

VP of Engineering

Job description

Location	Hybrid: home and Westminster, London office
Tenure	Permanent, Full time
Salary	£100,000 - £110,000
Closing date	Rolling recruitment

About the role

We are growing our technology team and looking for an engineering manager with a shared belief in the power of data and technology to change lives. As a team we want to continue building a solid engineering culture so that we can move the company and mission forward, and grow professionally and personally.

You will lead a team of engineers, balancing people management with delivery oversight. You will be responsible for the performance, growth, and wellbeing of your direct reports. You'll work closely with Product and other stakeholders to ensure your team delivers high-quality work aligned with business priorities, setting clear expectations, removing blockers, and fostering a culture of psychological safety, continuous improvement, and accountability.

A core part of this role is helping our teams excel at agile delivery. We run both Scrum and Kanban across different teams, and you will work across them - coaching, facilitating, and continuously improving how we plan, deliver, and learn. You'll need to be fluent in both methodologies and understand when and why each is the right fit.

You will remain technically credible and able to engage meaningfully in architectural and technical discussions, though your primary focus is on enabling others to do their best work. This is a scale-up environment with plenty of opportunity to take responsibility and lead on improving our ways of working alongside new development.

Key Responsibilities

Agile delivery and process ownership

- Own and evolve agile practices across engineering teams, working fluently with both Scrum and Kanban depending on team context and the nature of the work

- Facilitate sprint planning, reviews, retrospectives, and stand-ups for Scrum teams; ensure Kanban teams have well-maintained boards, clear WIP limits, and effective flow metrics
- Coach teams on when and how to adapt their process - recognising that different work (product features vs. BAU/support vs. data delivery) benefits from different approaches
- Use delivery metrics (cycle time, throughput, velocity, lead time) to identify bottlenecks, drive improvements, and provide visibility to stakeholders - without reducing agile to a numbers game
- Champion continuous improvement through well-facilitated retrospectives and follow-through on action items
- Ensure cross-team alignment on cadences, dependencies, and shared ceremonies where needed

People leadership and development

- Run effective 1:1s, provide timely and constructive feedback, and support each team member's development through clear goals and regular career conversations
- Manage performance fairly, addressing issues early and with care
- Build trust within your team and create an environment where people feel safe to take risks, ask for help, and challenge ideas
- Grow junior team members through mentoring, pairing, code review, and leading by example, using our engineering career pathways framework to support progression
- Actively support hiring - contributing to job descriptions, interviews, and onboarding

Delivery and execution

- Ensure your team delivers reliably and sustainably, working with Product to prioritise work, manage dependencies, and set realistic expectations
- Protect the team from unnecessary disruption while keeping them connected to business context
- Track progress, identify risks early, and intervene when delivery is at risk - without micromanaging
- Balance feature delivery with technical health, ensuring time is allocated for maintenance, refactoring, and technical debt reduction

Technical engagement

- Remain technically credible - you don't need to be the strongest individual contributor, but you should participate meaningfully in design discussions, code review conversations, and architectural decisions
- Identify technical risk, ask good questions, and support sound decision-making
- Ensure technical standards are maintained and that the team invests appropriately in code quality, testing, and documentation
- Work as a hands-on engineer where needed - front-end, back-end, CI/CD, IaC, and security

- Ensure the security of data entrusted to the organisation, minimising risk of breach, data loss, or downtime

Stakeholder and cross-functional collaboration

- Build strong working relationships with Product, Design, Data, Policy, and Client Services teams
- Communicate complex technical concepts to all audiences within the organisation
- Represent your team's capacity, constraints, and progress clearly
- Escalate risks and blockers appropriately
- Contribute to cross-team planning and coordination, ensuring your team's work aligns with broader engineering and organisational goals
- Manage external technical relationships with pentesters, infrastructure specialists, accessibility testers, and contractors
- Shape the company's thinking on software, technology, architecture, and how to build systems that work for us, our customers, and our users over the long run
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The Ideal Candidate

Essential Skills:

- Demonstrable experience as an engineering manager or senior tech lead managing a team
- Deep practical experience with both Scrum and Kanban - real-world facilitation and continuous improvement of agile teams is preferred over certification
- Track record of improving team delivery through process changes, removing impediments, and coaching engineers on agile practices
- Experience working across teams that use different agile methodologies, and the judgement to understand which approach fits which context
- Strong people management skills - performance management, career development, constructive feedback, and difficult conversations handled with care
- Hands-on software engineering experience across the full stack (you don't need to code daily, but you must be technically credible enough to engage in design discussions, identify technical risk, and maintain the team's trust)
- Experience with CI/CD, automated testing, and modern development workflows
- Strong communication and stakeholder management - you can represent your team clearly, influence decisions through well-reasoned arguments, and communicate complex ideas simply
- Comfort with ambiguity and change - you help others navigate pressure and keep the team focused

Desirable:

- Experience in a scale-up or growing engineering organisation
- Familiarity with our tech stack: TypeScript, Node.js, Angular/React, AWS (Lambda, Fargate, RDS, DynamoDB, S3), Python
- Experience with Jira for sprint/Kanban board management and roadmap planning



- Certified Scrum Master (CSM), Professional Scrum Master (PSM), or Kanban Management Professional (KMP) - useful but not required
- Experience working in GovTech, public sector, or mission-driven organisations
- Understanding of data engineering workflows and cross-discipline collaboration

Technical environment

Our benefits model uses: JavaScript, TypeScript, Node.js, Angular (transitioning to React), Mocha/Chai/Playwright, AWS (S3, CloudFront, Lambda, Fargate, DynamoDB, RDS MySQL).

Our data analysis workflow uses: Node.js, AWS (RDS PostgreSQL, Fargate, Lambda, S3), Python, Stata, Excel, Tableau.

Our development practices include: GitHub, CI/CD via GitHub Actions with code review and automated quality checks, AWS CDK, Jira for epics/tickets/roadmaps with quarterly roadmap review.

Interest and aptitude for ongoing learning is more important than what you know today.

About Policy in Practice

Policy in Practice believes data and technology have the ability to empower people and change lives. Our goal is to be the single point of access for all people on means tested benefits, and enable effective public services through citizen centred services.

We aim to reach as many households as possible across the UK. We will do this via growth of existing products in public and private sector organisations, and through expansion into new markets.

Policy in Practice is at a pivotal point as we continue to move from start up to scale up. We have invested in our capability, and development has moved from ideas to prototypes and in some cases to production.

Policy in Practice's vision and mission

Vision

We believe data and technology have the ability to empower people and change lives.

Mission

Empower people via proactive, integrated support.

We will help more people to live better lives using our expertise in social policy, data and technology.



We are transforming the way society supports low income families through citizen centred approaches. We focus on improving how all policy areas, sectors and journeys combined can have an impact on people and their outcomes.

Values

Purposeful and passionate

- We push for opportunities to improve, not just for our clients or for ourselves, but also for the people who need our help.
- We take responsibility. Details Matter. We have a genuine passion to help people, with a willingness to take action.

Insightful and impactful

- We go beyond straightforward analysis to get to the 'So What?', driving our policy insight and services to deliver impact.
- We think deeply and communicate simply in a way that helps people make the right decisions.

Respectful and supportive

- We are willing to discuss and debate openly, listening to both sides and relying on evidence and strong relationships to reach shared positions.
- We have each other's back.

Why work here?

Working at Policy in Practice is not just about maximising our own profit and product performance. It is also about what is right for people in the UK and the system supporting them.

We are a team of professionals with extensive knowledge of the welfare system who are passionate about making social policy work. We love what we do, have fun and, while we recognise the importance and impact of our work, we take life-work balance seriously.

- Working in a thought-leading organisation where you can empower people and change lives.
- Flexible working arrangements with hybrid and remote working available
- Opportunities for quick career progression

Policy in Practice colleagues say:



“Everyone is lovely and we do such impactful work. There is a very caring employee culture, and a drive to share expertise.”

“I appreciate how our work helps shape policies and the supportive team environment here encourages everyone to grow. Flexible working options make it easier to balance life and work and our inclusive culture makes this a welcoming place to be.”

“The work is extremely meaningful and translates directly into tangible benefits.”

How to apply

Please send your CV with a cover letter that clearly outlines your suitability and your interest in the post to jobs@policyinpractice.co.uk as soon as possible.