

Job Profile

SEND Engagement and Communications Officer

Grade: 8

Date created: August 2026

About the Job

The SEND Engagement and Communications Officer will lead integrated communications, engagement and co-production activity for Gloucestershire's system wide SEND Reform and Improvement Programmes. The role will ensure that children and young people with SEND, parent carers, education settings, health and social care partners, elected members and wider stakeholders receive clear, accessible and timely information and have meaningful opportunities to influence change.

The postholder is the lead communications and engagement professional for Gloucestershire's SEND Reform and Improvement Programme, providing expert advice and strategic communications leadership to senior leaders, programme boards and partnership governance arrangements. They will sit within the Council's Communications Team and will work closely with the SEND leadership and programme governance. The role will draw on the wider Communications Team's media, digital, design, consultation and internal communications expertise, while providing dedicated leadership for SEND priorities.

The role will support delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan, Local Offer improvement, inspection readiness and wider partnership priorities. The role will build trust, strengthen relationships, amplify stakeholder voice and use evidence and insight to improve communication, engagement and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The postholder will be required to demonstrate the behaviours and values of a Gloucestershire County Council officer.

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This is what we need you to do...

1. Shape and deliver strategic SEND communications

- Act as the recognised communications lead for SEND, influencing strategic decision-making and ensuring communications considerations are embedded within programme planning and delivery

Lead the development and delivery of Gloucestershire's SEND Communications and Engagement Strategy, aligned with the Council's annual communications plan and SEND programme priorities.

- Work with the Communications Business Partner and SEND senior leaders to translate strategic outcomes into integrated communications, campaign and delivery plans.
- Ensure clear, consistent, inclusive and accessible messaging across education, health, social care and wider partnerships.
- Lead & develop campaigns, key messages and communication materials that build understanding, confidence and participation.
- Provide professional communications advice and constructive challenge to programme leads, senior leaders and partners.
- Identify emerging issues, opportunities and reputational risks and support proactive stakeholder, media and reputation management.
- Support communications linked to inspection readiness, SEND reform, continuous improvement, emergencies and crisis situations.

2. Build meaningful engagement and co-production

Special Conditions

- This is a fixed-term role for up to two years, subject to the terms of the approved appointment.
- Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, this post is deemed to be politically restricted.
- You will be required to participate in an out-of-hours communications rota, including responding to social media and urgent media requests.
- Occasional evening and weekend working will be required to support engagement activity, events, emergencies or urgent communications.
- Travel across Gloucestershire and attendance at schools, community venues and partnership meetings will be required.
- Flexible working across locations, services and stakeholder groups is required.

Performance measures may include

- Delivery and evaluation of the SEND Communications and Engagement Strategy and associated plans.
- Stakeholder satisfaction, reach, participation and evidence of influence on service development.
- Increased awareness, use and accessibility of the Local Offer and other SEND information.
- Timely delivery of engagement, consultation and co-production activity.
- Quality, consistency and accessibility of communications across channels.
- Effective management of emerging issues, media enquiries, risks and urgent communications.

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- Create opportunities for children and young people, parent carers and professionals to shape SEND developments across Gloucestershire.
 - Develop and maintain an effective county wide stakeholder engagement framework and co-production approach.
 - Plan and deliver engagement, consultation and co-production with schools, colleges, early years providers, NHS partners, Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum, SENDIASS, voluntary and community organisations and elected members.
 - Ensure feedback is captured, analysed and demonstrably used to advise senior leaders & elected members about service development and decision-making, including clear “you said, we did” reporting.
 - Help amplify the voices of under-represented and seldom-heard groups and support the embedding of co-production principles across the local area partnership.
- 3. Make information easy to find, understand and use**
- Support the ongoing development and improvement of the Gloucestershire Local Offer and associated family-facing information.
 - Ensure information is accurate, accessible, inclusive, written in plain English and meets digital accessibility requirements.
 - Lead campaigns and initiatives that increase awareness and use of the Local Offer.
 - Work with services, the Digital First team and system wide partners to develop high-quality digital content, guidance and resources and improve user experience.
 - Coordinate publication of SEND updates, progress reports, case studies, briefings, FAQs and stakeholder information.
- Contribution to inspection readiness, self-evaluation, governance and partnership assurance.
 - Effective coordination of allocated people and resources and evidence of value for money.

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4. Create engaging and inclusive communications

- Manage and develop SEND communication channels, including the Local Offer website, newsletters, bulletins, social media, webinars, workshops and digital resources.
- Produce engaging content across relevant formats, including written, photographic, audio, video and online material, using corporate systems and standards.
- Manage online and offline media activity for allocated SEND work, build effective media relationships and coordinate responses to enquiries with the Communications Team.
- Explore innovative approaches that increase participation from communities and groups who may not traditionally engage with services.
- Evaluate channel effectiveness and recommend improvements using evidence, audience insight and accessibility considerations.

5. Support delivery, governance and team capacity

- Lead communication and engagement activity supporting the Local SEND Reform Plan and key priorities, including Experts at Hand, the Inclusion Framework, Locality Clusters, Local Offer development, sufficiency planning, preparation for adulthood and workforce development.
- Create communication and engagement plans aligned to programme milestones, outcomes, interdependencies and delivery requirements.
- Provide professional leadership, mentoring and quality assurance across SEND communications and engagement activity, ensuring consistent standards and effective use of communications resources Provide day-to-day professional

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coordination, task leadership, mentoring and development support to SEND engagement and information colleagues, working with their formal line manager where this is held elsewhere.

- Coordinate allocated communications and engagement resources and monitor agreed expenditure, ensuring value for money and compliance with Council requirements. Any formal budget or line-management accountability will be confirmed through the approved structure and job evaluation process.
- Report progress, impact, risks and issues through relevant SEND and Communications governance arrangements and escalate matters appropriately.
- Lead shared communications activity and joint campaigns with public sector and community partners.

6. Use insight to drive improvement

- Lead the evaluation of communications and engagement activity, presenting findings and recommendations to senior leaders and governance boards to inform future policy, service improvement and investment decisions

Analyse feedback, engagement data and communications performance to understand reach, participation, experience and impact.

- Use insight and learning to improve future communication and engagement activity and to inform service improvement.
- Produce concise reports for programme governance, self-evaluation, inspection readiness and partnership assurance.
- Monitor stakeholder understanding, confidence and involvement, with a focus on whether communication and engagement activity contributes to positive outcomes.

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Monitoring and ongoing development of outcomes

As part of the annual appraisal, outcome-based targets will be developed in conjunction with the postholder and will supplement this job profile. The job profile will be subject to regular review and the Council reserves its right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed above.

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The ideal candidate will have...

Experience - Essential

- Proven experience of leading successful integrated communications, engagement, consultation or campaign activity in public services or a complex organisation.
- Experience of creating and implementing communication and engagement strategies that support organisational change and improvement.
- Experience of building productive relationships and working collaboratively across multiple stakeholders, organisations and partnerships.
- Experience of creating accessible content for different audiences and channels, including digital, media and internal communications.
- Experience of designing and delivering workshops, events, consultations and co-production activity.
- Experience of managing websites, social media or online engagement platforms and evaluating communications impact.
- Experience of briefing senior leaders or elected members and presenting sensitive information clearly to the public.
- Experience of mentoring, coordinating or supervising colleagues and managing competing priorities.

Experience - Desirable

- Experience within SEND, education, health, local government or children's services.
- Experience of co-production with children and young people, parent carers and communities.

Behavioural attributes

- Aligns with Gloucestershire Employee Values and behaviours. The Council's values are Accountability, Integrity, Empowerment, Respect and Excellence.
- Passionate about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Collaborative, inclusive, respectful and skilled at building trust across complex partnerships.
- Confident, credible, politically astute and able to influence at all levels.
- Creative, curious and insight-driven, with a willingness to test new approaches.
- Proactive, resilient, solutions-focused and calm under pressure.
- Well organised, accountable and committed to continuous improvement.

Education and Qualifications - Essential

- Degree-level qualification, relevant professional communications qualification, or equivalent professional experience.
- Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to communications, engagement or stakeholder management.

Education and Qualifications - Desirable

- Professional qualification in communications, marketing, public relations, engagement or a related discipline.
- Qualification or professional development relevant to education, children's services, SEND or public sector communications.

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- Experience developing or managing a Local Offer or similar information service.
- Experience supporting transformation, inspection, improvement or reform programmes.
- Experience of budget monitoring or coordinating programme resources.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding - Essential

- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills and the ability to adapt messages for different audiences.
- Ability to turn complex policy, technical and service information into clear, accurate and engaging content.
- Strong stakeholder engagement, relationship-building, influencing and constructive challenge skills.
- Ability to plan and deliver integrated campaigns using evidence and audience insight.
- Ability to engage confidently and credibly with senior leaders, elected members, partners, communities and the media.
- Strong organisation and project management skills, with the ability to manage unpredictable demands and challenging deadlines.
- Proficiency in digital communications, web editing, social media and basic multimedia content creation.
- Understanding of inclusive communication, accessibility, equalities and writing for the web.
- Ability to use feedback, insight and data to evaluate impact and continuously improve practice.
- Understanding of the role of local government, political awareness and the need for impartiality.

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Knowledge, Skills and Understanding - Desirable

- Knowledge of SEND legislation, statutory guidance and the wider SEND system.
- Understanding of co-production principles and best practice.
- Understanding of the local authority, education and NHS landscape.
- Awareness of Ofsted/CQC area SEND inspection frameworks and improvement activity.
- Knowledge of Local Offer requirements and family-facing information services.

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