

## Role profile

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| <b>Role title</b>                  | Senior Public Affairs Officer                          |
| <b>Department and directorate</b>  | BMA Northern Ireland                                   |
| <b>Grade</b>                       | Grade 5  |
| <b>Reports to (job title)</b>      | Head of Strategic Communications & Public Affairs (NI) |
| <b>Direct reports (job titles)</b> | None   |

### *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*

Plan and lead on public affairs activities in order to influence and secure outcomes in line with the strategic aims of BMA NI. Working under the leadership of the Head of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs (NI), and collaborating with rest of the team and colleagues in BMA NI, and wider BMA as required.

### *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*

- Keep abreast of key political and health policy developments, and to proactively identify public affairs opportunities to engage with stakeholders to promote BMA policies and influencing priorities. Including lobbying MLAs, MPs and other relevant stakeholders, eg Northern Ireland Government, councillors, political party members or other stakeholders
- Identify and action opportunities for BMA to influence legislation and debate at the NI Assembly through Assembly questions and evidence sessions
- To prepare BMA members for evidence sessions, MLA meetings and attendance at political events
- Produce written briefings and other communications in conjunction with policy staff, for political stakeholders, including liaising with creative services to produce materials for events
- Represent BMA [policy] externally at stakeholder meetings and pro-actively identify opportunities for joint working with comparable organisations
- Plan and oversee organisation of meetings and functions involving MLAs / elected representatives, including the BMA presence at Northern Ireland party conferences
- Update the BMA website and social media with timely public affairs content ensuring it accurately reflects NI public affairs priorities
- To oversee the content and distribution of weekly political updates to BMA elected representatives in Northern Ireland
- Answer calls/queries from Assembly Members, parliamentarians and other stakeholders including drafting replies to correspondence and giving comment as necessary
- Lead integrated communications projects with a significant public affairs angle, liaising with communications colleagues in the wider directorate, BMA national and other devolved offices
- Liaise with staff in devolved nations, and staff in BMA regional offices, keeping them up to date with political, public affairs and legislative changes which may affect them
- Any other duties as reasonably directed

### 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.*

- Previous demonstrable professional experience of the direct lobbying of politicians / influencing
- Proven ability in developing and delivering effective public affairs campaigns and/or achieving clear policy influencing objectives
- In-depth knowledge of NI Assembly, and devolved legislative procedures as well as high awareness of policy-making processes and lobbying opportunities
- Excellent established contacts, especially with MLAs, party staff and MPs across all parties
- Excellent political awareness
- Good understanding of health-related issues and policy and trade union functions
- High level verbal and written communication skills for speaking to or providing briefings and other written material for members, secretariats and external audiences
- Ability to demonstrate tact and diplomacy in dealing with politicians and their support staff and also committee members and external stakeholders
- Excellent research and analytical skills (e.g. analysing parliamentary debates and policy documents)
- Ability to prioritise and manage own workload effectively including the organisation and planning of work
- Ability to adapt and be flexible to emerging situations
- Familiar with using Microsoft office suite
- Experience of using social media professionally

### 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).*

- A swift understanding of complex developments is required. The individual must be able to analyse and provide advice on appropriate action and responses on, for example, legislation and political developments, translating complex information into easily understandable language is, therefore, required
- There is a strong requirement for the role to initiate ideas and create political affairs strategy that is in line with the BMA's objectives and considers the wider external environment and the positions of other stakeholders
- Ability to build relationships and advise colleagues and wider BMA representatives
- Analytical skills and political awareness to review and assess problematic situations in a public affairs environment and if possible, prevent them from arising by proactively taking necessary actions
- Ability to swiftly analyse government and political publications and other policy documents and assess where BMA needs to respond or input

### 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)?*

### Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

- The role has a degree of autonomy, however any external briefings or other content for wider distribution will be cleared by the Head of Strat Comms and PA, and other senior staff as necessary
- The post holder needs to demonstrate the ability to balance often competing priorities and to respond flexibly to the demands of the political timetable and organisational priorities
- The role requires a proactive approach in identifying public affairs opportunities and the subsequent appropriate actioning of these opportunities
- Good level of persuasive skills with members, colleagues and stakeholders
- The role requires a high degree of tact and diplomacy and the ability to adapt style of communications depending on the audience to be influenced

### 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?*

- Will have a role in leading colleagues on specific issues and activities to achieve required objectives, for example, leading a legislative 'bill team'
- Co-ordinating with others within BMA NI, and wider BMA (e.g. the policy directorate) to initiate, plan and deliver public affairs outputs
- No budgetary responsibility, but may have responsibility for overseeing an area of expenditure e.g. political party conferences or parliamentary events but all financial decisions are cleared by the Head of Strat comms and PA

### 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?*

- The role requires regular contact with politicians, their staff and stakeholders. Therefore, the postholder must, for example, be confident in their ability to respond to phone calls and requests from MLAs and their staff who may have queries about a BMA policy or position
- Immediate colleagues and line manager should be kept informed and briefed on key issues or projects, particularly those that impact on others
- Regular contact with senior BMA representatives such as committee chairs, committee members.
- Regular contact with staff working in other departments, committee members and representatives. Liaising with head of departments or SMT, depending on the issue
- Contact with external organisations, for example the GMC, medical royal colleges, other health or related organisations and government departments
- Direct communication with other external audiences, including the public, through website content and social media
- Proactive contact with politicians (engage with them to promote BMA policies and issues; identify legislative opportunities; produce appropriate briefing materials)
- Contact with outside organisations such as think-tanks, medical royal colleges and other trade unions and patient groups where necessary
- Represent the BMA at relevant meetings with stakeholders

### 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?*

- Normal co-ordination or physical demands associated with an office environment
- Extensive VDU usage

### 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?*

- The job is mostly conducted in a normal office environment and is not exposed to hazardous conditions or anti-social behaviour
- There may be occasional weekend or evening work to complete work based activities or tasks as required
- Occasional travel, e.g. for the political party conferences, or occasional UK wide travel
- Minimal personal risk

### Values and behaviours

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

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

We are **leaders** because:

- We strive to always improve
- We take responsibility for our actions
- We collaborate with each other and work as one BMA for the good of our members
- We are proactive and prepared to guide our members and each other

We are **experts** because:

- We understand our members
- We draw on our collective experience and knowledge to solve problems
- We use our insights and research to make decisions
- We provide accurate, credible, relevant and engaging information
- We recognise our strengths and act upon them

We are **committed** because:

- We listen to our members and put them at the heart of everything we do
- We are respectful, inclusive, open and honest with our members and each other
- We approach everything we do with confidence and sensitivity

We are **reliable** because:

- We deliver on what we say we will do
- We are accessible and approachable
- We build trust by being consistent and supportive
- We are positive and decisive whatever the situation

We are **challenging** because:

- We fight, ethically and fearlessly, for the interests of all our members
- We work as a brave, assertive and effective champion for high quality health services and the advancement of the profession

**Sign-off**

Manager:

Date:

Role holder:

Date: