

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

Job Title: Senior Communications Officer

Responsible to: Communications Manager

Department(s): Communications

Directorate: Communications

Operating Division: NHS Lothian Headquarters, Edinburgh

Job Reference: 243944

No of Job Holders: 3

Last Update (insert date): October 2024

2. JOB PURPOSE

- Lead, develop and manage communications projects to support NHS Lothian in the delivery of services and to achieve its corporate objectives.
- Take a lead on specific projects or areas of work. For example, these might be; capital planning projects, engaging with stakeholders, raising awareness of pioneering innovation, planning events and VIP visits and devising staff and public facing campaigns.
- Generate and produce interesting and engaging content for use across all of NHS Lothian's communication channels, internal and external using multimedia tools.
- Develop good relationships with media managing effective media relations dealing with media enquiries, preparing reactive statements, and proactive media releases.
- Provide effective advice and services to NHS Lothian staff, including senior management and facilitate effective communication to staff.
- Participate in the on-call out of hours rota on a 1 in 5 basis.

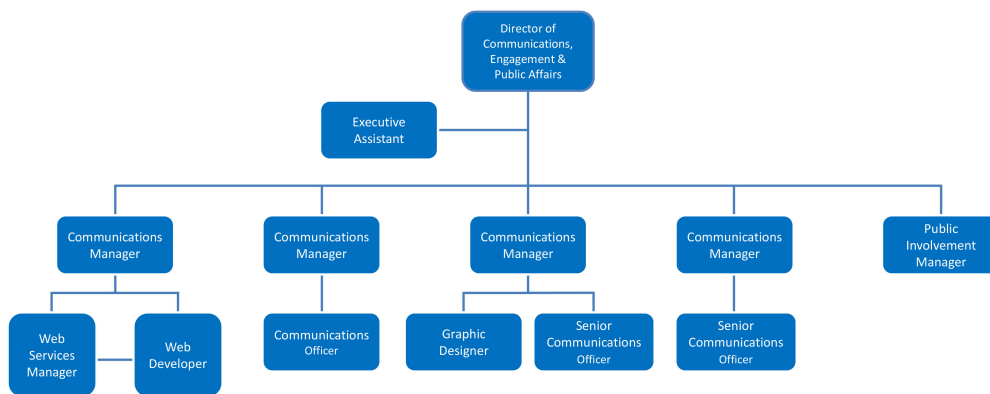
3. DIMENSIONS

NHS Lothian provides services for the second largest residential population in Scotland – circa 850,000 people. We employ approximately 26,000 staff and are committed to improving all patient care and services and engaging staff in service planning and modernisation.

The Corporate Communications function engages with many different audiences; staff, patients, the general public and specific communities we serve. We offer timely, useful and accessible information about the organisation and its services and seek to safeguard NHS Lothian’s reputation.

The post holder will develop and maintain effective working relationships across the departments of NHS Lothian, and with a wide range of organisations and stakeholders both in Lothian and nationally including local authority partners, Scottish Government, a wide range of third sector and other NHS organisations.

4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

NHS Lothian’s Corporate Communications team perform a number of essential functions including internal and external communications, public involvement and engagement, as well as public affairs. Its reach stretches right across the organisation working with colleagues in acute (hospital) services as well as those in primary and community care services. As a result, the ability to work with teams of all kinds is essential, understanding quickly what support is needed

and providing the best professional advice and expertise for the job in hand.

The department provides advice and support 24/7 365 days per year to the Chairman, Chief Executive and Board's Executive Directors as well as senior management teams. It is responsible for leading, developing and managing the organisation's communication activities especially in relation to:

- The media, public, patients and staff
- The Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament
- NHS Lothian corporate image and identity

The range of work undertaken by the communications team is very broad. It includes: managing media relations; engaging with stakeholders and implementing staff and public campaigns; publicising innovation and achievement; managing events such as *Celebrating Success* (the annual staff achievement awards); facilitating VIP visits to our services and handling any reputational crisis ensuring our messages are clear and our information up to date.

Increasingly the use of multimedia tools to create graphics, animations and video and the management of social media channels play an important role in the communications mix. These sit alongside traditional methods and channels such as written publications, website content and e-bulletins.

6. KEY RESULT AREAS

- Lead, develop and manage communication activities relating to specific projects within NHS Lothian.
- Provide communications support and advice to project teams and attend and contribute to meetings.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of communications, engagement, PR and marketing campaigns and activities. These activities may include, but will not be limited to, high profile strategic capital planning (building) projects and public health campaigns.
- Research stories and write articles for internal and external channels to ensure positive or balanced coverage of NHS Lothian's work and ensuring staff and the public are kept informed of developments.
- Develop multimedia content for use on the NHS Lothian social media channels and websites.
- Provide contact for the media, drafting accurate and considered responses to media enquiries and requests for information so as to inform the public and staff and maintain the reputation of NHS Lothian.
- Proactively develop and manage good relationships with the media, including local, regional and national print and broadcast media eg health journalists within television and radio.
- Proactively develop and manage good relationships with staff across the organisation to create a network to generate good news and celebrate success.
- Build and maintain effective working relationships with the communications and public affairs team, the project teams, NHS Board members, senior managers and clinicians, and external partners to support co-operative and partnership working
- Proactively develop and manage good relationships with key partners in Scottish Government, four local authorities and other multi-agency partner press offices and with the media.
- Provide and receive highly complex, sensitive and contentious information overcoming barriers to understanding to communicate these in an accessible way for staff, patients and the public.
- Assist with NHS Lothian's internal communications by compiling briefing reports for board members and ensuring a regular flow of news articles for newsletters, intranet, bulletins etc

- Assist in times when the organisation is under significant media pressure or in a time of a major emergency or a business continuity issue.

7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

- Personal Computer
- Laptop
- Smart phone
- Digital Camera / video
- Software packages / creative tools
- Intranet / internet
- Social media Platforms
- Photocopier and Scanner
- Office Equipment

7b. SYSTEMS

- Compiling and maintaining databases
- Maintaining the Communications division's shared computer drive
- Using various computer packages which include Microsoft Word, Excel, Presentation Packages, eg Power Point and shared drive archive.
- Microsoft Sharepoint for Internet and Intranet updates
- Multimedia software and creative tools for production of infographics, animation and video content.

8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

- Objectives set and agreed with line manager and signed off by Director of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs
- Workload is generated by the needs of the organisation and the Communications Department
- Day to day management of workload is the responsibility of the post holder
- Key objectives are set annually with the Communications Manager, with bi-monthly meetings to review current workload and monitor productiveness.
- Within the above framework the Senior Communications Officer is required to use his/her own initiative.
- PDP reviews take place regularly to monitor progress and development.
- Regular attendance at team meetings where the team's business is discussed in an open and transparent forum.

9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

- Responsible for making judgement calls and initial decisions on a variety of issues including media requests and in situations of a sensitive nature.
- Work autonomously with consultation with line manager as required.
- Advise project teams and departments on communication issues and approaches.

10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

- Respond effectively and proactively to the constant and changing demands while simultaneously implementing communications plans in relation to external and internal communications.
- Ability to constantly react to changing and competing demands involving multi tasking and effective time management.
- Managing and responding to the high profile that healthcare has in the media and in politics.
- Ability to meet tight deadlines whilst dealing with persistent interruptions, resulting in the constant reprioritisation of workload, particularly with multi agency work, where other schedules and timescales are involved.

- Managing the competing needs/requests different projects for communications advice and support.
- Working across a large, diverse and dynamic organisation spread across large geographic area.

11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The post holder will be required to communicate with and develop good working relationships across all levels both internal and external to NHS Lothian.

Internal - frequent or regular contact with:

- Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs team
- Departmental teams
- Project Teams
- Staff within NHS Lothian
- Regular contact with senior managers, clinicians, NHS Lothian board members and directors

External - frequent or regular contact with:

- Media – local and national broadcast and print
- Communications departments within other health organisations
- Patients, public or their representatives
- Scottish Government Health Department
- Communications departments with Local Authorities
- Third Sector organisations

12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

- Based in an office setting although visits to hospital sites will be required
- Use of VDU equipment for long periods
- Fast and accurate keyboard skills
- Extensive use of smart phone

- Occasional requirement to lift boxes.
- Retention and communication of knowledge and information
- Required to maintain high levels of concentration and to process a range of complex information in a pressured environment while dealing with time sensitive issues and demands from a wide range of people and responding to constant distractions via the telephone, face to face and email.
- Needs to communicate clearly and persuasively with staff at all levels, with the media, public, patients and other external contacts (expected to comprehend quickly, access and articulate often complex medical and scientific issues.)
- Proactively respond to the media while simultaneously delivering internal and external communications consistent with clinical and operational service delivery.
- An ability to react quickly to new challenges and situations where accurate action is required urgently and there is a need to provide consistent communications to many different audiences internally and externally in a variety of formats.
- An ability to receive and provide sensitive information which is complex and often of a distressing nature in difficult situations such as a hospital setting where ill or distressed people are involved This can involve speaking to patients and families during upsetting times. These situations involve being able to deal with media queries professionally but also be compassionate and considerate at the same time when liaising with the families under stress and offering guidance on how to deal with media issues.

13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

Essential Qualifications

- A degree or equivalent qualification in a communications related field

Experience

- Must have sound and proven public relations, internal communications or journalistic background gained through practical experience.
- Should have ability to prepare a communications strategy involving multiple partners.
- Ability to work with a high degree of self-direction.

Skills

In order to fulfil the tasks and objectives outlined in the job description, candidates must be able to demonstrate the following:

- Good oral and written communication skills;
- A high standard of interpersonal skills;
- Copywriting skills;
- An ability to work largely under self-direction;
- Project Management skills;
- An ability to manage multiple priorities effectively within tight deadlines;
- Be an effective time manager;
- An understanding of and commitment to team working;
- An ability to plan and manage a budget;
- A detailed knowledge of the workings of the media at both local and national levels;
- Good contacts or an ability to make new contacts, and close working relationships with the media at all levels.
- Experience of working on PR/social marketing campaigns
- An understanding of current affairs and media issues
- Ability to assimilate complex information, determine key messages and deliver them appropriately to different audiences
- Driving Licence essential

14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Head of Department Signature:

Date:

Date: