

# External Affairs Assistant

---

Reports to: Senior External Affairs Officer

Location: London, with some remote working

Role type and grade: Full time; grade F; Fixed-term contract (12 months)

## About NHS Confederation

The NHS Confederation is the membership organisation that brings together, supports, and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The members we represent employ 1.5 million staff, care for more than 1 million patients a day and control £150 billion of public expenditure. We promote collaboration and partnership working as the key to improving population health, delivering high-quality care, and reducing health inequalities.

## About the Role

This is an exciting opportunity for an aspiring communications professional from an ethnic minority background to launch their career in communications by working in one of the busiest and highest-profile healthcare communications teams in the country. This is either an entry-level post for someone who is interested in politics, the media, health policy, and in beginning their career in communications, or a more experienced individual who is looking to kickstart a new career.

The postholder will be responsible for supporting the NHS Confederation's external affairs team including how it engages with journalists, and how it lobbies and connects with government and national bodies to bring about changes in policy that will benefit the NHS.

The post is advertised as a 12-month fixed term contract with the hope that after this point, the appointee will have gained sufficient experience to be in a strong position to secure a permanent role in communications, either within the NHS Confederation or elsewhere.

As part of the NHS Confederation's drive to increase the diversity of its staff, this post is targeted at candidates from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The health care communications profession is under-represented when it comes to ethnic diversity and our communications, as a [recent report](#) by the

NHS Confederation found. Our internship programme is a small step in trying to address this within our own communications department.

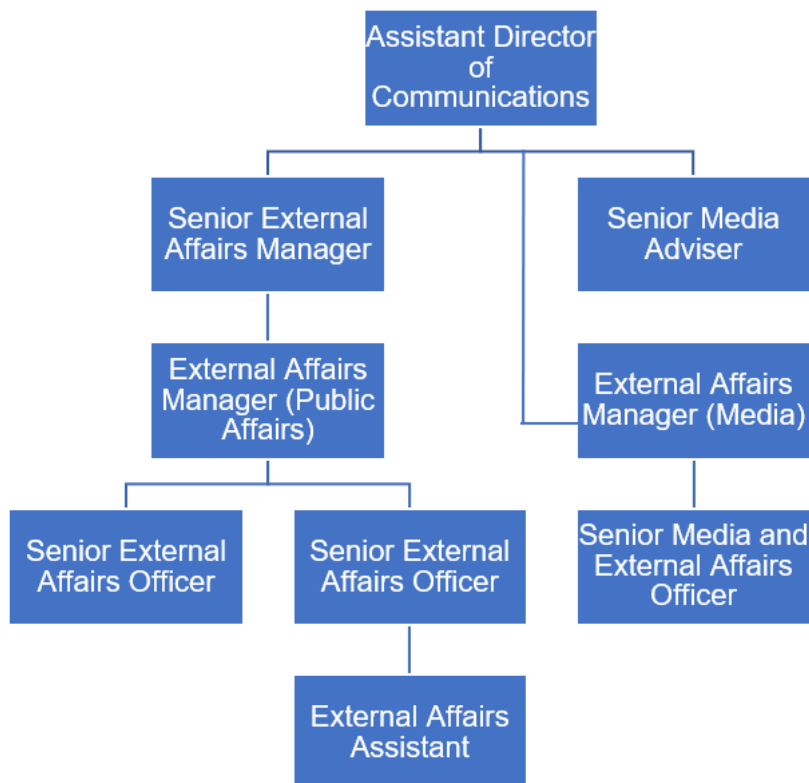
As part of our commitment to supporting the development of the postholder, they will benefit from the communication department's training and development programme, which includes spending a day per month solely on learning and development. The postholder will also have access to other forms of training and will be exposed to all parts of the communications department to aid their learning and skills development. This could include funding the postholder to have membership of our professional body, the Chartered Institute for Public Relations.

## Structure

The communications department is made up of the following units: external affairs; content (digital, editorial, and audio visual); membership communications; and our team that leads the delivery of NHS Employers communications activities.

The external affairs assistant is part of the external affairs unit. This team is at the heart of the organisation's external influencing. By integrating its functions across public affairs and press office, it has responsibility for managing the NHS Confederation's public profile and strategic relationships, supporting the organisation to influence on behalf of its members across NHS trusts, integrated care systems and primary care, as well as for NHS Employers. The unit spans media relations, national stakeholder engagement, parliamentary and Government relations, strategic planning and elements of social media delivery.

The post reports into one of the senior external affairs officers (there are three in the team). The reporting line shown below is for illustrative purposes only.



# Responsibilities

## Media relations

Support the external affairs team to provide a highly effective press office service. This includes by:

- monitoring the news across print/online, broadcast and social channels, alongside other members of the team
- pulling information together from internal and external sources to respond to media enquiries, as well as to support briefings that will advise our media spokespeople on what to say ahead of broadcast interviews, with close support from the team
- issuing and publishing approved press releases and media statements on our websites
- supporting team members to produce reports that showcase our media coverage and reach, such as with statistics obtained from our monitoring agency and links to major stories or interviews
- keeping our media contact lists up-to-date
- helping with logistical arrangements for our broadcast media work
- promoting our broadcast interviews across our social media channels.

## Public affairs

Support the external affairs team to manage the NHS Confederation's strategic relationships so that it can influence government and others on behalf of its members. This includes by:

- monitoring and summarising developments in Parliament and from national stakeholder groups
- sourcing information to contribute to briefings for MPs and peers on NHS Confederation policy positions, with support from the team
- issuing events and supporting with logistics for events aimed at MPs and peers, with support from the team
- issuing approved correspondence to government and stakeholder audiences
- pulling information together from internal and external sources that will then advise the chief executive, chair and directors on their engagement with key stakeholders, with close support from the team
- carrying out online research on parliamentarians and stakeholders that the NHS Confederation should engage with to support its policy work, as guided by the team
- keeping our contact lists of stakeholders and parliamentarians up-to-date.

## Other

The postholder can also expect to undertake broader responsibilities including:

- supporting the department's planning work, including populating the communications grid with expected publications, announcements, events and other developments
- writing brief content for our member bulletins, as supported by the team
- supporting the external affairs team with select administrative duties, including booking meetings and keeping our subscriptions up-to-date
- providing occasional diary management support to the director of communications.

# Person Specification

## Essential criteria

- A keen interest in how the media works, what makes a good story, and in politics / current affairs
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Good attention to detail
- Ability to use initiative and work independently, when needed
- Ability to ensure deadlines are met
- Ability to communicate effectively (written and oral)
- A keen interest in the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in communications
- A good understanding of MS office tools – particularly Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and Teams.

## Desirable criteria

- An understanding of how the NHS works and an interest in government decision-making processes.
- Experience of social media, particularly X, WhatsApp and LinkedIn.