

Role Profile

Job Title:	Political Assistant (Opposition)
Location:	Colindale / Hendon Town Hall
Department:	Governance Service
Directorate:	Assurance and Public Protection
Contract	Fixed Term Contract (to 30 August 2030)
Grade:	Grade J <i>Note: Regulations affect the salary of this post¹</i>
Type of Working:	Hybrid
Reports to:	Strategic Advisor & Member Support Manager
Post No.:	508492

This post is politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. There is specific guidance on the role of political assistants which should be complied with [Local authority political assistants guidance - GOV.UK](#)

1. Job Purpose:

- 1.1. To support the Leader of the Opposition, Opposition Spokespersons, Committee chairs and Group Officers in the furtherance of their Council responsibilities.
- 1.2. To directly advise elected members on policy, procedure and political implications of principal policies, to ensure the Group can effectively conduct its Council business
- 1.3. To provide communications and administrative support, research, information and analysis services to the group and its members in their roles as Barnet Councillors.

2. Key accountabilitiesStrategic Development

- 2.1. To plan strategically with Group Members to set Opposition Group objectives and priorities including liaison with the Leader of the Opposition, Opposition Spokespersons, Council Management Team and the Senior Management Team across the Council's portfolio of responsibilities and activities.

¹ [The Local Government \(Assistants for Political Groups\) \(Remuneration\) \(England\) Order 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- 2.2. To conduct research to underpin the development of policies designed to help meet those identified objectives taking into account the advice and guidance of professional officers.
- 2.3. To initiate and develop policy proposals from within the Group and to help refine policy recommendations put forward by officers in order that they reflect the Group's priorities.
- 2.4. To operate within a matrix management structure (reporting directly to the Group Leader, Group Officers Strategic Advisor & Member Support Manager and Head of Governance) and to act as a single point of contact between senior officers and elected members, helping them understand and take account of each other's priorities and positions.
- 2.5. To support the formulation of Group Policy and pledges and use these to inform the creation of the Group's local election manifesto (used to inform Council priorities over the electoral term) taking into account the wider strategic context in Barnet, London and nationally.
- 2.6. Political assistants are permitted to speak to the public with the intention of affecting support for a political party, but their actions must not give the impression that they are acting as the representative of the political party.

Briefing and external liaison

- 2.7. To brief members on relevant local, regional and national issues necessary to conduct their committee and ward work.
- 2.8. To brief members on upcoming council business, including major strategic policies and decisions, to keep them updated on Administration Group policy and forthcoming significant council decisions.
- 2.9. To work with Group Officers on the management of Group meetings including the political management of key issues, providing briefings and giving advice as required.
- 2.10. To liaise with local, regional and national party structures to brief them on local issues and to foster co-operation and co-ordination.
- 2.11. To liaise with key stakeholders including council officers, external organisations, other local authorities, MPs and members of the public, to support the work of the Group, sharing knowledge and conducting analysis.
- 2.12. To support the Governance Service with delivery of the Member Development Programme to ensure that Members have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to be effective councillors

Public Relations

- 2.13. To develop and execute a public relations strategy covering a Council electoral term, including both proactive and reactive media and social media handling.
- 2.14. To work with Members to shape the presentation of their policies.
- 2.15. To help Members communicate their views both internally, within the Group and the organisation, and externally, to residents and the press and social media.

- 2.16. To draft and distribute material on behalf of the Group and individual members and to liaise with various media outlets as required.

Administration and Democratic Engagement

- 2.17. To assist the Group and its members engage correctly and effectively with the democratic process, drafting and submitting questions, motions, items and amendments, related to the business of committees and Full Council. To liaise with the Governance Service, the Monitoring Officer and other officers (as required) to facilitate this.
- 2.18. To ensure the Group acts in compliance with its own Group Rules, the Council's Constitution and relevant wider legislation
- 2.19. To assist in the preparation of agendas, reports and minutes for Group meetings and meetings of related bodies.
- 2.20. To take action on matters arising from meetings, ensure that key actions are progressed and that information is disseminated appropriately.
- 2.21. To maintain a record of Group decisions
- 2.22. To support the Group Leader and other Group Officers with the management of the Group
- 2.23. To maintain strict confidentiality on all matters arising from the Group

Project Management

- 2.24. To undertake special projects on behalf of the Group

3. Flexibility

- 3.1. In order to deliver the service effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

4. Health and Safety Responsibilities

- 4.1. As an employee of the London Borough of Barnet, you are required to:
- 4.1.1. Abide by Barnet's health and safety policy and associated arrangements
 - 4.1.2. Complete mandatory health and safety training
 - 4.1.3. Report any Accident/Incidents/Hazards.
 - 4.1.4. Take care of your own and other's safety, health and wellbeing

5. Promotion of Corporate Values

- 5.1. To ensure that customer care is maintained to the agreed standards according to the council's values. To ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work. Our values:

Caring / Learning to Improve / Inclusive / Collaboration

6. Flexibility

- 6.1. In order to deliver the service effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post-holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

7. The Council's Commitment to Equality

- 7.1. To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity in the provision of services. All staff are expected to promote equality in the workplace and in the services the council delivers.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title:	Political Assistant (Opposition)
Location:	Colindale / Hendon Town Hall
Department:	Governance Service,
Directorate:	Assurance and Public Protection
Grade:	Grade J <i>Note: Regulations affect the salary of this post²</i>
Type of Working:	Hybrid
Reports to:	Strategic Advisor & Member Support Manager
Post No.:	508492

Knowledge, training and experience

Knowledge

- Educated to a high standard, preferably degree level or equivalent level experience
- Knowledge of all aspects of local government organisation and services
- Detailed knowledge of local, regional and national political issues and how they relate to and impact on the local authority

Experience

- Experience of working in a political environment with politicians and senior officers.
- Experience of research, analysis and policy briefings in a Local Authority or similar context.
- Experience of undertaking complex policy research into local government issues and to contribute to the development of Group policy
- Experience of organising own work successfully whilst under the pressure of deadlines and conflicting priorities.
- Journalistic experience and experience of writing all types of correspondence to a high standard including publicity material, briefings, presentations and policy documents.
- Experience of advising, liaising and influencing senior officers and/or group members

² [The Local Government \(Assistants for Political Groups\) \(Remuneration\) \(England\) Order 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

- Experience of the use of Microsoft Office, including track changes a variety of ICT and social media to support effective research and analysis and formulating appropriate reports and press and social media materials

Skills

Planning, organising and controlling skills

- Ability to adopt a flexible work pattern to meet the needs of the job, including attendance at weekend and evening meetings as required.
- A high degree of self-direction including proactively identify and responding to emerging issues, managing competing priorities and dealing with complex issues

Communication and influencing skills

- Ability to understand the role of public relations and to contribute effectively to the Group's media and social media strategies.
- Member of the relevant political party / able to demonstrate commitment to the relevant political party.
- Good understanding of the internal workings of local government at both the political and management levels, and an understanding of how regional and national politics impacts on Barnet.
- Good understanding of public policy issues as they affect local government.
- Ability to influence elected Members

Initiative and Innovation skills

- Helping develop policy initiatives across the Council's portfolio of responsibilities and activities.