

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru

Welsh Local Government Association



CLILC • WLGA

Communications and Public Affairs Manager Recruitment Information Pack



Closing Date: 19th September 2021

Interview Date: Wednesday 29th September 2021

Communications and Public Affairs Manager

Salary: Grade 6 (SCP 42 – 43) £44,632 - £45,591
Term: Permanent / Full-time
Reports to: Head of Policy
Based: One Canal Parade, Cardiff & Homeworking

Politically Restricted: Yes

Welsh Language essential: Yes

About the Role

The WLGA's political leaders have outlined an ambitious Manifesto ahead of May's Senedd elections and the 2022 local elections. Our members have set the organisation a challenge to be more positive and persuasive in everything we do, focusing more on public affairs and strengthening engagement with our wider membership and Members of the Senedd.

This is an exciting role within the WLGA, which will be integral in refocusing and reshaping the WLGA's approach to communications and public affairs as we come out of the COVID pandemic and developing relations with the new Senedd and newly elected councils following the 2022 local elections.

Working closely with the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team and WLGA political leadership, the Communications and Public Affairs Manager will advise, manage and deliver the organisation's corporate communications and public affairs activity in order to secure positive change on behalf of local government.

The Communications and Public Affairs Manager will manage a Communications Team including two Communications Officers and will identify and develop opportunities and relationships with partners and key stakeholders. The post-holder will seek to coordinate and develop a community of council communications practitioners to contribute and support national WLGA campaigns and promote the reputation of local government collectively.

We are looking for an innovative, motivated and talented individual who will be able to make an immediate impact, bringing new ideas and energy and helping to steer the WLGA forward.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Manage the WLGA's corporate communications and public affairs team and activity in order to secure positive change on behalf of local government and WLGA.
- Plan and co-ordinate WLGA's communications activities, and oversight of communications and public affairs strategy.
- Devise and plan effective public affairs activities and campaigns which support the delivery of the WLGA's Manifesto, Corporate Strategy and business plan priorities and help promote the reputation of local government.

- Support the Chief Executive and senior management in identifying opportunities to engage with key stakeholders, notably Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament.
- Liaise with colleagues to align communications with policy work and consultation responses, including high quality written material to help ensure the consistency of WLGA messaging through speeches and written evidence.
- Draft speeches for the Leader and other senior spokespersons, in liaison with policy colleagues.
- Advise and support WLGA senior members, including any development and training needs including presentation skills and media interviews.
- Oversee the redesign, development and maintenance of the WLGA website as an effective, user-friendly primary communications channel.
- Develop a WLGA Social Media Policy and coordinate the WLGA's social media activity.
- Oversee the WLGA's approach to internal communications, to ensure WLGA employees understand, inform and are engaged in delivering the WLGA's corporate priorities.
- Coordinate and develop a community of council communications practitioners to contribute and support WLGA campaigns and promote the reputation of local government collectively.
- Maintain effective working relations with LGA colleagues in the development and delivery of consistent or complementary local government campaigns.
- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post as required by the Chief Executive or the WLGA political leadership.

Person Specification

Essential

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or equivalent professional qualification.

Knowledge & Experience

- Demonstrable experience of public affairs, press office management or a senior communications role.
- Experience of working with a Senior Management Team and elected politicians or a Board.
- Understanding of the political environment and the key issues, priorities and pressures affecting local government.
- Experience and wide-ranging knowledge of working in a political or public policy environment.
- Experience of managing a team with excellent interpersonal skills, a team-player with an ability to network, communicate and work with people at all levels.

Skills & Abilities

- A fluent Welsh Speaker, with excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Welsh.
- Ability to be creative and innovative, with a commitment to delivering positive results and outcomes.
- Political sensitivity and the ability to exercise appropriate discretion and judgement when dealing with elected members and senior officers.

- Confident and resilient with excellent people skills, able to develop positive internal and external relationships.
- Credibility with senior elected members, senior officers and stakeholders.

Attitude and Motivation

- Self-motivated, able to manage own workload with an ability to balance conflicting demands in a highly pressured environment.
- Commitment to local democracy, public service and promoting diversity and equality.

Other

- Excellent IT skills.
 - Willingness and ability to travel across Wales and other parts of the UK as necessary.
 - Prepared and willingness to work weekends and evenings if required.
 - This post is politically restricted.
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About the WLGA

The Welsh Local Government Association represents the interests of local government and promotes local democracy in Wales.

Our aim is to **promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government** and the interests of local authorities in Wales.

We are a politically led, cross party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. The WLGA is a membership organisation that represents all 22 local authorities in Wales, the 3 fire and rescue authorities and the 3 national park authorities as associate members.

We believe that services are best provided within a democratic framework of local accountability and that the people who use public services should have as much of a say in the way they are organised, managed and funded as possible. Local government is seen as being the tier of government closest to service users and best able to respond to their needs. We support the role of the Welsh Government in setting the strategy for public services nationally but believe that it is down to local government to interpret strategy to deliver services based on local circumstances and local priorities.

Much of our work is focused on the Senedd (formerly the National Assembly for Wales), the Welsh Government and other national stakeholders and partners. We also liaise with the Wales Office and UK Government and work closely with the LGA in London in seeking to influence non-devolved policies and legislation and, in particular, the recovery from COVID 19 and responding to developments around Brexit.

Our work involves engagement with Ministers, Members of the Senedd, and other national and governmental organisations. We promote the important role of local government to Members of the Senedd and seek to enhance and protect councils' reputation and secure positive change to legislation. The WLGA's lobbying work is therefore extensive.

Our Values

In working towards its primary purposes, we seek to be:

- **Ambitious** in our expectations and in our vision for local democracy and local services;
- **Accountable** to our members and member authorities;
- **Proactive** in our defence and promotion of local democracy, our policy development and our engagement with members;
- **Receptive** through listening to and considering the range of views of our membership, partners and stakeholders;
- **Responsive** through our services and support to our members and member authorities;
- **Collaborative** in our approach to governance and partnership working with Welsh Government and other stakeholders.

We also work towards upholding and promoting equality, diversity and human rights; including promoting diversity in democracy and supporting councillors in their role as democratically elected local representatives.

We are committed to equality and fairness and although we are not a statutory body, we operate in the spirit of legislation such as the Equalities Act, Freedom of Information Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Our Aims and Priorities

Our priorities are underpinned by our core aims to secure:

- **Reform, continuous improvement and a commitment to partnership** - we believe in local government reform and seeking continuous improvement as a process for delivering better outcomes and services for the people of Wales, and in ensuring that resources are used as effectively and as efficiently as possible;
- **Fair and flexible funding** – councils need greater fiscal autonomy and flexibility to respond to local needs and priorities. Specific grants should be transferred into the settlement, after an agreed period of time, and the Welsh Government should fully cost and fund any new national initiatives and/or legislation and should commit to multiyear financial settlements, so councils can plan more effectively;
- **Commitment to the principle of Subsidiarity** – the Welsh Government and the Senedd should commit to the European Charter of Local Self Government and the principle of subsidiarity, where the presumption is that power is transferred to the level of government closest to the people. The Welsh Government has a clear national strategic role, but councils want to see momentum behind the devolution of powers beyond Cardiff Bay to local government and to local communities.

We will also:

- **Promote the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders**, emphasising their equal democratic mandate with national politicians.
 - **Ensure maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance** where councils and regions have flexibility in determining regional priorities, services and governance arrangements.
 - **Promote sector-led improvement**, with an emphasis around digital and innovation, supporting authorities in sharing best practice, developing workforce skills and developing a new corporate peer review programme.
 - **Encourage a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity** and enhanced democratic engagement and supporting councillors' development and training.
 - **Support authorities to effectively manage their workforce** through our role as the Employers' Organisation.
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Benefits: Working at the WLGA

The WLGA is an exciting place to work.

The WLGA is in the process of moving to new, modern, open-plan offices at One-Canal Parade, Cardiff (as of October 2021). This is part of an exciting new urban development, which includes local amenities and is within a brief walk from Cardiff Central Station and the City Centre. The WLGA is also introducing new Agile Working arrangements from September 2021, which means that staff will be able to balance working from home and public service hubs, as well as the WLGA's Cardiff office.

We seek to offer staff a friendly, supportive and flexible working environment and staff are entitled to a range of benefits including:

- Incremental pay rises and contributory local government pension scheme
- 26 days annual leave, rising to 29 after 3 years then rising to 32 after 5 years of service, plus 8 days bank holiday
- Agile working policy which encompasses Flexitime, flexible working including options to work from home.
- Cycle to work scheme, travel loan facilities and free staff car park
- A range of supportive policies, including career breaks, job share, leave purchase scheme and other leave arrangements.
- Generous maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave
- Centrally located office in the heart of one of the UK's most vibrant cities

Terms of Employment

Association employees are employed on the conditions of service of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, amended by local agreements. The principal provisions are outlined below:

Salary:

Salary is payable calendar monthly by bank credit on or about the 15th of each month.

Hours of Work:

The working week is 36 hours. The WLGA is introducing new Agile Working arrangements which will provide staff with significant flexibility around working hours, non-working time and annual leave.

Travel and Subsistence:

It is a condition of appointment that staff will be prepared to work on occasion anywhere within Wales, the rest of the United Kingdom or Europe. Travelling and subsistence expenses will be payable, in accordance with the Association's scheme, when staff work away from their fixed centre.

Annual Leave:

The annual leave entitlement for a full year (the leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March in the following year) will initially be 26 days, in addition to statutory holidays. Existing local government employers may attract additional leave based on continuous local government service.

Pension:

The successful candidate will automatically be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme. This is a contributory scheme which has defined benefits for employees.

<https://mpfmembers.org.uk/content/members-currently-contributing-lgps>

Period of Notice:

The period of notice which staff are required to give is one calendar month, commencing on any day in the month. Staff will also be entitled to receive one calendar months' notice, or the current statutory notice period, whichever is greater.

Terms of Secondment (if applicable)

The successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer which, will continue to pay their salary and the Association will reimburse the salary to the employer. In addition, their terms and conditions of employment will remain unchanged. The Association will reimburse business travel and expenses incurred on secondment. Interested applicants will need to be aware of their organisation's secondment policy and obtain prior approval of their employer.

WLGA Politically Restricted Posts:

The WLGA will not appoint as an employee or worker in any capacity, any Councillor who is currently a Member (including co-opted member) of a local Authority or any other member body of the WLGA e.g. National Park Authority or who had been a Member in the previous 12 months (s.116 Local Government Act (LGA) 1972).

The following posts are considered to be politically restricted (in line with those local authority roles as specified in Section 2(1) of the 1989 Act¹:

- All members of Senior Management Team
- All officers paid above Spinal Point 30
- Other officers giving advice to local authorities on a regular basis
- Any officers with a role which involves speaking on behalf of the WLGA to the media.

The Association is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

¹ Part I of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) (Wales) Regulations 2008

Apply Now!

For an initial discussion about the role and the organisation, please contact Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy (Improvement & Governance) on 07900 240939.

To apply, please send a covering letter with a completed application form by the closing date of Sunday 19th September 2021 to:

HR Manager

e-mail recruitment@wlga.gov.uk

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview via Microsoft Teams on 29th September 2021.

Shortlisted applicants may be requested to undertake a task before attending for interview, as well as pre-interview tasks on the day, followed by an interview with a selection panel.