Senior Policy and Research Manager
£35,000pa (+contributory pension)

Background

The Genetic Interest Group (GIG) is the UK alliance of charities and support groups for individuals and families with all types of genetic disorder. Its membership ranges from large, well established bodies for those with common, complex disorders (e.g. British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK) to small support groups for very rare single gene disorders.

GIG exists to raise awareness of the needs of those affected by genetic disorders, of all sorts, for high quality services and support. It is an advocate for biomedical research and for the transfer of the outputs of such research into products, services and support to all who need them quickly, safely and equitably. It is patient centred, and draws its legitimacy from the endorsement of its 140 member organisations. GIG focuses on policy and strategic issues, seeking to work alongside other key stakeholders in order, for example, to enable them better to understand and respond to the needs of GIG’s member groups and those who belong to them.

Although it is a relatively small organisation, GIG has established a solid reputation as a body that makes constructive, well thought out interventions in aspects of national, European and international health and science policy, and health care delivery. Our aim is to have an impact on the opportunities for individuals and families living with genetic disease to control their lives to the fullest extent possible, given the limits of current scientific knowledge and good clinical practice.

GIG also strives to combat unfair discrimination arising from the abuse or misuse of genetic information and to inform the public about the limits and possibilities of genetics in order to help create a rational debate about the possible ethical, legal and social issues that may be created as a result of progress in genetics and associated areas of scientific endeavour.

A Policy, Research, Advocacy and Awareness Raising Role at GIG

Building on previous successes, GIG is now poised to take a step up in its ability to:

- influence public understanding of the needs of our members and the families they support,
- shape the debate about scientific research and its application in order to improve the health and well-being of those affected by or at risk from genetic disorders.

To do this we need to integrate aspects of our work more effectively, and use the experience and knowledge that it generates to campaign for change more effectively.
GIG undertakes a number of projects currently on quality standards in genetic testing on integrated care for families with rare genetic disorders ethnic monitoring by NHS genetics centres working with the insurance industry to establish better ways for the assessment of rare genetic conditions for insurance cover. GIG is also working with UK Biobank and other large scale data and sample collections, with Research Ethics Committees and with NICE and other bodies on the value and impact of innovations in health care. GIG’s remit extends to European and International issues where these impact on opportunities to improve services and support for our members and their families.

In addition it has regular contact with its members, and with an extensive network of clinicians, scientists and policy makers. It also works with industry and the commercial sector, and alongside other patient bodies, trade associations and professional bodies. We need to integrate these strands of knowledge and experience creatively and effectively in order to maximise our advocacy and campaigning on behalf of our members.

To do this we need to recruit a policy advocate and research manager who will bring these aspects together, someone who is also able to interpret new scientific advances in the context of our members' hopes and expectations and who can work alongside colleagues in, and members of, GIG to create a force for change that will result in tangible benefits for all those affected by genetic disorders.

This is an opportunity to work at the national level, but it requires someone who is able to empathise with and relate to individuals and families living with the daily consequences of intractable genetic disease.

The Person

The person who can fill this role will need to be able to demonstrate that he/she
- has a firm grounding in science, so he/she can (for example) read the journals and work out what the possible implications for new research might be and give feedback to colleagues and stakeholders,
- experience in formulating, developing and implementing policy in biomedical science and health
- have an appreciation of the way policy is developed and implemented in biomedical science and health,
- capable of appreciating the ethical and societal implications of new developments,
- is an excellent communicator both written and orally, whether one to one or on a public platform
- is able to tailor the message to the audience appropriately and sensitively,
- is outgoing, both a team player and a leader
- is capable of working with people in all arenas, assertive but not aggressive, quick thinking, flexible and responsive, but committed to the beliefs and values of GIG its members and the families they seek to support
- is motivated to push GIG’s policy to the next level, determined and dynamic in translating policy research into policy actions that GIG can work on as an organisation
- experience of managing staff and overseeing campaigns.

Experience and Qualifications

The successful candidate for this role may come from a variety of backgrounds and experience. He/she may have worked in health care, in academia or in industry. He/she may have a PhD, a professional qualification in a field such as pharmacy or medical technology or experience in research and development. However technical knowledge on its own will not be sufficient. There also needs to be evidence of engagement with people and issues relevant to the work of GIG and our aspirations for the future wellbeing of those with genetic disorders”.

Someone to lead on the development and implementation of GIG’s new UK policy, research and parliamentary advocacy. An excellent communicator and strategist, and an enthusiastic leader who can support and enable team members to reach their greatest potential in meeting the charities aims.

Be able to:

Identify key policy issues and areas of opportunity in the context of the political agenda to ensure that the charity can influence government policy at the earliest possible stage.

Direct and support the Policy Officer in developing and maintaining effective working relationships with key parliamentarians, civil servants and relevant NGOs to support the Committees government lobbying and funding work.

Support the work of the Communications Manager in identifying and delivering appropriate campaign actions related to our advocacy aims and in communicating with and expanding our campaign supporter base.
Senior Policy and Research Manager
Job Description

Strategic Purpose of Role

1. To provide analysis of development in science, health and public policy that will inform GIG’s own policy and develop its campaigning and advocacy role.
2. To manage key research project, to ensure that they deliver against targets, and to ensure that the outcomes inform GIG’s work as an advocate on behalf of its members and the families they represent.
3. To play a role as a senior member of staff, part of the organisation’s senior management team.

Specific Tasks

1. To manage staff in identified policy and project officer roles
2. To integrate policy and project outcomes.
3. To scan external development in science, health care and other areas to identify and analyse developments relevant to GIG and its members.
4. To take oversight of government consultations proposed legislations etc, identify and potential impact for GIG and its members and to propose responses as appropriate.
5. To enhance existing and create new links with other bodies that will enhance GIG’s policy and advocacy role.
6. To play apart in the day to day management of GIG as a member of the senior management team.
7. To work with colleagues in ensuring the effective communication of GIG’s policies and objectives to external audiences in government, the civil service, industry, commerce, the academic and clinical community, other voluntary organisations, the media and elsewhere.
8. To be active in securing the ongoing development of GIG as an effective voice for patient and families affective by genetic disorders.

Person Specification
The successful post holder many come from a variety of backgrounds but he/she will be able to demonstrate the following:
1. The ability to understand and interpret developments in science, health and the associate policy implications arising from these.
2. The ability to analyse legal or regulatory proposals and integrate these into practical and achievable goals that will improve the circumstances for GIG’s members.
3. Experience of staff management and a management style which is supportive and enabling, which enhances potential and encourages innovative and creative thinking.
4. An appreciation of the role that GIG plays as a “second tier” policy and strategy focussed alliance that speaks from a patient and family perspective.
5. Empathy with GIG’s purpose and the needs of those from whose perspective we speak.
6. Creativity in marking and taking opportunities that will enhance GIG’s impact on behalf of its members
6. The ability to communicate effectively using appropriate tools to a wide range of audiences.

Application by CV and covering letter to:
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