

Job Description & Person Specification

Job title:	Director of Communications and Engagement
Salary range:	£63,751 - £73,664 depending on experience
Duration:	Two year fixed term contract or two year secondment, full time (slightly reduced hours may be negotiable)
Reports to:	AHSN Network Assistant Coordination Director
Accountable for:	Communications Manager & Communications Officer

JOB SUMMARY

This is a key role within the AHSN Network and the post holder will be called upon to make an outstanding contribution to the realisation of the AHSN vision: to become the best health innovation adoption network in the world.

The post holder will have significant strategic experience in public or private sectors spanning full service marketing communications, with a track record of driving engagement and developing successful influencing strategies.

This role will create and oversee delivery of a communications & engagement strategy to take the Network to the next level of awareness and reputation: demonstrating creativity and flair, seeking new ways to build profile:

- Crafting a compelling, inspiring Network narrative, owned by all AHSNs
- Using the AHSNs' combined knowledge and expertise to identify, engage & build influence with strategic national stakeholders and decision makers.

In addition to being an excellent strategist the post holder will be a highly proficient organiser; managing a portfolio of communications and engagement products and overseeing processes - including CRM system - to ensure a planned and coordinated approach is taken at all times.

Whilst the role is predominantly remote-based (within a 'virtual' AHSN Coordinating Office) the post holder must be able to travel regularly throughout England. The post holder will work closely with Chief Officers of the 15 AHSNs and with leads of cross-AHSN groups; playing a central role in ensuring a joined up approach that presents a connected national Network with a long term future at the heart of healthcare innovation and transformation.

The post holder will also lead on proactively building and managing external relationships with communications and engagement leads of a range of national partner organisations.

VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

The post holder will behave at all times in ways consistent with the purpose and vision of the AHSN Network:

Purpose – Transforming lives through Innovation

Vision – seeking to become the best innovation adoption network in the world, delivered by understanding need, building capability and facilitating spread.

The AHSN Network seeks to support, champion and develop diversity and the post holder will be passionate about, and committed to the Network's pledges:

- Implementing a recognised process to self-assess and improve equality performance in each of our organisations
- Empowering and supporting staff to be positive role models for equality and diversity
- Understanding the impact of our work on all members of our communities and ensuring our work reflects the equality and diversity within these communities.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

General / strategic responsibilities

- Lead, manage and direct strategic communications and engagement for the AHSN Network; identifying, mapping and prioritising stakeholders and developing strategies to engage, influence and leverage support and advocacy.
- Manage the Network's communications and engagement resources including budget and line management of staff, and develop business plans related to evolving resourcing requirements.
- Develop, oversee implementation of, review and evaluate AHSN Network strategies, campaigns and plans related to media, communications and engagement, marketing and digital marketing; ensuring systems operate smoothly and are developed creatively to cope with a highly pressured and unpredictable work pattern.
- Manage high level reputational issues, which will involve delivery of complex and sensitive information and messaging both within the Network and to a range of external cross-sector stakeholders.

- Play a key role in ensuring the AHSN Network is positioned as a strategic influencer and driver for change; regional and national leaders in the field of innovation adoption of spread, with a reputation as expert thought leaders.
- Develop, review and refresh the AHSN Network narrative and messaging; ensuring this is compelling and dynamic, communicates the unique value and expertise of the AHSN Network and individual AHSNs – and is owned, understood and cascaded by AHSN colleagues nationally and regionally.
- Undertake regular stakeholder mapping reviews and ensure all national / strategic contacts are managed, and relationships tracked, via the Network's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- Manage external contracts related to communications and engagement.
- Provide expert, independent advice to the AHSN Network Coordination and Assistant Coordination Director, AHSN Network Chief Officers and cross-AHSN groups on all internal and external communications issues, plans and activities, including highly sensitive and controversial issues.
- Advise and lead development of bespoke communication and engagement plans for projects related to AHSN Network priority / cross-cutting themes.
- Act as a strategic link between the AHSN Network and the communications leads of its wide-ranging and diverse cross-sector stakeholder groups including partner organisations, regional and national government bodies, academic and industry sectors, the voluntary sector and patient groups.
- Attend regional and national meetings, events and conferences to represent the AHSN Network and its constituent members.
- Undertake any other duties which might reasonably be required and are commensurate with the post.

Responsibilities related to AHSN Network communications & engagement

- Oversee development and review of existing and new digital and offline communications and engagement channels, tools and products, ensuring they reflect the AHSNs' status and reputation as innovators.
- Oversee production of AHSN Network copywriting and storytelling including case studies, awards entries, newsletters, briefings/updates, marketing materials, website and social media – ensuring processes are in place to generate compelling content from across the Network national programmes / themes and from individual AHSNs.

- Coordinate national media relations activity, taking a proactive approach that maximises opportunities to raise awareness of the AHSNs and AHSN Network and builds stakeholder support and advocacy.
- Manage high level reputational issues, which will involve delivery of complex and sensitive information to the internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop horizon-scanning resources to identify and disseminate relevant news, policy developments and best practice across AHSNs.
- Ensure systems and process are in place to enable effective navigating and signposting of AHSN Network support to strategic stakeholder individuals and organisations.
- Support effective engagement with the AHSNs' national commissioners: including providing, receiving and disseminating information (which may be complex and sensitive) both from and to the commissioners, and acting as a key Network point of contact to cascade commissioner messaging and campaigns.
- Own, review, enhance and embed a strong AHSN Network brand and corporate identity; ensure this is used in all national activity and is adapted appropriately by individual AHSNs.
- Lead on communication of Network governance and resource/budget management e.g. responding to Freedom of Information requests and championing equality and diversity.
- Develop and review policies and protocols related to communications and engagement e.g. data protection.
- Develop evaluation techniques and measures to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of communications activity.

Responsibilities related to regional and national collaboration

- Ensure processes are in place to align messaging across all AHSNs:
 - Identifying regional content for national channels
 - Collating stories, case studies and impact information produced by communications leads of cross-AHSN groups and programmes
 - Ensuring effective cascading to individual AHSNs of national narrative, messaging and impacts.

- Lead on developing and driving strategic communications collaboration with national partner organisations including NHS England and Improvement, NHSX, NHS Digital, the AAC and its constituent members and the NIHR infrastructure.
- Support the effective operation of the national AHSN Network communications forum.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Direct / day to day liaison with:

- AHSN Network Coordination Office colleagues
- AHSN Network Communications Forum Co-Chairs
- Chief Officer sub-group lead for communications
- National AHSN communications leads for themes and programmes.

Ongoing / routine liaison with:

- AHSN communications leads / teams
- AHSN chief officers
- Chairs / leads of cross-AHSN groups and forums
- Communications leads of partner organisations
- AHSN national commissioner key contacts (NHS England, NHS Improvement and Office for Life Sciences).

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is predominantly a **remotely-based** role and is offered as either a fixed term contract, or as a secondment from the post holder's existing organisation.

The post is full time though reduced hours may be possible (the minimum requirement for this post is four days per week).

The secondment / contract may be extended subject to negotiation by both parties and the post includes a two-month break clause, which can be activated by the Network or the post holder at any time.

The post holder will be expected to use their existing equipment (or that of their host organisation).

Whilst predominantly remotely based, the role will require regular travel throughout England and depending on the post holder's location it may be possible to arrange hot-desking at the closest AHSN.

The post holder (or their host organisation if a secondment) will be able to recharge / reclaim any travel and accommodation expenses incurred, at cost.

If a secondee the post holder's salary and remuneration will continue to be paid by the host AHSN and recharged at cost to the AHSN Network.

The post holder will be required to commence the role as soon as possible, at the latest **within eight weeks** of confirmation / acceptance of appointment.

If candidates are seeking a secondment, **written confirmation must be submitted with their application** confirming that their line manager / host organisation will support a two-year secondment. Applications for secondments will not be considered without this confirmation.

JOB REVISION

This job description should be regarded as a guide to the duties required and is not definitive or restrictive.

Duties may vary from time to time in response to changing circumstances.

This job description does not form part of the contract of employment.

This Job Description was revised in August 2020.

Director of Communications and Engagement – Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	How measured: A – application I – Interview T – Test
Commitment to AHSN Network and NHS values	<p>Demonstrate a strong commitment to the AHSN Network and be passionate about health service innovation and transformation</p> <p>Belief in the NHS and public service values</p>	Evidence of active support for and involvement in driving cross-AHSN & AHSN Network communications and engagement	A / I
Training and Qualifications	Educated to masters level or equivalent significant experience at a senior level in communications, marketing or engagement		A, I
Experience	<p>Significant experience of working in a senior / strategic communications management role and leading teams</p> <p>Substantial experience of developing and deploying strategies and campaigns to build profile and reputation</p> <p>Devising / leading processes to map and prioritise stakeholders, and developing campaigns to influence and leverage support</p> <p>Substantial experience of planning / devising and delivering 'full service' offline and digital marketing communications activities including media relations, social media and video</p>	<p>Leading an AHSN communications team</p> <p>Contributing to, or leading communications and engagement projects for the AHSN Network</p> <p>Working in the NHS or sector such as public health and social care</p> <p>Strong commitment to continuing professional development</p> <p>Member of a senior leadership team (Executive / Board level)</p>	A, I, T

	<p>Excellent written skills covering a range of activities (newsletters, case studies, press releases etc.) and ability to create compelling 'jargon-free' copy for multiple audiences</p> <p>Transforming complex information into impactful copy, infographics and slide decks</p> <p>Working across networks and organisations, using communications techniques to build collaboration</p> <p>Directing and developing an organisation's digital presence, social media, website and video assets</p> <p>Highly digital / computer literate with experience of a range of software packages and processes including Customer Relationship Management systems</p> <p>Proven success at managing change while maintaining high standards of quality</p> <p>Working with strategic leaders across sectors AHSNs engage with, and evidence of strong influencing and negotiation skills</p> <p>Working in strategic communications with a range of organisations including NHS, local authorities, government agencies, CVS and commercial sectors</p> <p>Managing complex projects involving multiple partners</p> <p>Advising strategic leaders on communications and engagement at Board / Executive level</p>		
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<p>Communication and relationship skills</p>	<p>Inspirational leader able to work at speed and respond to continual change, and ability to motivate team members to do the same</p> <p>Managing and communicating highly sensitive and at potentially contentious information</p> <p>Overcoming barriers to acceptance / leveraging influence and advocacy through outstanding interpersonal skills</p> <p>Navigating complex and contentious situations, able to influence to achieve consensus from different views</p> <p>Delivering written and verbal briefings and presentations to strategic audiences, often focusing on highly complex or contentious issues</p> <p>Presenting highly complex and potentially sensitive information to a range of audiences internally within the organisation and to external partners and stakeholders</p> <p>Developing and deploying a wide range of communications and engagement tools and channels with ability to identify and target stakeholders using the right channel</p> <p>Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to liaise and negotiate effectively at directorate management team level</p> <p>Strong negotiating and influencing skills with ability to motivate and engage individuals and teams</p>		<p>A, I, T</p>
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<p>Analytical and Judgement skills</p>	<p>Ability to quickly analyse and interpret highly complex situations and recommend options for communications where opinions may differ</p> <p>Ability to evaluate communication and engagement strategies, plans, campaigns and tools both quantitatively and qualitatively and ensure future initiatives are informed by this learning</p> <p>Quality-focused with an innovative approach and the ability to solve highly complex problems</p> <p>Excellent analytical skills to ensure the true issues are identified and appropriate actions taken, and to seek out, identify and promote positive stories to build the reputation of the AHSN Network and its leaders</p> <p>Ability to identify target audiences for any given issue - understanding their needs and the best channels to reach them, and adapting engagement techniques</p> <p>Responding to rapidly changing priorities, with the ability to quickly realign their / their team's resources to meet evolving needs and new deadlines</p> <p>Ability to show creativity and initiative in seizing communications and engagement opportunities for the Network</p> <p>Ability to analyse highly complex facts and situations quickly, and develop a range of creative and appropriate options</p>		<p>A, I, T</p>
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<p>Planning and organisation skills</p>	<p>Planning and organisational skills to formulate strategies involving uncertainty and risk, which will play an important role in the long term future of the AHSN Network and constituent AHSNs</p> <p>Track record of working calmly and effectively under pressure to tight deadlines, with conflicting priorities</p> <p>Ability to manage budgets and external contracts to ensure the best value for money</p> <p>Excellent time management and the ability to prioritise and manage a highly complex workload with multiple projects, with minimal supervision</p> <p>Track record of managing, motivating and directing teams, including reviewing performance and ensuring the highest standards are maintained at all times</p>		<p>A, I, T</p>
<p>Other requirements specific to the role</p>	<p>Demonstrate passion to healthcare innovation and transformation, and dedication and commitment to the AHSNs and AHSN Network</p> <p>A team player able to contribute to the wider mission of the AHSN Network, with the ability to work flexibly</p> <p>Travel within England with occasional overnight stays</p>		<p>A, I</p>

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