

UNISON Director of Communications

Supporting information

If you're a senior communications professional with a passion for social change, we'd like to hear from you. UNISON needs a new Director of Communications to lead our in-house team, develop our communications strategies, advise and guide staff and lay members across the union and oversee our political and recruitment campaigns.

You'll need professional communications experience earned at a high level, matched with great people management and influencing skills and an energy and commitment to achieving social change and winning political gains for our members. You may have a background in trade unions, but you could have gained your skills working in charities or campaign groups; for a political grouping or in the public services. What matters is that you have the right mix of skills, experience, passion and commitment.

Here are just a few reasons to join UNISON as our new Director of Communications:

1. We've got challenges for you

With 1.3 million members working in public services like the NHS, social care, local councils and communities, charities and the voluntary sector, police and schools and colleges, UNISON's members have been at the heart of the response to the pandemic. They've shown the power of public services in the most difficult of circumstances. They need a union to support them, provide advice and practical help, organise alongside them, and to speak up for them and the services they provide.

UNISON's size and diversity is a huge strength, but also presents challenges in terms of managing priorities, audiences, channels and timing of our communications. We're looking for an energetic clear thinker with strong management and engagement skills as well as an understanding of delivering integrated on and offline communications and campaigns within a political environment.

2. We're a great employer to work for

UNISON employs some 1,000 staff across our national centre and 12 regions. This role is based at the UNISON Centre in Euston Road, central London. You'll lead a team based at this purpose-designed modern office built for UNISON around the site of the historic Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for Women. We offer a competitive salary and terms and conditions, including a pension scheme, season ticket loans, excellent facilities for cyclists, staff sports and social activities and a great café for lunch and the occasional evening event.

3. We're committed to equality

UNISON is a union with equality at its heart. Equality is enshrined in the union's aims and values and we have specific structures and policies designed to ensure that the voices of women, Black members, LGBT+, disabled members, young members and retired members are heard in UNISON.

4. You'll lead a great team

The Director of Communications leads a great in-house team of communications professionals with a wide range of skills and specialisms, including campaign planning, writing, magazine production and creating content for on and offline communications, design, video, copy writing, email, social media and website management. You'll also oversee the work of our print unit and work closely with the Head of Media who leads our media and press office. As well as an in-house team, you'll commission and work with specialist agencies to support our external-facing political campaigns and recruitment marketing.

5. It's been an extraordinary year

A year of COVID-19 has put huge pressures on our members, but also shown the true value of public services to our communities. For UNISON too, it has meant big changes – staff working from home for most of a year; a rapid shift to online communications, meetings and democratic forums; a need to focus on providing accurate, up-to-date workplace-specific guidance on issues around the pandemic and finding new ways to support members suffering financial loss, struggling to access PPE or adequate sick pay or dealing with grief and loss. The pace of change has been swift and is likely to continue as we work our way back to "normality". It is a challenging and rewarding time to join us.

6. We don't conform to the stereotype

Unions aren't quite the cliché that some might promote – we don't live in the 1970s and there's not much beer and sandwiches and absolutely no smoke-filled rooms. But UNISON is even less like the stereotype. More than two thirds of our members are women. They work in a huge range of jobs across public services at every level – in our communications, you could be talking to a chief executive, a nurse, a refuse collector, a scenes-of-crime officer or a teaching assistant. A bus garage manager or a librarian. A social worker or a lab technician. The things that unite them are their membership of UNISON and a public service ethos.

7. We've got a new general secretary

This year, UNISON members elected their first woman general secretary to lead a union of one million women members. Christina McAnea is one of the UK's leading negotiators and has worked across nearly every sector that UNISON represents. Joining UNISON as Director of Communications now is a great opportunity to be part of Christina's senior team and to help set the tone for her leadership of the union.

8. We run powerful campaigns

UNISON has a tradition of running innovative, outward-facing campaigns. We've led the way in using television advertising from the Ants and Bears advert that launched the new union back in 1993 to our current recruitment advert; we've made viral videos (15-minute Care Makeover and Pats on the Back) that used humour to earn millions of views; and run billboard and newspaper campaigns across the UK asking the public to use their vote to support public services. We combine our in-house

team's knowledge of the union and sensitivity of messaging with the best external agencies to find new ways to promote public services and the people who provide them.

9. We're investing in the future

UNISON is committed to a programme of improving our member engagement – enabled by better digital technology and access to member data, but driven by the need to communicate with our members and give them new ways to engage with the union. By joining us now, you'll help make sure this programme keeps its focus on what our members need and how we can develop integrated, timely and targeted communications.

10. We're not perfect...

It would be boring if we were. Bring your experience, your ideas and your fresh perspective and show us where we could do better.