

Job Description

**Job title:** Policy Engagement Officer

**Reporting to:** Chief Officer

**Salary:** £27,033 - £29,445 per annum (SJC spinal points 31 – 34)

**Hours:** 35 per week

**Location:** Edinburgh

**Organisation profile**

Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) is the national network for voluntary health organisations across Scotland. We are a registered Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee, led by our Board of Trustees with a small Edinburgh based staff team. We receive financial support from the Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland, for which we deliver an annual programme of work.

Our missionis to support voluntary health organisations to be valued and effective partners in creating a healthier Scotland, and to promote recognition of their contribution to improving health and wellbeing.We have a growing membership of small, large, national and local voluntary health organisations, individual associate members, and significant wider networks across both voluntary and public sectors.

We actively promote the role of the voluntary health sector, providing a platform and a voice for our members. We demonstrate and showcase the impact of our members’ work on people’s health and wellbeing. We enable voluntary health organisations to build their knowledge and understanding about emerging health agendas and to influence policy makers and other decision makers. We help to generate fresh thinking through connecting a rich mix of people across the third and public sectors.

**Purpose of role and expected outcomes**

The purpose of the role is to plan and deliver an effective programme of policy and public affairs work, with a strong emphasis on engagement and communication with members and other external stakeholders. The post holder will deliver outcomes that demonstrate that VHS actively promotes recognition of the voluntary health sector, provides an effective gateway between policy makers and our sector, and amplifies the voice and influence of our sector in national policy development. The role also includes lead responsibility for managing VHS’s website, media and digital communications. The post holder is expected to work collaboratively and flexibly with other team members, to support delivery of VHS’s overall strategy and work programme.

**Key results areas**

1. Actively engage our membership in the full range of VHS’s policy and public affairs work, using a full range of communication methods, including face to face, written, digital and other media. Act as a point of contact for members seeking information and advice on health and related policy areas.
2. Identify, analyse and communicate relevant policy developments and their impact on health to VHS members. Translate complex policy ideas for a range of audiences. Prepare high quality responses on formal policy consultations. Prepare and disseminate briefings, reports and case studies.
3. Provide effective platforms to support VHS members to develop their voice and influence. Support members to contribute actively to Scottish Government and NHS working groups, cross-party Parliamentary groups, etc. Participate directly in such groups, as appropriate. Establish systems for disseminating feedback from these groups to the wider VHS membership.
4. Survey and analyse members’ activities, impact and priorities and build a robust evidence base on the third sector’s contribution to health. Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation tools as required. Contribute to the development and implementation of research projects.
5. Design and deliver an effective communications plan to support VHS’s policy and public affairs work. Prepare media releases and liaise with media representatives as required. Lead on developing and content managing the VHS website. Lead on developing and sustaining an effective social media strategy.
6. Contribute to VHS’s external engagement events as appropriate. Deliver presentations and workshops on policy topics.
7. Represent VHS and manage active and effective working relationships with a wide range of stakeholder and partner organisations. These include the Scottish Government, NHS, the Scottish Parliament, and other strategic third sector intermediaries. Contribute actively and constructively to VHS’s overall development, including to its strategic plan and operational plans. Provide appropriate support for the Chief Officer. Provide reports to the Board of Directors and VHS’s funders as required. Support the drafting of funding and partnership proposals. Take responsibility for administration of own work, e.g. electronic filing.
8. Be actively responsible for own professional learning and development. Contribute constructively to regular support and appraisal meetings and to the development of this new role.
9. Carry out other tasks and duties as required.

**Person Specification**

**This post requires the following experience, competences and knowledge:**

1. Educated to degree level, or equivalent level of experience
2. Evidence of working with policy makers, involvement in policy development and understanding of policy making structures and processes in Scotland
3. Excellent interpersonal skills: able to communicate effectively (face to face as well as electronically) with a wide range of stakeholders, to build positive working relationships and to achieve positive results through other people
4. A good team player: willing and able to work collaboratively, flexibly and responsively
5. High degree of self-motivation: ability to take the initiative, to prioritise and manage own workload and to learn fast
6. Ability to stay calm under pressure, work to tight deadlines and find flexible solutions to problems.
7. Conscientious and committed to producing accurate work and high quality services at all times
8. Able to write material that communicates content/ideas clearly and compellingly
9. Competence and confidence in using IT applications, including Microsoft programmes and digital media
10. Numerate: able to gather, organise and analyse data

**Experience and knowledge in the following areas would be an advantage:**

1. Experience of using Wordpress to content manage websites
2. Experience of using a Customer Relations Management System, e.g. Salesforce
3. Knowledge and understanding of the voluntary sector in Scotland
4. Knowledge and understanding of current health and social care issues in Scotland
5. Experience of working with print/broadcast media
6. Knowledge of research and evaluation methodologies. Experience of developing/implementing social media strategies

*VHS/job description/policy engagement officer/final/17 Oct 2014*