

Job Title: Policy and Membership Services Officer

Accountable to: Chief Executive

Salary: c£35k plus 10% employer's pension contribution

Hours: Full-time

Located: Home-based with regular travel to London and regular travel within England and Wales

1. NASS Background

NASS is committed to working alongside its members in the creation and sustainability of high quality and effective special school provision in the non-local authority sector.

We believe that the Non-Maintained and Independent Special School (NMISS) sector has a vital role to play in achieving a system of special educational provision that meets the needs of children, young people and their families. NASS plays a key role in advocating for the sector and campaigning, as required, to highlight need, challenge discrimination and change perceptions.

Our main activities are to:

- promote the role of the non-local authority sector in providing innovative approaches to meeting the needs of children and young people
- campaign for our schools to feature fully in the political agenda
- speak with the collective voice of the non-local authority sector
- offer direct support to our members in the form of training, research, events and newsletters

Purpose of the job

1. To represent NASS and its members at Parliamentary level and with Government and other external bodies. The post holder will work with members to develop and influence public policy in the best interests of children young people and families, and overseeing the delivery of high quality services to the children's voluntary sector.
2. To deliver and develop NASS's membership services to member schools, including communications and recruitment of new members.
3. The post holder may be required to deputise for the Chief Executive, in areas of representation, management and governance, as agreed with the Chief Executive, and Trustee Board. The post holder will be a key member of the staff team and play an active role in strategic planning for the organisation.

The post has primary responsibility for:

- Leading areas of strategic planning and membership growth for NASS and the delivery of designated elements of the strategic plan, including lobbying, representation and special interest groups
- Developing new policy and practice support services for members and the wider sector, ensuring the highest possible quality standards and control of all communications, policy and practice activities and products

Key Areas of Responsibility

Policy development and stakeholder influencing:

To support NASS's policy and influencing work, ensuring high quality delivery through;

- Supporting the CEO in identifying emerging policy issues based on the experience of member organisations in relation to special schools and presenting issues on behalf of members to the public, professional groups, central and local government
- Establishing, maintaining and reviewing effective influencing, parliamentary presence and media strategies;
- Overseeing members' consultation processes and the preparation of the NASS responses to Government's consultation papers, sometimes jointly with other umbrella agencies
- Identifying and engaging with other coalitions and campaigns which support the best interests of special schools and Children with SEND and where NASS and its members can have significant impact
- Supporting the development of policy positions and influencing/campaigning activity to achieve positive change for children and the sector.

To maintain and develop a range of services to Member Schools:

- Developing and managing Special Interest Group initiatives (current examples include Finance, Care, HR and Teaching and Learning) ensuring they meet sector needs and are delivered in accessible ways across the regions.
- Identifying possible research and information activities, services or events that might generate income, meet members' needs, and could be delivered in partnership with members or other partners.
- Taking a lead on developing strategies and marketing activities to recruit and retain member schools
- Ensuring the provision of an appropriate, accurate regular information and advice service, to members and other stakeholders supporting their policy development, practice and training needs

Communications to members and representation:

- Responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring NASS's Communications Strategy
- Production of the fortnightly e-bulletin
- Production of policy summary papers;
- Undertaking speaking engagements as and when required.

Strategic Planning:

To play a role in the development and achievement of NASS's strategic plan through;

- Representing NASS at senior level external meetings, including deputising for the Chief Executive as required at: consultation meetings with Government, standing groups, conferences, seminars, Government working groups and policy forums.
- Co-ordinating work on evaluation and monitoring through the setting up of data collection systems for policy and practice development activity, and impact reporting.
- Co-ordinating internal and external/partnership working groups established to progress particular strategic goals, projects and objectives.
- Providing policy and information support to Trustees and members who undertake representational roles for NASS, and regional or expert working groups.

Organisational Support:

To support the operational development of NASS, contributing to the development of the organisation and supporting high standards of day-to-day service delivery and organisational effectiveness through;

- Preparing Trustees papers, contributing to the preparation of the annual report and other papers, web based publications and public presentations.
- Making a significant input into the content and organisation of the Annual Conference and AGM and other NASS events.
- Contribute to NASS team meetings

Terms and Conditions

Salary **C £35k**

Pension

NASS has an employees' pension scheme with The People's Pension. NASS will make 10% employer contribution, based on basic salary, into this scheme.

Hours of Work

37 hours per week. Required to work flexibly to meet the needs of the post but, in turn, NASS can offer considerable flexibility about how and when the hours are worked. From time to time (primarily around the annual conference and AGM) the post may require longer working hours which may then be taken as Time Off In Lieu at an agreed time.

References

Position subject to two satisfactory references one of which must be from the current employer. Referees will be approached prior to interview.

Probationary Period

6 months – during the probationary period the employment can be terminated with one months notice from either party.

Leave

25 days per year plus public holidays. The leave year runs for 12 months from January to December.

Sick Pay

As per NASS sick leave policy

Discipline and Grievance

As per NASS's Discipline and Grievance policy – issues to be raised in the first instance with Line Manager.

Person Specification

1. Qualifications & Experience

1. Degree or equivalent qualification and evidence of continuing professional development
2. Proven experience of working with parliamentarians and civil servants
3. Demonstrable experience of assessing and meeting the needs of key stakeholder groups, ideally in a membership body context
4. Experience and understanding of the issues faced by the Non-Maintained and Independent Special School Sector (including Special Free Schools and Academies)
5. Experience of strategic policy analysis and planning skills, with a proven record of implementation, review and evaluation
6. Experience of developing and delivering a communications strategy within an organisation
7. Experience of project management, monitoring systems and evaluation processes
8. Experience of developing and managing partnership working across organisations and sectors

2. Skills and Aptitudes

1. Excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to manage/develop relationships with a variety of stakeholders including staff and members.
2. Ability to represent NASS at senior level
3. Understanding of the mechanisms for policy change and influence at both local and national levels
4. Diplomacy and good negotiation skills
5. Ability to synthesise complex material and pull out relevant points
6. Business development skills and an entrepreneurial approach to service development
7. Ability to be highly motivated, proactive, manage competing priorities and work under pressure
8. Ability to work alone for long periods of time
9. Critical reasoning and problem solving skills

3. Personal Attributes

1. Honesty and integrity
2. Loyalty and a proven commitment to the mission and vision of the organisation
3. Positive attitude to problem solving and seeking solutions
4. Intellectual curiosity

In addition

- Willingness to abide by NASS policies at all times.
- Ability to travel across England and Wales, including some overnight stays
- All staff must be willing to participate in appropriate training and development opportunities.

Further Information

NASS is a small organisation, employing 4 staff, and everyone is expected to work together as a team, contributing to shared tasks, as well as taking personal responsibility for their own area of work.