

Job Description and person specification

Communications and Public Affairs Officer Employment Related Services Association

Central London

Salary: £28,000 - £30,000

The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA), the representative body for the employment support sector, is seeking to appoint a Communications and Public Affairs Officer.

Reporting to the ERSA CEO, this role will support the delivery of ERSA's parliamentary and public affairs function, plus its communications work including press and social media. ERSA is a busy working environment. As such, the role is likely to suit a dynamic individual able to juggle multiple workstreams and work on their own initiative, whilst contributing willingly to the wider team. The successful candidate will join a small team based in central London.

While working hours are 9am to 5pm, flexibility is required to accommodate events, busy workloads and project timetables. There are opportunities for working flexibly, as well as job sharing.

Interested candidates are asked to submit a CV and covering letter to recruitment@ersa.org.uk by 5pm on Monday 4th August. First round interviews are anticipated to be the week beginning 12th August.

For an informal conversation please contact the Interim CEO of ERSA by email to elizabeth.taylor@ersa.org.uk

About ERSA

Established in 2005, ERSA is the sector body for organisations either delivering or with an interest in employment support services. ERSA has over 250 members, including private sector organisations, national charities, housing associations and local authorities. Three quarters of its membership is not for profit. ERSA members deliver a wide range of back to work schemes, including national government-commissioned programmes and specialist disability employment programmes, plus programmes funded by European money, charitable funding, social investment, local government and organisations' own core funds.

ERSA works to ensure that a diverse sector is able to deliver the best possible employment support services against a sometimes challenging political and economic backdrop. ERSA's role is threefold: to represent and explain the sector to a range of audiences; to help drive up standards within the sector to benefit current and future jobseekers, providers and commissioners; and to lead thinking on public policy relevant to jobseekers and the employment sector. The scope of ERSA's work is broad: its policy areas cover issues related to programme design and operations, disability employment, youth unemployment, welfare reform, skills, employment of ex-offenders, among many others. ERSA also operates regional/devolved national networks in Scotland, Greater Manchester, London and the West Midlands.

Key responsibilities

- Assisting in the design of communications and public affairs strategies.
- Responsibility for implementation and delivering key contact programmes, encompassing key journalists and Westminster, national governments and devolved authorities.
- Supporting and developing ERSA's campaign activities, including Employability Day and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Campaign.

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- Leading on the communications plans for ERSA's events, such as the ERSA Annual Awards,
- Drafting and distributing press releases and media statements and maintaining ERSA's blog site.
- Monitoring and supporting local stakeholder relations across the sector and maintaining the political and press databases;
- Working in conjunction with senior ERSA staff, organising the day to day running of a number of ERSA's England forums, plus the Scottish Network, to ensure successful quarterly meetings;
- Managing ad hoc projects and delivering workstreams associated with the forums;
- Producing weekly parliamentary monitoring bulletins;
- Working with the Chief Executive and The ERSA board on the development of policy in some defined areas. These policy areas may be flexed to accommodate the interest and knowledge of the successful candidate;
- Supporting specific parliamentary work e.g. around select committee inquiries;
- Drafting external briefings, reports and presentations;
- Forging partnerships with other organisations to deliver public affairs and communications objectives;
- Project managing and delivering political events, e.g. roundtables, fringe events at party conferences;
- Working in close partnership with ERSA communications, membership and research colleagues;
- Assuming responsibility for relevant sections of the ERSA website;
- Building and maintaining an excellent network of contacts in Westminster, Whitehall, members, journalists, PR / PA agencies, think tanks, charities, trade bodies and local government;
- Promoting the involvement of frontline service users in ERSA's communications public affairs work.

Skills, knowledge and experience

Essential

- Knowledge of UK politics, either within the political system at a national or local level, in a consultancy or an in-house role;
- Knowledge of communications strategies and stakeholder relations, with skills and experience in press relations and political influencing;
- Experience of securing national print and broadcast opportunities / coverage;
- Ability to create and maintain good relations with key contacts;
- An interest in UK social policy;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and first class written and verbal communication skills;
- Being comfortable with working in a busy, hard-working team. We will expect you to roll your sleeves up, use initiative and have a willingness to get things done.

Desirable (but not essential)

- Specific experience in a policy area related to ERSA's areas of interest – employment provision, welfare reform, offender related services, youth employment, health and disability, localisation, etc;
- Knowledge of the Scottish political system and/or local government.

Person specification

- Team player, able to manage complex multi-stakeholder initiatives and policy processes.
- Highly flexible, able to juggle demands and manage competing priorities.
- Strong communicator, able to manage and nurture a wide range of relationships.
- Good negotiating and influencing skills.
- Must be extremely organised, motivated and with healthy levels of perseverance.
- Adept at problem solving and identifying solutions.