Head of Public Relations job description

This job description gives an overview of the kind of work and level of responsibility expected for this role. It's not a complete list of all tasks, and duties may change occasionally. But the overall nature of the job and the level of responsibility will stay the same.

Section 1 - Job details

Job title	Head of Public Relations
Directorate	Research and External Affairs
Department or team (if applicable)	Public Relations
Reports to	Director of External Affairs
Direct reports	Senior PR Manager Senior Celebrity and VIP Supporter Manager
Job location	London office with flexibility to work remotely
Contracted hours are agreed locally with line managers	

Section 2 - Job purpose

(Normally no more than 2 or 3 sentences explaining the relevance and purpose of the role)

To provide leadership and management of the MS Society's public relations and celebrity engagement activity, ensuring the team's work supports issue based campaigns, our research programme, brand engagement, income generation and reputation management.

Section 3 - Key responsibilities and accountabilities

(Normally between 4 and 10)

	One line description of responsibility or accountability
1	Responsible for setting the strategic plans for the Public Relations team covering the medium to long term and aligning with the MS Society's overall organisational goals.
2	Lead, motivate and develop a high functioning team.
3	Responsible for leading proactive and reactive media relations activity across the UK supporting the delivery of our overall engagement plans, major campaigns and fundraising appeals.
4	Continuously develop an active UK wide press and PR function working effectively with colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and ensuring media spokespeople are trained and supported.
5	Through our media relations activity enhance and protect the MS Society's external reputation as a source of trusted and independent news and information about MS and ensure the voice of people with MS has a place within public debate.
6	Responsible for continuously monitoring and anticipating risks to the charity's reputation, ensuring robust processes are in place for crisis communications that successfully mitigate risks.
7	Oversee the continuous development of an effective engagement programme with celebrities and VIPs (including our Ambassador Programme), to support our work and increase our reach and engagement with target audiences.
8	Represent the organisation externally at a senior level.
9	As a member of the Research & External Affairs leadership team, contribute to the leadership, planning and budget setting of the Directorate as a whole.
	Acting as a leading authority on matters related to Public Relations and crisis management, providing advice across the organisation.

Section 4 – Dimension of the role

Resources	Responsible for proposing and agreeing the annual budget and delivering against the budget.
Staff or volunteers	Line management of 2 staff focussed on Public Relations and celebrity and VIP management.
Budget	Setting and managing Public Relations budget of approx. £375k.
Key relationships	Chief Executive and Executive Directors. Country Directors and teams. Directors and Heads across the organisation. Trustees (on specific topics). Journalists, particularly in relation to health Celebrities and VIPs. Freelancers, agencies and suppliers. People affected by MS involved in Public Relations projects and media opportunities.
Information security and data governance	Responsibility for undertaking relevant actions and responsibilities according to the role assigned by the MS Society

Section 5 – Key deliverables

	Measures of success
1	MS Society responds proactively and reactively in the media to issues of importance to people affected by MS.
2	People affected by MS are involved in relevant stages of the MS Society Public Relations and media work.
3	Crisis communications processes are in place and understood across the organisation.
4	Celebrities and VIPs potential is maximised to support our work and reach target audiences.

Section 6 – Competencies

Competency	Level required (see below)	B	E	A	T
Fosters co-production	**4**		**X**		**X**
Open to change and innovation	**4**	**X**		**X**	
Sound decisions	**4**		**X**	**X**	
Collaborative working	**5**				**X**
Effective communication	**4**			**X**	**X**
Outcome focussed	**4**	**X**			**X**
Inclusivity	**4**				**X**
Accountability	**4**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Tech savvy	**4**	**X**		**X**	

Level	Description
5	**Strategic** Has a broad and advanced understanding of the organisation's policies, procedures, and how things work across the MS Society, or has deep expert knowledge in a specific area. Shares expert advice on topics related to MS and represents the MS Society in public or external settings. Clearly explains the organisation's vision and strategy in a way that others can understand and act on. Makes important decisions that have a big impact and ensures the right resources are in place to support them.
4	**Expert or recognised authority** Shows expert knowledge and strong leadership, influencing others in a positive way. Colleagues regularly perform tasks at a high level, instinctively understanding what needs to be done, how it affects other areas, and how it can be improved for the MS Society's benefit. They have deep expertise and focus on developing their skills. They're the go-to person for advice and are known for their knowledge, using their experience to tackle new challenges. They are responsible for managing significant resources, like people and budgets, related to their work.
3	**Complex** These roles may or may not involve managing others, but they require using experience or professional knowledge to handle complex information or raw data. The work often involves solving unusual problems by using your own judgment, without needing instructions. You'll also need to work with others to overcome challenges and achieve results across different teams or departments.
2	**Enhanced** These roles may or may not involve managing people, but they are responsible for handling cases and providing face-to-face services. Or managing internal or external processes and people (including volunteers). People in these roles understand how their team or function works, help build good relationships inside and outside the organisation, and work together to achieve results. They use their knowledge to organise and manage tasks and processes, solve everyday problems, and help improve the way things are done..
1	**Foundation** People in these roles contribute to the MS Society without any responsibility for managing processes or people. People in these roles understand what's needed for their job and how it fits with other roles and tasks. They know what needs to be done and have the skills and ability to complete those tasks.

Section 7 - Qualifications and training

(List qualifications and training needed for this role)

Qualification or equivalent	
Internal training	Understanding MS
Other professional training or qualifications	

Section 8 - Person specification (knowledge, experience, skills and attributes needed for the job)

Essential requirements will be tested at application stage (A) and used as shortlisting criteria for deciding who will be invited to interview. There should be no more than 7 essential shortlisting criteria.

Requirement	Essential	Desirable	Tested*
Significant experience of developing, implementing and reviewing Public Relations strategies	X		A
Proven experience of managing successful media relations activities, contributing to successful high profile integrated campaigns to raise awareness of an organisation's work, change public policy and generate support for major fundraising appeals using a variety of tactics	X		AIP
Significant reputational management experience, including experience of successfully managing crisis communications situations	X		AIP
Experience of working with celebrities and VIPs and promoting their support to the media		X	IP
Excellent written and verbal communications skills, with the ability to communicate effective and to influence and engage with a wide range of stakeholders across different media	X		A
Experience of training, advising and supporting staff to be effective media spokespeople, including senior staff.	X		A
Excellent understanding of the health, social care and welfare external environment across the UK		X	I
A proven track record of success in leading and managing a team of comparable size and complexity, focussed on impact and delivering outstanding results in a team environment	X		AIP
Experience of strategic planning and budget management, as well as successful programme and project management/implementation	X		AIP
Experience of involving people through engagement and co-production		X	I

*Tested – A (application), I (interview), T (test or Assessment), P (through performance reviews including probation, 1:1s and PDR)

Section 9 – Other information and requirements

Confidentiality	Make sure sensitive or personal information is kept private and only shared with the right people. All information must be handled according to GDPR and other relevant laws and rules.
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Make sure all your work supports our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. As a charity focused on helping disabled people, we expect everyone to be open-minded and creative in finding and removing any barriers that might affect disabled people, including colleagues, who work with us.
Health and safety	Help create a safe working environment by following all health and safety rules and completing any required training.
Safeguarding	We're committed to safe and responsible recruitment. We aim to protect the wellbeing of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and we expect all staff and volunteers to support this. Background checks and a Disclosure and Barring Service scheme check **will not** be required for this role.
Digital, data and Technology	Use technology confidently to do your job, including internet voice and video calls, Microsoft Office, the MS Society intranet, HR and finance systems, case management software, and other MS Society tools and apps.
Unusual specific physical or mental demands associated with the role	N/A
Travel requirements	Occasional travel as required by role, including to London office
Unsocial hours	Evening or weekend meetings/events/responding to media enquiries as required by role, in line with MS Society TOIL policy

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