

Job Title:	Head of Communications and Engagement	Job Band:	Band 1
Reporting to:	Director of Strategy and Performance	Directorate:	Strategy and Performance
Network:	People and Purpose		
Direct Reports:	5 to 10		

Job Summary

The Head of Communications and Engagement provides strategic leadership for organisational communications, engagement, corporate messaging and reputation management. The role ensures employees, volunteers and stakeholders receive clear, timely and consistent communications that support delivery of organisational priorities by helping audiences understand what matters and why.

Working closely with senior leaders and colleagues, the postholder leads the planning, coordination and delivery of communications activity of audience-focused communications, appropriately prioritised and delivered through the right channels at the right times. The role is responsible for creating a coherent and inclusive communications approach that supports a positive St John experience.

The postholder acts as a trusted adviser on communications, engagement and reputation, developing clear and compelling organisational narratives, corporate messaging and reputational positioning around strategic priorities, change and emerging issues. They provide leadership on complex communications challenges, and ensure that the organisation is equipped with the systems, tools, workplans and governance arrangements for effective and consistent communication. The role works in close partnership with the Brand and Communications team, which holds responsibility for PR and media relations.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the development and delivery of a strategic approach to the organisation's communications and engagement needs, maintaining oversight of communications demand and activity to ensure effective prioritisation, coordination and sequencing in alignment with organisational strategy.
- Lead a cohesive, impactful internal communications function that ensures employees and volunteers are informed, connected and engaged, with a strong focus on clarity, consistency and two-way dialogue to help create a positive experience for all St John people.
- Lead the strategic communications approach to significant organisational risks and issues, including reputation management and crisis communications, ensuring appropriate preparation, governance and response arrangements are in place, and ensuring coordinated communications across audiences in liaison with the Brand and Communications team who lead media relations and PR.
- Ensure communications are tailored appropriately for different audiences, using expert knowledge, audience insight, segmentation, co-production and meaningful two-way dialogue to improve relevance, reach and effectiveness.
- Work with subject matter experts and senior leaders to shape and deliver communications delivery plans, with clearly articulated narratives and position statements for major organisational priorities, emerging issues and change initiatives.
- Provide expert, trusted advice enabling visible, authentic and effective leadership communications, particularly on sensitive and high-profile issues and areas of reputational risk
- Oversee internal communications systems, tools and governance arrangements, including the Connect intranet system, and develop frameworks, standards and guidance that support effective, legally-compliant and high-quality communications.
- Work closely with Brand, PR and Marketing colleagues to agree strategic direction on communications and messaging priorities, to enable coordinated delivery of campaigns, media relations and audience engagement.
- Establish and monitor relevant metrics and feedback mechanisms, using data and insight to evaluate reach, experience and effectiveness and continuously improve communications and engagement approaches.
- Lead and develop communications and engagement capabilities with direct reports and wider colleagues across the organisation, supporting organisational development and capacity-building priorities in these areas, in collaboration with People and Culture team.
- Lead and develop a high-performing team culture that reflects our St John values, encourages creativity and collaboration, and enables people to grow, contribute and thrive.

- Perform any other duties commensurate with these responsibilities, the band of the post and skills and qualifications of the post-holder.

Important things you need to know about this job

- Able to work flexibly as required to collaborate with employees and volunteers with varying availability
- Due to the nature of the role, the postholder may occasionally be required to provide out-of-hours strategic communications advice or approval in relation to significant organisational incidents or reputational risks
- Willing to travel nationally as required, including meetings at our London head office

Our Values and Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Our Values spell HEART which stands for Humanity, Excellence, Accountability, Responsiveness and Teamwork. Everyone who works at St John needs to be familiar with the HEART values and exemplify them.
- We are committed to being an organisation that is inclusive and welcoming of individual differences while championing equality of treatment and opportunity.

Person specification

This is a specification of the experience, skills etc. that are required to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post (as outlined in the job description) and forms the basis for selection.

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Education and Qualifications		
Educated to Degree level, or equivalent experience	✓	
Qualification or professional development in communications, organisational development, leadership or a related discipline		✓
Experience		
Leading internal and external communications and engagement within a complex organisation.	✓	
Developing and delivering communications and engagement frameworks that support strategic priorities, organisational effectiveness, and positive audience experience.	✓	
Leading and managing communications plans, narratives, messaging for significant organisational initiatives, emerging issues, or change programmes.	✓	
Maintaining oversight of multiple communications priorities and stakeholder requirements, balancing competing demands and ensuring effective coordination, prioritisation and delivery.	✓	
Providing communications advice and support to leaders and stakeholders at all levels, including on complex, sensitive or high-profile issues.	✓	
Leading organisational responses to communications, reputation management or stakeholder engagement issues, including crisis or incident communications where appropriate.	✓	
Developing communications metrics, standards, governance arrangements or tools that support consistent and effective communications.	✓	
Using stakeholder and audience insight and evidence-based evaluation to drive continuous improvement in communications and engagement effectiveness and audience experience.	✓	
Effectively Leading a team and managing and developing people	✓	
Work in a charity environment engaging with diverse teams, including volunteers and employees and responding to differing needs.		✓

Skills, knowledge and abilities		
Brings creativity, curiosity and fresh thinking to communications and engagement, using innovative approaches to connect people to the organisation's mission and priorities.	✓	
Excellent communication skills, able to convey complex information in a clear and compelling way that speaks to diverse internal and external audiences.	✓	
Highly-developed interpersonal and influencing skills, able to build trust, credibility and collaboration across organisational boundaries to achieve shared goals.	✓	
Strong strategic thinking skills, able to translate internal priorities and external developments into coherent communications positions and plans that support organisational objectives.	✓	
Excellent planning and execution skills, able to maintain oversight of multiple priorities, opportunities and risks in a dynamic and ambiguous environment.	✓	
Ability to effectively assess competing priorities, exercise sound judgement and make balanced decisions in ambiguous, complex or sensitive situations	✓	
Ability to build alignment and shared understanding across diverse groups, helping people connect organisational priorities to their own contribution and experience and act accordingly.	✓	
Ability to facilitate meaningful engagement and two-way communication, creating opportunities for people to contribute, provide feedback, and feel connected to organisational priorities.	✓	
Ability to establish and maintain clear processes, governance and ways of working that support organisational risk management, assurance and continuous improvement.	✓	
Authentic leadership skills, able to provide visible, credible and compassionate leadership.	✓	
Knowledge of communication, engagement, change management and reputation management methodologies and tools.	✓	
Knowledge of the media and digital communications landscape, with the ability to assess reputational risks and opportunities and advise accordingly.	✓	
Knowledge of the health, voluntary, public sector or wider operating environment relevant to St John Ambulance.		✓
DBS Requirement	Yes	No
Does the role require a DBS check to be carried out to be successful for the role		
If Yes what level of DBS check is required for the role Basic/Enhanced *please refer to the additional information page in reference for hiring manager guidance on DBS checks		✓

This job description is intended as an outline indicator of general areas of activity and will be amended in light of the changing needs of St John Ambulance. It is expected that the post holder will be as positive and flexible as possible in using this document as a framework.	
Initials: CV/SJo	Date of preparation: Jun 2026
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