

# Head of Communications

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**Reports to:** Director of the Race and Health Observatory

**Grade:** B

**Location:** London

**Date Prepared:** December 2020

## PURPOSE

NHS England has commissioned the NHS Confederation to deliver an independent Race & Health Observatory to address the long-standing health inequalities facing Black and Minority Ethnic communities in England.

The Director leads the Observatory's independent work to:

- facilitate new, high-quality and innovative research evidence to address the poorer health access, experience and outcomes experienced by BME patients, communities and healthcare staff
- make strategic policy recommendations for change and improvement
- support practical implementation of those recommendations

The Communications Manager will provide leadership and strategic oversight for the Observatory's communications activities. You will ensure our communications strategies for individual work programmes are produced and delivered to a high standard with a high degree of co-ordination to ensure we gain synergy and maximum impact from all our communications activity.

The postholder will be an expert at distilling complex information into compelling key messages that resonate with our members and other target audiences and can be amplified across multiple channels and product types.

You will contribute to the development of the Observatory's corporate strategies and business plans, working closely with senior leaders across the organisation.

The postholder will ensure that the Observatory's communications activity is delivered to a consistently high standard.

- Due to the nature of the role, you may need to respond to calls and/or emails outside of working hours. An on-call supplement will be payable to you in these instances.

## **NATURE AND SCOPE**

### **Including Dimensions**

NHS England has agreed to fund the establishment of the NHS Race and Health Observatory in England, which will be hosted by the NHS Confederation. The Observatory will deploy considerable resource and expertise to address the poorer experience of BME patients, communities and healthcare staff in England.

The NHS Confederation is the independent voice of NHS leadership. Our aim is an empowered healthy population supported by world class health and care services. 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.

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## **ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **Contributing to the development and delivery of communications strategies**

- Oversee the development and implementation of the Observatory's communications strategy.
- Play an influential role as part of the Observatory team, providing advice, ideas and suggestions for how the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation can be improved.
- Provide strategic communications advice, support and delivery for a number of the Observatory's major work programmes, coordinating communications activity across the Observatory to ensure effective delivery.
- Take responsibility as the communications lead on specific projects, often acting as the main point of coordination with external organisations to ensure key objectives are achieved.

## **Key relationships**

The postholder will support the Director in building strong relationships with:

- NHS England and other arm's length bodies
- System leaders, Provider Chief Executives, CCG Chief Officers and their Boards
- National public service leadership structures including government departments and the LGA
- Officials from the Department of Health and Public Health England
- Academics, think tanks and funders of research
- Staff from across the wider NHS Confederation including the regional teams, communications, membership and public affairs staff
- Partner organisations and key stakeholders – including, but not limited to trade unions, AoMRC, Royal Colleges, Richmond Group, Healthwatch and National Voices.
- Ministers, senior Parliamentarians and their teams across the political spectrum.

## **Delivery**

The post holder will be responsible for:

- Development of the Observatory's communications and stakeholder engagement strategy/plan;
- Liaising with wider media outlets regarding the work of the Observatory;
- Working with colleagues to identify and map key stakeholders and create strategies for engaging with them on the work of the Observatory;
- Creating and delivering specific plans to inform key stakeholders such as ALBs, provider organisations, CCGs, community and voluntary organisations, and wider communities and other partners, about the Observatory's function and work;
- Providing expert communications and stakeholder engagement advice to the Observatory's team on ways to meaningfully engage and deliver change with stakeholders;
- Define current processes, facilitate discussions and advise colleagues as to how best practice might be adopted in the definition of future processes, document those processes as they are agreed and oversee their delivery;
- The post holder is responsible for providing professional communications and engagement expertise to the team.

## **Communications and Media**

The postholder will actively seek out opportunities to proactively promote the work of the Observatory through:

- Working closely with the press and media, and the NHS Confederation's media team, on both reactive and proactive press. Drafting responses and press releases as well as background briefings on the work of the Observatory
- Actively generating proactive press opportunities to raise the profile and work of the Observatory
- Developing a bank of case studies to use for media bids
- Analysing relevant and new data and having the ability to make this newsworthy
- Supporting the Board Chair, Director and other members of the core team to act as external spokespersons by providing media training. Supporting and advising the Board Chair and Director for all public speaking engagements, as appropriate
- Ability to use informed persuasion to influence others including journalists.

### **Providing leadership and oversight for the delivery of the Observatory's communications**

- Take lead responsibility for ensuring a robust communications strategy is in place for our Observatory activities, working closely with senior leads across the Observatory to coordinate strategic activity and delivery.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring that high quality and consistent standards are applied across all areas of work when it comes to communications activity for the organisation.
- Work effectively and proactively with other senior staff to generate high quality communications content that enables the Observatory to influence policy and practice.
- Ensure the Observatory adopts a planned and proactive approach to all activities across the organisation, identifying opportunities to work with colleagues to shape and inform content development from the outset of projects.
- Provide expert advice and guidance to colleagues on the best formats, product types and channels to use to meet their objectives.

### **Leadership and team management**

- Lead on all aspects of communications within the organisation to deliver first-rate communications outputs.
- Build effective and cohesive relationships with others – including a commitment to excellence and supporting the needs of all our audiences.
- Manage elements of the budget allocated to communications, ensuring a proactive and robust approach is taken to budget management in line with any wider corporate policies.

## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

### Including Career Path to role (how did you get there)

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The postholder will have:

#### Experience

- Experience of dealing with a range of national media and communications outlets including print and broadcast experience
- Experience of managing reactive and crisis comms
- Experience of proactive media engagement
- Experience of developing, delivering and implementing communications and engagement strategies within a complex organisation at a senior level
- Experience in change communications in a service related environment
- Excellent proven written communication skills, with significant experience of writing for a variety of audiences, including board/ executive team reports, strategies, copy for websites and public-facing documents, media statements etc
- Experience of managing relationships in a proactive manner with a range of different stakeholders
- Experience of receiving / providing highly complex, sensitive and contentious information
- Experience of stakeholder engagement – i.e. setting up engagement processes and engaging stakeholders in projects or programmes
- Experience of working in a high-pressure environment and to tight deadlines

#### Desirable

- Black book of press contacts across all outlets, including ethnic media outlets
- Experience of working on large scale, national campaigns

#### Knowledge

- Extensive knowledge of specialist areas, acquired through post graduate diploma or equivalent experience or training plus further specialist knowledge or experience to master's level equivalent.
- Good knowledge of contemporary health, race and equality policy, service delivery challenges and the wider NHS.
- Understanding of the UK political environment and the operation of government.
- Understanding of contemporary communications methods, their delivery, and how these relate to the successful engagement of a variety of stakeholders and the public.

#### Skills

- Ability to identify risks, anticipate issues and create solutions and to resolve problems in relation to project or service delivery.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills that cut through complexity and provide insight.
- Ability to write in an accessible and compelling way.

- Good communication and interpersonal skills, including being personally credible and influential with senior stakeholders.
- Ability to support the development of a prioritised portfolio of work.
- Authentic and effective manager that inspires trust and a commitment to excellence.
- Ability to effectively support the delivery of the team's work programme ensuring it is relevant, timely and of a high quality.
- Ability to be responsive and agile in a rapidly changing environment.
- Experience of public speaking, as appropriate.

Person specification				
Criteria		Essential	Desirable	Evidence *
<b>Knowledge and experience</b>	Experience of developing, delivering and implementing communications and engagement strategies within a complex organisation at a senior level.	√		A/I
	Experience in change communications in a service related environment.	√		A/I
	Excellent proven written communication skills, with significant experience of writing for a variety of audiences, including board/ executive team reports, strategies, copy for websites and public-facing documents, media statements etc.	√		A/I
	Experience of managing relationships in a proactive manner with a range of different stakeholders.	√		A/I
	Experience of taking decisions on difficult and contentious issues where there may be several courses of action.	√		A/I
	Experience of receiving/ providing highly complex, sensitive and contentious information.	√		A/I
	Experience of stakeholder engagement – i.e. setting up engagement processes and engaging stakeholders in projects or programmes. .	√		A/I
	Experience of working in a high-pressure environment and to tight deadlines.	√		A/I
	Extensive knowledge of specialist areas, acquired through post graduate diploma or equivalent experience or training plus further specialist knowledge or experience to master's level equivalent.	√		A/I
	Evidence of continuing professional development.	√		A/I
	Must have an understanding of the background to and aims of current	√		A/I

	healthcare policy and appreciate the implications of this on engagement.			
	Member of relevant professional body.		√	A/I
<b>Communication Skills</b>	Developed written and verbal communication skills.	√		A/I
	Good presentational skills for conveying complex concepts.	√		A/I
	Ability to use informed persuasion to influence others.	√		A/I
<b>Analytical Skills</b>	Ability to identify risks, anticipate issues and create solutions and to resolve problems in relation to project or service delivery.	√		A/I
	Ability to understand a broad range of complex information quickly and making decisions where opinions differ/no obvious solution.	√		A/I
<b>Planning Skills</b>	Evidence of planning and delivering programmes and projects and services on time.	√		A/I
<b>Autonomy</b>	Ability to work without supervision, providing specialist advice to the organisation, working to tight and often changing timescales.	√		A/I
	Interpreting national policy for implementation.			
<b>Management Skills</b>	Abilities for financial and staff management.	√		A/I
<b>Financial Skills</b>	Previously responsible for a budget, involved in budget setting and working knowledge of financial processes.	√		A/I
<b>Equality and diversity</b>	Will consider the most effective way to promote equality of opportunity and good working relationships in employment and service delivery and	√		A/I

	has the ability to take actions which support and promote this agenda.			
	Values diversity and difference, operates with integrity and openness.	√		A/I
	Self-awareness in teams of emotional intelligence, biases and personal triggers with cultural sensitivity and awareness.	√		A/I
<b>Values and Behaviours</b>	Commitment to and focused on quality, promotes high standards in all they do.	√		A/I
	Able to make a connection between their work and the benefit to patients and the public.	√		A/I
	Consistently thinks about how their work can help and support clinicians and frontline staff deliver better outcomes for patients.	√		A/I
	Works well with others, is positive and helpful, listens, involves, respects and learns from the contribution of others.	√		A/I
	Consistently looks to improve what they do, look for successful tried and tested ways of working, and also seeks out innovation.	√		A/I
	Actively develops themselves and supports others to do the same.	√		A/I
	<b>Additional skills and capabilities</b>	Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with external stakeholders	√	
Ability to influence, persuade and negotiate		√		A/I
Strong attention to detail and ability to manage multiple projects in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment		√		A/I
Strong communication skills: able to relate highly complex, sensitive or contentious information in order to persuade and gain agreement.		√		A/I
Outstanding written and verbal communication skills		√		A/I
Ability to think strategically and anticipate and resolve problems before they arise.		√		A/I
Ability to negotiate with senior stakeholders on difficult and controversial issues, and present complex and sensitive information to large and influential groups.		√		A/I
Ability to persuade board and senior managers of the respective merits of		√		A/I

	different options, innovation and new opportunities.			
	Excellent IT skills (particularly Outlook, Word, PowerPoint and Excel and Internet)	√		A/I
	High level interpersonal skills with the ability to build positive relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders	√		A/I
<b>Other</b>	Team working skills.	√		A/I
	Self-motivated.	√		A/I
	Ability to move between details and the bigger picture.	√		A/I
*Assessment will take place with reference to the following information				
A=Application form		I=Interview	T=Test	C=Certificate