

# CROYDON COUNCIL

## ROLE PROFILE AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

**DEPARTMENT:** Resources

**DIVISION:** Communications

**JOB TITLE:** **Senior media relations officer**

## ROLE PROFILE

<b>Job Title:</b>	Senior media relations officer
<b>Department:</b>	Resources
<b>Division:</b>	Communications
<b>Grade:</b>	Grade 14
<b>Hours (per week):</b>	36
<b>Reports to:</b>	Head of communications and engagement
<b>Responsible for:</b>	2 x media relations officer
<b>Role Purpose and Role Dimensions:</b>	<p>The senior media relations officer is responsible for managing, enhancing and protecting the council's reputation across broadcast, print, online and social media.</p> <p>The role is involved in devising and delivering targeted media activity that promotes and enhances the reputation of the council and the wider borough.</p> <p>The role holder is the deputy manager of the media relations service, deputising for the head of communications when they are not around – including managing staff and liaising with the Leader and chief executive.</p>
<b>Commitment to Diversity:</b>	To take individual and collective professional responsibility for championing the council's diversity agenda, proactively implementing initiatives which secure equality of access and outcomes. Commit to continual development of personal understanding of diversity.
<b>Key External Contacts:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Journalists, editors and media organisations – building good working relationships in order to be able to sell in stories to get maximum positive PR, and also to neutralize any negative reputational issues</li><li>• Key partners</li><li>• Other senior media/press/PR officers in other organisations – sharing information, getting and giving advice, working on joint campaigns such as the South London Partnership</li><li>• London Councils – working on media issues which affect</li></ul>

- all London Boroughs, such as homelessness numbers
- Greater London Authority (GLA) – working with their media team to ensure equal and timely coverage on issues such as transport (trams) and regeneration investment
- Local Government Association (LGA) – responding to requests for information, supporting the LGA with reviewing communications functions in local government, providing quotes for press releases
- Professional bodies such as Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and LGComms – speaking at events, taking part in research
- Suppliers of goods and services

### Key Internal Contacts:

- Chief executive and corporate directors –giving advice on media handling for reputational issues and PR opportunities
- Council leadership team (CLT) – advising directors on handling issues in the public domain which are playing out in the media
- Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members – giving advice on media handling for reputational issues and PR opportunities.
- Council solicitor and external legal counsel – on issues which have legal implications if reported in the media.

### Financial Dimensions:

- Responsible for managing project budgets.
- Monitoring contractual payments and ensuring satisfactory delivery of services purchased or procured

### Key Areas for Decision Making:

- Prioritisation of own work load and that of other media officers
- Advising cabinet members and chief officer on media handling

### Other Considerations:

- Ability to occasionally work outside of core hours, including evenings and weekends such as attending cabinet meetings.
- This role is part of an on-call rota for the out-of-hours emergency press phone.

Is a satisfactory disclosure and barring check required?  
[\(click here for guidance on DBS\)](#)

No

What level of check is required?

**Is the post politically restricted**  
([Click here for guidance on political restriction](#))

Yes

**Is the post exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974**  
([Click here for guidance on ROA](#))

No

### **Key Accountabilities and Result Areas:**

#### **Corporate responsibilities**

### **Key Elements:**

- To support the delivery of a best-in-class media function, ensuring Croydon Council is seen as a highly effective, innovative and well-led organisation.
- To think creatively, challenging the norms, and constructively challenging others (including those more senior) to ensure continuous improvement, commercial astuteness and inspire the same in colleagues.
- To be a positive ambassador for the council and Croydon, maximising our influence and promoting Croydon in a positive light and creating opportunities to enhance the council's image and reputation.
- To champion the council's renewal plans in modernising how we work and how we deliver services.
- To champion, promote and demonstrate the council's values in all aspects/areas of the role both within the department and across the council.
- To provide a visible

commitment to improving customer and staff satisfaction and continuous improvement across all services.

## Departmental responsibility

### **This will involve:**

- Helping to manage a high performing press office function, ensuring an excellent quality proactive and reactive service is provided to council departments, including setting and delivering on targets for generating national and regional media coverage.
- Ensuring that the media relations team make best use of the full range of media channels – including digital and social media.
- Ensuring media coverage is monitored and evaluated to improve performance.
- Leading, managing and implementing high impact media relations activity – which promotes and enhances the reputation of the council and the borough.
- Ensuring focus on the council's strategic priorities and key messages in the corporate narrative when developing releases or case studies.
- Being proactive and astute in highlighting to departments the potential media implications in decisions they may be making.
- Providing an early warning of the issues which could harm the council's reputation and to provide sound advice on the best way to handle.

- Helping with the management of the weekly, monthly and annual media cycle.
- Liaising with the media relations officers and communications and engagement officers to ensure plans are accurate, up to date and support service and communications objectives.
- Supporting the head of communications and engagement in delivering the digital transformation programme for media relations team – including continuous improvement of the online newsroom.
- Providing strategic advice to chief officers and cabinet members on media relations issues, attending committees and other meetings as needed.
- Ensuring the council's brand is protected and enhanced through all media relations activity.
- Building and maintaining strong, effective relationships with external organisations such as partners, contractors, professional bodies, voluntary sector, local and national government bodies in order to deliver council communications.
- Leading the creation of content and driving journalists and media outlets to take up the council's narrative – particularly in relation to regeneration activity.
- Leading and driving the council's agenda in getting its stories out in a way that promotes, enhances the reputation of the council.

- Challenging journalists and editors when they are incorrect in what they have published or broadcast
- Advising chief executive, chief officers, the Leader and the Council Solicitor on media law issues such as defamation.
- Challenging policy direction if there is a danger that it will damage the council's reputation beyond repair.
- Responsible for ensuring that the council's media policy is adhered to – who, how and when we respond.

*This is a description of the main duties and responsibilities of the post of SENIOR MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICER at the date of production. The duties may change over time as requirements and circumstances change. As such, the person in post may also have to carry out other duties as may be necessary from time to time.*

## **Confidentiality**

- Treating all information acquired through employment, both formally and informally, in confidence. There are strict rules and protocols defining employee access to and use of the council's databases. Any breach of these rules and protocols will be subject to disciplinary investigation. There are internal procedures in place for employees to raise matters of concern regarding such issues as bad practice or mismanagement.

## **Data Protection**

- Being aware of the council's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the security, accuracy and relevance of personal data held, ensuring that all administrative and financial processes also comply.
- Maintaining customer records and archive systems in accordance with departmental procedures and policies as well as statutory requirements.

## **Equalities and Diversity**

- The council has a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity in its services to the community and in the employment of people. It expects all employees to understand, comply with and promote its policies in their own work, undertake any appropriate training to help them to challenge prejudice or discrimination

## **Contribute as an effective and collaborative team member**

This will involve:

- Participating in training to demonstrate competence.
- Undertaking training as required for the role.
- Participating in the development, implementation and monitoring of service plans.
- Championing the professional integrity of the service.



# Person Specification

**Job Title:** Senior media relations officer, communications and engagement

**Essential knowledge:**

- Professional qualification in the field of journalism (e.g. NCTJ) – or the equivalent measurable, successful experience.
- Working knowledge and understanding of the full range of media channels and how to use them effectively to generate positive coverage/messages.
- Up to date knowledge of media law.
- Up to date knowledge of the latest thinking in digital and social media.
- Expert knowledge of the department of communities and local government's (DCLG) publicity code of conduct.
- Up to date knowledge of local government issues, with an excellent awareness of current affairs.

**Essential skills and abilities:**

- Ability to provide high-quality, strategic media and external relations support and advice to politicians and chief officers
- Politically astute and an effective communicator, with outstanding interpersonal and negotiation skills combined with experience of establishing effective relationships with journalists, politicians and influencers
- Proven ability to manage, lead and deliver a range of complex projects, activities and media strategies
- Excellent ability to think strategically – both in terms of thinking about the long term and the needs of the whole organisation
- Good facilitation skills with working experience of facilitating complex, sensitive and difficult situations
- Practical problem solver, with a focus on efficiency, value for money and getting things done
- Excellent ability to provide clear and unambiguous advice on complex issues and not use jargon
- Proven ability to influence at all levels of the organisation – unafraid to constructively challenge
- Outstanding ability to process and analyse a broad range of data quickly and effectively
- Highly creative and innovative
- Outstanding ability to work well in a team – whether a service team or a project team
- High level of resilience – able to handle competing priorities or demanding workload
- Good coaching skills – with experience of coaching staff as well as internal customers
- Excellent attention to detail
- Calm in a crisis – handling the situation effectively and efficiently
- Proven ability to make a significant personal impact at senior

levels of an organisation and to work effectively and credibly across the organisation and across government

**Essential experience:**

- Strong political acumen, with extensive experience in dealing with sensitive press issues whilst working in a highly politicised environment.
- Proven track record in media and public affairs and extensive experience of leading on significant communications activity including sensitive and high profile media enquiries.
- Experience of working in high-pressured environments with most intense level of public scrutiny, with a good understanding of how local, regional and central government works.
- Experience of supervising staff
- Experience of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on all aspects of media relations and coverage.
- Extensive experience of developing and implementing media strategies, plans, campaigns and projects.

**Special conditions:**

- This role is part of an on-call rota in meeting the needs of a 24/7 media relations function – this covers emergency situations only.
- Occasional working outside of core hours including evenings and weekends such as attending cabinet meetings