



Job description

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| Job title: | Policy and Communications Assistant/Officer |
| Salary: | £20,000 – £25,000 per annum, pro rata (negotiable for exceptional candidates) |
| Type: | 1-year fixed term |
| Hours per week: | 35 (with consideration given to those seeking 28 hr p/w or flexi hours) |
| Location: | London |
| Start date: | September/October 2017 |
| Accountable to: | Policy and External Communications Manager |

Introduction

ARCO works at the intersection of health, social care, housing and ageing policy. We work to ensure that older people have the option to live in high quality supported housing in their later years, which enables them to live independent and socially connected lives. As well as being good for older people and their families, this form of housing benefits our public services, frees up homes for all generations, and helps boost our economy.

We meet our objectives by working with our membership of not-for-profit and private providers of specialist housing-with-care for older people, and network of wider sector stakeholders. Together we set and raise standards in the sector, share good practice, and influence the government to tackle barriers to supply so that more housing-with-care communities can be built.

We are looking for a high calibre and self-motivated candidate to join us as Policy and Communications Assistant or Officer (depending on experience). In this role, you will gain experience of the hugely important and rapidly changing housing, health, care and ageing policy landscapes, and an insight into how both not-for-profit and commercial housing-with-care providers operate.

Over the next year ARCO plan to extend our policy and communications work, with exciting plans to relaunch our website, revitalise our public facing presence, and extend our programme of commissioned research and events with partner organisations, as well as to continue responding to and influencing policy decisions at the local and national level.

Our small team works closely with our Board of Directors, who are Chief Executives and Directors of the UK's largest housing associations and private providers of housing-with-care for older people. This role therefore offers the opportunity for the successful candidate to gain unique executive-level insight into the strategic workings of a sector predicted to grow

substantially over the coming years, and gain understanding and exposure not often afforded in a bigger organisation.

You will play an active role across the whole ARCO team, and your tasks would involve keeping abreast of policy and research developments, supporting our events programme, delivering membership functions, and contributing to our website and social media presence. With an interest in the sector, a keen attention to detail, and relevant work experience, you will be comfortable working in a flexible and fast paced atmosphere and with a wide variety of responsibilities.

This role would suit an ambitious and capable candidate who is keen to gain experience in a policy and public affairs environment.

Please note that although funding for this post is limited until 31 August 2018 (the end of ARCO's financial year), there is potential for it to become a permanent post and/or potential opportunities for advancement. Please also note that we would consider a candidate who would prefer to work 28 hours (four days) per week or with a flex schedule (e.g., 9am-3pm daily), and that salary and benefits would be on a pro rata basis.

Purpose of role

The overall objective of appointing a Policy and Communications Assistant/Officer is to support ARCO's executive team in running the association's affairs and delivering ARCO's objectives. The Policy and Communications Assistant/Officer will work on a diverse range of tasks, with the focus being on supporting our events programme, communication strategy, and policy work. The post would be of particular relevance for anyone interested in health, social care and housing policy, or in the role that effective self-regulation can play in shaping the future legal framework of an emerging sector.

The role will be mainly based in our office in Tooting, with some time in our central London office base. The Policy and Communications Assistant/Officer will be line managed by ARCO's Policy and Communications Manager, and will also work closely with the rest of [ARCO's Executive Team and Steering Group](#).

Key tasks of role

1. Assist with policy functions, including contributing to letters, policy briefings and consultation responses, and conducting research on health, housing, and social care policy (including assisting with ARCO's in-house research, and research database).
2. Contribute to the production of ARCO's communications via the web, intranet, email, and print, and through phone and face-to-face communications.
 - a. Assist in the delivery of ARCO's PR strategy through media monitoring, tweeting, contributing to press releases, updating the website, etc.
 - b. Internal communication with members and affiliates, for example compilation and sending of newsletters.
 - c. External communication with the public and stakeholders, mainly via telephone and email queries, and attending relevant meetings and events.

3. Event/conference assistance – ARCO holds an annual conference and runs multiple summits, workshops, roundtables, and meetings throughout the year. Tasks may include liaising with attendees and the venue, organising collateral, and tech support.
4. Assist in the delivery of membership functions to member organisations (e.g. certifying schemes, keeping member and affiliate registers up to date, and supporting ARCO’s self-regulatory functions around ARCO’s Consumer Code).

Other tasks and requirements

1. To undertake any other duties commensurate with the purpose and remit of the post.
2. To be willing to travel during the course of your duties with possible overnight stays away from home.

Benefits

- 25 days annual leave plus statutory holidays
- Employer pension contributions
- Working environment which encourages a good work-life balance
- Healthy office fruit scheme
- Option of sit-stand desk

Person specification

| Education | Essential / Desirable |
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| Degree educated | Essential |
| Willingness to undertake training and continuing professional development | Essential |
| Experience | |
| Experience organising conferences or other events | Experience in at least two of these areas is Essential |
| Experience working in a policy or research environment | |
| Experience working in an administrative capacity | |
| Experience in health, social care, and/or housing | |
| Abilities and competencies | |
| Good analytical skills | Essential |
| Ability to work creatively and flexibly | Essential |
| Excellent verbal and written communication skills | Essential |

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| Proficiency with a range of IT products including Microsoft Outlook, Office, and Excel | Essential |
| Experience with technology and design and/or with using web based content-editing applications and programmes such as WordPress, Mail Chimp, etc. | Desirable |
| Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage and prioritise multiple day-to-day tasks while maintaining high quality standards | Essential |
| Ability to form and maintain productive working relationships with a wide variety of people within multiple organisations | Essential |
| Self-motivated and pro-active | Essential |
| Precise attention to detail | Essential |
| Experienced working with a minimum level of supervision | Desirable |
| Understanding the political context in which ARCO campaigns and the constraints and opportunities this offers | Desirable |
| Other requirements | |
| To be committed to the principles of equal opportunities and diversity | Essential |
| To have a genuine interest in the health, social care, and housing field | Essential |
| Flexibility to work across a number of functions | Essential |
| Knowledge of national and local government and the mechanisms that can be used to influence change | Desirable |

This information will be used as part of the shortlisting process.

About ARCO

The Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) is the trade association representing providers of retirement communities in the UK. ARCO was founded in September 2012, currently has 31 members, and represents approximately 50% of all housing-with-care schemes in the sector and includes both private and not-for-profit providers.

For more information on some of what we've done in the past year, please see our recent [Annual Review](#).

Our vision and aims

ARCO's vision is that by 2030, 5% of older people will live in a retirement community (a level seen in other countries with a more mature market for this type of provision), which will require a ten-fold expansion of the sector. In order to achieve this, ARCO works to:

- **Raise awareness of the retirement community model** amongst older people and stakeholders alike – ensuring that all older people are aware of the variety of housing options available to them, and that policy makers fully understand the ways in which this type of housing provision can meet the lifestyle, health, and social care needs of our ageing population.
- **Promote confidence in the sector**, ensuring that all members are providing a high quality service to their residents. To this end, all ARCO members have to adhere to ARCO's Standards and Compliance Framework, centred on assessments against the ARCO Consumer Code.
- **Increase the volume and quality of expertise within the sector** and share this with members, continually investing in research to better understand and promote the socio-economic value of the housing-with-care model.

How to apply

Please apply with the following:

- A succinct covering letter detailing why you are interested in this position and clearly explaining how you meet the criteria outlined in the person specification.
- A short CV (maximum of 2 pages), which should clearly outline any relevant experience to date.

Please note that **the closing date for applications is at midnight Monday 28 August 2017**. Please send your application to info@arcouk.org.

We plan to hold assessments on 1st and 4th September, and interviews for successful candidates on 5th and 6th September in London. Candidates to be invited to the assessment will be notified on 29th August. Ideally the successful candidate would start as soon as possible in September.

Please note we will not be able to give feedback to every applicant, but we will endeavour to provide feedback to every candidate we invite to interview.