Prior experience of line management or people development.

Thank you

Thank you for your interest in this role. Switchback is an organisation that transforms lives. It's a remarkable charity, doing remarkable work, with a remarkable team of all sorts of different people involved. We hope you might want to become one of them and we look forward very much to hearing from you.



"I don't know where I'd be without Switchback. They restored a lot of things. My faith, my trust, my mentality. You're allowed to open up at a rate that works for you. You're a person, not a plan. There's so much to look forward to now. I used to see the world in a totally different light. I used to see it in black and grey, now I see it in colours"

Michael, Chef and former Switchback Trainee