JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief of Staff to Leader of the Scottish Labour Party

Department: Support Unit
Reports to: Leader of the Scottish Labour Party
Direct Reports: Head of Communications, Head of Policy
Salary Level: Dependent on experience

Main Purpose of Job

- To provide strategic advice to the leadership of the Scottish Labour Party across all aspects of the role including policy, communications and personnel matters.
- To provide strategic leadership and management to the Support Unit within the Scottish Parliament ensuring it works effectively and efficiently in the formulation, expression and delivery of policy both within and out with the parliament.
- To manage all functions of the Support Unit across policy and communications ensuring co-ordination between the functions of the unit and with MSPs to support them in their respective roles.
- To liaise with the stakeholders and support staff to ensure consistency of policy and messaging.

Position in Organisation

- Senior Parliamentary Adviser to the Leader of the Scottish Labour Party
- Head of the Senior Management Team
- Liaison with parliamentarians on an individual and collective basis to ensure appropriate level of support to enable them to fulfil their roles
- Liaison with stakeholders, colleagues and support staff across the UK to ensure consistency of policy and communication
- Liaison with external organisations and stakeholders to assist in the formulation, development and approach to policy proposals
- Principal point of contact/gatekeeper for the Leader

Scope of Job

- Responsible for the work of the Support Unit
- Responsible for providing and supporting main lines of approach for Parliamentary debates, especially, but not limited to, FMQs, Budget debates and other significant legislative proposals
- Provide guidance and support to Leader, Deputy Leader, Group Members, party and parliamentary staff on all policy and communications issues
- Responsible for the process of consultation and drafting of policy related documents, ensuring all appropriate stakeholders are involved
- Work with MSP staff, providing policy advice and support to them in their role
- Work co-operatively with MSP staff, drawing on and harvesting knowledge and expertise to support the work of the Group as a whole

Dimensions and Limits of Authority

- Responsible for the delivery of agreed outputs from the Support Unit
- Responsible for the configuration of the budget for the Support Unit, securing agreement from the Leader and Business Manager, and thereafter the efficient management of the budget

Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

- Educated to degree level or substantial experience, skills and knowledge commensurate with this level of education
- In-depth knowledge of political environments and policy and communications roles
- Demonstrated knowledge of leading, supporting, developing and managing staff
- Demonstrable knowledge of managing and building relationships with stakeholders
- Ability to work to tight deadlines, producing high-quality proposals in a fast-paced working environment
- Excellent written English, with proved ability to research and write accessible, clear policy documents and reports for a range of audiences
- Knowledge of communication strategies and the ability to demonstrate how different approaches can achieve impact in a political environment,
- the ability to identify and shape communications for the press, broadcast and social media
- Excellent oral communication skills, with the ability to engage different audiences, convey complex information in an understandable way and prepare and give presentations
- Ability to manage policy development and communications strategies across a diverse portfolio of subject areas, managing team workloads, providing support where required
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a high level of diplomacy and ability to work effectively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Excellent level of political awareness
- Willingness to travel with overnight stays as required

Duties and Key Responsibilities

- Accountable for the performance of the Policy and Communications functions in the Support Unit
- Support and encourage the formulation and development of policy by MSPs and staff, providing guidance and co-ordination
- Support and encourage the development of communications from MSP offices to local and national media
• Monitor policy and communications from other political parties including our sister-parties across the world to inform the work and approach of the Leader, Deputy Leader, members of the group and Policy Team.

• Motivate and provide support to members of the Support Unit and MSP policy staff, providing training and briefing sessions to support professional development

• Alert the Leader, Deputy Leader and members of the group to opportunities and threats in relation to policy proposals and positions

• Work closely and co-operatively with the Communications Team, providing robust and well-researched policy to support their role

• Motivate and provide support to the Policy Team ensuring they provide policy support of the highest standard to the Leader, Deputy Leader and members of the group

• Identify and prioritise areas for Parliamentary debates, including but not limited to FMQs and major Parliamentary debates

• Provide support to policy reviews being undertaken by the Leader, Deputy Leader and members of the group

• Manage the budget of the Support Unit

The above represents your principal duties and responsibilities. In addition, you may be required to undertake additional or other duties within your capacity as may from time to time be required and necessary to meet the needs of the Labour Support Unit.