

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Communications Officer		
Directorate	Strategy, Performance & Communication		
Reporting to	Communications Manager		
Grade	11		
Evaluation ref:	AG0162	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
<p>The Communications Officer plays a pivotal role in supporting Somerset Council's strategic objectives by delivering effective communications across a broad range of disciplines, including public relations, marketing, and media engagement. Working within the Strategy, Performance & Communication Directorate, the post-holder is responsible for both proactive and reactive media relations, ensuring that all content is clear, accurate, and aligned with the Council's standards and values. This includes writing and distributing press releases, organising media briefings, and developing strong relationships with media representatives.</p> <p>In addition to media work, the Communications Officer develops and implements communications plans and campaigns, supports senior officers and councillors with media advice, and generates written content for various platforms, including the Council's website and social media channels. The role also involves planning and delivering events, producing publications, and overseeing branding to maintain consistency and quality across all Council communications.</p> <p>The post-holder is expected to contribute to staff engagement activities, support organisational programmes and projects, and assist with information requests during peak times. Upholding Somerset Council's values, the Communications Officer actively promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, and seeks opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of Council communications with the public, partners, and staff.</p>			
Accountabilities			
<p>The Communications Team has a flexible structure to meet the ongoing needs of the organisation. The post-holder is expected to work across a wide range of Communications disciplines, including Public Relations and Marketing, as required by a Service Manager - Communications.</p> <p>Proactive Public Relations work with the media – writing and distributing/publishing press releases and other articles; ensuring that content is easily understandable, accurate and agreed by appropriate officers and Councillors. Organising media briefings/press conferences, coordinating launches, developing good relationships with media, and proactively seeking opportunities to promote the Council.</p>			

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Reactive Public Relations work with the media – receiving, logging and responding to media enquiries; making sure responses are consistent, concise and approved by appropriate officers, councillors and partners. Arranging and advising on statements and interviews, helping to monitor media coverage.

Communications Plans and Campaigns - – researching, developing and implementing communications plans and campaigns with agreed objectives and thorough evaluation. May include developing materials, planning advertising/marketing and stakeholder engagement.

Media Support for Senior Officers and Councillors – providing advice and support for officers and councillors when they are working with the media. Includes written briefs, establishing key messages, attending interviews and assisting with training.

General communications support for Senior Officers and Councillors – For all staff and councillors to help embed and maintain corporate standards, for example around appropriate branding and Plain English.

Supporting the authorities Programmes and Projects – with advice, guidance and activities.

Generating written content – writing and, where appropriate publishing, content for a variety of purposes, including the website and social media platforms, in appropriate styles and to the required length.

Social media – monitoring and writing material for the Council's Facebook accounts and any other social media platforms, reactively and proactively.

Staff engagement – developing, implementing and supporting staff engagement activities.

Events – devising, planning, delivering and supporting Council events for the public, partners and staff.

Publications – helping develop, deliver and distribute a variety of publications and materials for public, partners and staff. Includes quality assurance, liaising with designers, printers and distributors.

Branding – contributing to the team oversight of the Council's branding, identifying and addressing any branding issues and providing guidance on the use of branding guidelines.

Multi-media work – such as taking and sourcing photographs and creating and editing videos and infographics.

Improving communications – proactively seeking and suggesting ways of improving the way that the Council communicates with the public, partners and its staff.

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Knowledge / Experience / Skills		
	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Understanding of public relations, marketing and media engagement principles.	X	
Awareness of local government operations and the strategic objectives of Somerset Council.		X
Knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion practices and commitment to upholding these values in all communications.		X
Familiarity with branding guidelines and the importance of maintaining consistency across all communications.		X
Experience		
Proven experience in delivering proactive and reactive media relations, including writing and distributing press releases, organising media briefings, and developing relationships with media representatives.	X	
Experience in developing and implementing communications plans and campaigns, including stakeholder engagement and evaluation.	X	
Proficiency in using social media platforms (eg Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn) for both proactive and reactive communications.	X	
Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, senior officers, councillors, and external partners.	X	
Ability to monitor and respond to media enquiries, ensuring consistency and quality in all responses.	X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Educated to A-Level standard or equivalent.	X	
Degree in communications, public relations, journalism, or a related field, or equivalent experience.		X
Chartered status or membership of a relevant professional body (e.g., CIPR, IoIC).		X
Evidence of continuous professional development in leadership and communications.	X	

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Professional certification in digital marketing or social media management.		X
Training in stakeholder engagement and communication.		X
Skills		
Ability to proactively seek and suggest improvements to Council communications.	X	
Creative skills for producing multi-media content, including infographics and videos.	X	
Skills in event planning, publication development, and quality assurance.		X
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	X	
Analytical skills, including the use of communications metrics and data to inform strategy.		x
Proficiency in digital communications, social media management, and crisis communications.		x
Creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.	x	
Ability to adapt to changing priorities and environments	x	
Working Conditions		
<p>Standard working hours are 37 per week, with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events.</p> <p>Primary work location is County Hall, with opportunities for remote work as per organisational policies.</p> <p>Some travel within the local area may be required for meetings, site visits, and community engagement activities.</p> <p>Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.</p> <p>Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.</p>		
Dimensions of the role		
<p>The postholder will assist the Communications Managers as part of the overall Communications and Engagement team which is responsible for all proactive and reactive external and internal communications, including consultations and engagement.</p> <p>Key relationships with senior managers, elected members, partner agencies, and wider stakeholders.</p>		

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Working Arrangements
Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.
Corporate Accountabilities
Understand, uphold, and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: