**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| 1. **JOB DETAILS**
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| Job Title: Policy and Research Officer  |
| Reporting to: Head of Communications and External Affairs |
| Directorate: Operations and New Business  |

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| 1. **JOB PURPOSE**

The Policy and Research Officer is an integral part of Victim Support Scotland’s (VSS) Communications and External Affairs Team. The purpose of the role is to build the profile, influence and credibility of VSS’s work at a local and national level with Scottish politicians, political parties and opinion formers. The postholder will develop and influence policies and practices that deliver positive and lasting change for victims and witnesses.  |
| 1. **SCOPE OF THE ROLE**

Working to and closely with VSS’s Head of Communications and External Affairs, the wider Communications and External Affairs Team, and colleagues across the wider organisation, the post holder will proactively and reactively develop and promote policy positions and positive interventions that contribute to improving the lives of people affected by crime.They will also support and guide organisational-wide research and associated activities to ensure voices of victims and witnesses are heard both internally and externally. The post is relatively high-profile and front-facing involving, for example, engagement with a wide range of senior stakeholders that are key to the success of VSS delivering on its main aims. It is therefore expected that the postholder will be tenacious in their approach to handling relationships with partners, and also has a willingness to contribute to the wider Communications and External Affairs Team at VSS. |
| 1. **JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY RESULT AREAS**

**Policy*** Identify, monitor and evaluate policy issues appropriate to VSS. Horizon scanning for opportunities, and making recommendations to senior staff for areas of policy to engage in.
* Draft formal responses to consultations, ensuring the rights and wellbeing of victims and witnesses is foremost, and also dissemination through existing and new Communications channels (including directly sending on to key stakeholders, publishing to the web, promotion through social media).

 * Provide intelligence and advice to senior staff about effective Parliamentary influencing approaches to enable VSS to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with key local and national politicians.
* Provide political and policy analysis, intelligence and advice for senior managers to inform VSS’s strategy, policy and service delivery.
* Identify opportunities to engage effectively with and influence other organisations, academics, public and civil servants on social justice issues and others, to help promote the rights of victims.
* Establish and maintain an up-to-date knowledge base of best practice initiatives in a variety of differing agencies internationally and nationally.
* Create briefings for staff and stakeholders on policy issues; collaborate with colleagues to summarise and communicate complex data (scientific, technical and economic) and policy ideas to engage stakeholders.
* Represent VSS at key events and forums, including providing oral evidence at the Scottish Parliament. Lobby and assist the development of VSS policy lines, taking responsibility for collating information and submitting VSS’s lobbying returns to the Scottish Parliament’s Lobbying Register.
* Contribute to strategic planning and suggest ways to build the capacity of local services to fully maximise opportunities to work effectively with local MSP’s, whilst observing political impartiality and electoral law and to influence local health, social justice and planning partnerships.
* Contribute to and support the work of policy influencing groups, such as Victims Organisations Collaboration Forum Scotland, providing secretariat support where needed.
* Support in the organisation of events, workshops or conferences to represent, inform or showcase VSS.
* Work with the wider Communications and External Affairs Team to promote and support VSS’s research, policy positions and key messages through the media, web and social media.

**Research*** Support development of a programme of research and facilitate mechanisms for VSS to commission research studies including submissions to external funding bodies.
* Develop effective evaluation of research projects, incorporating qualitative and quantitative measures.
* Consider and recommend ways in which VSS can harness the involvement of students, associates or research assistants on short-term assignments.
* Monitor and report on all aspects of research projects, service user feedback and policy, ensuring issues and findings are published.
* Carry out ad hoc projects which may be assigned by senior managers in conjunction with the Head of Communications and External Affairs.
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| The post holder may be required to travel across local areas. |

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| 1. **COMMUNICATIONS**

**Internal:** CEO, Director of Operations, Head of Communications and External Affairs, Senior Staff, Regional Teams, HQ staff, Executive Board, volunteers**External:** Victims and witnesses of crime, professionals and other agencies,  victim agencies, general public, Scottish Parliament and Scottish  Government, MSP’s and political advisors, local government, influencers |

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| 1. **QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (COMPETENCIES)**
* Technical and Professional Knowledge
	+ Graduate (Social Science or other) or professional qualification or SVQ level 4.
	+ At least 3 or 4 years professional work experience.
	+ Knowledge and/or working experience in parliamentary, public affairs, campaigns, policy research or related role, evidenced by working on major projects focussed on rights issues for a high profile organisation.
	+ A demonstrable understanding of social policy, criminal and community justice issues in Scotland and how Parliament works (how to influence Parliamentary activity).
	+ Up-to-date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to communications and campaigning work.
	+ Experience of:
		- Undertaking and publishing research and public speaking.
		- Evaluating internal policy development against external policy trends and make recommendations and proposals for change.
		- Assimilating and processing complex information including statistics and data from a variety of sources.
* Strategic vision and awareness
	+ Experience of horizon scanning and identifying key issues of focus for an organisation.
* Planning and Quality management
	+ Proven ability to prioritise a busy workload, producing consistent, accurate work to tight deadlines.
* Team work
	+ Experience of working productively with internal teams to support and influence policy
	+ Demonstrable experience of working effectively with partners and stakeholders
	+ Experience of working either within or closely alongside a Communications team would be desirable.
* Customer focus
	+ Experience of conducting research and consultations with staff, service users and stakeholders.
* Communication and interpersonal effectiveness
	+ Strong communications and effective influencing skills.
	+ Confident use of social media to engage service users, stakeholders and influencers.
	+ Experience of, or willingness to learn and support, wider aspects of Communications (including web and copy writing).
* Additional desirable factors
	+ Ability to work within a complex organisation and encourage awareness of public affairs at all levels.
	+ An understanding of the role of the voluntary sector, and the purpose and scope of advice work.
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