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Communications/public relations staff [1]

Communications and public relations (PR) staff help NHS organisations engage with patients, their local communities, staff and other interested groups including the media.

Training and qualifications required

Although there is no set entry route, communications and PR staff often have a relevant qualification. This could be in PR, marketing, journalism or communications, often at degree level. Employers may expect experience, which could be paid or voluntary. It may be possible to gain experience in an admin job in a communications department. When you start the job, you'll be given the training you need including an introduction to the department and its systems and procedures. You'll be expected to keep your knowledge and skills up to date. Your employer may offer you the chance to go on short courses on particular topics (eg social media, web development, etc) and you may take further professional qualifications in communication, marketing and PR.

Expected working hours and salary range

Communications and PR staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. You will typically start in a position on AfC band 2 or 3. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at bands 4 and 5. Senior managers will be paid more. Communications and PR staff in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. They may have to attend meetings or events in the evenings or at weekends. Some may be part of an on-call rota for media enquiries. Terms and conditions will usually be different for clinical support staff working outside of the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

Working in communications and PR, you'll need to be creative, able to communicate messages clearly, willing to work under pressure, accurate, with an eye for detail and able to deal with sensitive situations. You'll also need excellent writing skills, excellent speaking and presentation skills, good networking, research and social media skills.

Prospects

With experience, communications and PR staff can progress to become managers of a department or area.

With further experience they could become a director of communications, responsible for all communications and PR in an organisation. There may also be opportunities to work outside the NHS.

Related roles

- Communications and corporate affairs [2]
- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics [3]
- Clinical measurement [4]
- Clinical pharmaceutical science [5]

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