



The Forward Trust Job Description

Position Title	Digital Communications Officer	Reports to	Digital Communications Manager
Line manages	n/a	Directorate	Development

Introducing The Forward Trust

We are a social justice charity that supports people to recover from addiction or leave behind crime, helping them move on in life with family, friends, jobs, homes, and a sense of belonging. We deliver Substance Misuse and Mental Health, Criminal Justice, and Employment services in over 80 prison and community settings across England and Wales, augmented by our unique range of Recovery & Belonging services, together reaching over 40,000 people every year.

We also campaign to change public attitudes and policy, so that more people feel able to ask for help in a society that believes in the power of second chances and long-term recovery.

Join a purpose-led organisation with high-profile advocates and ambassadors and help make a difference to people that need our support.

Role/Team Overview

The role

The Digital Communications Officer is based within the Digital Communications Team and sits alongside a Digital Content Officer, with both roles reporting to the Digital Communications Manager. This is a varied generalist role that combines project management, creative media, technical and analytical skills within a wider communications function.

As a digital communications all-rounder, you will balance the delivery of day-to-day digital communications activity with longer-term projects and campaigns. Working closely with internal stakeholders, you will plan, create and deliver compelling multimedia content, including video, photography and visual assets, while also managing content calendars, monitoring channel performance, supporting community engagement, and using data and insight to drive audience growth and continuous improvement.

Working collaboratively across the organisation and with external partners, you will provide expert digital communications advice, support campaigns and events, manage a range of digital projects, and help protect and strengthen Forward's brand and reputation through

high standards of governance, accessibility and best practice.

About the team

The Communications Team is led by the Head of Communications and provides a range of internal and external support for the wider organisation with team responsibilities including strategic oversight for digital, internal, corporate, media, and campaign activities.

This is an exciting time to join the dynamic and creative communications department, which has responsibility for the marketing and promotion of our services, alongside ambitious new campaigning and fundraising initiatives, such as [Taking Action on Addiction](#) and [More Than My Past](#). The Communications Team overall remit includes:

- PR and media relations
- Campaigning, parliamentary and public affairs
- **Digital communications (including social media, website, creative content design)**
- Brand and creative services
- Marketing and promotion
- Internal communications and employee engagement
- Working with colleagues to support digital transformation (delivery of digital services in new ways to staff, service users and stakeholders).

Candidate attributes, skills and experience

The successful candidate will identify with our mission and values, using their proven experience and technical expertise to enhance and develop Forward's digital communications activities across the organisation and our national campaigns.

We are looking for a digital communications all-rounder with experience of working in a fast-paced communications environment. A key aspect of this varied generalist role is the ability to balance reactive business needs with a steady stream of planned campaigns, projects and business-as-usual activity, while supporting a wide range of internal stakeholders.

With strong technical, project management and creative media skills, including the ability to create and edit high-quality video content, the successful candidate will also possess excellent written and verbal communication skills, alongside strong copywriting, proofreading and stakeholder engagement abilities.

The successful candidate will be able to quickly translate ideas into compelling content that can be repurposed across Forward's digital communications channels, including social media, websites and stakeholder newsletters.

This role is also increasingly supporting Forward's ambitions to strengthen the development, delivery and promotion of content that showcases our frontline services, recovery journeys, organisational impact and the achievements of our staff and service users.

As such, you will possess a broad mix of communications expertise. You will be confident translating complex or sensitive subject matter for a variety of audiences, but also in using creative media tools including Canva, Adobe Creative Suite and social media schedulers.

You will also demonstrate strong technical problem-solving skills, such as resolving digital communications queries and audience segmentation challenges, alongside a natural ability to manage competing priorities and build productive working relationships with internal stakeholders.

Advanced-level creative media skills would be an advantage, particularly in photography, graphic design, animation and multimedia content creation. As this is a broad digital communications role rather than a specialist creative position, equal importance is placed on project management, stakeholder liaison, campaign delivery and digital communications expertise.

Additional elements of the role – including infrequent travel and out-of-hours work requirements

This role is remote based. However, you will also be required to travel on an infrequent basis for some workplace events across England and Wales.

In order to develop a deeper understanding of our frontline service delivery and how this relates to communications with key audiences and stakeholders, you will also be encouraged to undertake infrequent travel to regional services. This can also include working on specific tasks for content development as per the wider responsibilities held by the Communications Team.

The role is predominately delivered within core contractual hours (e.g. 9am-5pm), but very occasionally may also require out-of-hours work in the evening(s) and weekends. Weekend working is specifically for supporting events or undertaking reactive work during campaign weeks (e.g. Addiction Awareness Week). There is a responsibility to be part of a rota system for out-of-hours social media monitoring, mostly relating to holiday periods (e.g. Christmas and New Year). These responsibilities are infrequent but are considered core requirements of the role. Any overtime would be managed within our Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) process.

As this is a remote-based role, the successful candidate must be able to maintain a suitable home-working environment, including reliable broadband connectivity capable of supporting creative content production, Microsoft Teams meetings, downloading and reuploading large media files, website management and other cloud-based communications activities. You will be assigned a creator-grade laptop for this role. Due to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), you are not permitted to use your own laptop or personal software. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of their internet capabilities prior to appointment.

Duties

As Digital Communications Officer your primary duties will include:

- **Social media management** – day-to-day oversight and responsibility for planning, scheduling and publishing content across Forward's social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and YouTube). This also extends into our campaign channels for Taking Action on Addiction (as above listed). There will also be a requirement to take a broader reputational interest in the posts for local social media channels relating to specific services. Beyond post scheduling, this role should also ensure there is an active and committed approach towards follower engagement and community management. This is to ensure Forward is building advocacy and trust in our social media communications.
- **Content creation, planning and calendar management** – the creation of a wide variety of content for both external and internal audiences, as well as maintaining and coordinating integrated content calendars across social media, websites and campaigns, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities, awareness dates, fundraising initiatives and service-led activity.
- **Social media monitoring, community engagement and performance benchmarking** - using your experience of social media analytics, social listening and competitor analysis to track and evaluate Forward's social media performance against our targets and sector competitors. Monitor, respond to and engage with audiences across social channels in a timely and professional manner, escalating issues where appropriate and helping to foster an active and supportive online community. Produce regular performance reports and actionable insights for internal stakeholders and senior managers, using data to recommend improvements and inform future content and campaign activity.
- **Social media development that improves engagement and non-paid follower growth** - contribute to the growth of Forward's digital audiences through effective content planning, optimisation, engagement activity and continuous improvement of channel performance. This includes monitoring trending topics and content streams and tracking platform updates/algorithm changes.
- **Upholding best practice relating to accessibility, brand protection and governance** - including identifying opportunities for implementation across Forward's multiple social media channels. Identifying and flagging risks arising from social media posts, messages or alerts mentioning Forward or our campaigns.
- **Website content management and updating** – ensuring the accuracy of service information pages, identifying and presenting powerful case studies and posting news articles.
- **Visual and multimedia content creation** – create engaging visual and multimedia content including social media graphics, short-form video, reels, animation, photography and infographics tailored to platform-specific audiences and objectives. This is delivered from within a fast-paced communications environment, but predominately this is delivered remotely. On this basis, we also welcome applications from people with advanced-level skills across all or the majority of these areas.
- **Campaign communications** - support the planning, delivery and evaluation of integrated digital communication campaigns that contribute to organisational objectives, public awareness, fundraising priorities and stakeholder engagement.
- **In-person event content** – servicing a wide range of events that take place to showcase our work and achievements including celebration days for existing and

former service users from within our recovery community, campaign launches, corporate events, and staff awards, among others. Content collation should always be completed with an understanding that it is for speedy conversion for social media content (sometimes same day).

- **Providing digital communications consultancy to colleagues** - working across the wider organisation with colleagues at all levels. You will need to help maintain Forward's reputation by upholding our high communication standards relating to branding, reputation and risk management, and advising over industry best practice when working with colleagues to develop digital service promotion collateral, web news stories, advising on the most appropriate format/channel for regional developments (e.g. projects, partnerships, and programme developments).
- **Digital project management** – oversight and day-to-day responsibility for seeing through a range of communications projects which vary in scale and complexity (e.g. helping a service launch a new social media channel, planning and devising a new content stream for the website, generating new content series for specific services/teams) aligned with deadlines, budget and overlap with related work delivered by the Communications Team.
- **Digital troubleshooting** – resolving technical challenges that may arise across Forward's digital estate relating to social media channels, our websites, newsletter software, and creative media content. This also extends to integrations between these various channels and being able to work through these with internal technical teams or external support teams.
- **Working with external partners** - take a collaborative approach to any working with external partner organisations, suppliers, ambassadors, supporters and internal stakeholders to develop engaging digital content and maximise campaign reach.
- **Internal representation at strategic meetings** – ensuring that the Digital Communications Team is accountable at strategic development and planning meetings, using your knowledge/experience of supporting ideas into possible end products (videos, case studies or service developments).

This role will also provide a potential opportunity to develop their skills through in-house or external training (budget dependent) as required.

Accountabilities

Delivery

- With support from the Digital Communications Manager, create and deliver effective and engaging content for Forward's digital estate. Ability to tailor content depending on audience, channel, and urgency.
- Demonstrate strong creative media and copywriting skills through the development of graphics, social media posts, videos/reels, web news stories, stakeholder newsletters and campaign content.
- Identify opportunities to be innovative, newsworthy, and showcase creative ways of achieving our organisational goals, based on previous experience, professional insights and evidence – within appropriate levels of risk and approval.

Knowledge

- An understanding of all relevant legal, regulatory and ethical responsibilities, particularly the currently changing regulation in fundraising and communications.
- Keep abreast of any developments in communications practice and look for ways to incorporate new approaches and best practice into your work, ensuring that your team and wider department are updated.
- Ensure you are up to date with Forward's work and services, as well as issues relating to the third sector with empathy and awareness of subject sensitivity relating to our service support work – especially within criminal justice and drug and alcohol support sectors.
- Previous experience of using a website CMS, social media platforms and schedulers, creative media software and Microsoft Office.

Process, Policy & Administration

- Ensure all policies and procedures are followed and that accurate and timely records are kept
- Work with external suppliers where appropriate, following policies and best practice on selection, commissioning, payment and reporting
- Develop and maintain effective systems to support the efficient and accurate functioning of the communications team, including administrative tasks, contact management and so on
- To carry out all tasks with professionalism and in accordance with Forward's policies and values particularly those on Equal Opportunity and Confidentiality
- Alert the Digital Communications Manager to any significant risks or problems that arise
- Effectively manage information, particularly confidential information and personal data, within statutory duties and in accordance with best practice

Other

- Take on other reasonable tasks and responsibilities as deemed appropriate by your Line Manager

Role criteria

Below is a list of the criteria that we are looking for in applicants to this post. Please address each of these points in your application.

Criteria Requirement	
E	Essential Criteria
D	Desirable Criteria
Criteria Measure	
A	Application
I	Interview
T	Test

Knowledge, skills and experience

A minimum of 18 months' workplace experience working in a	E	A/I
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similar role.		
Proven project management success and experience involving working cross-departmentally to deliver high-quality communication outcomes. This may include one or more from within campaigns, digital marketing or digital products (creative media content / web-based platforms), and/or internal work developments (e.g. workplace wellbeing schemes or EDI initiatives).	E	A/I
Knowledge and proven experience of working with and delivering content on Content Management Systems	E	A/I
A flair and proficiency for creating engaging and memorable content for social media channels, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, X and YouTube, as well as experience of using social media management tools to evaluate outcomes.	E	A/I
Knowledge and experience of reputation management and how this relates to working within social media.	E	A/I
Strong creative design skills, and the ability to understand the needs of a diverse audience in terms of accessible multimedia products (videos, graphics and case studies).	E	A/I
Demonstrable understanding and experience of writing for different audiences through news articles, social media posts, blogs and/or newsletters.	E	A/I
Experience of using and reporting on social media and website performance metrics and analytics for senior management.	E	A/I
Ability to work quickly and flexibly whilst retaining good attention to detail	E	A/I
Technical expertise of using video production and editing software/tools	E	A/I
Excellent verbal and written communications skills and the ability to explain and summarise issues in an understandable and approachable manner, relevant to the audience	E	A/I
Excellent proofreading and copy-editing skills	E	A/I
Excellent planning, project management, and organisational skills	E	A/I
Ability to work on own initiative and intuition to deliver work in a busy and fast-paced communications environment	E	A/I
Good time management, work scheduling skills to manage a variety of jobs with different deadlines at the same time	E	A/I
Ability to build strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders	E	A/I
Flexible, proactive and can-do approach to providing communications support at Forward events.	E	A/I
Good knowledge and understanding of Microsoft Office packages, particularly Word and Excel	E	A/I
Creative media skills and experience to an advanced standard would be a welcome advantage in any of the following areas - photography, videography, graphic design, animation and creative editing.	D	A/I
Working knowledge or lived experience of The Forward Trust and/or the criminal justice/drug and alcohol support sector	D	A/I
Technical knowledge and experience of search engine optimisation (SEO) and digital tracking elements for campaigns.	D	A/I

Knowledge of communications and/or marketing best practice and regulation	D	A/I
Advanced-level experience (preferably with sharable examples) of working with design software (notably Adobe Creative Suite)	D	A/I
Knowledge or experience of working within a third sector organisation or charity	D	A/I
Personal attributes		
Proactivity – Quick thinking with a high-level use of initiative	E	A/I
Positive approach – A positive, problem-solving approach with the initiative to focus on key issues quickly and clearly	E	A/I
Resilience – Solves problems, takes learning on board from mistakes to aid personal and professional growth	E	A/I
Adaptability – Can work in fast-paced changing environments	E	A/I
Confidence – Has confidence in own abilities and able to communicate clearly and concisely	E	A/I
Team Work – Works in harmony with colleagues to deliver results	E	A/I
Open to Feedback – Open to constructive feedback in order to further develop	E	A/I
Innovative – Continually searching for better ways of working	E	A/I
Qualification		
Degree Level qualification	E	A
Relevant qualifications in Communications, Digital or Marketing	D	A