**About this role**

As the External Affairs Officer for the largest children’s hospice in the UK and Europe, this role plays an important part in campaigning for greater and more sustainable funding for children’s hospices and advocating for better palliative care for all children and young people.

In this role, you will develop a strong understanding of health policy and politics and use this to identify ways Acorns can lend its voice to and shape the national debate on children’s palliative care and hospice care funding.

You will play a vital role in making a difference at a local level by building trusted relationships with key stakeholders, including politicians, ICBs, civil servants and decision makers across the West Midlands and Gloucestershire.

As Acorns External Affairs Officer you will champion our work and use powerful storytelling to demonstrate the impact of our hospice care for children and families across the region.

You will develop impactful messaging and equip advocates with the tools they need to use their voices in support of our cause.

Working in collaboration with colleagues across the sector to maximise our impact, you will play a role in shaping solutions that decision-makers can implement to ensure that children and families in our region receive the care and support they need.

You will also identify opportunities to work in partnership with Hospice UK and Together for Short Lives and contribute to the planning and delivery of political campaigns that build pressure on decision makers using parliamentary, public and media support.

**Your team**

You will be part of Acorns talented Communications team, sitting within the highly-skilled Marketing and Communications department.

**Job description**

**Job Title:** External Affairs Officer

**Reports to:** Senior PR and Communications Manager

**KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

* Develop a strong understanding of health policy and politics and use this to identify ways Acorns can lend its voice to and shape the national debate on children’s palliative care and hospice care funding.
* Play a vital role in making a difference at a local level by building trusted relationships with key stakeholders (politicians, IBCs, civil servants, decision makers).
* Champion the work of Acorns at national and regional levels, using powerful storytelling to demonstrate the impact of our hospice care for children and families across the region.
* Develop impactful messaging and equip advocates with the tools they need to use their voices in support of our cause.
* Work in collaboration with colleagues across the sector to maximise our impact.
* Identify opportunities to work in partnership with Hospice UK and Together for Short Lives and contribute to the planning and delivery of political campaigns.

**MAIN DUTIES:**

*Political monitoring and analysis:*

1. Monitor and analyse the impact of national policy developments (such as Government announcements or consultations) and draft written briefings for key stakeholders, including politicians and Acorns staff.
2. Develop your knowledge of what is happening across the political and policy landscape, in particular health policy, and use it to identify opportunities for Acorns to influence change.
3. Develop open dialogue and partnership working practices with national organisations such as Hospice UK and Together for Short Lives on national issues and developments that may impact Acorns.
4. Provide spokespeople, including Acorns executives and senior leaders and families on national issues to establish Acorns as a thought leader across the sector.
5. Provide information, as requested by colleagues from other areas of the organisation, on policy and political developments.

*Campaigning and advocacy:*

1. Working in collaboration with internal teams across Acorns plan, develop and run campaigns aimed at local decision makers that involve engagement with politicians, IBCs, the media and the public to influence change.
2. Develop powerful case studies that demonstrate the vital need for and impact of Acorns children’s hospice care for children and families across our region.
3. Establish a campaign group utilising Parent Carer Champions and Young Ambassadors and equip them with the resources needed to speak on local and national issues affecting children’s palliative care.

*Building relationships:*

1. Working with the Executive team, develop and maintain relationships with elected representatives across the West Midlands and Gloucester via emails, in-person meetings and by providing written briefings as needed.
2. Working with EDs and the Statutory Partnerships team develop and maintain Acorns relationships with ICBs and civil servants.
3. Manage a database of MPs, councillors and other key decision makers who support our cause and ensure it is kept up to date.
4. Develop and maintain relationships with counterparts across the sector and at Hospice UK and Together for Short Lives to help shape activity and provide an Acorns voice to campaigns and activity.
5. Develop and implement a ‘communications journey’ for key stakeholders to ensure decision makers are kept informed of our work and any local or national issues affecting children’s palliative care and the hospice sector.

*Developing and influencing policy:*

1. Draft responses to political issues that impact Acorns and the hospice sector as required.

*Other key duties:*

1. Represent Acorns at external meetings or events as required, acting as an ambassador for our charity, raising awareness of Acorns aims and objectives and enhancing its reputation through exemplary behaviour, conduct and team working.
2. Be able to occasionally work outside of normal office hours and travel to London, including overnight stays. For example, to attend a party conference or an event in the House of Commons.
3. Deliver all work accurately and to a high standard.
4. Develop effective working relationships across the organisation.
5. Support the Senior PR and Communications Manager in collating accurate and insightful reports to senior managers on progress against objectives.
6. Put the needs and interests of Acorns children and young people and their families first in all aspects of their work.
7. Actively participate in an annual performance and development review and any training and development identified to further enhance your role with Acorns.
8. To ensure compliance with Acorns policies for diversity, employment, equal opportunities, health and safety, information governance and safeguarding

Acorns adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As an employee you will be a Duty Bearer for Children’s Rights and support all children to be Rights Holders.