

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Majority Group Political Assistant	Service Area: Mayor's Office	
Directorate: Resources	Post Number: 35481	Evaluation Number: JE6778
Grade: P03	Date last updated: August 2023	
Type of appointment: Fixed term up to the Council's Annual Meeting following the first elections after appointment – ie May 2026.		
<p>People at the heart of everything we do</p> <p>We are committed to putting people – Newham residents and Council staff – at the heart of all we do. Our approach is a collaborative joint enterprise between residents, the Mayor, Members, Council staff and the Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>Equality and diversity</p> <p>We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of their work.</p> <p>Protecting our staff and services</p> <p>Adherence to health and safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good health and safety practices and manage risks appropriately.</p> <p>Corporate parent</p> <p>We believe that every member of staff working for Newham Council should understand and fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities for our looked after children that we have under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.</p>		

Overall Purpose of Job

To provide pro-active, efficient and trusted political support to the Majority Labour Group to ensure they deliver their Council responsibilities. To ensure the Mayor as Leader of the Majority Labour Group, Group Officers and the Chief Whip are able to lead the Group and enhance effective working and relations across the Group and with council officers and other stakeholders.

Job Context

- You will report to the Mayor's External Affairs & Communications Adviser, agreeing with and being accountable to them and the Majority Labour Group Officers on work priorities.

- While the post is politically restricted, you will be working closely with a political group to harmonise the interface between politicians and officers recognising and understanding their different roles and responsibilities in their approach at all times.
- Generating trust, maintaining confidentiality, managing complex issues and disagreements sensitively, and operating to – and supporting others to operate to – the highest ethical standards of public service, are underpinning requirements.
- You should thrive in a high-pressured, fluid environment, be comfortable taking responsibility and initiative, and be able to manage your own resilience and support those around you to do so too.
- You will have no line management responsibilities but will work closely with the rest of the Mayor's Office and other officers as needed.
- You will be expected to work in the office or in person with Labour Group members and officers for a minimum of 3 days a week. You will be required to work flexibly including some evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays to meet service requirements and to ensure appropriate representation of the Council with residents, the Mayor and elected members, and external bodies.
- This post is established under s.9 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the statutory rules applicable to such posts and in line with the Decision taken at Newham's Council meeting on 22nd July 2024 about the [Appointment of Political and Mayoral Assistants](#).

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

To undertake all responsibilities listed below:

1. To provide a comprehensive and confidential political support service to the Majority Labour Group as a whole (currently the Mayor and 59 councillors) and its leadership.
2. To support effective Group meetings including appropriate and timely meeting scheduling, agenda planning, preparation and despatch of papers, producing briefings, attending and taking minutes or action notes and ensuring follow-up of actions within agreed timeframes.
3. To support the holding of annual Group elections, agreeing Group appointments to Council committees and outside bodies and other activity in accordance with the Group's constitution and agreed ways of working.
4. To undertake research, collate information from various sources, and prepare clear and accurate briefing papers and reports as necessary for the Labour Group or its members.
5. To ensure that the Labour Group is fully and promptly briefed on important aspects of council business, clarifying information with council officers as needed. To advise on the content of council, scrutiny and external documents and to prepare responses as necessary.

6. To support the political management for Full Council ensuring the Labour Group members are organised and briefed on the items for debate prior to meetings.
7. To provide speaking notes or speeches for members representing the Group in council or wider functions and events, as required.
8. To support meetings of the Labour Group with national and local political leaders, scope out best means of representation on local and national platforms and make the arrangements and support the effective delivery of these and ensure any follow-up is progressed in a timely way.
9. To actively keep abreast of London, National and European developments affecting local government and ambitions and commitments set out in the Newham Labour manifesto, including new legislation, national party policies and initiatives and publications from relevant think tanks and to brief the Labour Group on the political implications locally.
10. To advise and support the Labour Group in initiating and developing political strategy.
11. To facilitate the development and delivery of training, seminars, away days etc to support the effectiveness of the Group as a whole and its members individually.
12. To plan and support the delivery of events hosted and organised by the Group.
13. To provide digital support for the Group including managing the Group's website and social media accounts.
14. To support Group Officers in the budgeting, management, deployment and monitoring of Group budgets.
15. To develop and maintain a good knowledge of the functions, operations and programmes of the Council and its departments to underpin your ability to do the job effectively.
16. To support the Labour Group's engagement with the Labour Party nationally and at London level, including helping to shape the Labour Group's involvement in national Party Conferences and events and making the practical arrangements to deliver this, including attending in support where required.
17. Undertake all tasks having regard to political sensitivity and strictest confidentiality.
18. To carry out any other functions as directed by the Labour Group leadership and in agreement with your line manager.

Communications

1. To ensure effective communications between the Mayor and Labour Group on the Council including liaising with the Labour Group Officers in running a system for communicating with the Mayor and Labour Group Members and organising group meetings.
2. To ensure effective communications with the Labour Party nationally, at London level and locally, community groups and the media locally, preparing newsletters and press releases for the Labour Group and handling media enquiries.
3. To ensure that Labour Group members have clear, up-to-date information about council ambitions, services and activities to support their engagement with residents and other stakeholders.

4. Provide research at ward level for councillors.
5. Be able to design copy for press or social media campaigns.

Culture

1. To promote and demonstrate a practical commitment to equal opportunities.
2. To contribute to the corporate culture, which is forward thinking, results oriented and customer focused.
3. To carry out such other duties within the competence of the post holder which may be reasonably required from time to time.
4. To support the Council in monitoring high standards of conduct and probity in the public life of the authority.
5. To deal responsively and sensitively with matters that are the subject of high priority to Members always exercising the utmost probity and judgement.
6. To ensure a seamless and responsive service is provided to Members, Officers and Stakeholders across the section/teams and the Council.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

Newham Council supports flexible working for its staff, subject to meeting business needs. As part of the Mayor's Office and due to the nature of the work, the post holder will be expected to work a minimum of 3 days per week in the office or at in person meetings with Labour Group officers or members.

This post is established under s.9 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and in line with the Decision taken at Newham's Council meeting on 22nd July 2024 about the [Appointment of Political and Mayoral Assistants](#)

This post is politically restricted under section 2(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Person Specification

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Grade: P03	Date last updated: August 2023	
<p>IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS</p> <p>The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.</p>		
CRITERIA		METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
KNOWLEDGE		
Degree level qualification or equivalent qualification and /or knowledge and experience.		Application
Knowledge of local government and an understanding of the statutory framework governing the political management of local authorities and the powers and conduct of councillors or a demonstrable ability to gain this understanding.		Application / Interview
Knowledge of the Labour Party and its ways of operating.		Application / Interview
Knowledge of standard software packages and ability to maximise the use of ICT in this role.		Application / Interview
EXPERIENCE		
Experience of working with or advising politicians or equivalent role.		Application / Interview
Experience of working effectively and sensitively in a political context and with a range of stakeholders.		Application / Interview
Awareness of equal opportunities, customer care, and quality standards.		Application / Interview
Experience of working independently providing advice on Council or similar organisation proceedings at a senior level.		Application / Interview
PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR		
Value and manage diversity and a commitment to equality.		Application / Interview
Hard working, dynamic, flexible and personally resilient in approach to work.		Application / Interview

<p>Commitment to responsiveness to residents, customer service and meeting quality standards.</p> <p>High standard of integrity and ability to maintain confidentiality at all times.</p> <p>A flexible, co-operative approach to working in a team and across an organisation to get things done.</p>	<p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p>
<p>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</p> <p>Ability and judgement to shape and give clear, appropriately tailored advice.</p> <p>Ability to identify strategic and/or sensitive issues and shape appropriate actions in response</p> <p>Practical planning and a problem solving approach.</p> <p>Ability to build effective working relationships and influence with politicians, officers and stakeholders, including at senior levels.</p> <p>Strong verbal and written skills.</p> <p>Numerical and analytical skills sufficient to enable post holder to undertake duties of the post.</p> <p>An ability to demonstrate political awareness and sensitivity with members, partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Manage competing priorities and meet deadlines, working with minimal supervision.</p> <p>Ability to build effective and productive working relationships with politicians at a senior level</p>	<p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p> <p>Application / Interview</p>
<p>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:</p> <p>Available to work outside normal business hours to meet the needs of the mayoral function and to attend evening meetings at council offices and in the community. Plus, willingness and ability to work occasional evenings and weekends to maintain service delivery.</p>	<p>Application / Interview</p>