



JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Communications Officer
(Children's Services)**

Grade V

Full-time 35HPW

1 WTE

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: **COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (Children's Services)**

Department: **COMMUNICATIONS**

Report to/Accountable: **Communications Manager**

FACTOR	ESSENTIAL
Qualifications	Eligible applicants will be those who on the closing date for the competition: 3rd level qualification in relevant field e.g. Journalism, Communications, PR. - Full Irish drivers licence and access to own vehicle. - Proficiency in the English Language.
Experience (Duration & Type)	2+ years' experience in a communications role, ideally within the public or not-for-profit sector. - Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with ability to tailor messages to different audiences and platforms. - Experience managing social media platforms and digital content creation. - Proficiency in Microsoft Office and basic design/editing tools (e.g. Canva, Adobe Creative Suite, or similar). - Experience in Event management and planning - On-site physical presence in Limerick required - All Applicants must be able to work in Ireland. **Applicants should possess Level 2 behavioural competencies as set out in the job description.
	DESIRABLE

Skills/Abilities	• Demonstrate ability to collaborate with numerous stakeholders . • Demonstrate creativity and innovation in developing communication strategies and content. • Experience with project management of inter-departmental projects, campaigns and events. • Be a highly motivated individual with the ability to work on own initiative and the capacity to manage change.
Knowledge & Understanding	• An understanding of Health Service communications landscape, policies, circulars, frameworks etc. • A commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive communication.

J O B D E S C R I P T I O N

Job Title: **COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (Children's Services)**

Department: COMMUNICATIONS

Report to/Accountable: Communications Manager

A B O U T A V I S T A

AVISTA IS A PERSON-CENTRED, RIGHTS-BASED ORGANISATION THAT IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES. WE PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES INCLUDING DAY, RESIDENTIAL AND RESPITE SUPPORTS (INCLUDING HOMESHARING AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES) TO BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS ACROSS DUBLIN, LIMERICK AND NORTH TIPPERARY.

THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES WITHIN AVISTA PROVIDE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM SUPPORTS, RESIDENTIAL, FAMILY SUPPORT AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES TO 0-18 YEAR OLD CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Working together with people to live their best lives through the delivery of quality services.”

VISION

People living their best lives as active citizens in an inclusive society.

VALUES

Service

Holistic approach characterised by quality and compassion.

Respect

A high regard for the dignity of each person.

Excellence

Developing and maintaining the highest standards in our service.

Collaboration

Mutual support for the total development of each person.

Justice

Advocating for the rights of the people we support.

Creativity

Being innovative, imaginative and resourceful.

General Accountability

The Communications Officer, working with the Communications Manager is responsible for delivering effective communications in alignment with organisational goals, while collaborating with a wide range of internal teams and external stakeholders. The post holder is responsible for developing and executing communication initiatives, ensuring consistent messaging, managing competing priorities, and using insight and feedback to continuously improve engagement and outcomes across all channels throughout the service.

Responsibilities & Accountabilities:

The person chosen will:

- Develop and implement strategic communication and engagement plans aligned with Avista’s organisational objectives.
- Create, edit, and publish high-quality content across digital platforms, including but not limited to; Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, X and YouTube/Vimeo.
- Tailor messaging to effectively engage diverse audiences, stakeholders, and communication channels.

- Manage multiple concurrent, time-sensitive projects, ensuring delivery within deadlines.
- Support the planning and execution of digital and local campaigns, events, and cross-functional initiatives.
- Monitor, analyse, and evaluate communication activities, providing data-driven insights and recommendations for improvement.
- Ensure brand consistency across all internal and external communications and educational/training materials.
- Collaborate with internal departments and external stakeholders to support key organisational priorities i.e. recruitment and retention campaigns.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of targeted communication strategies for Children's Services projects in line with Avista's strategic plan.
- Design engaging digital content using tools such as Canva and Adobe Creative Suite.
- Coordinate and engage with stakeholders across departments to produce a wide range of communications materials including website development, social media posts, press releases, reports, briefing documents, newsletters, information resources, support family network meetings and promotional assets.
- Support the development of internal communications by developing tools and channels to improve employee engagement and awareness.
- Prepare regular performance reports to assess impact and inform continuous improvement.
- Supervise the work of external consultants and service providers where required.

The above job description is not intended to be a comprehensive list of duties and responsibilities and consequently the post holder may be required to perform other duties as appropriate to the post which may be assigned to him/her from time to time and to contribute to the development of the post when in office. This job description may change in line with the changing needs and objectives of the Avista Service.

Age Restrictions In Relation To Applications

Age restriction shall only apply to a candidate where he/she is not classified as a new entrant (within the meaning of the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004). A candidate who is not classified as a new entrant must be under 65 years of age on the first day of the month in which the latest date for receiving completed applications for the office occurs.

Health

"A candidate for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Be of good character

A person selected for this role must be of good character.

Garda Vetting

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons. Given the specialised nature of the services provided by Avista, your appointment is subject to satisfactory Garda Vetting and re-vetting in circumstances where the Service deems it appropriate. You are obliged to disclose previous and any criminal convictions acquired during the course of your employment. Should the Service obtain information from the Garda Vetting Unit to indicate that your Garda clearance report is not satisfactory and / or if you have supplied the Service with false or misleading information in relation to your Garda clearance status, the Service may terminate your contract with immediate effect.

Particulars of Office

The appointment is fixed- term contract. The successful applicant will be based in Limerick and will support Avista's Children Services teams in Limerick and Dublin.,

Duties

The responsibilities of this post will evolve and may include other relevant duties, not currently documented in this job description which the post holder would be required to undertake in line with service requirements, following consultation. The responsibilities and reporting structures for this position, as outlined, may be subject to change in the future, within the context of the reconfiguration of management structures in the service and the managed clinical network.

Hours of work

Normal working hours are 35 hours per week worked over 5 days Monday-Friday. Your contracted hours of work are liable to change between the hours of 8 am to 8 pm over 7 days to meet the requirements for extended day services in accordance with the terms of the Framework Agreement.

Flexibility

This post requires a high level of flexibility to ensure the delivery of an effective and efficient service. Therefore, the post holder will be required to demonstrate flexibility as and when required, i.e. evenings/weekends.

Remuneration

Remuneration is in accordance with the salary scale approved by the Department of Health & Children effective from 1st June 2026. Current remuneration as follows:

€ 52,757- € 63,110per annum (including LSIs)

Probation

The successful candidate will be appointed initially for a probationary period of nine months. During the probationary period progress or otherwise will be monitored and at the end of the probationary period the service will (a) be certified as satisfactory and confirmed in writing or (b) if not satisfactory, the probationary period may be extended by 3 months.

Annual Leave

The annual leave entitlement is 28 working days pro rata **per annum**, plus 10 Bank Holidays per annum as they occur. The annual leave year runs from 1st of April to 31st March each year.

Sick Leave

Payment of salary during illness will be in accordance with arrangements as approved from time to time by the Department of Health and Children and as per Avista policy.

Termination of Office

The employment may be terminated at any time by one months' notice on either side except where circumstances are dictated by the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973/2001. The Management's right under this paragraph shall not be exercised save in circumstances where the Management is of the opinion that the holder of the office has failed to perform satisfactorily the duties of the post or has misconducted himself/herself in relation to the post or is otherwise unfit to hold the appointment.

Pension arrangements and retirement age

There are three superannuation schemes currently in operation for staff in The Service:

- (a) NHASS - Superannuation Scheme (Non-New Entrant)
- (b) NHASS - Superannuation Scheme (New Entrant)
- (c) SPSPS - Single Public Service Pension Scheme

Please read carefully the summary of the criteria for the three superannuation schemes below. This will assist you in identifying which scheme membership is applicable to your employment circumstances.

- (a) If you have been continually employed in the public service before 1st April 2004 and you have had no break of more than 26 weeks; you will be included in the NHASS (Non-New Entrant) with a Minimum Retirement Age of 60 and a Maximum Retirement Age of 70.
- (b) If you have been continually employed in the public service since 1st April 2004 and you have had no break of more than 26 weeks, you will be included in the NHASS (New Entrant) with a Minimum Retirement Age of 65 and no Maximum Retirement Age.

(c) If you have been continually employed in the public service since 1st January, 2013 or you are a former public servant or returning to the public service after a break of more than 26 weeks you will be included in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) with a current minimum retirement age of 66 (this will change in line with state pension changes) the maximum retirement age under this scheme is 70 years.

The person appointed will be required to join the relevant Superannuation Scheme and will be required to contribute to Avista at the appropriate rate of gross annual superannuable remuneration as determined by the Minister responsible for the Scheme

Pension benefits made to part-time staff will be on a pro-rata basis.

Pension Arrangements and Retirement Age:

For existing Public Servants (i.e. those who have entered the public service on or before the 31st March 2004). The Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Bill 2018 provides for an increase in the compulsory retirement age of most pre-2004 public servants from age 65 to 70 years.

However, candidates should note that changes have been made in the superannuation provisions and retirement ages for public servants who take up duty with effect from 1st April 2004.

In this context, new entrants, within the meaning of the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004, to the public service should note:

The minimum pension age has been increased to 65 years for most new entrants to the public service. The compulsory retirement age of 65 has been removed

Pension benefits for new entrants will accrue on a standard basis (i.e., one year's credit for one year's service up to a maximum of 40 years' service) while normal abatement of pension provision will apply to all public sector posts.

With effect from 1st January 2013, it is a condition of the appointment of new entrants to the public service* that you be a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. Please see information booklet enclosed

If you have commenced employment in the public service as a new entrant or you are a former public servant, returning to the public service after a break of more than 26 weeks, you will be included in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme effective from the 1st January 2013 with a minimum retirement age of 66 in 2018 (rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028 in line with state pension changes). The maximum retirement age under this scheme will be age 70.

*A former public servant returning to the public service after a break of more than 26 weeks is considered a new entrant.

Health & Safety

- All employees must comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Comply and enact Health and Safety responsibilities as outlined in Services policies, protocols and procedures relevant to your area.
- Take reasonable care to protect your own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work.

- Ensure that personal protective equipment is worn while on duty
- Correct use of equipment

Information Technology

Ensure that you make the most effective and efficient use of developments in technology for both supported individual's care and IT support in a manner, which integrates well with systems throughout the organisation, actively assisting in the integration of new technology and systems.

Hygiene / Infection Control

All employees have responsibility for Hygiene awareness. Hygiene is defined as “The practice that serves to keep people and environments clean and prevent infection.” All employees also have a responsibility under their terms of employment to prevent transmission of infection and to follow the services infection control policies and guidelines as outlined in the Infection Control Manual. All employees must be aware that they work in an area where there is potential for transmission of infection. All employees have a responsibility to follow hand hygiene guidelines as this is the single most important intervention to prevent the transmission of infection.

Confidentiality

In the course of the post holder's employment he/she may have access to or have information concerning the personal affairs of staff or other confidential information. Such information is strictly confidential and unless acting on the instruction of an authorised officer, on no account must information concerning staff or other service business be divulged or discussed, except as appropriate in the performance of normal duty. In addition, information, records, files must never be left in such a manner that unauthorised persons can obtain access to them. No records, documents or property of the Service may be removed from the premises of the Service without prior authorisation. You must return to the Service upon request and, in any event, upon the termination of your employment, all documents or other property of the Service which are in your possession or under your control.

Data Management

Ensure compliance with the obligations required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

Trust in Care Policy

Avista is committed to the principles of the HSE Trust in Care Policy and all employees have a duty to report concerns for the safety and welfare of people within the procedures detailed in this policy.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children Act 2015

The Service is committed to the principles of the Children First Act 2015 all employees must fully comply with Procedures and Practices including relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

Short-listing

Applicants will be subject to short listing based on information provided in their application, whereby only those who meet set criteria shall be called to interview.

Panel

A panel may be formed for future Administration Roles.

Core Competencies
Quality Service • Pro-active and uses Initiative. • Undertakes holistic approach to ensure the best possible service is provided. • Ability to encourage and develop quality led practice initiatives. • Demonstrates an ability to evaluate, audit and review practice • Provides a flexible service that is responsive to the needs of the service user, colleagues and service. • Optimises resources within own areas to achieve appropriate outcomes. • Identifies and prioritises the requirements of change within own service area at all times considering how it will affect other parts of the organisation. Planning & Organising • Effective use of time focussed on managing self and developing others in a busy working environment. • Sets clear, realistic goals and targets for self and others. • Keeps appropriate and accessible documentation. • Utilises established systems and processes for prioritising and delivering on tasks. • Delegates effectively to ensure objectives are met. • Consistently focuses work effort to where it will have most impact. • Anticipates Problems and issues and takes preventative action to address these. • Demonstrates an ability to plan and deliver care in an effective and resourceful manner within a culture of person-centeredness. • Advance planning to ensure adequate resources are available. • Effective and efficient utilisation of resources. Professionalism • Deals fairly and consistently with others. • Approachable and accountable and professionally courteous with others. • Shows ability to work under pressure; handles stress in a constructive manner. • Self-aware; recognises own response while retaining objectivity.

- Is cognisant of own strengths/limitations, and scope of one's practice.
- Shows resilience; keeps others focussed on a successful outcome.
- Maintains appropriate level of visibility.
- Maintains highest standard of confidentiality in all areas of work.

Continuous Learning & Development

- Participate in the Service Development Review System.
- Organises and structures department to create a continuous learning environment.
- Creates "on the job" opportunities to address staff learning needs.
- Demonstrates application of theory to practice and influences staff in this regard.
- Encourages colleagues/team to undertake a broad range of development initiatives and to maintain an active performance development plan.
- Mentors, coaches and provides constructive feedback on performance to staff in order to improve capability and confidence.
- Acknowledge staff strengths and achievements.

Organisational Knowledge

- Familiar with Health Service trends related to area of discipline.
- Understands the contribution of each department to the organisational goals and objectives
- Uses knowledge of mission, values and service structures to deliver on organisational goals.
- Understands health strategies relevant to own discipline.
- Innovation & Creativity
- Works within teams to maximise the number of ideas and creative inputs for best outputs.
- Encourages others to 'think outside the box'.
- Generates new ideas that have a positive impact on the department/service and its ultimate success.
- Creates an environment where people are encouraged to put forward ideas, experiment and learn from their mistakes.
- Challenges the status quo to ensure areas for improvement are identified and addressed
- Proposes new approaches, methods or technologies.

Leadership Potential

- Inspires others to consistently perform at a high level and achieve their potential.
- Is approachable and treats people in a fair and consistent manner in order to gain trust.
- Is seen as an effective leader, setting high standards of behaviour for others to follow and addresses inappropriate behaviour.
- Coaches others in maintaining a flexible approach to their work.
- Embraces change and looks for ways to make positive changes within the team.
- Ability to understand how individuals, at all levels, operate and applies this knowledge to achieve change objectives in the most efficient and effective way.
- Seizes opportunities to influence the future direction of departments and the overall business.
- Encourages, inspires and supports others to deliver successful outcomes through change.
- Is politically attuned, knowing when to communicate with key stakeholders.

- Understands importance of getting input and buy-in from others when making decisions.

Problem Solving & Decision Making

- Is comfortable making decisions with incomplete or uncertain information
- Has basic Communications and budgeting knowledge and draws on this to make decisions when applicable.
- Understands the effect of ones decision on colleagues/service users, departments and the organisation.
- Anticipates probable consequences of decisions.
- Consults with others to improve decision making.
- Takes a proactive approach to problem solving and able to recognise early warning signs of potential problems and takes pre-emptive action.
- Demonstrates a reflective approach when dealing with problems, carefully evaluating different options/solutions.
- Able to act quickly to address urgent matters.

Teamwork

- Fosters a collaborative working team with complementary strengths.
- Recognise the talents and contributions each team member brings to the work environment.
- Proactively develops and nurtures workplace relationships.
- Utilises team skills and attributes in achieving goals.
- Encourages input from all team members.
- Adapts interpersonal style to engage all members of the team.
- Identifies areas of potential conflict within the team and takes steps to resolve it.
- Is open and approachable to discuss issues.

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Supports a culture of open communication to maintain a climate of trust and honesty.
- Communicates at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Supports ideas with appropriate research and information to persuade others.
- Focused Listening: Gains' understanding through accurately clarifying what was heard.
- Shares information within – and to – other sections and departments in an open timely manner.
- Delivers presentations to groups with confidence and credibility.
- Documents important relevant communications.
- Facilitates two way communications between conflicting parties
- Uses an appropriate business writing style