

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Assistant Director of Communications  
**Reports To:** Director of Communications  
**Location:** London  
**Date Prepared:** May 2019

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### PURPOSE

A senior role in the NHS Confederation's Communications Directorate, the postholder will be responsible and accountable for the strategic leadership and operational delivery of high-quality media, public affairs and stakeholder relations, leading a team of professionals to deliver excellent service and value on behalf of our members.

Alongside the Director of Communications and other senior staff, you will play a lead role in shaping and delivering our external affairs and wider strategic communications activities. You will help ensure the NHS Confederation maximises its influence on behalf of its members and enjoys a high profile and excellent reputation with the media, parliamentarians and other key partners.

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### NATURE & SCOPE

#### The organisation

The NHS Confederation brings together and convenes all parts of the health system. Our 500 plus members span the full range of organisations that provide and commission services, including: acute, community, mental health and ambulance service trusts; independent providers; clinical commissioning groups; and academic health science networks. We work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and have a European Office focused on Brexit and international learning opportunities.

Through our networks we speak on behalf of providers and commissioners across the different sectors, but we are also uniquely placed to articulate the interests of the whole healthcare system. We believe this role is more vital than ever as every part of England moves towards integrated care system status by 2021.

Our strength lies in the diversity of our membership and our ability to bring together all parts of the health and care system to develop solutions to major challenges – and we are building on this with our new regional engagement team who are tailoring our services to members in each part of England.

### **The role**

Reporting to the Director of Communications, you will provide leadership for the communications department, develop strategies for our major work programmes and lead staff in the directorate.

You will be responsible and accountable for the strategic leadership and operational delivery of our media, public affairs and stakeholder relations activities, ensuring we build and maintain strong relationships with journalists, parliamentarians and other key contacts in stakeholder organisations.

You will take on account management responsibilities for some of our most significant programmes of work which seek to engage and influence policy-makers on behalf of our members. You will work closely with our policy advisers, regional engagement managers and other senior staff to generate high profile content and other approaches that enable us to meet our strategic objectives.

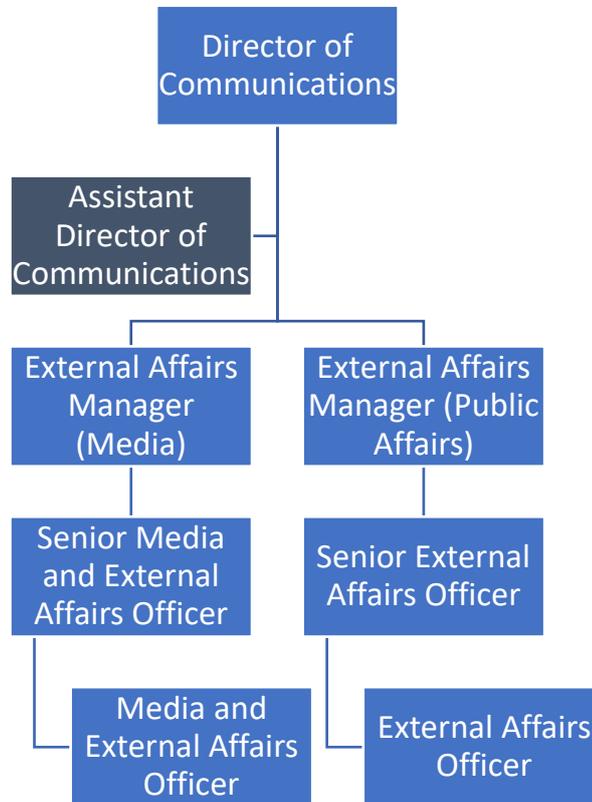
As a senior member of the communications department, you will contribute to the development of corporate strategies and business plans, working closely with senior leaders across the organisation.

The NHS Confederation is also contracted by the Department of Health and Social Care in England to provide the NHS Employers service, acting on behalf of employers within the statutory sector. The communications element of this contract is provided by the NHS Confederation's communications department, with the Assistant Director of Communications expected to play a key role in overseeing the external affairs activities of NHS Employers. A separate Assistant Director of Communications, based in Leeds, takes lead responsibility for NHS Employers' communications activities, with overall responsibility residing with the Director of Communications. The two assistant director posts will work closely with the Director of Communications to ensure all communications for the NHS Confederation and NHS Employers are delivered effectively as part of one cohesive department.

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## STRUCTURE CHART

The following chart covers the part of the department where the Assistant Director of Communications has line management responsibilities:




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## ACCOUNTABILITIES

Responsibilities for the role include:

### Leading the development of communications strategies

- Working alongside the Director of Communications and other senior staff in the department, to help shape, develop and implement the organisation's three-year communications strategy and annual operational plans.
- Take lead responsibility for providing strategic communications advice, support and delivery for a number of the organisation's major work programmes, coordinating activity across the department to ensure effective delivery.

- Provide strategic communications advice and support across the NHS Confederation, including NHS Employers.

### **Leading the strategic and operational delivery of media, public affairs and stakeholder relations activities**

- Take lead responsibility for ensuring we have high-quality media, public affairs and stakeholder relations strategies in place, as well as putting systems in place for gathering intelligence on the activity of government, arms-length bodies and other partners to identify opportunities for influencing.
- Ensure we build and maintain strong relationships with journalists, parliamentarians and other stakeholders by overseeing a well-managed contact and engagement programme.
- Take lead responsibility for running a highly effective press office that is well regarded by national print, broadcast and trade media.
- Ensure we develop a bank of spokespeople that are supported to become recognised national media commentators, conference speakers and who are in demand to present evidence to select committees and other influential parliamentary forums.
- Ensure the NHS Confederation and NHS Employers have clear, consistent external facing lines – based on the views of our members – on all major issues that are of relevance to the organisation and its members.

### **Provide leadership and oversight for the delivery of our outputs and other corporate activities**

- Work effectively and proactively with our policy advisers, regional engagement managers and other senior staff to generate high profile content that enables us to influence on behalf of our members.
- Take responsibility for signing off of a number of our reports, consultation responses, media statements, blogs and other key outputs.
- Provide communications advice and support to help ensure the delivery of a high-quality annual conference and exhibition that is recognised by members and participants as the central event in health service leadership calendar.

### **Leadership and team management**

- Lead a team of six external affairs specialists to deliver first-rate media, public affairs and stakeholder relations.
- Build an effective and cohesive team that has a shared commitment to excellence and supporting the work of our members.

- Play an influential, corporate role as part of the senior leadership team of the communications department, providing advice, ideas and suggestions for how the efficiency and effectiveness of the department can be improved.
  - Manage elements of the budget allocated to the communications department, ensuring a proactive and robust approach is taken to budget management in line with NHS Confederation corporate policies.
  - Deputising for the Director of Communications as appropriate.
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## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

### Essential skills

The post-holder will require:

- experience at a senior level in communications, including: media relations, public affairs, stakeholder management and corporate communications.
- experience of developing and delivering successful communications and engagement strategies that meet organisational objectives.
- highly developed political awareness and judgement, with experience of leading public affairs, government and parliamentary lobbying and wider campaigns.
- experience of building relationships with national print, broadcast and trade media.
- excellent written and oral communications skills, sophisticated news judgement and a proven ability to develop strategic relationships and partnerships.
- the ability to advise and influence internally at a senior level to help develop communications and corporate strategies, policies and priorities, identifying and handling complex issues and reconciling different points of view.
- experience of advising chief executives and other senior staff in media relations, political engagement and other high-profile situations.
- the ability to operate with a high degree of flexibility in covering a range of activities from high level and strategic to operational and transactional, at the same time.
- the ability to create simple but compelling messages to a wide range of audiences from what might be complex information.
- the ability to consistently horizon scan, model best practice and learn from success and failure to drive continuous improvement and innovation across all activities.
- experience of managing teams to a high standard.

**Desirable**

- substantial relevant experience of working in, and knowledge of, membership organisations and how to effectively communicate on behalf of members.
  - detailed knowledge and understanding of the NHS and wider healthcare sector.
  - established relationships with national print, broadcast and trade media within the health sector, as well as other communications professionals in other national health organisations.
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**SAFETY**

Health and Safety at Work Act

The postholder is required to take reasonable care for the safety and health of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts and to promote/ maintain health and safety measures.

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ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	DESIRABLE CRITERIA	DEMONSTRATED BY: Application /Assessment/ Interview
<b>Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A record of achievement in strategic communications at a senior level, including successful implementation of a range of different internal and external communications activities.</li> <li>• A strong track record in managing complex stakeholder relations.</li> <li>• Experience of developing and delivering successful communications and engagement strategies that meet organisational objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working directly with/developing communications in a public sector environment.</li> <li>• Experience of leading communications for and developing the profile of an organisation or service.</li> <li>• Experience of working in a complex policy environment, with multiple stakeholder relationships to manage effectively.</li> </ul>	<b>Application Assessment Interview</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive experience of working with the media and undertaking day-to-day media handling as well as providing strategic media relations advice to senior spokespeople.</li> <li>• A strong track record of public affairs work, including parliamentary engagement and broader influencing in Westminster and Whitehall.</li> <li>• Experience of leading and managing a team to deliver high quality and creative communications that support corporate objectives.</li> <li>• Experience of planning and managing budgets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working for a membership body, with an understanding of how to communicate effectively on behalf of members.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive knowledge of politics, the policy-making process and media relations.</li> <li>• Knowledge of communications strategy, planning and delivery and impact measurement techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed knowledge and understanding of the NHS and wider healthcare sector.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Application Interview</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of how to work in a complex organisation and/or partnership context.</li> <li>• Knowledge of and contacts in key national print, broadcast and trade media.</li> <li>• Up to date knowledge of current communication techniques and ability to learn new skills and apply them to improve communication products and outputs.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First class written and oral communications.</li> <li>• Highly developed political awareness and judgement.</li> <li>• Ability to quickly interpret and understand complex policy issues.</li> <li>• Negotiation and conflict resolution skills.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Application Assessment Interview</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to work under pressure, on competing priorities.</li><li>• Ability to develop and focus on long term strategy while ensuring effective day-to-day delivery of communications activities.</li><li>• Ability to lead communications, engagement, public affairs, government and parliamentary lobbying campaigns.</li></ul>		
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