

Role profile

Role title	Assistant secretary
Department and directorate	BMA Cymru Wales
Grade	3
Reports to (job title)	Head of member relations (Wales)
Direct reports (job titles)	Employment Advisers/ RSO/SEA

Job Overview– purpose of the role

*Describe as concisely as possible the overall purpose of the job and what success looks like. **Please limit this to a maximum of four or five sentences***

The Assistant Secretary provides expert advice and representation to BMA members in Wales on complex employment and contractual matters. They lead negotiations on a local and national level, manage sensitive casework, supervise team members, and liaise with senior stakeholders including NHS Wales and the Welsh Government. The role demands high-level industrial relations, strategic, and interpersonal skills, with significant autonomy and impact across the organisation.

Duties and Responsibilities

What are the core duties/responsibilities required to be performed in the role. (e.g., to provide a full range of administrative support services to the department including x,y,z)

Please provide a bullet point list

- To ensure that members receive the best possible individual advice/representation and collective representation on contractual matters.
- To support effective recruitment and retention policies and to support local BMA structures appropriately.
- Management and day to day supervision of Employment Advisers/RSO/SEA.
- To provide advice and support to Welsh national branch of practice (BoP) committee Chairs on contractual and collective negotiations which have the potential to have a high impact on not only many members but also to the BMA's reputation and standing in Wales.
- To establish develop and lead the work of Local Negotiating Committees in Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts.
- Where appropriate lead negotiations on All Wales Branch of Practice issues.
- As necessary, participate in other work locally and nationally to ensure the effectiveness of BMA Wales is maximised across the full range of its responsibilities and in line with its strategic aims.

Skill (level and breadth of application)

What relevant experience is necessary to undertake this role? What specialist, technical or professional qualifications are required to be able to perform the job?

How far does the role extend out across the organisation, eg confined to own team, involves co-ordination with another department or requires regular negotiation with many other parts of the organisation. Why is this necessary? Describe the range of issues that are involved in this, eg resolving people's IT problems, collecting information on key research items or advising members on a particular issue.

- In order to ensure the best possible advice is given, there is a need to be a technical specialist in the area of industrial relations.
- Professional qualification as a Solicitor and/or Chartered Membership of CIPD, or
- Postgraduate qualifications in Law and/or Industrial Relations, or
- 5 years plus experience in HR, legal or trade union role, as appropriate, and
- Up to date and in depth and authoritative knowledge and experience of employment law, terms and conditions of doctors, NHS policy and relevant staff, pay and employment procedures
- Role impacts across BMA (UK-wide) involving liaison with UK Central BoP Committees, legal department, and externally with direct negotiating with Welsh Assembly Government, Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts at Chief Executive/Board level.
- Proven experience of collective bargaining and negotiating terms and conditions of employment.
- Highly developed ability to gather, assimilate and analyse information and a strategy for handling negotiating forums and very complex individual member cases.
- Excellent interpersonal skills facilitating the development of effective relationships at a very senior level.
- Excellent skills of oral and written communication including presentation and advocacy skills.
- Ability to prioritise and manage own case load and that of team members and work effectively with minimum supervision delivering results on time.
- Leadership skills in LNC negotiations with Local Health Boards/NHS Trusts and on an all-Wales level with the Welsh Assembly Government to maximise benefits for members.
- Excellent planning and organisational skills required to deal with issues raised by members and their cases. More complex cases will typically extend over several months and in some case years.

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

What sorts of problems, situations or issues are typically dealt with? Give any illustrative examples. How are the problems, situations or issues dealt with (eg undertaking original research and analysis or seeking specialist advice)?

To what extent are standard procedures and processes followed when undertaking typical tasks, and how is personal initiative used when solving problems? To what extent is creativity used in solving the problems (eg adopting different approaches, trying things that have not been done before within the organisation or improving/changing previous approaches).

- Role deals with highly sensitive and complex situations and problems alone often in a stressful setting (e.g. member being simultaneously under criminal and employer's investigation and Assistant Secretary being under pressure on the spot having to decide and advise on how to best protect member's continued employment (or alternatively to negotiate the member's departure from employment on best possible terms). This involves a high degree of creativity adopting a bespoke solution in each individual case typically with no precedent to follow, including substantial original research and analysis of numerous authoritative sources. Typically, there is no 'standard procedure' to follow.
- Conducting the advocacy for individual members in formal procedural hearings (e.g. GP Probity Panels, Internal Disciplinary Hearings and Disciplinary Appeal Hearings of NHS (and non-NHS) Employers, Grievance and Grievance Appeal Hearings of NHS (and non-NHS) Employers, Job Plan Appeal Hearings to the All Wales Job Plan Appeals Panel)
- Representing senior doctors of the highest level in unique cases where there is no other precedent in Wales in contractual negotiations and disputes with their employing bodies (e.g. Welsh Government)
- Supporting members in litigation liaising with external solicitors, counsel and medical defence organisations, including the giving of evidence in High Court, County Court and Employment Tribunal Hearings

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

- Providing detailed, specialist and authoritative advice to individual BMA Members in Wales on highly complex contractual, employment, partnership law and legislative matters arising from the Welsh Government policy.
- Working with national BoP committees to draft and negotiate national policies and procedures in social partnership with NHS Wales Employers and Welsh Government.
- Negotiating collectively for members in Wales on complex terms and conditions of service and on all employment policies and procedures pertaining to members (and assisting elected members in doing the same) at national & Local Health Board/NHS Trust levels.
- Managing highly complex/high risk and politically sensitive casework often in the glare of the Welsh media spotlight.
- Mediating disputes between members in emotive and highly charged disputes (e.g. GP partners, hospital consultants to try and resolve the matter in the best interests of both parties and to promote the image the BMA.
- Writing articles for external publication e.g. BMA News, writing guidance notes and handbooks for members e.g. Welsh Consultants handbook.
- Developing areas of special interest and work within agreed team e.g. (e.g. SAS Job planning guidance, GP Performance Procedures, Consultant Job Planning)
- Organising the team to ensure balanced workload between the Employment Advisors in order to ensure cases are dealt with quickly and efficiently to maximise member satisfaction.
- Recognising and adhering to specific critical timescales as part of representational/ case handling process arising out of employment law requirements/ local employer procedures.
- To deploy skills to the immediate advantage of the member to promote the individual doctors case. This must be balanced with maintaining long term working relationships with senior NHS Managers/Welsh Assembly Government officials.
- Giving evidence in legal proceedings at Employment Tribunal up to and including the High Court, to include cross examination by KC requiring very high levels of concentration

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

What are the typical decisions that are made in the job without reference to any higher authority? What informs/constrains the decisions (eg expenditure limits, have to follow clearly laid down procedures or working within broad objectives). What influence upon policy, procedures or resources is there (eg giving advice to others)?

Who (or what) is next to be affected by the decisions that are made – for example, supervisor sees them before they leave the team or the whole department sees and has to respond to the change that is made. Give typical example(s) of the consequences of the decisions (eg what impact does the decision-making have on the performance of the team/section/department/organisation)?

- Assistant Secretary has total day-to-day autonomy and freedom to act without supervision in respect of casework, typically only seeking guidance from Head of MR Wales in cases of political sensitivity for BMA Wales.
- Magnitude and scope of impact of casework can be considerable including potential to set precedent on both a Welsh and UK level.
- Impact can be highly significant. Members throughout Wales may be next to be affected by decisions made by the Assistant Secretary.
- In the devolved context, Welsh Assembly Government policy towards BMA Wales may be directly affected so impact on the organisation can be considerable (e.g. from Assistant Secretary's stances taken in BoP negotiations and in stances taken in individual high profile cases) leading to external pressures on the BMA.
- Assistant Secretary has very wide discretion in balancing case load, management responsibilities, deciding priorities and in giving advice to members which will be based on contractual, legal and other published (and unpublished) sources available to the Assistant Secretary

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

- Performance, final outcomes and the extent to which objectives are achieved determines the degree of member satisfaction and the way in which the Association is perceived by members and external organisations.
- Decisions taken and advice given have a high impact on members and credibility of the Association and must therefore be correct and service provided must always meet the high expectation of members.
- Advice and support to BoP Committee Chairs on contractual and collective negotiations which have the potential to have a high impact on not only a large number of members but also to the BMA's reputation and standing in Wales.

Use of resources (supervision of resources and influence)

What responsibility is there for managing people, equipment, budgets, resources, customer's welfare or confidential information? If this is a staff management role describe what is involved, eg staff reporting, staff development, appraisal, leading a department or the allocation of work.

How does the role fit within the organisation, eg support role, team member, team leader, specialist policy adviser, or leading major areas of core business?

- Assistant Secretary is responsible for setting objectives, undertaking progress check-ins and managing performance of Employment Advisors/RSO/SEA. Also, the Assistant Secretary is responsible for training & developing of team members including weekly case work discussion with Employment Advisors/RSO/SEA to direct case management in order to maximise effective and expeditious outcome to cases and meet member satisfaction.
- Responsible for day-to-day supervision of Employment Advisors/RSO/SEA and direction of secretarial workload to ensure effective case management.
- To be responsible for and to manage more difficult, sensitive, high risk and complex case work involving highly confidential, politically sensitive information.
- To help in developing and implementing member service initiatives and in line with the BMA's strategy. The purpose of this is to recruit/retain members, promote/increase profile of LNCs to members, to increase the profile of Member Relations among the membership, to gather intelligence from the wider membership on matters which may be of interest to the BoP committees / LNCs at local or national level and to ensure objectives in the Welsh Business Plan are met to ensure the Association's strategic aims are achieved.
- To participate in and lead training and other seminars/events for staff and members e.g. LNC training.
- Undertake recruitment and retention activities by leading on behalf of the Association at e.g. resident doctor meetings, SAS job planning seminars and facilitating and participating in seminars and other core programme / recruitment activities.
- To manage and support Doctors with mental and physical health problems in conjunction with well-being support services and other external organisations up to and including GMC proceedings. This involves dealing with highly sensitive and confidential information regarding the member.
- To lead on the implementation of national contracts in Wales e.g. SAS contract and the Welsh Consultant Contract.
- Involved in staff recruitment including short listing, interviewing and induction of new staff members.

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

*What people are typically contacted (regardless of the medium) **inside** the Association, eg immediate colleagues, senior managers or administrators? Committee members are the only members classed as internal communication. Normal non-committee membership and doctors are external (see below)*

*Who is in regularly contact with the role holder **outside** of the Association, eg members who are not committee members, suppliers, members of the public? Approximately what percentage of the time is spent on external communications?*

What is the purpose of these contacts, eg conveying information, gathering data?

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

- Required to develop excellent working relationship with the Chair and members of the individual National BoP Committee(s) which the Assistant Secretary is assigned to support in order to effectively advise and support Chairs in the delivery of the committee's objectives.
- Required to establish effective relationships at the highest levels (with board level personnel) in Welsh Assembly Government, the HEIW, Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts in Wales.
- Advocacy and presentation of complex and high risk cases at formal internal disciplinary and appeal hearings where member's future employment (and often entire career) could be at risk. This requires advanced advocacy and persuasive skills.
- Required to develop excellent contacts with Board Level Senior Management within Local Health Boards/NHS Trusts and very senior managers within Welsh Assembly Government (e.g. HR Director NHS Wales & Director NHS Wales in order to negotiate on national collective issues).
- Liaison with external legal representatives, medical defence organisation solicitors' and liaison at a higher level with KC's in order to prepare cases fully for litigation up to and including the High Court.
- Must develop good working relationship with BoP secretariats and expert departments, e.g. Legal Dept, Pensions Dept within BMA in order to liaise in case matters and participate in BoP specific liaison groups.
- Appear as witnesses for members in legal proceedings, including employment tribunal and High Court proceedings.
- Requires well developed interpersonal skills to be able to obtain complex case history from members and to then manage expectations which can be unrealistic in order to reach agreement on objectives and maintain relationships with members.
- Advanced negotiation skills required when contributing to and where appropriate leading on negotiations on national issues e.g. GP performance Procedures, Welsh Consultant disciplinary procedures, Welsh variations to SAS contract with Welsh Assembly Government and when leading negotiations in LNCs.
- Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills are required when liaising and with non-NHS organisations e.g. GMC, Universities, DVLA, private companies on individual case work and collective issues e.g. University recognition.
- Required to develop excellent working relationship with other Trade Unions and Professional Associations in order to promote resolution of individual and collective issues.

Physical demands & coordination (physical effort and mental strain)

Are there any unusual physical or mental demands of the role; for example, lifting heavy objects, standing for long periods, using VDUs extensively or high levels of concentration?

- Travel extensively throughout Wales to meet with members, to represent them in meetings/formal procedural hearings and to attend Branch of Practice committee meetings in various parts of Wales. This typically means working anti-social hours driving long distances with many early starts and late finishes. Travel throughout the UK to attend training events and Member Relations meetings is also required.
- To attend meetings 'out of hours' as and when required (frequently evenings e.g. LMC's/ LNC's) and overnight stays (for North Wales/South Wales meetings) occasional weekend working for member conferences/training courses
- To manage difficult sensitive high risk and complex cases which involve supporting doctors under high levels of stress which can be emotionally demanding and requiring a high level of diplomacy. This includes managing Doctors with mental and physical health problems in conjunction with well-being support services and other external organisations.
- Giving evidence in legal proceedings at Employment Tribunal up to and including High Court, to include cross examination by KC.

Working conditions and emotional demands)

What are the environmental conditions in which the work is conducted, the social and emotional demands faced by the role and the pressures resulting from these?

- Due to the distances from the National Office in Cardiff and the rurality of Wales, the role frequently involves working away from the office environment - seeing members in external premises e.g. hotels, hospital canteens, offices, rest rooms, cars, members' homes etc.
- Emotionally charged situations are a normal part of the role. Potential exposure to verbal abuse and distressing, offensive written remarks.

Values and behaviours

The post-holder is expected to execute their role in line with our four organisational values.

The following examples illustrate how we are using our values to inform how we act:

We Campaign, Organise and Represent

- We win positive changes at work and in wider society
- We are the trusted collective voice of our profession, seeking progress for doctors, medical students, our patients and populations

We are accountable and member-led

- Our representatives and staff work in partnership for and on behalf of our members
- We are open and democratic

We are expert and trusted

- We grow professional communities of practice to provide credible information, guidance and support
- We use our influence to champion advancement, innovation and professional development for the benefit of health and society

We find strength in unity and celebrate our diversity

- We seek to be fair and just, and foster respectful discussion of our differing (potentially conflicting) perspectives and contributions
- We fight prejudice and discrimination of all kinds
- We are committed to creating a culture that is inclusive of all members and staff
- We extend solidarity to each other and other groups

Sign-off

Manager:

Date:

Role holder:

Date: