



## CANDIDATE PACK

Interim Head of External Affairs  
& Communications

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Interim Head of External Affairs & Communications (12 month fixed term contract) at Onward.

This is a high profile leadership role with real influence with our Executive and Senior leadership teams. Reporting to the Executive Director of People, Wellbeing and Communications, you'll lead our External Affairs & Communications Team, shaping how Onward is seen, heard and understood by colleagues, partners, the media and key external stakeholders.



Over the next 12 months, you'll play a key role in delivering our external affairs strategy and communications plans, overseeing a high-performing team and ensuring quality communications support is delivered to the business. You will also be able to advise senior leaders on the media, reputational risks and the external landscape related to housing, and will translate this advice into clear deliverable plans that help strengthen Onward's reputation, culture and impact.

At the heart of the role is leadership. You'll provide clear direction, develop and motivate a talented in-house team, manage resources effectively and foster a culture that encourages creativity, challenge and high performance. You'll also act as a visible ambassador for Onward, building strong external partnerships, and helping amplify the voices of our customers and communities.

If you're an experienced communications leader who can quickly build credibility, lead with confidence and deliver impact in a fast paced, strategic environment, we'd love to hear from you.

Further details about the role, the skills and experience we're looking for, and how to apply can be found in this candidate pack.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'J' followed by a long horizontal line.

**Jackie Carter**  
Executive Director of People, Wellbeing and Communications



## About us.

Onward is one of the largest registered providers of social housing in the North West.



We own and manage more than **35,000** homes across Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

# MOODY'S

Onward has **G1** (governance) and **V2** (financial) ratings from the Regulator of Social Housing and has a credit rating of **A1** (Negative) from Moody's.



## Homes England

We are a Strategic Partner of Homes England and plans to invest **£600m** to build **5,000** new homes by 2030.

We are passionate about making a real, positive impact and provide a range of additional services to support our customers with their tenancies. Visit: [www.onward.co.uk](http://www.onward.co.uk)

# Interim Head of External Affairs & Communications

<b>Location:</b>	North West
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Executive Director of People, Wellbeing and Communications
<b>Responsible for:</b>	External Affairs & Communications Team
<b>Salary:</b>	£91,500

## Key responsibilities.

**Team leadership:** provide proactive and strategic leadership to the in-house External Affairs & Communications team, managing budgets, priorities and performance. Develop colleagues to deliver excellent strategic communications and external affairs support.

**Managing external media relations:** Lead external media relations, advising on reputational risks and overseeing reactive and proactive strategies.

**Managing internal strategic communications advice:** Ensure the business receives high quality strategic communications and external affairs advice aligned to agreed plans.

**Managing content production:** Oversee the production of high quality print and digital content, consistent with the successful delivery of the external affairs strategy and communications plans.

**Leading external partnership working:** Play a leading role in identifying and building an extensive network of external partnerships and relationships to deliver the external affairs strategy.

## Key skills & experience.

- Leading a team to consistent high-level of performance in a similar or equivalent environment.
- Leading strategic campaigns and engagement with high profile external audiences, including political and business leaders.
- Delivering high levels of service to customers or clients.
- Translating strategic intent into operational plans and successfully delivering on those plans.
- Proven record of developing and delivering communications and external affairs strategies.
- Deep understanding of the policy landscape surrounding social housing.

## Qualifications.

### Essential:

- Educated to A level standard or equivalent experience.
- Professional marketing qualification or equivalent experience.

### Desirable:

- Senior level experience in external affairs and communications, ideally in housing.
- Intermediate Microsoft Office skills.

## Benefits and wellbeing.

### Annual leave

Onward's annual leave allowance runs from 1st April to 31st March. You will be entitled to an annual leave allowance of 32 days per year plus all usual UK (England) public and bank holidays. Your basic entitlement will be 29 days comprising 28 days which can be taken throughout the leave year and 1 day for your birthday, which can be taken anytime during the year. 3 additional days are to be taken between Christmas and New Year (you will be advised about specific arrangements each year).

### Pension

A simple, tax efficient way to save for your future, whether that involves travelling the world or covering your everyday living costs when you finish working. Your pension is provided by Aviva and our standard contribution rates are 5% of salary from the colleague, and 5% from Onward. If you want to save more then Onward will match your contributions up to a maximum of 10%. You can increase your personal contributions to any level you'd like, although the Onward contribution will be capped at 10%.

### Cash plan

Your health is important which is why we enrol all colleagues into our cash plan. Through our cash plan you can help to manage the everyday costs of healthcare and can claim cashback on lots of different items including:

- £100 for dental check ups
- £100 for glasses and contact lenses
- £250 on physiotherapy

### FRED – flexible benefits scheme

Our flexible benefits let you pick and choose the benefits that work for you. You simply login to FRED where you can select the benefits you require. Some of them are available year around, whilst others are only available during the bi-annual enrolment windows, such as buying holidays.

You can read more about our benefits [here](#).



## Our values.

We are committed to our customers, and we want our colleagues to be inspired by the positive impact they can make in people's lives every single day. With Onward you get the opportunity to work for an organisation with a real social purpose.



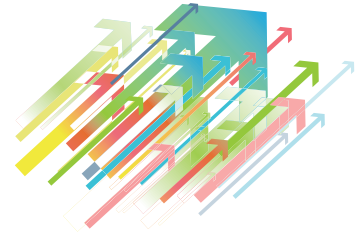
### **RESPECT**

for our customers  
and each other



### **CREATIVITY**

in our approach  
and ambition



### **EXCELLENCE**

at delivering meaningful  
services to our customers

## # The Onward Difference

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will enable people to be their best, in homes they love, and places they are proud of. We will do this by working with partners to go beyond housing and invent new ways to do more. Getting the basics right - and listening to customers - will be the foundation for everything we do.

Together we will make #TheOnwardDifference

“ Onward is a fantastic place to work - brilliant people, and an organisation that really lives up to its values.

I've just completed a Master's in Business Administration with the University of Liverpool. I'm really grateful to work in an organisation that has enabled me to do this. ”

**Gavin Batchelor**  
Head of Neighbourhood Services - Lancashire



## Application process.

Like what you have read so far and would like to register an interest in this role? It's time to complete your application form and update your CV. Check out our helpful [blog](#) for our top ten tips for applications.

START YOUR APPLICATION

## Selection process.



Onward actively encourages applications from all backgrounds and cultures. We believe that a diverse workforce helps us deliver the best results for the communities we serve. Read more on our commitment to ED&I [here](#).

