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**Patrick Brown MLA**

*Alliance Party Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly for South Down Constituency*

**COMMUNICATIONS AND RESEARCH OFFICER**

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| Report to:  | Patrick Brown MLA |
| Office Location:  | Between Parliament Buildings, Stormont and Constituency Office at 9 Market Lane, Downpatrick, as required.  |
| Hours:  | 37 hours per week, Monday – Friday. |
| Holidays:  | As per determination |
| Salary:  | Grade 2, £30,888pa  |
| Pension:  | A central Assembly-approved pension scheme is provided. If enrolled an amount equivalent to 10% of employees salary will be paid into the pension scheme. |
| Duration:  | Fixed Term whilst the member remains an MLA or until legislation is introduced to change Constituency expense provision. Six-month probation period shall apply. |
| Closing Date | Noon, Friday 31st March 2023 |
| Interview dates: | It is anticipated that shortlisted candidates will be interviewed on Tuesday 4 April 2023. |

# JOB DESCRIPTION

“Responsibility for full range of communications and research support to Patrick Brown MLA preparing briefings, questions and speeches, monitoring business, developing Motions, Questions and Private Members Bills, identifying and responding to media and press opportunities and management of social media communications”

Research

* Assiting member in the preparation and submission of Assembly motions, Assembly Questions and Private Members Bills
* Monitoring business of the Assembly and Committees, and providing detailed prompt briefings for the MLA
* Drafting speeches, questions and briefing papers for the MLA
* Reviewing Assembly Committee papers, identifying issues and preparing range of suggested range questions
* Management of the MLA’s legislative and master diaries, communicating with Constituency staff to avoid conflicts
* Engaging and building relationships with various groups, representatives statutory organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations including attending meetings and conferences on behalf of the MLA
* Responding to policy and Assembly-business related correspondence, consultations and enquiries from constituents, the media, lobbyists and pressure groups
* Maintaining up to date knowledge or relevant legislation, policy and wider political and industry developments providing relevant regular briefings to the MLA
* Providing rapid, accurate and detailed research on a wide range of policy issues in support of the MLA’s work
* Providing research support for constituency casework and drafting correspondence where relevant

Communications

* Identifying and responding to media and press opportunities including replies to queries and the pro-active drafting of weekly releases
* Regularly review the MLA’s social media presence, providing a strategic plan on how to improve communications with and for constituents using various resources including social media, website and other means
* Manage the MLA’s various digital platforms to improve stakeholder engagement and awareness of the MLA’s legislative and policy work
* Create dynamic written, graphic and occasional video content. Support will be provided where the succesdful candidate does not have previous design or filmography experience
* Create content that promotes constituent interaction, increases constituent presence on the MLA’s various platforms and encourages participation by constituents
* Propose concepts for improved communication for and with constituents and key stakeholders in tandem with constituency staff
* Coordinate and plan all communications in tandem with constituency staff to ensure coverage in national and local press
* To write, produce and distribute e-newsletters and other material to confirm the activities and work of the MLA and constituency office

Other responsibilities

* Planning and organising of events as required including physical and virtual
* Liaising with constituency staff to manage processing of casework, and assisting with casework where required
* Working with constituents directly on casework cases as required ensuring that casework is logged and dealt with sensitively and confidentially
* Ensuring efficient data and file management to comply with GDPR and data management
* Attending work related training and networking meetings to develop skills
* Oversight of work experience placements
* Other duties as required in support of the MLA carrying out their Assembly duties. In particular in light of current political uncertainty, this role is likely to involve a significant casework and constituency component in the absence of a functioning Assembly.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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|  | **Essential Criteria**  | **Desirable Criteria**  |
| **Professional / Technical Qualifications**  | * 7 GCSE’s / O’ Levels or Equivalent at Grade C or above including both English Language and Mathematics
* Third level qualification in Humanities, Journalism, Economics or Law
* Excellent written skills (Grammar, punctuation and spelling)
* Proficiency in the use of

Microsoft Outlook, Word and Excel packages  | * Recognised qualification in ICT
* Recognised qualification in leadership or project management
* Recognised qualification in marketing or content creation
* Postgraduate degree in Humanities, Journalism, Economics or Law
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| **Experience / Job Knowledge**  | * Minimum of one years’ experience in a paid capacity undertaking policy research and analysis in a political context and/or:

Minimum one years’ experience in a paid capacity working in communications role such as PR, social media, marketing, journalism * Experience and knowledge of the legislative process and working of the Northern Ireland Assembly in a paid or unpaid capacity
* Knowledge of Northern Irish political context
* Minimum one years' paid or unpaid experience in a role requiring use of CRM and/or project management software packages
* Experience managing and generating content for professional social media channels
* Experience of working in a small team
 | * Minimum of one years’ experience working in a paid capacity in a project management role
* Minimum of six months experience working in a paid capacity in speech writing or similar role
* Knowledge of and interest in animal welfare issues generally, and specific legislation within NI
* Knowledge of political economy issues in a paid or academic capacity
* Knowledge of animal welfare issues in a paid or academic capacity
* Experience of dealing with sensitive and confidential information (both verbal and written) in line with the Data Protection Actand GDPR
* Previous experience of working with the public
* Ability to update and maintain a database
* Experience of managing a small team
* Experience using software packages such as Adobe creative cloud, iMovie or similar
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| **Personal Qualities /** **Skills**  | * Good punctuality
* Excellent interpersonal skills in person and on the phone
* Excellent initiative and ability to deliver tasks with minimal direction
* Flexible approach to work duties
* Understanding of Alliance Party core objectives
 | * Time management
* Ability to multi-task
* Ability to perform under pressure
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| **Circumstances**  | * Able to work unsupervised and as lone worker in office when required
 | * May be required to travel to meetings
* May be required to work outside of normal working hours for example during late sittings of Assembly or drafting of emergency releases/posts
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Applicants must demonstrate clearly on their application form how they meet the criteria.