

Northumberland County Council

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

<b>Post Title:</b> Media Communications Officer		<b>Director/Service/Sector</b> – Corporate Resources, Communications Team		<b>Office Use</b>
<b>Grade:</b> 7		<b>Workplace:</b> County Hall Based with work across the county required		JE ref: 2949 HRMS ref:
<b>Responsible to:</b> Communications Manager		<b>Date:</b> September 2014	<b>Manager Level:</b> 12	
<b>Job Purpose:</b>  1. To manage the council's relationship with the local, regional and national media.  2. To be able to act as the Council's lead officer for communications during emergency and statutory situations such as elections, ensuring that responsibilities are fulfilled, communications remain timely, accurate, useful and helpful and the reputation of the Council is proactively managed.  3. To develop and implement media strategies that protect and promote the council's reputation  4. To provide advice and training to key officers and Policy Board members to enable the effective management of the media.  5. To build relationships with journalists so as to manage risk and positively promote the council's policies and achievements.				
<b>Resources</b>	Staff	Will have access to a small number of support staff to support the delivery of objectives.		
	Finance	No budget responsibility		
	Physical			
	Clients	Executive Directors, Portfolio Members and others as appropriate. Significant economic and well-being impact on all services, service users, local people and visitors to Northumberland through work across organisations and communications and marketing programmes.		

**Duties and key result areas:**

1. To manage all media calls to the council either directly or by coordinating activity across the local authority.
2. To act as a Media Partner to all directorates, services or groups across the Council.

This will include:

- Developing media strategies that enable the delivery of agreed outcomes
  - Ensuring that research is taken account of
  - Ensuring that comprehensive media communications are delivered
  - Ensuring that the standards and expectations set out in legislation are met.
  - Ensuring that media communications are effectively managed during emergency/critical situations, ensuring that responsibilities are fulfilled, communications remain timely, accurate, useful and helpful, and the reputation of the Council is proactively managed.
  - Establishing proactive partnerships and relationships which support, enable and inspire coordination across organisations to effectively spot opportunities, mobilise and promote Northumberland as a great place to live, work, visit and invest in regionally, nationally and internationally, taking advantage of funding opportunities, national initiatives and opportunities for showcasing the county, where appropriate.
3. To write high quality media releases, features and social media text to maximise the positive impact of the council's work.
  4. Build strong relationships with local, regional and national journalists that result in positive and extensive coverage
  5. Build media handling and writing capacity in the organisation by developing training programmes and through direct delivery of training.
  6. Develop media handling capacity in the communications function by offering expertise and leadership where appropriate.
  7. To ensure that robust financial and resource management arrangements are in place across your area of responsibility through overseeing monitoring and reporting arrangements for any delegated arrangements; being fully accountable for effective spend/income generation against established targets; and maintaining systems for compliance with financial regulations.
  8. To actively promote and represent the interests of the Council, and where appropriate, the Service, at local, regional and national level participating in relevant programmes, showcasing good practice and contributing to exchange networks.
  9. To be available to provide an out of hours media advice and handling service on a rotational basis.
  10. To provide support where required to the Communications Business Partners and the Communications Manager.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this job description are indicative and may vary over time. Post-holders are expected to undertake other reasonable duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Transport requirements:	Involves occasional travel to facilities, area offices and venues throughout the county and further afield on occasion.
Working patterns:	Is likely to include evenings and weekends given the nature of the role, particularly with respect to emergency or critical situations, which mean that responsibilities may span 7 days a week.
Working conditions:	Predominantly office based but with some exposure to working outdoors.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post Title: Media Communications Officer	Sector: Communications Team	Ref: 2949
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
<p>Educated to degree level or equivalent in a relevant subject</p> <p>Relevant professional or managerial qualification or significant experience of operating at a senior level</p> <p>Evidence of working in the media and of exceptional strategic, tactical and writing skills.</p> <p>Recent and relevant post qualification training, additional qualifications and/or evidence of continuing professional development including management development e.g. CIPR membership.</p> <p>In-depth knowledge of professional theory, practice and procedures, and contemporary issues in relation to the role. This includes high levels of expertise relating to media and reputational management as well as emerging communications practices.</p> <p>Able to function effectively in a large complex public sector organisation, whilst understanding its cross cutting issues and challenges</p> <p>In-depth knowledge of professional communications functions and practices and associated media/information handling.</p> <p>Knowledge of current inter/national laws, regulations, policies, procedures, trends and developments relevant to the role.</p> <p>Commercially aware and understands the relationship between costs, quality, customer care and corporate performance assessments.</p> <p>Understanding of relevant legislation and requirements such as corporate manslaughter, health &amp; safety, procurement, equalities and diversity, risk management etc.</p>	<p>Relevant management degree e.g. MBA, DMS</p>	<p>(a), (i), (t), (p)</p>
Experience		
<p>Recent significant post-qualification experience in a relevant context</p> <p>An evidenced track record of successful managing complex reputationally challenging media issues</p>	<p>Experience of a range of strategic management functions.</p> <p>Implementing alternative service delivery models to achieve value for money.</p>	<p>(a), (i), (r)</p>

<p>A demonstrable track record of leading practice delivering outcomes that require collaborative approaches both within the organisation and with external partners.</p> <p>A successful track record of engaging effectively with others at a senior level and building productive partnerships with key stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Substantial experience and demonstrable success in managing change and of securing the support of others in the process.</p> <p>Experience and a proven track record in the formulation and delivery of strategies, tactics and products within an organisation of comparable scope and complexity.</p> <p>Experience in issue management</p> <p>Demonstrable evidence of providing visible, empowering and motivational leadership and fostering a positive organisational culture.</p>		
<b>Skills and competencies</b>		
<p>Very high level of political awareness and sensitivity</p> <p>Commensurate writing skills (writing for a variety of audiences)</p> <p>Brilliant judgement</p> <p>Strong personal leadership skills including the ability to challenge, win hearts and minds, and motivate others to deliver change.</p> <p>High level of personal credibility and “weight”</p> <p>Personal effectiveness, takes the initiative, and able to work with autonomy</p> <p>Highly risk aware</p> <p>Effective forward planning, project management, performance management and policy skills in area of responsibility.</p> <p>IT literate</p> <p>Collaborative Presents and communicates information appropriately for different audiences; effectively shares/disseminates acquired knowledge.</p>		(r), (t), (p)

<p>Ability to develop projects and ideas based on sound reasoning and logic, draw appropriate conclusions and present these to an audience; this includes complex information and business statistics.</p> <p>Excellent negotiation and influencing skills, able to persuade others to alternative points of view.</p> <p>Customer oriented, with well developed networking and partnership skills, able to build relationships with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>Active and effective advocate for the service both within the council and externally.</p> <p>Financial and commercial awareness and effective budgeting and financial management skills. Ability to maintain a clear overview of the issues affecting the Council in general and the service in particular.</p> <p>Ability to propose, develop and implement effective strategies and plans in pursuit of agreed goals and to make clear, informed, appropriate and timely decisions.</p> <p>Ability to command respect, trust and confidence of colleagues, Council Members and other stakeholders.</p> <p>High level of professionalism, tact and diplomacy in difficult situations.</p> <p>Ability to make decisions, allocate resources and direct activity at times of crisis or high intensity.</p>		
<b>Physical, mental and emotional demands</b>		
<p>Able to work under pressure to tight deadlines</p> <p>Able to manage competing demands calmly</p> <p>Normally works from a seated position but with regular need to walk, bend or carry items</p> <p>Need to maintain general awareness with some lengthy periods of enhanced concentration.</p> <p>Regular contact with partners / stakeholder in negotiation with the Council; some contact with public/customers in dispute.</p> <p>Some exposure to working outdoors and, more frequently, outside normal office hours as necessary.</p>		
<b>Motivation</b>		

<p>A proactive corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues in a non-departmental manner and dispassionately</p> <p>Self-reliant, able to exercise discretion and possessing the ability to manage time effectively.</p> <p>Models and encourages high standards of reliability, honesty, integrity, openness and respect for others.</p> <p>Actively helps managers and staff create a positive work culture, in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued.</p> <p>Resilient, proactive, self motivated, and achievement orientated.</p> <p>Works with minimal direct supervision.</p> <p>Personality, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of colleagues, Council Members and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Must be able to work well under pressure, manage crisis, sensitive and at times, distressing situations.</p>		(i), (r), (t)
<b>Other</b>		
<p>The ability to drive and, as necessary, work unsocial working hours.</p> <p>Ability to meet the transport requirements of the post.</p>		(a)

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits