▌Position Description

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| **Job Title:** | Communications Officer |
| **Acronym:** | CO |
| **Reporting To:** | Service Manager |
| **Liaise With:** | National Manager, Regional teams and Corporate Services team, National Office |
| **Employment Type:** | Full Time, Fixed Term Duration Contract (End date June 2021) |
| **Hours:** | 35 hours per week - The position is full time and may involve working some unsocial hours. |
| **Location:** | Dublin. The position entails travel throughout the country; therefore, the ability to provide your own transport requirements is necessary for the post. |
| **Salary Grade:** | €44,078 - €53,022  It is anticipated that new entrants to the Patient Advocacy Service will be appointed on the 1st point of the scale however, incremental credit, should it be awarded, will be based on previous relevant experience as set out on application form. |

The Patient Advocacy Service is a new service which will provide a free and independent service to support users of public acute hospitals making or intending to make a formal complaint through the Health Service Executive (HSE) investigation process in "Your Service Your Say", and for patient safety incidents. The service became operational in October 2019 and will grow over the course of the next 18 months.

The contract for the Patient Advocacy Service was awarded to the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities following a competitive tendering process.

# **Summary of Position**

As Communications Officer within the Patient Advocacy Service (PAS) you will scope, plan and implement the communications plans for the Patient Advocacy Service. You will support the ongoing development of PAS and other key organisational initiatives through the provision of communications expertise and strategies which enable increased service user, and public understanding of the service. You will be responsible for writing and editing promotional materials, press releases and internal communications when necessary. You will carry out the management of media queries and you will liaise with stakeholders, management and members of the public. The Communications Officer will also support PAS to deliver on a commitment to contribute to the ongoing development of social policy in the field of advocacy in Ireland. The Communications Officer reports to and takes direction from the PAS Service Manager and will support the support the National Advocacy Service to deliver their strategic plan.

**Duties and key responsibilities**

1. **Communications**
   1. Design and Delivery of a pro-active Communications Plan for anticipated Stakeholder\Public communication events in line with the PAS project implementation plan deliverables.
   2. Works with management and staff to define communications strategies and approaches.
   3. Create communications plans to support the effective operation of the PAS including key messages, delivery channels , timing and feedback.
   4. Develop a Crisis Communications Plan which identifies target audiences, appropriate communications channels, key messaging and scenario planning.
   5. Manage the day-to-day internal and external communications activities of PAS.
   6. Measures the impact of communications interventions on service user and stakeholder groups and adjusts plans as required and necessary.
   7. Ensure that PAS communication outputs are of a high standard, respond to the needs of the target audience, and are delivered within agreed budget and timelines.
   8. Develop and maintain a strong brand for the organisation, including impactful and effective publications, content and social media material.
   9. Creation of content for public facing information which will be easily accessible by the public including “plain English” publications and utilising non-typical communications channels.
   10. Provide support for the Board of Directors and Board Sub-committees as required.
   11. Advise and support staff on communications matters.
2. **Media and Public Affairs** 
   1. Co-ordinate media and public affairs activities to promote the establishment of PAS, including developing and publishing press releases related to the service.
   2. Co-ordinate media and public affairs activities to promote PAS’s legal and policy positions.
   3. Manage the monitoring of media and current affairs for PAS.
   4. Develop relationships with media, key decision makers, relevant organisations and others.
   5. Provide 're-active' support for responding to questions that may arise from the media, politicians or public such as parliamentary questions or freedom of information requests.
   6. Creation of a FAQs repository for ‘pro-actively’ dealing with anticipated questions that may arise.
   7. Write and distribute press releases and co-ordinate arrangements for media interviews and promotional opportunities.
   8. Prepare speeches for the management team and other senior team members as required.
   9. Develop a ‘Media Policy’ for the service and ensure all staff and board members confirm receipt and understanding.
3. **Service Promotion and Stakeholder Engagement** 
   1. Support the Service Manager to optimise awareness of and engagement with the organisation amongst a wide range of target audiences including service users, the health service, other advocacy organisations and funders.
   2. Support the development and delivery of a stakeholder engagement plan to promote demand for the PAS service and monitor impact of promotional activities on service demand.
   3. Manage the publication and promotion of PAS promotional materials as well as contributing to the organisation’s annual report.
   4. Represent and promote the organisation, attend and participate at conferences and seminars as agreed.
   5. Work with internal stakeholders to generate new ideas for promoting the organisation; to develop and distribute innovative promotional material and to facilitate the production of branded merchandise as appropriate.
4. **Policy & Research**
   1. Develop policy submissions on behalf of the organisation in line with service user, funder and other stakeholder requirements.
   2. Represent the organisations and service users interests through responding to public consultations and participating in public and stakeholder engagements.
   3. Undertake desk and field research as required.
   4. Collect, collate and analyse quantitative and qualitative data relating to policy matters from PAS staff, service users and other relevant sources.
   5. Develop and share knowledge of relevant legislation, appeals/redress mechanisms and social policy and practices in relation to advocating on behalf of service users.
   6. Develop a mechanism to record and share organisatonal learning to inform continuous improvement of services for patients.
   7. Develop reports for funder and advisory fora in collaboration with the PAS Service Manager.
5. **Contributing to the effectiveness of the Organisation** 
   1. Follow all PAS service manuals and standards and comply with all appropriate policies and procedures.
   2. Ensure that the purchase and/or commissioning of any materials or services are obtained in line with organisational procurement procedures.
   3. Undertake further personal development as discussed and agreed with line manager and keep knowledge up-to-date.
   4. Responsible for personal learning and development and for supporting the learning and development of others and the whole organisation.
   5. Contribute to the evaluation of the advocacy service.
   6. Highlight gaps in policy that are affecting access to service.
   7. Work in a manner that facilitates inclusion and diversity.
   8. Organise and administer own work to ensure that it is accurate and meets quality targets, KPIs, reasonable deadlines and reporting requirements.
   9. Operate within a Performance Management Development System. Participate in working groups/ committees/ fora as requested by the Service Manager.
   10. Chair, co-ordinate, attend and manage a range of meetings both internally and externally as required.
   11. Undertake any other duties or projects equal with the nature and grade of this post as required.
   12. Contribute to the development of annual work plan and strategic planning as required.
   13. This role may require the management and/or supervision of staff.

**Person Specification**

**Academic & Qualifications**

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| Essential | Desirable |
| * Educated to graduate level in social sciences, humanities, law, public relations or communications or relevant field. Equivalent experience and training will also be considered. | * Certification in Freedom of Information * Certification in communications/public relations |

**Knowledge Base**

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| Essential | Desirable |
| * Experience (minimum 3 years) of working in a communications role. * An understanding and knowledge of the philosophy, background and operation of advocacy, patient advocacy, Patient Safety and the ‘Your Service Your Say’ Complaints process. * Experience in communications planning, management and delivery for projects involving multiple stakeholders, internal and external. * Demonstrate excellent interpersonal and communications skills to facilitate work with a wide range of individuals, groups and multiple stakeholders. * Ability to research, analyse and evaluate information. * Excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills. * Attention to detail and strong organisational skills. * Excellent office ICT skills, including social media * Determined, positive and outcome focused attitude. * Ability to work calmly under pressure and within a small dynamic team. * Understanding of & Commitment to Human Rights and Diversity. | * A good understanding of public service administrative, financial and governance systems. * Understanding of the PAS and the broader advocacy environment in Ireland. * Experience in scoping, planning and managing a Public Consultation process. * Experience of representing an organisation to the public or / and media. * Experiencing managing or contributing to the delivery of successful events. * A good understanding of current policy issues affecting advocacy sector. * Experience of managing Freedom of Information requests. * Experience of managing Parliamentary Questions * Experience in project management with a proven track record of delivering on objectives. * Experience of managing and supervising staff. |