

Role profile

Role title	Employment Adviser (EA)
Directorate	BMA NI
BMA Grade	Grade 6
Location	Northern Ireland
Reports to (job title)	Assistant Secretary/Head of Member Relations
Direct reports (Y/N)	N

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 Employment Adviser will provide predominantly individual case representation, both in person and via Teams, on complex issues to ensure that members receive the best possible individual advice and representation. This will include preparing and presenting cases to employers, internal or external appeal panels. They will also assist with the development and delivery of local BMA campaigns, working with others to organise in workplaces, and support members in undertaking campaigns in their places of work

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

- Provide advice, assistance and representation to members (individually and collectively) on employment and other work-related issues. Representation includes pay issues, job plan appeals, sickness absence reviews and grievance hearings with the employment adviser presenting the case on behalf of the member to the management panel, cross-examining witnesses and making final submissions as well as supporting members throughout processes.
- Undertake recruitment and retention activities by representing the Association at events and meetings, facilitating and participating in seminars and other core programme activities (including campaign work designed to promote the Association and recruit and retain members across all grades)
- Assist in the development and delivery of local BMA campaigns, working with others to organise in workplaces, and support members in undertaking campaigns in their places of work.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with senior personnel in HSC Trusts, PHA, HSCB, NIMDTA, LMCs, LNCS, QUB, NIO etc and develop relations with new stakeholders.

Job Overview– purpose of the role

- Dealing with the Labour Relations Agency and solicitors as external stakeholders in relation to case work.
- Prepare and progress claims with employers by telephone, in writing, and by direct representation.
- Provide expert advice on contractual documentation and Terms and Conditions of Service for employed doctors.
- Provide support to BMA NI national Branch of Practice committees, attending meetings as required.
- Develop areas of specialist interest and work within agreed team to develop and update guidance, as necessary.
- Attend internal meetings / groups as deemed necessary and feedback key information to colleagues.
- Assist in the delivery of training to members (eg Local Negotiating Committees) and non-members (eg Job Planning for SAS doctors and Consultants).
- Attend the NI local negotiating committee forum (NILNCF).
- Provide support, advice and training to the other relevant staff members as required.
- Advise GP members in GMS practices in relation to the GMS statement of financial entitlements NI.
- 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.

- Graduate or equivalent qualification with previous experience in areas covered by the role. Ideally from within a trade union or employment related background (legal practice advice-based organisation, HR, medical staffing).
- Up to date and in-depth knowledge of employment legislation, employment relations practice and human resource policy, procedures and good practice and HSC terms and conditions.
- Advanced computer literacy and keyboard skills, requiring in-depth knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, case management (CRM) systems and ability to effectively conduct web-based research.
- Good presentation and public speaking skills required to deliver engaging presentations to large audiences.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills eg: letters of complaint to HSC employers about how a member's case has been dealt with; dealing with distressed members over the telephone and in person.
- Good working knowledge and understanding of the HSC structure in NI and major HSC issues, together with an understanding of the role and function of the BMA.
- Highly developed ability to gather, assimilate and analyse information and develop a strategy for handling complex individual cases.
- Ability to prioritise and manage own work effectively with a personal case load.
- Excellent interpersonal skills in order to facilitate the development of effective relationships at senior level and to be able to communicate and empathise with members both over the

Job Overview– purpose of the role

telephone and in person.

- Excellent planning and organisational skills required eg: to complete case plans for individual cases in terms of the action required and their deadlines. This assists in satisfactorily resolving cases and to organise own case load and other working commitments in the short, medium and long term to achieve the same.
- Predominately works without direct supervision (although advice and guidance will be provided by senior colleagues) and has flexibility to work on own initiative, dealing with telephone and other methods of making enquiries including first line employment relations and human resource queries.
- It is essential that a good working knowledge of employment law, terms and conditions of service plus local and national policies is maintained, taking into account frequently occurring changes, so that advice given to Members is always correct and appropriate.
- Ability to identify and address gaps in knowledge independently and prioritise learning needs.
- Required to deal with members on a daily basis and so the role is very much external to the organisation in its scope and focus. In addition, support and further guidance is often sought from senior BMA NI staff, central BMA staff, and external bodies in order to effectively deal with cases.
- Flexibility in approach to ensure that each case is dealt with differently depending on its merits.

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).

Whilst the Employment Adviser role is supported by a range of guidance and procedural documents they;

- Manage their own case workload on a daily basis with the aim of resolving each in a timely manner. Cases are usually, but not limited to issues surrounding pay and benefits, contracts of employment, bullying and harassment, sickness absence, job planning, discrimination, managing staff capability or conduct, disciplinaries and grievances
- Dealing with each individual case involves use of own knowledge and expertise, further research into terms and conditions or employment legislation, liaising with other BMA staff and/or external representatives e.g. DoH NI
- Has freedom of action within the broad constraints of case handling, seeking support and advice from senior colleagues where appropriate, to determine and deal with each case based on its own individual merits
- Inherent in the role is the requirement to autonomously balance and manage competing and multiple constraints that arise from own case load; constraints such as time, legal deadlines, members' expectations, realistic outcomes, CPD, organising and event activity etc
- Required to recognise and adhere to specific critical timescales as part of the case handling process arising from employment law requirements/local employer.
- Works on own personal initiative to resolve issues and to determine whether cases should be referred to more senior level eg: cases that involve exclusions (suspensions) or termination of employment.

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

- Decisions taken and advice given have a high impact on Members and credibility of the Association and therefore must be correct.
- Will seek guidance from senior colleagues in advance of major decisions.
- Members can be emotional, demanding and difficult. The Employment Adviser has to work with the member to understand the issue, manage the emotion, their expectation and guide them through the internal procedural process in order to ensure their legal rights are protected.
- Complex, extensive and detailed information needs to be analysed in order to ensure that the adviser has an accurate understanding of the issue to be addressed. Effective questioning and listening techniques are required to gather all the relevant information necessary to achieve this.
- Direct representation of a member at a hearing will require an ability to adjust approach as further information becomes available. Adjournments may need to be sought and further, often difficult, discussions held with the member before proceeding.
- The types of cases referred to BMA NI are not always routine, therefore occasionally a new or unusual case, requires a degree of creativity and further research before advising the member accordingly. On these occasions an ability to think laterally is required.

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)?

- Decisions taken and advice given have a high impact on Members and the credibility of the Association and therefore must be correct eg: advice on job planning affects the day-to-day working arrangements of members.
- Has freedom to act with individual responsibility for providing expert advice for own case load within the broad constraints of case handling eg: advising on pay issues arising from assimilation to new contracts, entitlements under the terms and conditions of service, queries and disputes arising from monitoring and banding.
- Has autonomy for the way in which those cases are managed eg: dealing with the matter formally or informally in the first instance, which policy or terms and conditions would apply, determining who should be contacted within the employing authority.
- Will seek guidance from senior colleagues in advance of major decisions.
- Required to organise events and activities.
- Required to recognise and adhere to specific critical timescales as part of the representational/case handling process arising from employment law requirements/local employer procedures.
- Input into the formulation of policy eg: working with colleagues to identify trends in doctor's

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

cases to be raised and discussed with DoH NI and other appropriate internal and external organisations/committees.

- Performance, final outcomes and the extent to which they are achieved determines the degree of member satisfaction and the way in which the Association is perceived by members and external organisations.

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?

- Responsible for supporting the induction of new employment advisers both within team and wider team.
- Key team member of Member Relations in BMA NI – the Employment Adviser is the first point of contact to BMA NI member relations team and therefore crucial for good first impressions and sound analysis and advising of the query.
- The Employment Adviser must exercise confidentiality and discretion at all times in relation to cases, and to identify potential conflicts immediately so that an alternative case worker can be assigned to the case.
- Whilst acknowledging that support is available to members via Doctors for Doctors and Counselling line, Employment Adviser's should have an awareness of members' welfare issues, supporting and signposting them to other appropriate sources of help such as when there are financial problems or problems that are potentially employment or even career ending.
- Provide advice to colleagues across the Association on NI-specific terms and conditions as required.

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 communicate daily with members of BMA NI and member relations colleagues in particular.
- Required to liaise and develop good working relationships with Branch of Practice Committee Executive Staff, and other colleagues across the BMA. The ability to deal with individual member queries often requires information and advice from these additional specialist BMA departments eg: ill health retirement queries in relation to pensions, etc.
- Majority of time is spent in external communication with members. This is a key part of case work and recruitment/retention role.
- Requires well developed interpersonal skills to obtain case history from members and to manage their expectations in order to identify and achieve objectives.
- Requires supportive and empathetic telephone manner to frequently deal with members who are distressed, angry, tearful or concerned for their jobs or future financial stability.
- In the short term, these skills are deployed to the immediate advantage of the member and to promote the service. There is a requirement to balance this with maintaining long-term relationships with employers and other external contacts.
- Effective presentation and public speaking skills are required to deliver engaging presentations to large audiences.

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?

- There will be normal physical demands typically associated with an 'at home' office environment and there will be a limited requirement to engage in lifting / carrying or other exertion. There will be a requirement to use office technology and systems as provided or recommended by the BMA.
- The role holder will be required to have a valid driving license and car to travel to carry out the role, in line with Member Relations and BMA policy. Alternatively, they must have access to a car or the ability to travel to and attend meetings in person as required. Attendance at meetings at a variety of locations (eg: hospitals and trusts) will be necessary. There will also be a requirement to attend the BMA NI office as required.
- There are internal health and safety policies and guidance to be followed and adhered to by the post holder. These policies apply both in the normal office environment and also when visiting other locations in the execution of duties.
- Required to travel to meetings and recruitment events across NI as part of the role. On the rare occasion travel to BMA House in London / other work-related venues in the UK may be required for training / work activity.
- 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?

Working conditions and emotional demands)

- The job is typically conducted either in a home office environment or external location as required to carry out the role and is not considered to be exposed to hazardous conditions or extreme anti-social behavior (which should be reported through the appropriate internal channels).
- There may be times where the post holder is involved with a case that involves an emotionally charged situation. Infrequent exposure to verbal abuse and some challenging written remarks arising from distressed members. This can be raised through the appropriate internal channels to ensure support is given to the role holder as required.

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: