

Role profile

Role title	Senior media officer
Department and directorate	Communications and Policy
Job family level	Grade 5
Reports to (job title and name)	Head of Media
Direct reports (job title and name)	None

Summary – purpose of the role

To represent and promote the organisation, and the doctors that it serves, its views and activities within the media.

- Provide strategic and tactical media public relations advice to BMA committees, BMA departments and BMA branch of practice committee chairmen and officers including supporting the BMA in negotiations by providing communication guidance and advice and planning media activity.
- Write press releases, articles and letters for publication, finalising with appropriate committee chairs and BMA staff, promote to the media, follow-up work and evaluation. Provide media with background information as appropriate.
- Devise communications strategies/plans on specific issues and liaise with relevant committees and departments to co-ordinate action and oversee its implementation.
- Deal with the media in a crisis situation or when sensitive issues arise, plus advising colleagues, other departments and individual BMA members where appropriate.
- Devise and manage specific projects, such as producing research or reports, to support BMA campaigns and attract media activity
- Advise on other areas of BMA communications, e.g., communication to members and external audiences.
- To be part of the Media Team on-call service

Skill (level and breadth of application)

- Educated to degree level. A professional qualification within the journalism/PR/communications field is desirable.
- Previous experience in journalism, media relations, or PR is essential and preferably at a national level.
- Previous experience in media campaign organisation and management
- Excellent writing skills and communication skills and with an ability to draft material for external publications and a varied audience.
- Sound news judgement and ability to interpret information and know what makes a story newsworthy and relevant to the BMA's position.
- Ability to manage conflicting priorities and enquiries, especially during high profile BMA related media coverage.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with ability to negotiate with diplomacy and awareness of the BMA political agenda in terms of media relations and influence on others.
- Ability to adapt and be flexible to emerging news stories.

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

- Working to tight deadlines and dealing with multiple priorities. Media officers are required to deal with a number of competing urgent requests at any one time in addition to long term work. The ability to prioritise work effectively is essential.
- Translating complex information into easily understandable language.
- Risk management, for example limiting the damage, when necessary to the organisation's reputation.
- Strategic planning: devising media and communication plans for assigned committees and for key issues.
- Initiating and evaluating new ideas and creative approaches, for example to promote issues, to maximise media coverage, or to influence priorities of assigned committees or the wider BMA.
- Providing specialist and professional media training to elected officers, BMA representatives and grass root members.
- Giving specialist media advice to individual doctors, for example a doctor in difficulty, and seeking advice from legal or regional services as and when required.
- Strong awareness and understanding of Communications & Engagement directorate business priorities and their relevance to his/her work

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

- News judgement - deciding on the appropriate response and approach, the communication tools required, giving professional advice on tone, content and direction.
- Crisis management - managing individual enquiries or dealing with specific issues and judging appropriate response to limit any potential damage or change direction of enquiry.
- Political awareness - being perceptive to internal requirements, sensitivities and reflecting BMA policy

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

- One of the key challenges of the post is to react immediately to announcements/news stories that affect the reputation and good standing of the organisation or which provide an opportunity to present the BMA's views. It is essential that as far as possible media officers 'plan' for such eventualities.
- Media officers are responsible for advising and influencing committee members and staff on how to use the media effectively and the benefits of doing so. This can be a process of negotiation when there is lack of awareness of the need to include communications planning in wider BMA activity.
- Deciding on when to join up with others, for example relevant organisations or stakeholders, to maximise success.
- Media officers work with minimum supervision. The nature of the post means that media officers have to use their initiative and make decisions/take action very quickly with minimal input from managers. They will seek guidance or refer to the Head of Media, and other key players when necessary, on highly controversial, complex or sensitive issues and those where there is a very serious risk to the association. Guidance may also be sought when the enquiry is not covered by policy or requires input of a technical nature that falls outside of normal knowledge and expertise.
- Ensuring reffing procedures are followed on public statements, e.g. press releases, articles or letters before seeking clearance from the Head of Media. All press releases must be signed off by the Head of Media and the relevant committee chair or deputy. Committee Chairman or deputy, and approved by a line manager. Any statement covering a legal issue (e.g. a court case) would also be checked by the Association's legal department.

Use of resources (supervision of resources and influence)

- Senior media officers have responsibility for long, medium and short term planning of communication and media activities. This may require working with other members of staff or elected officers to seek their engagement and to influence priorities.
- Long-term planning (12 to 18 months): devise and implement BMA strategies, BMA reports and conferences within assigned areas of responsibility
- Medium or short-term planning: (up to 12 months): ongoing BMA policy work, including publicity for negotiations, responses to Government announcements/consultations/policy/legislation. Identifying the media training needs of doctors and meeting them.
- Oversee some projects undertaken by the Media Office, e.g. publications or research, and manage the workload and output of others as required.
- Co-ordinating with others within the communications directorate and across the wider BMA (e.g. the policy directorate) to initiate, plan and deliver media relations outputs.

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

- Media officers are responsible for all contact with the media on behalf of the BMA, including international, national, regional, specialist and trade press, and online media. Media officers are responsible for developing positive and constructive relationships with journalists to assist the facilitation of media activity. These relationships can obviously become challenging during critical periods. It is the responsibility of media officers to present journalists with the necessary information in order to minimise negative publicity.
- Advice on handling the media is given to individual BMA members. For example, when a member has been approached to undertake media work.
- Immediate colleagues and manager should be kept informed and briefed on key issues or projects, particularly those that impact on others.

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

- Regular contact with staff working in other departments, committee members and representatives. Liaising with heads of departments, SMG or chief officer depending on the issue.
- Contact with external organisations, for example the GMC, medical royal colleges, other health or related organisations and the Department of Health.
- Direct communication with other external audience, including the public, through website content and social media outlets
- Representing the BMA at relevant meetings with stakeholders, e.g. when discussing communications.

Physical demands & coordination (physical effort and mental strain)

- Normal co-ordination or physical demands associated with an office environment, limited requirement to engage in lifting/carrying/other exertion.

Working conditions and emotional demands)

- The job is conducted in a normal office environment and is not exposed to hazardous conditions or anti-social behaviour. The role contains minimal personal risk.
- Enquiries can be challenging, emotional, or confrontational from time to time. A formal shift rota is in place to deal with media enquiries out-of-hours to provide 24/7 availability.

BMA competency level required	
Behavioural competency	Level
Personal responsibility – demonstrates a positive attitude and takes ownership and responsibility for work performance	C
Service focus – demonstrates an understanding of customer needs and has a service orientation	C
Gathering information – is driven to seek out information and carries out research to the level required to achieve objectives	C
Team working – works with colleagues cooperatively in own department and the wider organisation	C
Influencing others – persuades others to support a viewpoint and achieve their participation	C
Dealing with change – implements and adapts to new ideas and ways of working at individual, team and organisational level	B
Creativity and innovation – takes a creative approach to work, identifies new ways of doing things and develops ideas to benefit the association	C
Managing and developing people – sets goals and ensures others perform to their full potential and meet required standards	B
Leading people – communicates goals, engages and motivates others to achieve	C

Sign-off	
Manager:	Date: 27.06.25
Role holder:	Date: