

Communications Service – Job Description

POST:	Senior Communications Officer
GRADE:	PO4
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Head of External Communications
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	None

KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE POST

1. To take the lead in providing a high quality media and communications service to enhance, develop, promote and protect the profile and reputation of Haringey Council.
2. To develop and implement communications strategies to enable effective communications between the council and its key stakeholders, including Haringey residents, council staff and elected members, partner organisations, public sector bodies, opinion formers, media outlets, etc.
3. To ensure a coordinated approach to external communications, with key council objectives and corporate priorities clearly reflected in communications work.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To manage and promote the reputation of the council through the local, regional, national, specialist and broadcast media, and through effective partnership working.
2. To be responsible for providing a first class media relations service, including answering media enquiries, writing press releases and issuing statements to meet journalists' deadlines and agreed targets.
3. To work with colleagues across the organisation to ensure a proactive and joined up approach to all communications activity.
4. To ensure communications campaigns and messages reflect the council's corporate priorities.
5. To provide professional advice and support on communications issues to elected members and council officers.
6. To plan and implement proactive media, PR and public affairs campaigns in order to maximise opportunities to promote the organisation.
7. To raise the profile of the council in the national, specialist and trade press by pitching and placing stories and by-line pieces.
8. To contribute to the council's social media strategy through fully integrated campaigns and communications planning, and producing content for social media channels.

9. To plan and organise media briefings and events as required.
10. To act as a spokesperson on behalf of the council when required.
11. To contribute to the production of corporate publications including Haringey People, the council's residents' magazine.
12. To work with council departments and the Web Communications Team to publish new web pages and to update existing content on the council's website as necessary.
13. To represent and act on behalf of the Head of External Communications at meetings and events as appropriate.
14. To provide an out-of-hours media relations service as part of a duty rota.
15. To attend evening meetings as and when required.
16. To manage other staff as and when required.
17. To undertake any other duties consistent with the objectives of the post.

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The Person

We are looking for an experienced communications professional to support and enhance the work of Haringey Council's external communications team.

These are the qualities we believe to be necessary to do this job. You should show in your application how your skills and experience meet these criteria. Short-listing will be based on our assessment of you against these criteria.

The final assessment/interview process will also seek to assess these criteria.

Abilities/Experience

- Demonstrable understanding and experience of effective external communications techniques, practices and current thinking.
- A proven track record of developing and implementing successful external communications strategies in complex organisations, and/or a solid background in news journalism.
- Experience of finding positive solutions to complex communications challenges.
- Proven independence and innovative approach to work.
- Political sensitivity and the ability to form productive, professional working relationships with councillors, staff and partners at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Ability to find solutions to complex internal and external communications challenges.

Knowledge/Skills

- Strong news sense and a clear understanding of risks and issues in relation to publicity.
- Understanding and experience of using social media to achieve communications objectives.
- A self-starter with the confidence and ability to take ownership of and responsibility for work.
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills, including the ability to communicate complex information in an easy-to-grasp way.
- Excellent copywriting and editorial skills and a high level of creativity.

- An understanding of how local government works and current issues and challenges facing it.
- A clear understanding of the law as it relates to publicity, including the Local Government Act 1998 and the Government's Code of Practice on Publicity.
- Ability to represent the council's position effectively to the media.
- Ability to use time effectively and to operate to tight deadlines and manage under pressure.
- Ability to operate effectively in an environment of constant change.
- A high level of interpersonal skills and the ability to forge strong working partnerships.
- To work outside normal office hours as required.
- An understanding of the council's vision and values.