

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER – GRADE VII ANALOGOUS

QUALIFICATIONS AND PARTICULARS

CLOSING DATE 29th SEPTEMBER 2020 at 4.00 p.m.

OVERVIEW

Kildare County Council has an exciting opportunity for an experienced, enthusiastic and innovative candidate who will lead our Communications Team and implement Communications Strategy. He/she will report to the Senior Executive Officer of Corporate Affairs.

We are looking to appoint a Media Communications Officer at Administrative Officer Grade VII level and the successful candidate will have the ability, drive and vision to relay the broad and varied flow of information about Kildare County Council to a wide range of stakeholders to include citizens, elected members and staff.

BACKGROUND

Kildare County Council is the primary unit of local government in Kildare. The organisation provides services in the following areas to a population of over 222,000 people. Kildare County Council employs over 1,000 staff and has an estimated revenue and capital spend of over €151m and €133m respectively in 2019 allocated under eight service divisions

- Housing & Building
- Road, Transport & Safety
- Water Supply & Sewerage
- Development Management
- Environmental Protection
- Recreation & Amenity
- Agriculture & Education
- Miscellaneous Services

The Communications Officer will lead and manage a communications team whose role will be to lead the delivery and implementation of a communications strategy to ensure the objectives of the Council are achieved to the highest standard.

The Communications team will work with each of the departments within the Council to publicise events, make people aware of new policy initiatives and provide citizens with the information that they require to fully avail of the Council's range of services.

The work of the Communications Team will include the following:

- Review and implementation of the Communications Strategy
- Press and media queries
- Press releases and speech preparation
- Content creation and management, in tandem with the I.T. Section, of the Council's website
- Development and oversight of the Kildare County Council brand.
- Citizen Engagement and Consultation Initiatives
- Social media
- Crisis communications
- Monitor the implementation of our Irish Language Scheme
- Communications and media monitoring
- Preparing officials prior to media engagements.

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QUALIFICATIONS

The office is whole time permanent and pensionable.

Character

Candidates shall be of good character.

Health

Candidates shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Education, Training, Experience, etc.

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms:

- (i)(a) have obtained at least Grade D (or a Pass), in Higher or Ordinary Level, in five subjects (or four subjects if Irish is included) from the approved list of subjects in the Department of Education Established Leaving Certificate Examination or Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme including Irish and/or English and one of the following: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics, and
- (b) have obtained at least Grade C (or Honours) in higher level (or Honours) papers in three subjects in that examination (or two subjects if Irish and/or one of the following is included: Mathematics, Accounting, Business Organisation or Economics) or
- (ii) have obtained a comparable standard in an equivalent examination, or
- (iii) hold a third level qualification of at least degree standard, and
- (iv) have satisfactory experience in administrative procedures, including adequate practical experience in work of an executive nature, office organisation and control of staff.

Desirable Attributes:

The ideal candidate will also:

Have a qualification at level 7 or higher in media/communications/public relations or a related discipline.

The ideal candidate should:

- Be a highly organised self-starter and natural leader with the ability to manage and motivate a team.
- Have experience in corporate and consumer public relations;
- Have experience in devising and implementing campaigns;
- Have strong media relations experience;
- Have excellent interpersonal, presentation and communications skills
- Have strong creative-thinking and planning abilities
- Have superior writing skills together with an ability to produce high quality analysis and reporting
- Have strong awareness and interest in existing and emerging communications technologies
- Have the ability to manage the delivery of several tasks/projects concurrently
- Have excellent analytical skills, with the ability to overview situations, review and evaluate, defining plans and setting targets in order to achieve goals
- Have excellent project management and budget management skills
- Have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the local government environment including services, policies, legislation and issues
- Have a creative approach to problem solving and a collaborative approach to working with others to reach a solution

KEY COMPETENCIES

Candidates are expected to be able to demonstrate in their application and at interview that they possess these competencies through the experience and skills they have gained to date.

<p>Management and Change</p>	<p>Strategic Ability Displays the ability to think and act strategically to ensure that their functional responsibility is properly aligned with purpose, mission and vision of the Council.</p> <p>Political Awareness Has a clear understanding of the political reality and context of the local authority.</p> <p>Networking and Representing Develops and maintains positive and beneficial relationships with relevant interests. Sustains a positive image and profile of the local authority.</p> <p>Bringing about Change Effectively manages the introduction of change; fosters a culture of creativity in employees and overcomes resistance to change.</p>
<p>Delivering Results</p>	<p>Problem Solving and Decision Making Can pinpoint critical information and can address issues logically. Understands the context and impact of decisions made. Acts decisively and makes timely, informed and effective decisions.</p> <p>Operational Planning Contributes to operational plans and develops team plans in line with priorities and actions for their area of operation, having regard to corporate goals, operational objectives, available resources. Establishes high quality service and customer care standards.</p> <p>Managing Resources Manages the allocation, use and evaluation of resources to ensure they are used efficiently to deliver on operational plans. Drives and promotes reduction in cost and minimisation of waste.</p>

	<p>Delivering Quality Outcomes Promotes the achievement of quality outcomes in delivering services, which are linked to the corporate priorities, with a focus on continuous improvement. Evaluates the outcomes achieved against operational plans, identifies learning and implements improvements required.</p>
<p>Performance through People</p>	<p>Leading and Motivating Leads, motivates and engages others to achieve quality results.</p> <p>Managing Performance Effectively manages performance using the PMDS process Builds and leads a positive, diverse and productive section/units and teams effectively. Empowers and encourages people to deliver their part of the operational plan.</p> <p>Communicating Effectively Recognises the value of and requirement to communicate effectively with all employees. Has effective verbal and written communication skills. Has good interpersonal skills.</p>
<p>Personal Effectiveness</p>	<p>Resilience and Personal Well Being Remains calm under pressure and can separate personal issues from work issues. Values the well-being of self and others by managing stress levels and work-life balance. Has a strong sense of self belief.</p> <p>Integrity Is honest and trustworthy in all dealings. Adopts an even handed approach and is fair, consistent and open in all matters. Models and promotes appropriate social, ethical and Council standards in all interactions. Demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering an effective Public Service.</p> <p>Personal Motivation, Initiative and Achievement Is enthusiastic about the role and is motivated in the face of difficulties and obstacles. Does more than is required or expected, anticipating situations and acting to pre-empt problems. Takes action within the bounds of own ability. Creates new opportunity.</p>

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PARTICULARS OF EMPLOYMENT

Salary

€49,835 per annum to €60,445 per annum (maximum)

€62,611 per annum (LSI 1) (after 3 years satisfactory service at maximum)

€64,786 per annum (LSI 2) (after 6 years satisfactory service at maximum)

Entry point to this scale will be determined in accordance with Circulars issued by the Department of the Housing, Planning and Local Government.

In accordance with Departmental Circular letter EL 02/2011, a person who is not a serving local authority employee on or after 1st January 2011, will enter the scale for the position at the minimum point.

In accordance with circular EL05/2016 existing Public Servants in analogous grades and pay scales when moving without a break from one part of the public service to another may retain current point on scale.

The salary shall be fully inclusive and shall be as determined from time to time. Holders of the office shall pay to the local authority any fees or other monies (other than their inclusive salary) payable to or received by them by virtue of their office or in respect of services which they are required by or under any enactment to perform.

Duties

The duties of the post include, but are not limited to the following:

The Communications Officer will:

- Provide communications support and advice to the Chief Executive, the Management Team and staff across the organisation.
- Ensure a strategic approach to all communications.
- Implement and lead the delivery of the Communications Strategy incorporating greater use of all media platforms and the Council's website as communications tools.

- Ensure that all stakeholders understand the work of Kildare County Council and implement and measure the effectiveness of communication strategies.

Specific responsibilities will include:

- Coordinate and advise in relation to the preparation and promotion of reports, including the Annual Report, Annual Service Delivery Plan and Corporate Plan, periodic newsletters, and such other reports and documents as required.
- Manage and lead the Communications Team.
- Further develop an awareness of the importance of communications throughout the organisation.
- Ensure effective dissemination of information via the website, social media and the staff intranet.
- Work closely with the I.T. Department in relation to management and development of the Council's website.
- Implementation of the Irish Language Scheme.
- Lead the Press/Media Office and any PR functions of the organisation.
- Identify new opportunities to develop public understanding of the role of the Council.
- Develop and implement a brand strategy
- Identify further opportunities to promote the Kildare County Council brand.
- Promote the key activities of Kildare County Council including briefing the media and key stakeholders.
- Organising press conferences and media briefings.
- Liaising with the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team in writing and drafting material and advising on media and communications issues.
- Liaising with the Cathaoirleach and the Elected Members and advising on media and communications issues.
- Ensure quality and accurate media reporting.
- Preparing officials prior to media engagements.
- Lead, manage and maintain an effective communications network across the organisation.
- Organise surveys/questionnaires to ascertain public opinion and perception of the Council's services, activities and communication methods.
- Preparation and delivery of the Council's media strategy and communications response in the event of a major emergency.

These tasks which are indicative rather than exhaustive are carried out under general guidance. The duties and responsibilities assigned to this person are based on the current stated role and may change from time to time.

Working Hours (37 Hour Week)

The hours of work are 9.00 a.m. to 5.24 p.m. Mondays to Fridays (rotas operate for lunchtime opening). Kildare County Council also has a flexi time system in operation, details of which are available from the Human Resources Section.

The Council reserves the right to alter your hours of work from time to time.

You may be required to work overtime on various occasions.

All hours of work will be subject to and recorded in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 and the Organisation of Working Time Act (Regulations) 2001.

Location

Staff will be based at Áras Chill Dara, or other council facilities within the county.

Kildare County Council reserves the right to assign you to any premises in use by the Council, now or in the future.

Annual Leave

Granting of annual leave, payment for annual leave and arrangements for public holidays will be governed by the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 and the nationally agreed annual leave scheme for the sector. The annual leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The current leave entitlement for this post is **30** days.

Recruitment

The appointment will be made on the result of an interview conducted by, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Candidates may be shortlisted on the basis of relevance and extent of their previous experience, as outlined on their application, and these applicants only will be called for interview.

A panel may be formed as a result of these interviews from which further Communications Officer Grade 7 Analogous positions arising may be filled. Candidates whose names are on a panel and who satisfy the local authority that they possess the qualifications declared for the office and that they are otherwise suitable for appointment may be appointed as appropriate vacancies arise.

Medical

For the purpose of satisfying the requirements as to health, it will be necessary for successful candidates, before they are appointed, to undergo a medical examination by a qualified medical practitioner to be nominated by the local

authority. The authority reserves the right to request further medicals during the period of employment.

Garda Vetting

A person who is being considered for appointment may be required to complete a Garda Vetting application, the results of which will be considered before an offer of employment is made.

Probation

Where a person is permanently appointed to Kildare County Council, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) There shall be a period after appointment takes effect, during which such a person shall hold the position on probation;
- (b) Such period shall be one year, but the Chief Executive may, at his discretion, extend such period;
- (c) Such a person shall cease to hold the position at the end of the period of probation unless during this period the Chief Executive has certified that the service is satisfactory;
- (d) There will be assessment(s) during the probationary period;
- (e) Officers who have already completed a probationary period with another Local Authority will not be obliged to serve probation with Kildare County Council.

Residence

Holders of the office shall reside in the district in which their duties are to be performed or within a reasonable distance thereof.

Superannuation and Retirement

If you are pensionable under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998 and are liable to pay Class A PRSI contributions, you would be required in respect of superannuation to make contributions at the rate of 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependent or qualified children) plus 1.5% of full pensionable remuneration. You are required in respect of spouses' and children's pension benefit to contribute at the rate of 1.5% of full pensionable remuneration in accordance with the terms of schemes made under the Local Government (Superannuation) (Consolidation) Scheme 1998. Maximum retirement age is 70.

If the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 applies to your employment, 65 is the minimum age at which your pension may be paid.

As a new entrant to the public service, under the terms of this legislation you will not be required to retire on grounds of age.

Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority who are liable to pay the Class D rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of their superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 5% of their pensionable remuneration. You may also be required to pay Spouses and Children/ Widows and Orphans contributions at the rate of 1.5% of gross pay. Maximum retirement age is 70.

Persons who become pensionable staff of a local authority for the first time on or after 01 January 2013 are assigned to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme with effect from the date of appointment. The scheme is contributory and provides pension, retirement gratuity, death gratuity and survivors benefits.

If you are pensionable under the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other provisions) Act 2012, you are liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution. You are required to pay contributions as follows: 3% of gross remuneration and 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependent or qualified children). The minimum age at which you may retire is allied with the State Contributory Pension age (currently 66, rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028). The maximum retirement age is 70.

To qualify for a pension the successful candidate must have served a minimum of two years employment in a local authority.

You are reminded that under this agreement the Council may refer you to a medical advisor at any time to determine fitness for carrying out the duties to which you have been assigned.

Further information is available from the Human Resources Department.

Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment

Pension Abatement

If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her re-employment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Period of Acceptance

The local authority shall require persons to whom an appointment is offered to take up such appointment within a period of not more than one month and if they fail to take up the appointment within such period or such longer period as the local authority in its absolute discretion may determine, the local authority shall not appoint them.

The County Council will not be responsible for any expenses a candidate may incur in attending for interview.

Mobile Phone:

The person employed will be required to carry/ use a County Council mobile phone during working hours and while on call.

Travelling

The applicant must at the latest date for receipt of applications hold a full driving licence for Class B vehicles and, shall drive a car in the course of their duties and for this purpose provide and maintain a car to the satisfaction of the local authority. The council must be indemnified on their insurance.