

Passenger Focus Job description

Title: Press Officer

Grade / Band: C+

Line Manager: Head of Communications

Job purpose

To be the first point of contact for all media enquiries providing a press office function which offers high-quality support and information on the passenger viewpoint to media contacts in a timely and effective manner. In addition, to proactively promote Passenger Focus's achievements, research, events and policies to external stakeholder audiences through print and broadcast media - national, regional, specialist bus / coach industry press and online media.

To work with colleagues in the communications team to deliver the communications strategy - this will involve working on the website, publications and events.

Outline

The Press Officer will maintain the full range of press office activities, primarily taking the lead for bus / coach related activities but also taking responsibility for rail related activities as required in line with team capacity and business need. This will involve drafting and issuing press releases and briefing notes; co-ordinating requests for interviews and comments; briefing key Passenger Focus personnel for interviews and media opportunities; and maintaining and building upon relationships with identified key media contacts. This will involve being on the on-call rota to answer media calls at weekends and evenings (for which an additional allowance will be paid). In addition, the postholder will be involved in the publicity and promotion of events and activities, providing media support to national and local initiatives and identifying opportunities for the organisation to raise its profile with passengers and other stakeholders.

The postholder will also be involved in cross organisational working in project teams to support the delivery of business plans.

Tasks and responsibilities:

- Handle media requests for comments and interviews, responding in person where appropriate and referring approaches to the Head of Communications, or other relevant person as necessary
- Develop effective working relationships with key journalists, providing briefing materials, proactively targeting stories and information to identified media and maintaining up-to-date contact lists

- Develop, in conjunction with the Policy team and Passenger Focus Managers, 'lines to take' on passenger issues and ensure the agreed lines are distributed internally and externally as appropriate
- Identify ways to broaden Passenger Focus's media profile, pursuing opportunities to place articles or features in a range of publications, providing appropriate copy and information as required
- Monitor daily press cuttings and broadcast media, maintaining a comprehensive log of all interviews and coverage relating to Passenger Focus, the industry and related issues
- Oversee the daily circulation of press cuttings provided by the Communications Assistant
- Assist as required in arranging Passenger Focus public events
- Assist as required with the production of publications and keeping the website up-to-date
- To cover for the rail Press Officer as and when required
- This role will require some travel.

Passenger Focus Person specification

Education, professional knowledge, and relevant experience

- Minimum of five GCSEs (or equivalent), including English
- Proven relevant experience in a busy press office / communications / journalism role
- Media knowledge: understanding of the way different media organisations work and an appreciation of the best way to influence media contacts. Previous working relationships with bus industry / journalists are desirable
- IT skills: experience of using Microsoft Office (particularly Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook) to an advanced level. Knowledge and experience of desktop publishing packages such as Adobe Photoshop, QuarkXPress, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Acrobat desirable.

Skills and competencies

- **Communication:** high standard of written and oral communications, with the ability to present information clearly and concisely and to convey messages to target audiences. Attention to detail to ensure all communications is appropriate and accurate
- **Relationship management / networking:** an ability to build rapport and respect in order to develop and sustain trusting working relationships and networks both in and outside of the organisation
- **Influence and assertiveness:** ability to influence and persuade journalists and to deal with and brief people at all levels within the organisation on media issues
- **Organisational awareness:** ability to act as a guardian for the Passenger Focus brand, recognising the importance of protecting this brand and applying it consistently through appropriate marketing and media
- **Flexible organisation and prioritisation:** ability to organise own work effectively, prioritising competing workloads and working to tight timescales. Able to forward plan and adapt to changing demands on time when circumstances dictate

- **Team working:** can work effectively as part of a team, contributing to the achievement of team objectives as a priority
- **Initiative and innovation:** able to work under own initiative, motivated to identify opportunities and recommend new ways of working, for example, to raise Passenger Focus's media profile and engage stakeholders.

Important working relationships

Internal

- Communications team
- Passenger Focus Chief Executive
- Passenger Focus Bus team
- Passenger Focus Managers and Executives (11 managers spread across the UK)
- Policy and Research teams
- Passenger Advice team - including contact centre outsourced staff
- Chairman and Board

External

- Key industry stakeholders, including press officer colleagues at the Department for Transport, Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), bus / coach operators
- Regional, online and specialist media contacts.