



**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
CUSTOMER SERVICES DIRECTORATE**

JOB DESCRIPTION

Date issued: July 2017

Job Title: Communications Officer

Service/Unit Area: Communications

Grade: Grade 6

Hours: 37 hours

Responsible to: Senior Communications Officer

Responsible for: This post has no staff reporting directly into it.

Contacts: All Council Members and officers, and potentially all staff when involved in public interface. External contacts are all media with whom the Council has contact.

This is a politically restricted post under the terms of the original Local Government and Housing Act of 1989, Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) Regulations 1990, and subject to most recent amendment under the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act brought into effect on 12th January 2010. See the definition and application to this role at the foot of this job description.

Job Summary:

The post holder will be responsible to the Communications Manager for the Council's relations with the media. Through media relations activity, he/she will support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities. The Communications Officer will work with Councillors and officers to identify and exploit news opportunities for the Council, and assist with the production of internal and external communications. The Communications officer will also play an active role in posting on the Council's social media channels and in editing and approving web content.

Key Responsibilities:

1 Principal Responsibilities

- 1.1 Act as a focal point for media communications within the Council, ensuring all spokesmen give consistent messages
- 1.2 Act as Deputy in the absence of the Senior Communications Officer

- 1.3 Write press releases and articles (or edit those produced elsewhere) to publicise the Council's activities and achievements
- 1.4 Maintain the media monitoring system, keeping up to date the status of press issues and enquiries and the lists of contacts
- 1.5 Analyse media monitoring information and make recommendations to improve media coverage
- 1.6 Facilitate interviews for Council members and officers, providing any necessary background information
- 1.7 Respond to all media enquiries in a timely manner
- 1.8 Advise departments on the identification and exploitation of positive news opportunities. Assist departments in the preparation of campaigns and events, arranging any press facilities at events
- 1.9 Maintain a continuous programme of ongoing PR events in liaison with other departments
- 1.10 Be familiar with crisis management procedures and techniques, including the Council's emergency and business continuity plans, and carry them out when necessary
- 1.11 Contribute to the production of the community magazine "Outlook", and internal communications (Insight)
- 1.12 Collect and record performance monitoring information
- 1.13 Contribute to the Council's Twitter feed and Facebook page and provide guidance to staff on social media
- 1.14 Write and edit copy for the Council's intranet and external website. Act as approver for web content.

2 Staff Management

- 2.1 None

3 Service Management

- 3.1 To review and develop the services for which the post holder is responsible and manage to change, to achieve continuous improvement; to maintain agreed performance targets and to meet the requirements of value for money and the relevant performance management and inspection regimes.
- 3.2 To ensure the service meets the Council's Customer First Standards.
- 3.3 To actively promote the service in order to raise the profile of the Council and demonstrate its value to residents and customers.

4 Financial Responsibilities

- 4.1 To proactively manage budgets under your control within agreed financial limits to provide value for money in delivering services and maximise the achievement of Council policy.

4.2 To adhere to Financial Regulations and Contract Procurement Rules.

5 Other Responsibilities

5.1 To ensure that the Council's Customer Care standards are maintained when dealing with members of the public and internal customers

5.2 To attend meetings of the Council or Committees as required

5.3 To ensure that all dealings with staff and the public are conducted within the Council's Equal Opportunities framework

5.4 To comply with all relevant legislation to ensure effectiveness in the role

5.5 To have regard for the duty of care of information (with particular reference to the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act) gained during the course of employment that relates to other employees, the public, contractors, Elected Members etc

5.6 To create and maintain authentic, timely and reliable records in relation to your duties. To take due care and attention when gathering, recording and manipulating data and to have regard to guidance issued by the Council in connection with data management

5.7 The job holder has a personal responsibility, whilst at work, to preserve and enhance health and safety. They must familiarise themselves with the health and safety aspects of their work and avoid contact which would put at risk the health and safety of themselves and other people including visitors, contractors and members of the public

5.8 To undertake other duties which may arise or as may be delegated from time to time, commensurate with the skills required for this post

6. Political Restriction

This post is subject to political restriction, which is divided into two categories and relates to the post holder duties, thus;

- Specified posts, including 'deputy chief officers' - since the post holder would be required to deputise for the Head of Service at relevant committee and sub committee meetings to make formal reports, and provide additional policy advice, this constitutes a specified post within this criteria.
- 'Sensitive' posts, which meet one of both of the following duties related criteria,
 - Giving advice on a regular basis to the authority itself, to any committee or sub committee of the authority or any joint committee on which the authority are represented, or where the authority are operating executive arrangements, to the executive of the authority; to any committee of that executive, or to any member of that executive who is a member of the authority
 - Speaking on behalf of the authority on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

The postholder must therefore be aware that in accepting this post, they are required to confirm that they will conform with these political restrictions and

that they will be included as conditions of their formal contract of employment with the authority.

Signed..... Manager Date.....

Signed..... Employee Date.....