



Mental Health Reform

Promoting Improved Mental Health Services

Director of Communications & Advocacy

Job Description

Position title: Director of Communications & Advocacy

Reports to: Executive Director

Supervises: Communications & Information Executive

Location: Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7

Term: Permanent, 12-month probationary period

Mental Health Reform (MHR) is the leading national coalition driving progressive reform of Ireland's mental health system. With more than 50 member organisations and more than 10,000 individual supporters, Mental Health Reform is implementing an ambitious strategic plan to achieve fulfilment of peoples' right to the highest attainable standard of mental health.

Mental Health Reform's vision is for an Ireland where everyone with a mental health difficulty can recover their wellbeing and live a full life in the community. Our strategic goals for 2015-2017 are:

1. The Government ensures high quality community based, primary care and specialist mental health services are available and accessible to everyone in Ireland
2. The Government and HSE ensure a transformed system for governance and accountability
3. Government improves the social inclusion of people with mental health difficulties
4. The espoused values and principles of *A Vision for Change* exemplified by citizenship, partnership, recovery and respect underpin mental health service delivery in Ireland, and
5. Government ensures that children and adolescents have adequate, prompt access to a range of mental health supports to promote their mental wellbeing and address mental health difficulties at an early stage

The current social and political environment provides a unique opportunity to build a modern mental health system. Visibility of mental health as a topic of concern in the public domain has never been greater. Political interest in the issue of mental health has also increased, as evidenced by cross-party membership of the Oireachtas Group on Mental Health and successive Dáil debates on mental health during 2016. Public activism towards improving mental health services and preventing suicide has also surfaced in recent campaigns such as #OurStateOfMind, #IAmAReason and #InOurHourOfNeed, as well as in the national demonstration against a €12M diversion of funds in April of this year.

Mental Health Reform has become a 'go to' organisation for expert commentary on mental health in Ireland and is recognised as the umbrella body for the mental health sector. MHR is a focal point for activism to improve the mental health system and a trusted partner with like-minded organisations

including A Lust for Life, Uplift, Future Voices and First Fortnight. In this context, the opportunity exists for the right person to lead MHR's communications and advocacy strategy, leveraging media, public and political interest with the strength of a coalition voice to bring about real improvements to Ireland's mental health and related social services.

Position summary

Mental Health Reform is seeking to appoint a creative and committed professional who has the skills and experience to design and oversee an effective communications and advocacy programme to support our strategic goals and position MHR appropriately in the public sphere.

Working closely with the Executive Director, the Communications & Information Executive and the rest of the MHR team, the Director of Communications & Advocacy will be responsible for sustaining and amplifying our coalition voice, generating individual activism and individual donor support, and organising a programme of impactful, collective action to achieve our strategic goals.

The person

The successful candidate will be expected to have the following essential qualifications, skills and experience:

- At least five years' experience in an external communications role
- Experience in a functional role responsible for collective advocacy or campaigning
- Experience in designing and implementing campaigns to successful achievement of strategic goals
- Experience of representing an organisation to the media and the public
- Ability to represent MHR to a range of audiences and to build effective relationships with member organisations, political, media, service user and professional groups
- Proven exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, both verbal and written
- Excellent organisational and IT skills with experience managing websites and social networking for organisational objectives
- Creativity and an ability to generate engaging campaign messages
- An ability to work with initiative and autonomy and take responsibility for a functional role within a small team
- Experience managing staff to achieve deliverables
- A third-level qualification in a relevant discipline

The successful candidate will also have:

- Commitment to the vision, mission and values of Mental Health Reform
- A can-do attitude with a focus on continuous improvement within area of work
- ability to work within strict deadlines and work well under pressure

The successful candidate may have the following desirable knowledge and experience:

- Experience in designing and running direct fundraising campaigns
- Knowledge of the mental health sector
- Knowledge of the health and social policy context in which MHR operates

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Managing the communications and advocacy programme

- Lead the development and implementation of the communications and advocacy strategy in line with MHR's strategic and operational plans
- Provide ongoing insight to the Executive Director about MHR's strategic plan
- Lead and run campaign-related projects
- Manage the day-to-day communications activities of the organisation towards fulfilment of the communications and advocacy strategy
- Oversee and organise events
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the communications and advocacy strategy and individual campaigns
- Support the Executive Director to engage with key influencers within government, public agencies and the Oireachtas

Managing relationships with the broadcast, print and social media

- Proactively develop and manage relationships with national and local broadcast and print media
- Maximise media exposure for MHR and identify media opportunities
- Produce and publish materials for spokespeople, including reports, media briefings, articles and press releases
- Develop and implement a social media strategy to build member and supporter engagement, with the support of the Communications & Information Executive
- Maintain and develop MHR's website to maximise its effectiveness as a communications tool supporting MHR's strategic goals, with the support of the Communications & Information Executive
- Source and develop personal stories for the media on MHR issues, in line with MHR policy
- Monitor media activity on mental health and related areas
- Occasionally represent the organisation in broadcast, print or other communications media

Developing the communications systems and resources

- Manage and maintain the communications database with the support of the Communications & Information Executive
- Produce newsletters, information, fundraising and promotional documents, videos, etc.
- Respond to requests for information, advice and assistance from members of the public, other NGOs etc.

Building and maintaining the critical relationships with our members and wider network

- Support relationships and engagement with member organisations, donors and supporters
- Establish and maintain key partnerships within the mental health and wider social sector
- Share advocacy tactics with members, allies and partners

Fundraising

- Participate in developing and implementing MHR's sustainability strategy
- Write and design fundraising materials
- Organise and engage in communications activities for fundraising campaigns
- Generate individual donor action

Organisation

- Work within the framework of the overall objectives and the policies and practices of MHR
- Contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity, anti-discriminatory practice, diversity, individual rights and choice in all aspects of work
- Update MHR's contacts database
- Carry out other administrative duties as required
- Participate in Mental Health Reform's performance management system and engage in supervision sessions on a regular basis with the Executive Director
- Supervise staff, interns and/or volunteers as required
- Participate in relevant training and development courses as agreed with the Executive Director
- Undertake such other duties as might be reasonably assigned from time to time in consultation with the Executive Director
- Be vigilant to any Health, Safety and Welfare risks in the workplace and bring any concerns to the attention of the Executive Director or Health & Safety Representative

TERMS

This is a full time position. Flexibility is required regarding hours as some weekend and evening work will be necessary. Travel and out of office work will also be a feature of the role.

This is a permanent position, subject to funding and completion of a twelve-month probationary period.

An attractive remuneration package commensurate with experience is available.

Hours of Work: 37 hours per week

Annual Leave: 24 days per annum

Mental Health Reform is an equal opportunities employer