

Associate Director of Advocacy and Communications (12 months)

About us

We're RCOT, the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. We've championed the profession and the people behind it for over 90 years; and today, we are thriving with over 35,000 members. Then and now, we're here to help achieve life-changing breakthroughs for our members, for the people they support and for society as a whole.

We have a vision, that people everywhere value the life-changing power of occupational therapy. To achieve this, we have a new organisational structure which positions us so that we can grasp the opportunities for occupational therapy and for us as a membership body.

What we do and how we do it

We live and breathe our values. They describe what matters to us. They show how everyone here at RCOT acts and makes decisions as individuals and as one team. And they drive us in our approach to achieving our vision and purpose.

Our values	
We Impact	We make meaningful differences with all our work. We prioritise work that achieves our shared purpose and strategy. We go above and beyond for the people who need us.
We Challenge	We find new and better ways to make things happen. We are brave and bold in our ideas and actions. We challenge ourselves, each other and the status quo.
We Elevate	We lift up and support others to be and do their best. We are accessible and collaborative. We are united and move forward together, even if we sometimes disagree.
We Respect	We value each other and celebrate our differences. We are approachable, genuine and trustworthy. We listen to others and believe everyone's views should be heard.

Practice, Innovation and Advocacy Directorate

The **Practice, Innovation and Advocacy Directorate** at RCOT ensures we, and the profession, have a strong voice and international presence. We work with members, external stakeholders, and partners to strengthen the evidence base that shows the impact of occupational therapy. We champion a culture of research and service innovation; and drive forward and support pre-registration education pathways to build a resilient and sustainable workforce. We support and promote the development of all occupational therapy practitioners, especially those from historically marginalised and under-represented communities, to be where they want to be, at each stage in their career.

Purpose of the role

The Associate Director of Advocacy and Communications leads our strategic direction for RCOT communications, ensuring a coherent and authoritative narrative across policy, advocacy and professional leadership activity.

Working within the Practice, Innovation and Advocacy (PIA) Directorate and reporting directly to the Director of PIA, you will ensure that RCOT's voice is influential, evidence-based, and aligned with strategic organisational priorities. You will be the primary source of advice to the CEO on strategic communications.

Key deliverables

This is a fixed term role with a clear objective of developing and delivering an integrated communications strategy that directly advances RCOT's policy priorities, strengthens its voice as a professional leader, and increases its influence with policy makers, partners and the public. Success in the role will be demonstrated through increased visibility and influence of RCOT's policy positions, improved engagement with key stakeholders and a clear consistent organisational voice.

Your main responsibilities	What you'll bring to the role
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver an integrated communications strategy that amplifies RCOT's policy, advocacy and professional leadership agendas. • Provide senior expertise and counsel to the CEO, Director of PIA, and senior colleagues on reputational positioning, strategic messaging, media handling and communications opportunities. • Lead the planning, delivery and evaluation of cross-organisational campaigns that raise awareness and understanding of occupational therapy and influence public, political and professional audiences. • Be part of the Senior Leadership Team, responsible for the running of the organisation that is coherent with RCOT purpose, priorities and available funds, ensuring collegiate cross directorate and team working. • Provide and deliver reports into RCOT governance, including the Board of Trustees. <p>Media & Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee proactive and reactive media engagement, ensuring RCOT maintains a strong, credible and timely presence across national, regional and sector press. • Prepare the CEO, Chair, Director of PIA and other senior representatives for media interviews and public appearances. • Manage media risk, crisis communications and issues management to safeguard and enhance RCOT's reputation. <p>Social Media Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the strategic direction of RCOT's social media presence, ensuring platforms are used effectively to influence key audiences, build 	<p>Strategic Thinking & Judgement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to set a clear, forward-looking communications strategy aligned with organisational priorities. • Strong judgement in complex, sensitive or politically nuanced situations. • Ability to anticipate reputational risks and opportunities, providing high-quality advice to senior leaders. <p>Leadership & People Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of inspiring, motivating and developing a high-performing communications team. • Experience of building a culture of creativity, accountability and continuous improvement. • Ability to balance strategic leadership with hands-on support where required. • Demonstrable skills in leading teams through change, ambiguity and competing priorities. <p>Communications Expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in designing and delivering multi-channel campaigns that influence public, political and professional audiences. • Experience of leading on evidence-informed message development, audience insight and evaluation. • Excellent media handling skills, with strong relationships across national, regional and sector press. • Experience in acting as a spokesperson or preparing senior leaders for media appearances. • Advanced ability to manage high-risk or sensitive media situations.

professional identity and support member engagement.

- Ensure messaging across channels is consistent, evidence-informed, accessible and aligned with policy and advocacy priorities.
- Monitor performance, trends and emerging platforms to ensure RCOT remains relevant and innovative in its digital communications.

Campaigns & Advocacy Communications

- Lead the development of compelling campaign narratives and content that advance RCOT's policy objectives and profile occupational therapy's impact.
- Ensure communications activity supports and strengthens relationships with policy makers, system leaders, partners and stakeholders.
- Collaborate closely with policy, practice and research colleagues to translate RCOT's insights into resonant messages for the public and members.

Membership Communications

- Ensure members clearly understand RCOT's advocacy priorities, achievements and activities.
- Oversee the production of member-focused communications that are transparent, timely and supportive of member engagement and professional pride.
- Work closely with Membership, Professional Practice and other teams to ensure coherent and joined-up messaging.

Team Leadership & Management

- Lead and develop the Communications team across campaigns, social media and media/PR, ensuring high performance, creativity and continuous improvement.
- Set clear priorities, manage budgets and ensure resources are allocated effectively to maximise impact.
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive team culture aligned with RCOT's values and strategic goals.

Values and culture

- Live our values in all that you do; celebrate it when colleagues live our values and raise it, respectfully, when they don't
- Engage in regular conversations with your manager about objectives, wellbeing and performance (data, impact and outcomes)

Social & Digital Media

- Deep understanding of platform trends, analytics, and digital audience behaviours.
- Ability to set strategic direction for social channels to enhance advocacy, visibility and member engagement.

Influence, Stakeholder Engagement & Relationship Management

- Experience in collaborating effectively with colleagues across policy, practice, research, membership and corporate teams.
- Skilled at influencing internal and external stakeholders at senior levels.
- Ability to communicate complex policy and practice issues to diverse audiences in an accessible and impactful way.
- Experience representing organisations externally, including with partners, media and system leaders.

Political & Organisational Awareness

- Understanding of how communications can shape national conversations, influence decision-makers and position a profession.
- Ability to navigate wider political, professional and health/social care contexts that shape RCOT's advocacy priorities.
- Understanding of the needs, pressures and expectations of members of their professional body.

Analytical & Evidence-Informed Approach

- Experience of using insight, data and evaluation to guide decisions and demonstrate impact.
- Ability to synthesise policy, research and evidence into compelling communications outputs.

Personal Effectiveness & Professionalism

- High levels of resilience, adaptability and emotional intelligence.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to craft clear and persuasive messaging.
- Strong organisational skills, able to manage multiple priorities in a fast-paced environment.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in communications practice and team leadership.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take personal ownership of your career development, seeking support and guidance as needed. 	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of UK health and social care policy, government systems and political dynamics. • Familiarity with occupational therapy or other Allied Health Professions.
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A bit more about the role

- **You'll report to:** Director of Practice, Innovation and Advocacy
- **Your contract will be:** Fixed term, fulltime
- **You'll work:** 35 hours a week
- **You'll be based at:** London Bridge headquarters (hybrid working)
- **You'll be paid:** Circa £80k per annum
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Your main relationships will be with:

- Director of Practice, Innovation and Advocacy
- CEO
- Senior Leadership Team
- Head of Policy and Public Affairs
- Campaigns, Social Media, Media and PR colleagues
- Practice, Innovation and Advocacy teams
- Board of Trustees
- External stakeholders including journalists, partner organisations, health and social care bodies, government and arms-length agencies

What we will offer you

- **26 days paid holiday** rising to 31 in the leave year after you've completed five years' service.
- **Christmas closure** – we're closed over the Christmas period. Additional time will be given to all employees to cover any working days during this period.
- **Pension scheme** – we operate a contributory pension scheme, you are eligible to join this scheme from your start date. Contributions are made on a salary exchange basis and are 6% of gross salary from the employee and 9% from the employer.
- **Life cover** – four times your annual salary.
- Free **eyesight testing**.
- Free **Employee Assistance Programme**.
- **Flexibility** through a hybrid working model which offers a blend of home and office-based working.
- **Supportive networks and inclusive team** - we have several colleague networks to support colleagues and provide a space for discussion and reflection, as well as promote allyship.

Equity, Diversity & Belonging

As a membership organisation, a professional body, and an employer, RCOT is committed to leading innovative change to promote equity and social justice and build a sense of belonging for all our staff, members, and the populations we serve. Our ambition is to have a diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. We don't only

embrace diversity, we celebrate it, nurture it and support our staff in realising their true potential. We are passionate about creating an environment free from discrimination and harassment where people can be their authentic self and recognise that each of us is unique. Therefore, our definition of diversity goes beyond those defined in equality legislation and we will afford the same standards and principles to those with lived experiences.