

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	News and External Affairs Manager
<b>MANAGED BY:</b>	Head of Communications & Marketing
<b>GRADE:</b>	Grade 12

## BACKGROUND

The West of England Combined Authority is appointing a News and External Affairs Manager to act as a strategic communications adviser to the Metro Mayor and raise the profile of West of England region.

This is an exciting time to join the West of England Combined Authority. In the last year a billion pounds of new investment has been secured for the region. New exciting plans are in place to deliver on Metro Mayoral priorities to improve transport, skills and housing for our residents, take decisive action to tackle the climate emergency, and to support our communities facing the cost-of-living crisis. There is a relentless focus on delivery to put the West of England firmly on the map for regional, national and global success.

Led by regional Metro Mayor Dan Norris, the West of England Combined Authority brings together three councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership and works with local communities, other public services, industry and government to deliver for the region.

Come and help shape the future of the West of England, a place so many people are proud to call home.

## THE ROLE

Are you up for the challenge of one of our exciting communications roles within the West of England Combined Authority? The West of England Combined Authority is appointing a News and External Affairs Manager to magnify the voice of the West of England region.

Working closely with our Metro Mayor, Dan Norris, you will lead an outstanding, proactive and reactive press function, and act as a strategic communications adviser to the Metro Mayor.

You will bring a decisive leadership style, enthusiasm about delivering for local people, clear thinking and drive, along with your little black book of contacts and networks within the regional and national media. You'll bring a motivation to support the Metro Mayor to place the West of England firmly on the map and the place to be for living, working, visiting and doing business.

Come and play a key role in helping to make it happen and telling the world about the great work happening in the West of England.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Working closely on a day-to-day basis with the Metro Mayor of the West of England, and reporting into the Head of Communications, you will provide a proactive and reactive media function and support the mayor to raise the profile of the West of England, its strengths and opportunities, nationally and locally. The role will include:

- Lead the news and external affairs team, managing staff to ensure the best work possible.
- Work with all West of England Combined Authority staff to ensure Metro Mayoral priorities and the positive work of the organisation are proactively promoted, identifying good stories and gaining coverage in print, broadcast, and online media
- Ensure a future pipeline of stories, maintaining a communications grid
- Have a top-notch understanding of the national political scene including a knowledge of opportunities and challenges coming from Government policy
- Managing the profile and reputation of the Metro Mayor and Combined Authority with government, ministers, and key regional stakeholders.
- Draft communications and briefings.
- Build excellent relations with journalists and regional stakeholders
- Be a strategic communications adviser to the Metro Mayor, to raise his profile and the influence of the region, nationally and internationally
- Provide media advice to Senior leaders to maximise opportunities and manage reputation.
- Work with the Campaigns, Engagement and Marketing manager and Corporate Communications manager to deliver a seamless narrative.
- Monitor effectiveness of news and external affairs strategies.
- Be part of an out of hours media rota.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

#### Qualifications and Knowledge

- Educated or experienced to master's degree/ postgraduate professional qualification level in a related subject.

#### Experience

- Excellent media contacts, locally, regionally and nationally, ideally including lobby journalists.
- Experience of maintaining and managing a programme of engagement with MPs, organisations and public bodies
- Proven track record of placing stories in the media
- Understanding of working at a high level in a political environment for example with ministers

#### Skills and Competencies

- Excellent management skills to lead a team to drive delivery
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Understanding of how to engage constructively with journalists
- Digitally literate including knowledge of digital & social media tools
- Ability to prioritise a demanding workload, working quickly in a pressurised environment
- Strong political judgement
- Ability to build long-term relationships with key influencers
- Able to work independently and as part of a team

### DESIRABLE

### REWARDS AND BENEFITS

Alongside a competitive salary, we offer an excellent benefits package including:

- 25 days Annual Leave plus bank holidays
- Generous Employer-Contribution Pension Scheme through the Avon Pension Fund
- Discounted monthly bus tickets
- Cycle to work scheme and secure bike parking
- Free eye tests for all display screen equipment (DSE) users

- Hybrid working to split your week between the office and home to help you achieve the best work/life balance, productivity and career goals.

We are about to move into a new bright, airy, modern office space, with all latest technology, under a 10 minute walk from Bristol Temple Meads Train Station. We offer flexible and hybrid working options too if you would rather work from home, or another suitable location.

*As an equal opportunities employer, we invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support they may need during the recruitment process.*

#### WE PAY THE LIVING WAGE

We're proud to have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer

Living Wage accreditation means that everyone working at The West of England and Combined Authority receives a minimum hourly wage of £9.90 – higher than the government minimum for **over 23s, currently £9.50 per hour**



It also means that anyone who provides services to, or has contracts with us, must pay the Living Wage, setting the bar for good employer practices in the region. This includes those who provide services to The West of England and Combined Authority, such as cleaning and facilities management contracts, as well as those who have contracts with us – such as IT providers.