

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of External Affairs
Reports to:	Deputy Chief Executive
Line reports:	Digital Communications Manager, Senior Policy and Research Advisor
Contract:	Permanent
Hours of work:	Full time (35 hours/week); we have the option of working a 9-day fortnight available.
Location:	Hybrid working available with approx. 2 days a week in our Central London office. The nature of this external affairs role also requires attendance at some external events.
Salary:	£55,000 per annum

The Head of External Affairs is a key role at the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH). It leads RSPH's external affairs function, integrating policy, parliamentary engagement, public affairs, communications, media, digital and cross-organisation work to strengthen RSPH's growth, reach and impact.

The role ensures coherence across all external-facing policy and communications work, support to other teams, and provides senior leadership to support RSPH's 2026 transformation priorities.

As the world's oldest public health agency and the UK's leading specialist provider of public health qualifications, the Royal Society for Public Health is uniquely placed to make a difference. With health and social care services under increasing pressure, healthy life expectancy stalling, inequalities increasing and more people than ever leaving the workforce due to ill-health, our remit couldn't be more important.

Key Responsibilities

1. Team Leadership, Governance and Performance

- Lead and integrate policy, communications and external influencing work
- Embed KPI-driven performance management
- Manage reputational and political risk
- Ensure effective planning and alignment across transformation priorities
- Build capability and progression pathways within the team

2. Strategic Programme Leadership

- Lead Healthy Places (Sport and Leisure) influencing strand
- Provide political leadership for Workplace Health and the Health and Work Network
- Support the Vaccines Commission

- Ensure coherence and sequencing across all programmes

3. Political, Parliamentary and Institutional Influence

- Own parliamentary engagement strategy including APPGs
- Deliver measurable policy adoption and campaign outcomes
- Build national influencing relationships
- Secure institutional endorsements and sector adoption

4. Narrative, Media and External Profile

- Lead integrated communications strategy
- Deliver proactive media moments each quarter
- Oversee content, brand and narrative coherence
- Oversee flagship publications including the Annual Report
- Position RSPH as an authoritative voice on public health, inequalities and workforce

5. Commercial Integration and Growth

- Align policy outputs with income growth in training and qualifications
- Support membership conversion strategy
- Identify adoption routes and conversion checkpoints
- Contribute to revenue growth within approved budgets

Person Specification

Knowledge and Experience

- Strong track record in public affairs, policy influencing or political strategy
- Experience leading communications or media activity in a complex environment
- Proven ability to secure policy adoption and measurable influencing outcomes
- Understanding of public health landscape, inequalities and national strategies
- Experience managing teams and building organisational capability

Skills and Behaviours

- Excellent political judgement
- Strong narrative and communication skills
- Ability to convene systems and build coalitions
- Highly organised and able to manage multiple priorities
- Collaborative, confident and outward-facing leader