



Job Description

Head of Communications & Publications

ABOUT THE ROLE

This is an exciting opportunity for an exceptional communications professional to lead a small, integrated communications team and continue to enhance the communications capability of the organisation.

As Head of Communications and Publications, you will lead the Inspectorate's overall communications strategy (both external and internal), helping us to ensure we have the influence that we need to drive improvements in the conditions and outcomes of detention.

As a small team, your role will include elements of all aspects of communications including strategic communications, press and media handling, publications, digital and new media, public affairs and stakeholder relations. You will be supported in this by the Inspectorate's communications and publications team, which consists of three members of staff as well as a small number of fee-paid editors.

You will be responsible for overseeing the planning and production of our reports and supporting materials to make sure these are high quality and impactful. You will oversee the strategic media planning for all announcements, thematic work and the Inspectorate's day-to-day press and media operations, making sure that our output helps to shape public and political debate about the treatment and conditions of detainees. You and your team will maintain excellent relationships with print and broadcast media, advising and supporting the Chief Inspector and Deputy Chief Inspector on their personal engagement across the spectrum of media. You will also take charge of our internal communications to make sure activity is aligned, timely and consistent, and meets the needs of our staff.

Responsibilities

The key responsibilities of this job are to:

- Lead the ongoing design and implementation of the Inspectorate's communications strategy (both external and internal), to maximise the impact of the Inspectorate's work. Identify and use a range of internal and external sources including stakeholder feedback, staff feedback, media coverage and analysis to update and adapt the Inspectorate's communications strategy as required.
- Develop and manage corporate communications to maximise the impact of the inspectorate through the dissemination of findings. Establish communications approaches which use the full range of tools available including digital communications, social media, media broadcasts etc.
- Oversee social media planning and handling, the development of new media such as podcasts and the continual development of the website.



- Oversee communication planning including chairing quarterly communications planning meetings, which keep the Chief Inspector, policy and research colleagues sighted on upcoming media handling and communication strategies and provide analysis on the previous quarter's activity and results.
- Oversee the strategic media planning for all announcements. This work will be managed by the communications team and will involve the production of press releases, handling any bids for interviews with the Chief Inspector or Deputy Chief Inspector, supporting them in all broadcast or other media interviews and providing advice to the Chief Inspector on media handling strategies.
- Manage the production of our reports and supporting materials, which includes developing our report templates, managing a small team of external editors to ensure editing jobs are scheduled in, completed on time and adhere to our house style and provide training and guidance to inspection staff on report writing.
- Oversee the planning, delivery and evaluation of the full range of internal communication tools used by the Inspectorate.
- Provide inspirational and motivational leadership to the communications and publications team including direct line management of two staff. Make sure that staff are supported and developed through objective setting, regular meetings and professional development opportunities. This role will also oversee the work of our fee-paid editors who support the publication process for reports.
- Provide strategic communications advice and support for a wide range of operational and corporate initiatives.
- Maintain a constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Justice press office and Home Office immigration media desk to make sure they are aware of upcoming prison and immigration-related reports and releases.
- Lead on media handling of joint inspection reports with partner inspectorates.
- Maintain relationships with press offices at the Howard League, the Prison Reform Trust and other third sector organisations.
- Actively learn from the communication approaches being taken by others including the Government Communication Service (GCS) and health/criminal justice inspectorates etc.



Knowledge, Experience and Skills

Essential

- A background in communications work, including experience of media relations, crisis communications, strategic planning and leading corporate communications.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to communicate confidently with a wide range of audiences and stakeholders, including successfully influencing senior stakeholders.
- Experience of successfully managing change, introducing and embedding new ways of working.
- Experience of using communications tools to influence the public policy debate and convey information internally to staff.
- Experience of using digital communications and social media to amplify messages.
- An ability to demonstrate support for and understanding of the Inspectorate's work and values, including its independence from government.
- Management experience, including direct line management responsibilities.
- Strong people skills and emotional intelligence.
- Excellent time-management skills and the ability to work to tight deadlines.

Desirable

- Editorial or publications experience and/or experience of working with the media
- Experience of criminal justice work and custodial settings
- Understanding of policy and debates associated with detention and custodial environments