Job Information

Assistant Media Relations Officer (Ref: 6577)

To apply you should read this information about the job, the application process and complete the application form and equal opportunities monitoring form.

The closing date for completed applications is 5pm Thursday 16 August 2012.

About the Parliament

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) ensures that the Parliament has the property, staff and services it needs. The SPCB is made up of the Presiding Officer and four MSPs who are appointed by the Parliament. It makes decisions on a wide range of issues to do with running the Parliament. It also employs the staff who work for the Parliament.

Parliamentary staff are not civil servants. They are independent of the Government and provide an impartial service to MSPs of all political parties. There are many groups of staff performing a variety of tasks. These roles range from clerks who advise MSPs on detailed matters of parliamentary procedure, to security and IT staff. The Clerk/Chief Executive is the Parliament’s most senior official. The Chief Executive has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Parliament runs smoothly and efficiently. You can find out more about the Parliament on our website

We aim to be a progressive employer. We offer staff an excellent range of benefits, including:

- guaranteed pay progression to the salary maximum for satisfactory performers
- a choice of pension schemes
- on-site occupational health services
- strong development and training policies
- interest-free travel season ticket loans
- an active equal opportunities policy
- a comprehensive work-life balance policy:
  - enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay
  - 30 days annual leave plus 10.5 days public and privilege holidays
  - childcare voucher scheme
  - special leave
About the Posts

This appointment is permanent, pensionable and based in Edinburgh. It is a part time, job share, post.

The Media Relations Office (MRO) is responsible for promoting the wide-ranging work of the Scottish Parliament, providing journalists with up-to-date information on the Committees, Chamber business, the work of the SPCB and the public engagement activities undertaken by the Parliament.

Duties

Reporting to a Senior Media Relations Officer, the main focus of this job is to ensure the smooth day to day running of the office and supporting the team. You will be responsible for dealing with accreditation of journalists to the Parliament; administering responses to media FOI enquiries; organising meetings, preparing minutes and agendas; drafting correspondence; and managing records and office resources, including processing invoices. Your responsibilities will include:

- Preparation and circulation of the daily newspapers cuts (local and national) and the broadcast monitoring note.
- Media monitoring: this includes monitoring the Press Association wires; BBC websites; news websites etc and updating LG members and SPCB via email.
- Dealing with all accreditation requests; maintaining the accreditation database; and auditing the day pass system.
- Providing administrative support to the head of office.
- Budget monitoring; processing all invoices using EASEbuy; and keeping accurate financial spreadsheets recording MRO’s spending.
- Offering support to the wider team with uploading of news releases and processing images and text for the web.
- Taking incoming requests and calls from the media, responding where directed.
- Media facilitation for more straightforward requests for filming and access.
- General office duties: organising meetings; minutes and agenda preparation; catering; drafting correspondence; administrative functions such as records management and office resources.
- Preparation of Editors’ briefings for Presiding Officer and Chief Executive.
- Acting as Finance Liaison Officer and Records Management Champion.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience Required

You must have:

- Organisational skills
- Good general IT skills – particularly MS Word
- Teamworking and interpersonal skills
- Oral and written communication skills

Assistant Media Relations Officer
The ability to work quickly and accurately under pressure

An interest in and a level of general parliamentary / political awareness would be desirable.

Use section 5 of the application form to provide evidence of these qualities.

**Salary**

If you are successful, you will be offered a starting salary at the minimum of the applicable grade range shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3 (Max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>£19,303</td>
<td>£20,461</td>
<td>£21,689</td>
<td>£22,991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progression from your starting salary is dependent on you performing the duties of your job to an acceptable standard in accordance with the Scottish Parliament Performance Management System. During your first 9 months in post (the probationary period), your line manager will meet with you on a monthly basis to carry out performance, conduct and attendance assessments, followed by completion of a final appraisal report to be carried out 9 months after you take up your appointment. Thereafter, if your appointment is confirmed, you will follow the standard appraisal cycle (1 April – 31 March). You will progress at the rate of one scale point per year provided you are performing your duties to the required standard. Your progression date will be the anniversary of taking up the appointment in the grade. This means that, subject to performing the duties of your job to an acceptable standard, you are guaranteed to reach the maximum of your scale within the number of years indicated above.

You will be paid monthly in arrears by Bank Credit Transfer directly into your bank or building society account on the last banking day of the month.

**Interviews**

You will be interviewed by a panel of two Board Members. Your interview will last about 40 minutes.

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**Other Information**

**Hours**

The way the Parliament works means that different groups of staff work varying hours and patterns. You may have to work longer hours when Parliament is sitting and reduced hours during recess periods. For this reason we have very progressive flexible working hours (FWH) arrangements. You will be required to work within these arrangements.

Notwithstanding your individual working pattern, if you are employed on a full time basis, you will be contracted to work 1,631 hours per year. This is the equivalent to a 37 hour week, excluding breaks, annual leave and public and privilege holidays. If you work on a part-time basis, you will be required to work the number of hours specified in your appointment letter.

Bandwidths are the hours within which staff may work and accrue time under the FWH arrangements. The bandwidth is from 7:00am to 8:00pm for all work areas and from 7:00am to 10:00pm for Sub Editors, the Deputy Editor and the Editor in the Official Report.
**Annual Leave**

Your annual leave allowance will be 30 days. Our annual leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August. If you take up your appointment during the course of the leave year, your annual leave allowance will be proportional.

In addition, you will also receive 10½ days public and privilege holidays. They are normally taken at fixed times of the year. If you are required to work on a public or privilege holiday overtime arrangements will apply.

If you work on a part-time basis, your annual leave and public and privilege holiday entitlement will be pro-rated.

As with working hours, there may be restrictions on annual leave when Parliament is sitting. In any event you may not take annual leave unless it has been agreed, normally in advance, with your line manager.

**Pension**

Unless you choose otherwise we offer the opportunity to join the Civil Service pension arrangements, which include a valuable range of benefits. We will make substantial employer contributions towards your Civil Service pension. More information can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website at [www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions)

**Age**

The SPCB does not operate a retirement age policy. This means that there is no upper age limit beyond which you would be automatically retired and you are free to continue in employment for as long as you wish subject to the normal rules concerning Performance, Attendance and Conduct.

**Travelling and Other Expenses**

We pay travelling and other expenses if you incur them whilst on official duty. However, we will not reimburse the cost of normal daily travel between home and office.

**Probation**

You will be on probation for nine months. Confirmation of your appointment is dependent on the satisfactory completion of this probation period, taking into account your job performance, conduct and attendance.

**Outside and Political Activities**

As an employee of the SPCB, you may not take part in any activity that would in any way conflict with the interests of the Parliament or be inconsistent with your duties and responsibilities.

You may not take part in national political activities, although you may seek permission to take part in local political activities. If permission is granted, it will be subject to the observance of
general rules relating to possible conflicts between your official responsibilities and your political activities.

**Health and Safety**

The SPCB is committed to promoting health and safety as a priority issue. Its aim is to take appropriate and reasonable steps to ensure that it conducts its business in such a way that employees and other people who may be affected by its work are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

**Data Protection**

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, information provided by you will be processed and stored to provide management information for recruitment and equal opportunities monitoring purposes. We will also use this information to form the basis of your personnel record if you are successful for the job. Otherwise we will not retain this information for any longer than it is needed and we would normally dispose of paper records after 6 months. You will have the right of access to any information held about you.

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**The Application and Selection Process**

Our recruitment policy is based on the principle of fair and open competition and selection on merit. Each application is assessed in the same way, against the same, agreed criteria for the vacancy in question. “Criteria” means the key skills that we think you need to be able to do a job. Our application form is split into two sections to ensure anonymity during short-listing. **Part A** contains only personal information, such as your name and address. It is not seen by the selection panel. **Part B** is for information relevant to your application. It is the only part of your application the selection panel gets. You must also complete our Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. Information contained in this form is used only for monitoring purposes. It will be treated in the strictest confidence and held securely within the Human Resources Office.

**Planning and Completing your Form**

The information that you provide in Part B of your application is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be short-listed for interview. Part B of the form is your chance to demonstrate that you have the skills required. **You should use section 5 of the application form (Skills and Knowledge) to address each of the skills listed.** You should use specific evidence to support your statements. You must show us what you did, the reasons for your action, what happened, what you took into account and the outcome. The selection panel will not make any assumptions about your skills and abilities, for instance through job titles. Please do not send us your CV instead of a completed form as it will not be considered.

Versions of the form are available on our website.

**Address:** The Human Resources Office  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

**Telephone:** 0131 348 6500 or (Calls via RNID Typetalk welcome)  
Textphone: 0800 092 6500

Assistant Media Relations Officer
Submitting your Application Form

Postal Applications

Forms should be sent to the address above.

Email Applications

On-screen applications should be e-mailed to: jobs@scottish.parliament.uk All e-mails are automatically acknowledged. Please note that evidence of sending an e-mail does not automatically mean that we have received it.

If you do not receive our automatic response within 2 working days of submitting your application by email, please contact us immediately.

Progress of Vacancies

You can keep track of what stage we are at with vacancies on our website at http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/12442.aspx

Disability

We guarantee to interview any disabled applicants who meet the essential requirements for the job they’ve applied for. The essential requirements for this job are described under the section “Skills and Knowledge”. This means that if you meet any qualification or experience criteria that we have set, and are assessed as providing “acceptable” evidence of the skills and qualities asked for we will automatically invite you to interview. If you have a disability and would like to talk to us about any aspects of this job please get in touch using the phone numbers or addresses listed above.

Short-listing

Each application is given a score and a final short-list is agreed by the selection panel. The applicants that receive the highest scores will be invited to interview (with the exception of candidates who apply under the Disability Symbol Scheme who may be invited if they receive the minimum acceptable score)

Suggestions

We want all applicants to feel that they have been treated fairly, even if they are not appointed. If you have any comments or suggestions about the way in which this recruitment campaign has been handled, we would really like to hear from you.

Referees

Please do not send references or testimonials with your form. If you are successful, we will approach previous and/or current employers for a reference. We can only make a formal offer

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of employment once we have received these references. If you have no employment history we may approach any school, college or university you have attended.

**Health Assessment and Security Clearance**

If you are successful at interview you will be asked to complete a health assessment form. If necessary we may ask you to attend a medical assessment. Assessments are carried out by our occupational health supplier in the Parliament building. The reason why we carry out a health assessment is to make sure that the job you have applied for is suitable for you. It is also to find out if we need to carry out any adjustments to help you do the job.

Security clearance is required for this post. If you are successful we will ask you to complete a security questionnaire. This form will explain our security vetting policy. We can only make a formal offer of employment once the security clearance process is complete.

**Visa and Work Permits**

There are no nationality restrictions on who the SPCB employs. You must however check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment in the United Kingdom before you apply for a post. If you are successful at interview we will make a complete enquiry into your eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

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Please note that this document is provided for information only and does not form part of the SPCB’s terms and conditions of employment.

**Equal Opportunities**

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment and to eliminating unfair discrimination in its employment practices. It will seek to ensure that all job applicants and staff are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. No job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his: gender; gender identity; sexual orientation, marital or family status; racial group (includes colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origin), religion, religious belief, or a similar philosophical belief (or lack of any of these); disability (unless such treatment is objectively justified); age (subject to retirement practice age); part-time or fixed-term contract status (unless such treatment is objectively justified); and trade union membership status/activities.