

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Head of Communications
MANAGED BY:	Chief executive
GRADE:	Head of Service 2

BACKGROUND

The West of England Combined Authority is appointing its Head of Communications.

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 that so many people are proud to call home.

THE ROLE

Are you up for the challenge of the lead communications role within the West of England Combined Authority as you magnify the voice of the West of England region?

Working closely with Metro Mayor, Dan Norris, you will lead the communications team including press, marketing, consultations, engagement, external affairs and internal comms experts.

The comprehensive planning and coordination of communications will be your responsibility. You will shape the narrative of the West of England Combined Authority, changing the way people see and understand its work and that of the Metro Mayor.

You will be a strategic communications adviser to the Metro Mayor and other key staff and ensure the West of England Combined Authority has outstanding proactive and reactive communications.

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, including lobby journalists. This is a job where you will manage a team, but also where you'll get hands on using your contacts, fielding calls and meeting the public.

To be successful in this role you will be able to see the bigger picture, bringing significant political acumen to shape strategy, and deal with fast moving and changing scenarios. You will have experience of working with politicians.

You'll bring a motivation to support the Metro Mayor to make sure the West of England is firmly on the map as the best place to live, study, work, visit and do business.

Come and play a key role and tell the world about the great work happening in the West of England.

The post-holder is a member of the Combined Authority Senior Management Team, and will from time to time represent the Chief Executive.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Working closely on a day-to-day basis with the Metro Mayor of the West of England, you will ensure the communications department supports the Metro Mayor to raise the profile of the West of England, highlighting its strengths and opportunities, locally, nationally and internationally. The role will include:

- Lead the communications department, effectively line managing staff in external and internal comms.
- Be a strategic communications adviser to the Metro Mayor, to raise his profile and the influence of the region, nationally and internationally, and provide media advice to senior leaders.
- Provide expert advice across the West of England Combined Authority on matters relating to news, communications, marketing, consultation and engagement.
- Develop and deliver a consistent narrative which is seamlessly deployed across all communications and marketing activity.

- Ensure a future pipeline of opportunities is maintained in the communications grid.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders (media, government, public and private sector, NGOs and the voluntary sector)
- Have a top-notch understanding of the national political scene including a knowledge of opportunities and challenges coming from Government policy
- As a member of the Senior Management Team, work with all staff in the organisation to embed an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of engagement.
- Manage budgets and resources to ensure value for money.
- Monitor and evaluate communications and marketing activity.
- Be part of an out of hours media rota.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Degree level or equivalent standard of general education.
- First class knowledge of news and communications including social media
- Understanding of local, regional and national government politics and experience of working with politicians.
- Understanding of the policy context relevant to the West of England Combined Authority, and how communications can be used to deliver its strategic goals

Experience

- A strong, senior, strategic leader with management experience.
- Excellent media contacts, locally, regionally and nationally, ideally including lobby journalists.
- Experience of leading a comprehensive communications strategy
- 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.
- Knowing what makes a story, and what is of interest to the public.
- Able to translate complex information into a clear format for a wide range of

audiences.

- A demonstratable commitment to listening to the public.
- Strong political judgement.
- A track record of building good, long-term relationships with key stakeholders.
- A knowledge of the policy environment, understanding the local, regional, national and international context.
- Excellent planning, project management, budgeting and organisational skills.
- Able to give advice and, when necessary, negotiate assertively with tact and diplomacy.

DESIRABLE

- Membership of CIPR

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 cleaning and facilities management contracts, as well as those who have contracts with us – such as IT providers.