



Regional Eating Disorders Charities Alliance & Network

REDCAN UK Communication and Policy Lead/Consultant

Job Description and Person Specification

Organisation: First Steps ED

Contract: Freelance fixed term contract currently funded until December 2028

Hours of work: 15 hours a week

Reports to: First Steps ED as host agency and REDCAN Development Director

Location: Hybrid/remote, with travel required across the UK and regular supervision meetings with REDCAN Development Director (remotely or in Bristol)

Payment: £40,000 FTE pro rata (15 hours) on a freelance basis

About REDCAN

Founded in 2020 by a group of CEO's, the Regional Eating Disorder Charities Alliance and Network (REDCAN) is an informal alliance of 9 charities across England and Scotland. They provide early intervention, prevention and all stage recovery focused support services for anyone experiencing eating distress or eating disorders and those that care for them.

REDCAN agencies are committed to work collaboratively to tackle one of the biggest mental health challenges in the UK

Eating disorders are extremely serious mental health problems, and can have severe psychological, physiological, and social consequences for individuals and their families. Early identification and intervention with rapid access to specialist care is crucial to improve outcomes and ensure that eating disorder behaviours do not become entrenched (Treasure et al, 2005).



REDCAN's goal is to ensure everyone experiencing eating distress or an eating disorder, wherever they live and whenever they need help; can access immediate, high quality support within their local community to fully recover.

For many years, people affected by eating disorders (EDs) have struggled to access specialist support. The sector faces numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, lack of understanding of EDs, and a 'postcode lottery' for both VCSE and NHS services. This restricts the availability and quality of services, leaving many people without the support they need, and allowing their ED to escalate and become entrenched.

REDCAN seeks to address these challenges and strengthen the VCSE eating disorder sector, collaborate for quality services, promote public understanding and transform support systems.

Role Purpose

This role will lead the development and delivery of an integrated communications and policy strategy that amplifies the collective voice of the alliance, strengthens public understanding, and influences national and regional policy to drive systemic change.

Working closely with member agencies, experts by experience, policy makers, funders, and partners, the role will ensure REDCAN is a credible, visible, and influential voice within government, the NHS, and the wider VCSE sector.

The postholder will combine communications expertise with strong policy insight

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Communications

- Develop and deliver a UK-wide communications strategy aligned with REDCAN's strategic priorities.
- Support and coach member agencies, particularly smaller organisations to amplify their work, through shared messaging, tools, and campaigns.
- Review and update REDCAN's website content, social media, email communications, and digital storytelling.
- Improve media representation of eating disorders through proactive media engagement, briefing spokespeople, and supporting ambassadors and campaigners.
- Ensure communications are trauma informed, inclusive, accessible, and grounded in the expertise of lived and learned experience.

Policy and System Change

- Lead REDCAN's policy and influencing work, positioning the alliance as a trusted expert voice within national and regional policy debates.
- Track, analyse, and respond to relevant government policy, legislation, research, consultations, and NHS developments
- Develop policy briefings and consultation responses that reflect REDCAN's evidence, data, and lived-experience insight.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders.
- Support system thinking initiatives, including national roundtables and cross-sector partnerships.

Alliance Engagement and Collaboration

- Facilitate a monthly online learning and good practice forum with member agencies to share and explore collective challenges and successes
- Collaborate with Experts by Experience to ensure communications and policy positions are grounded in lived experience and ethical practice.
- Represent REDCAN at external events, conferences, and stakeholder meetings.

Evidence, Insight, and Impact

- Translate data, evaluation findings, research and learning into accessible insights for policy makers, funders, and the public.
- Support the sharing of achievements, challenges, and impact to influence policy and funding decisions.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Experience

- Significant experience in a communications, policy, or public affairs role, ideally within health, social care, or the VCSE sector.
- Proven track record of developing and delivering strategic communications that shape public narrative and stakeholder engagement.
- Experience working collaboratively across organisations or alliances.

Skills and Knowledge

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate complex issues into clear, compelling messages.
- High-level digital communications expertise, including social media strategy, content creation, and digital engagement analytics.
- Ability to develop evidence-informed policy positions drawing on data, research, and lived experience.
- Strong stakeholder management and relationship-building skills.
- Commitment to ethical, inclusive, and trauma-informed communication.

Values and Approach

- Strong alignment with REDCAN's values and commitment to improving outcomes for people experiencing eating distress and eating disorders.
- Respect for lived experience and commitment to co-production.
- Collaborative, adaptable, and comfortable working in a complex, evolving system.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to move between big-picture vision and practical delivery.

Desirable Criteria

- Strong understanding of UK government, NHS structures, and policy-making processes.
- Experience working specifically in eating disorders, mental health, or trauma-informed services.
- Knowledge of prevention, early intervention, and community-based health models.
- Experience contributing to or leading national campaigns.
- Understanding of data, evaluation, and impact measurement in the VCSE or health sector.

What We Offer

- The opportunity to shape national conversation and policy in a critical and evolving area of mental health.
- Opportunities for professional development and sector leadership.
- Ongoing support from the REDCAN Development Director with a commitment to create a psychologically safe work environment
- Ongoing supervision
- Flexible working arrangements
- Learning and insight from a supportive alliance culture
- An opportunity for learning and development in First Steps ED's OD programme.

REDCAN is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and welcomes applications from under represented groups and people with lived experience of eating distress or eating disorders.

Recruitment Process

If you're interested in the role, we just need you to send us your CV, together with a covering letter (no more than two sides of A4) that explains how your skills, experience and knowledge make you the right person for this role.

If you would like an informal chat about this role before putting in your application, please contact rowanmiller@redcan.org.uk and we will arrange a suitable time to speak with you.

The deadline for getting your application to us is midday on Monday 9th March 2026.

Interviews are likely to take place online Thursday 19th March.