Political Assistant

JE Code: NA (MKLA 0214)

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| **Values – We are dedicated, respectful, collaborative, we are Milton Keynes Council** |
| **Service** | Democratic Services |
| **Reports to:** | Head of Democratic Services – under the day-to-day supervision of the political group |
| **Job Family** | Professional & Technical |
| **Grade:** | G |
| **Politically restricted** | Y |
| **Date:** | 4 May 2022 |

**Key Deliverables**

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| **1.** | Responsibility for supporting the Group Leader in developing the Group’s strategic direction and development within the Council, including the preparation of reports on progress / achievements and areas of development for the group. |
| **2.** | To lead, manage and contribute the provision of high-quality political research for councillors in the Group and to evaluate and analyse issue which are of interest to the Group developing action plans and monitor progress. |
| **3.** | To be aware of additions to the forward plan of executive decisions, and meeting agendas / workplans, helping Councillors prepare for these decisions and meetings, by preparing guidance notes, motions, questions or similar. To attend decisions and meetings at the direction of the Leader of that Group. |
| **4.** | To assist Councillors (as far as is appropriate and at the direction of the Leader of that Group) with the submission and monitoring of Casework enquiries.  |
| **5.** | To keep abreast of developments within local government and advise the Group accordingly, ensuring that Group members are aware of national party policy and emerging policy developments, providing expertise and advice as necessary so the group functions effectively. |
| **6.** | To prepare material including press releases for the media or community groups from the political group’s perspective and to liaise with the Communications Team as appropriate. |
| **7.** | To support arrangements (at the direction of the Leader of that Group) for the delivery of regular reports, bulletins, statistical digests, or similar, by or on behalf of members of the group. |
| **8.** | To liaise and communicate with political Group Members and Council Officers and the political structures within local government representative organisations, other Local Authorities and interested parties (including MPs). |
| **9.** | To be responsible for arranging Group events (e.g. group seminars and meetings) and to contribute to the arrangements for other events. |
| **10.** | To assist and support with Councillor training and development, including the induction of new Councillors and provision of general support to all group members so as to empower them to carry out their roles as Councillors. |

**Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)**

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| **1.** | A detailed understanding of and commitment to the priorities agenda of the political group appointed to. Knowledge of the local political structure and operation. |
| **2.** | Experience of building and sustaining effective working relationships with a variety of stakeholders including elected Councillors and Senior Officers. |
| **3.** | Awareness of the sensitivities of working with elected members and the ability to work with tact and diplomacy in a confidential environment. |
| **4.** | Membership of the political party appointed to support. |
| **5.** | Good IT skills with experience of Microsoft Office and Windows |

**Notes**

1. This is a post under paragraph 6 of schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 including Local Government (Assistants for Political Groups (Remuneration) Order 1995). The work of the Political Assistant must accord with current legislation and/or regulations.
2. It is politically restricted under section 2(21) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
3. Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that you will be flexible and adaptable in your delivery to meet both service and council wide needs.

Job Family

Professional / Technical

Grade G

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| **Colleagues Expectations*** Be professional at all times
* Work together for the good of the team, council and local people
* Promote a supportive culture
* Challenge assumptions
* Take ownership
* Be willing to change and do things differently
* Always work in a safe manner
 | **Managers expectations*** Be a role model by displaying positive behaviours at all times
* Make well-considered decisions
* Support, coach and communicate with my team
* Be accountable for my team’s performance
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Professional/Technical job holders rely upon their deep knowledge of the specialism or discipline in which they work to carry out vital tasks and provide authoritative advice to others. Often developing within recognised career paths, their evolving expertise sees them bear increasing responsibility for managing Council assets, the development of policies and procedures and the strategic direction of the functions they support.

### Role Characteristics

At this level roles require an in depth, theoretical understanding of their particular discipline to solve complex problems, offer evidence based, provide authoritative advice to colleagues / service users and manage teams and/or other resource assets.

### The Knowledge and skills required

The broad knowledge requirement needed to deal with the technical and business challenges of roles is usually underpinned by an appreciation of the theoretical basis of the particular discipline, such that job holders can fall back on the first principles of their specialism to make decisions and offer advice.

This level of knowledge is often indicated by the need for a degree level education in the relevant field, but for some roles this is substituted by a significant level of on the job training and focussed experience such that the level of expertise confers a similar level of authority.

Roles will have demands for manual dexterity in relation to typing and similar functions, other jobs will use a range of equipment requiring precision in their use and handling.

### Thinking, Planning and Communication

The situations and problems dealt with at this level will be increasingly complex, involving several information streams where analytical and judgemental skills will be needed to interpret information correctly and determine optimum solutions.

Job holders will have plenty of day-to-day issues to contend with, they will also need to plan some months ahead to achieve medium-term objectives in such areas as project support or service development.

At this level, the information exchanged with internal and external colleagues, and members of the public will call for developed communication skills on the part of the job holders. Matters will be technically complicated, requiring careful explanation, or sensitive, requiring significant listening skills to interpret information and provide appropriate advice

**Decision Making and Innovation**

Job holders will have the autonomy to adapt specific approaches to better meet medium term objectives. They will be bound by the recognised procedural framework of their specialism as it is managed by the Council but will decide when and precisely how duties are to be carried out. They will also deal with problems (often escalated to this level) for which there are no set-down routes to a solution other than broad service practice guidelines.

### Areas of responsibility

With a diverse range of jobs being represented at this level, the precise blend of responsibilities for which the job holder is accountable will depend upon the service in which they operate.

External facing roles will focus on the needs of people whether external service users or partners, and will be responsible for high impact decision making and the implementation of appropriate programmes on behalf of individuals or groups of people or enforcement of regulations which have direct and significant consequences upon those served. Such roles are likely to have only modest levels of responsibility for finance, information assets, equipment and/or premises.

Internal roles are likely to have this pattern reversed, with weightier responsibility for significant financial and non-financial assets, but less for the assessment of needs of individuals and groups.

Jobs will have supervisory responsibility for the work of others and will be accountable for the quality and timeliness of outputs, whether related to the work of internal teams or temporary external contractors, volunteers or others.

### Impacts and Demands

Tasks and duties will be generally carried out in a sedentary position but there will always be a requirement for standing and walking from time to time, and the occasional need to lift or carry items.

The problem solving and decision-making elements of these jobs mean that job holders require lengthy periods of enhanced mental attention to attend to duties, while also dealing with deadlines, interruptions and conflicting demands.

Duties of jobs at this level will not require job holders to develop and maintain working relationships with people who, through their circumstances or behaviour, place particular emotional demands on the job holder.

Many Professional / Technical job holders find themselves exposed to some disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous working conditions. Particularly when the needs of their specialism require them to work on external sites exposed to the weather, in or around refuse and waste plant, close to particularly noisy machinery and in similar environments.

Other jobs, such as enforcement roles, may also see job holders exposed to verbal abuse and threatening environments. In all cases, job holders will minimise risk and conform to health and safety regulations to mitigate any negative effects of such exposure.