



Setting Standards for  
Retirement Communities

# Candidate Pack

Director of Policy and Communications  
(full time or substantial part time)

The Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) is the main body representing the retirement community sector in the UK.

<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Director of Policy and Communications</b>
<b>Salary:</b>	£67,000-£80,000 per annum (depending on experience) pro rata if part time
<b>Type:</b>	Permanent
<b>Hours per week:</b>	37.5 (if full time)
<b>Location:</b>	The role is based in London with flexible working
<b>Start date:</b>	As soon as available
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Chief Executive

## Benefits of the role

- 25 holiday days per year (pro rata if part time), exclusive of bank holidays and any other time the office may be closed.
- Employer pension contribution.
- Flexible working hours.
- Opportunities for training and personal development.

## Introduction

**An ageing population. The housing crisis. Our health and social care systems under intense pressure.**

***We work hard to solve all of these issues – at the same time.***

Our vision is for all older people to have the option to live in high quality Integrated Retirement Communities in their later years. Integrated Retirement Communities maintain independence, foster friendships and ease loneliness – they create positive outcomes for older people and their families. They also provide a benefit to our public services, free up housing for all generations, and make a huge contribution to our health and social care economy. And residents love them, as evidenced by satisfaction surveys. If that's not something worth getting involved in, what is?!

## The Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) sector

IRCs are about more than bricks and mortar – and are also about more than care. They are about buying or renting high quality housing with a safety net of services to go along with it. Still not sure what it is? You are not alone – communicating a clear vision of what our sector provides is one of the key challenges ARCO is currently engaged in.

The sector is still in its infancy in the UK – only 0.6% of over 65s live in an IRC. If we were to reach only half the levels seen in other countries with more mature markets, we'd need to build around 250,000 homes by 2030, which is our vision.

Doing so will require spending £60 billion along the way. The good news is that the sector is finally getting the attention it deserves – from policy makers who have clocked that building new IRCs is a necessity and not optional, from investors who are attracted by the strong ESG credentials of the sector and by customers whose number is increasing by the day. Over the next 18 months, the government Older People's Housing Task Force provides a unique opportunity to make a real difference to the housing and care needs of our ageing population.

We are a small team but we get things done, because everyone mucks in. If you have a passion for hierarchy, legacy systems and an unwavering belief in never questioning the status quo – this role is not for you.

ARCO is ten years old, but we're actually pretty grown up – with ten members of staff (including you), a network of c. 30 operating members, 11 Accelerators, and over 100 Commercial Partners and Affiliates, we provide sector-leading insight, events, and influence (our members describe us as “punching well above our weight”).

Our members are a combination of private companies, charities, and housing associations – what unites us is a joint commitment to older people's well-being, providing choice, enabling independence, and delivering high-quality housing and services. In the UK, sector regulation and legislation for retirement communities is still in its infancy. We believe that over time, regulation and legislation for our sector will (and needs to) develop. Therefore, ARCO has put in place its own Consumer Code, designed to drive up standards and consumer confidence and provide a springboard for future regulation of the sector.

Of course, this also means that we need to engage with a wide network of stakeholders, including central government, local government, advocacy organisations, regulators and the media, while working with our current members and affiliates and recruiting new ones – we keep busy!

**For more information on some of what we've done in the past year, please [click here to see our Annual Review 2021](#) and [click here for our recent Policy reports](#).**

In this role, you will be making a difference today. But the real impact of your work will be measured by whether the IRC sector will have reached its potential in 10, 20 and even 50 years' time – currently, we are busy laying the foundations to redefine the future of housing, care, and support for our ageing population. So, we want your experience, your intelligence, and your enthusiasm for the work we do.

The Director of Policy and Communications is a member of ARCO's Executive Management Team (EMT) and along with the other members of EMT, sets the strategic direction for ARCO and supports the Board and Steering Group.

In this role, you will lead ARCO's public affairs and communications function, including achieving ARCO's strategic goals through building and developing high-level relationships with politicians, officials and other key stakeholders. In addition, the post-holder will develop and direct ARCO's policy and research strategy.

In 2022, the sector is at a critical juncture in its development: after two years of campaigning, ARCO has managed to persuade the government to launch a Task Force for Older People's Housing, aimed at significantly expanding housing options for older people. This follows ARCO's work with dozens of parliamentary supporters, events and research reports. But coordinating ARCO's work on the task force will require us to be flexible, responsive and to think outside the box when it comes to offering practical solutions to the sector's challenges and opportunities.

Our sector and work is flexible, and it can be challenging to respond to developments while keeping up with our planned work. That's why you'll be highly organised, a problem-solver, a self-starter and definitely a finisher, keeping yourself and ARCO's policy and communications objectives on track. You will lead this area of our organisation and be able to make a real mark on the future of this sector. But you won't be on your own – you will work closely with ARCO's Chief Executive, Finance and Business Manager, and the rest of the Executive Team, our Chair and Vice-Chair and various colleagues within our member organisations, as well as external consultants.

## Key Duties and Responsibilities

### Public Affairs

Strategic leadership of ARCO's Public Affairs function including to:

- Develop, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Steering Group, a public affairs strategy for ARCO including key monthly, quarterly, and annual targets
- In pursuit of these targets, build and maintain high-level relationships with politicians, officials and other stakeholders including in 2022/23 the Older People's Housing Task Force. This will include working with ARCO's ever-growing list of Parliamentary Supporters who we work with to expand housing and care options for older people in the UK.
- Produce content and collateral in fulfilment of the public affairs strategy including Parliamentary briefings, briefings for officials, speeches and presentations etc.
- Public speaking at relevant conferences, APPGs, Select Committees, party conferences etc.

### Policy and research

Leading and project managing ARCO's policy and research function, including:

- Building a body of research to support ARCO's strategic public affairs goals, including through commissioning and work with external partners;
- Producing policy collateral and thought leadership content;
- Identifying opportunities and risks to ARCO, its members and strategic goals in the policy and political environment and responding accordingly
- Engaging ARCO's members and commercial Partners as appropriate in ARCO's policy and research programme

### Communications

- Responsible for ARCO's external communications strategy
- Acting as media spokesperson for ARCO and dealing with press queries
- Identifying and mitigating reputational risks to ARCO and/or its members
- Producing external-facing content and placing articles in relevant publications and media channels
- Overseeing ARCO's digital and social media output
- Work closely with the Director of Membership and Operations on website and member/partner communications

### Other tasks and requirements

- Secretariat support to the Board of Directors as needed, together with other colleagues
- Supporting any other key ARCO projects or priorities as may arise, along with the rest of the Executive Management Team
- Acting as line manager for the Policy and External Affairs Manager
- Contributing to the production of content for web, intranet, member bulletins, email, and print
- Being willing to travel during the course of your duties with possible overnight stays away from home
- Undertaking any other duties commensurate with the purpose and remit of the post

## Person Specification

<b>Education</b>	
Educated to undergraduate degree level (or equivalent work experience)	<b>Essential</b>
Master's degree in relevant field (or equivalent work experience)	<b>Desirable</b>
Willingness to undertake training and continuing professional development	<b>Essential</b>
<b>Experience</b>	
Experience working in a senior policy and public affairs role	<b>Essential</b>
Experience of directing a programme of work and delegating work to team members	<b>Essential</b>
Experience in external communications including media management	<b>Essential</b>
Experience in health, social care, and/or housing	<b>Desirable</b>
Experience managing organisational budgets and budget planning	<b>Essential</b>
Experience in project and process management	<b>Essential</b>
Experience in commissioning research	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Abilities and competencies</b>	
Ability to form and maintain productive working relationships with a wide variety of people within different organisations	<b>Essential</b>
Self-motivated and pro-active, with a high level of accountability	<b>Essential</b>
Ability to work to a fast pace and manage multiple workloads	<b>Essential</b>
Highly organised with strong project management and planning skills, and attention to detail	<b>Essential</b>
Excellent verbal and written communication skills	<b>Essential</b>
Ability to think creatively and flexibly	<b>Essential</b>
Analytical skills including numerical competence	<b>Essential</b>
Advanced proficiency with Microsoft Office suite	<b>Essential</b>
Financial training	<b>Desirable</b>
Aptitude and experience using CRMs	<b>Essential</b>
<b>Other requirements</b>	
Willingness to work flexibly, including to tight timescales and with minimal supervision	<b>Essential</b>
Being comfortable working in a small team, supporting others across a variety of functions	<b>Essential</b>
Having a genuine interest in the health, social care, and housing field	<b>Essential</b>
Being committed to equality, diversity and inclusion	<b>Essential</b>

This information will be used as part of the shortlisting process.

## How to apply

Please apply with the following:

- A concise and precise covering letter (maximum of 1 page) detailing why you are interested in this position and clearly explaining how you meet the person specification.
- A short CV (maximum of 2 pages), which should clearly outline any relevant experience to date.

Please note that the closing date for applications is at midnight on **Sunday 5 June**.

Please send your application to **kasrothwell@michaelpage.com**

- Initial screening will take place during 6-10 June. Candidates progressing to the next round will be asked to complete online assessments in the week commencing 13 June and successful candidates will be invited for an interview/presentation in the week commencing 20 June.

Our preference is for the successful candidate to start as soon as possible, although we are willing to adjust timescales depending on notice periods and availability.

***Please note we will not be able to give feedback to every applicant, but we will endeavour to provide feedback to every candidate we invite to interview.***



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ARCO are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and believe that through recognising the inherent benefits of diversity we can achieve more. We aim to create an environment which respects and values difference, but that is inclusive and welcoming for all and actively seek applications from diverse backgrounds. Our recruitment partner for this campaign – Michael Page would be delighted to assist with any part of the recruitment process if required.

### **Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO)**

The Heals Building, Suites A&B, 3rd Floor  
22-24 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HJ

Trident Business Centre, 89 Bickersteth Road  
Tooting, London, SW17 9SH

**Email:** [info@arcouk.org](mailto:info@arcouk.org)

**Twitter:** @ARCOTweets

For more information on ARCO, visit:

**[www.arcouk.org](http://www.arcouk.org)**