



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# **ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATION OFFICER POST**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 10 October 2014

**Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval for the establishment of a Communication Officer post within the Corporate Communications and Administration team.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Corporate Communications team provides support to the Authority in all matters regarding marketing and communications, internal communications, press and media handling, digital and social media engagement and provision of materials to support Prevention activities.
- 1.2 As part of the last structural review, the Head of Communications role was extended to include the management of the Corporate Administration team as well as Corporate Communications, which has widened the scope and demands upon the role.
- 1.3 The role played by media and communications will be key to ensuring positive interaction and information sharing with both the public and service employees over future changes to the Service, this is particularly important at a time when the Services is facing financial constraints.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 The role of the Communications team has evolved rapidly in recent years with the development of the Service internet and intranet, and the growing use of web-based tools such as social media to convey messages, warn and inform (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc) and engaging the communities we serve in our work.
- 2.2 These are important means of conveying information to and engaging with employees and service users. The Service currently has 7,208 Twitter followers and this is increasing. The recent incident at Nottingham University is an illustration of how effectively an integrated multi-media strategy can work, with 25,000 accessing the Service's Facebook page and a million Twitter users sharing the information.
- 2.3 This has meant that the skills and resources needed to advise Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service how to use these channels, as well as manage them, has significantly diversified and increased at a time when traditional forms of communications such as staff briefing papers, media enquiries and pro-active press releases need to be maintained.
- 2.4 The current Communications team comprises of the Head of Corporate Communications and Administration and a Communications Manager.
- 2.5 In order to address issue of growing demand, it is proposed that a new role of Communications Officer be established to deal with day-to-day activity. The job description and person specification are attached for information.
- 2.6 It is anticipated that this role may attract applicants at the beginning of their career, with sound social media skills and experience as well as a grounding in

more traditional skills. The role has been subject to job evaluation which has recommended a Grade 3 appointment.

2.7 In addition, the Corporate Communications team is in the process of establishing an out-of-hours provision for media enquiries and this post would contribute to this once established in role.

2.8 Whilst this would be a new post, the Corporate Administration team has already reduced its establishment by 3.5 posts (grade 3) through efficiencies arising from the re-structure process. These savings have formed part of budget reduction measures already implemented and reported to this Committee at its meeting on 11 July 2014 .

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of this new post would be £20,736 per annum, rising to £23,674 per annum through incremental progression. The budget for this post was included in the 2014/15 budget in anticipation of this proposal and funded from the savings from the deletion of 3.5 fte posts

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The human resources implications are contained within the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because there are no policy or service delivery implications. The recruitment process will adhere to the Service's recruitment policy.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report..

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The value of maintaining effective and pro-active media services is central to maintaining good relations with the media, employees and service users. The growing demand for information and the ability to respond quickly to this demand

may be at risk if the Service does not adequately resource its Corporate Communications function, and could impact upon the reputation of the organisation.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members support the establishment of a new post of Communications Officer and recommend this to the Combined Fire Authority.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

<b>Post:</b>	Communications Officer,
<b>Grade:</b>	Grade 3
<b>Post Reference:</b>	XXXXX
<b>Conditions of Service:</b>	NJC for Local Government Services National Scheme of Conditions of Service
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Communications Manager
<b>Responsible for:</b>	None

**General Description of Post**

Effective communications will play a key role in fulfilling the organisation's aims and ambitions. The role of Communications Officer supports the running of Corporate Communications department and delivers first class external and internal communications including proactive and reactive media relations, internal and external publications and online communications.

**Specific Duties**

**Communications**

- 1.1 To assist the Communications Manager in the delivery of the organisation's corporate communications strategy.
- 1.2 To deliver proactive and reactive media relations service including researching and writing press releases, dealing with media enquiries and writing copy for a range of print and online publications / platforms.
- 1.3 To deal with communications relating to incidents, including providing live incident updates to the media and the public via social media, the website and other channels as required.
- 1.4 To assist in the on-going management and development NFRS' Facebook page and other social media channels including Twitter.
- 1.5 To take part in an out of hours media rota.
- 1.6 To assist with the production of internal and external publications.

- 1.7 To assist with the provision of an internal communications service including electronic briefings, staff briefing papers, supporting employee events and writing for and updating the intranet / staff newsletter.
- 1.8 To assist with a range of communications projects, from planning through to delivery.
- 1.9 To assist with press conferences and launches as and when required.
- 1.10 To represent the organisation at internal and external events, functions and meetings as required.
- 1.11 To undertake any other duties which may be reasonably regarded as within the nature of the duties, responsibilities and grade of the post.

### **Support**

- 1.12 To provide general support for the communications team including media monitoring, distribution and evaluation.
- 1.13 To maintain and keep up-to-date the department's systems and databases, including the media management database.
- 1.14 To ensure that all work takes account of the current legislation relating to the media and local government publicity, as well as Service policies and protocols.

### **General**

#### **(a) Health and Safety**

To take reasonable care for your own health and safety and work and that of other persons who may be affected by your work activities.

To co-operate with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue's attempts to comply with health and safety legislation. Where appropriate you must safeguard the health and safety of all persons affected by the work activities you supervise at any premises you have control over.

To work in a safe manner in which you have been trained and instructed and advise your line manager of any health and safety problems you become aware of.

To familiarise yourself with the contents of the Service's Written Safety Policy.

To wear personal protective equipment supplied to you by the Service in the manner in which you have been instructed to do so.

**(b) Use of equipment and other appliances**

To take proper care in the handling, operation and safeguarding of any equipment, vehicles or appliance, used or issued by the Service or provided or issued by a third party for individual or collective use in the performance of the job holder's duties

**(c) Equalities**

To uphold the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fairness at Work and Equal Opportunities policies and practices and to treat all colleagues, service users and contacts with respect and in accordance with the expectations laid down by the Service.

To promote and deliver fair and quality services that are sensitive and responsive to all service users.

**(d) Code of Conduct**

To adhere to the standards of the Code of Conduct established by the Service.

**(e) Personal Development**

To keep up to date with current practice, undertake training and Continuous Professional Development as appropriate.

**(f) Information Technology**

To comply with security measures to protect against unauthorised access to, alteration or disclosure of information held on computer and ensure adherence to the principles of the Data Protection Act.

To undertake any training and operation of new technologies and associated systems as required.