

Vicky Burman Communications Limited

The way I work

I aim to offer you great value for money as well as high standards of editorial support tailored to your needs and objectives. I try to take into account the challenges facing public sector communication and engagement, including budget constraints, accountability and governance issues, and internal processes.

From the outset, and right the way through a project, I will work with you to explore your specific objectives and intended outcomes, and how best to achieve them. There are several stages in my usual approach.

Initial briefing

Step 1 is to discuss what you want from me in the context of your overall project. For instance, do you want me to review and refine a draft someone else has written? Or do you want me to write the content and suggest how it should be structured? If so, where can I source the core information from?

It is important to be clear about:

- who the information is for
- why it's being produced and what you hope people will do as a result
- whether there are any particular challenges and obstacles you're aware of
- what tone and style would be most appropriate
- any deadlines I have to meet
- who needs to see and sign off the draft content, and whether I can expect a lot of feedback and suggested amendments as it takes shape
- who I can approach with queries or for clarification.

Collaboration

Step 2 is developing the written content. Producing the right information is a creative process that relies on an open and constructive dialogue to capture different perspectives. I may challenge the initial brief if I have ideas for a potentially more effective approach, such as a revised structure that's easier to navigate.

I find my regular clients trust me to make decisions about content and how best to use information from various sources to ensure there is a strong, relevant narrative thread that gets the right balance between different agendas (including national policy) and the needs of the target audience. This includes incorporating amendments, and taking on board any general feedback, while maintaining a consistent style.

Delivery

Step 3 is doing everything possible to meet our agreed timescales and ensure the content is ready for publication when you need it. I appreciate public sector communication projects

may be affected by other factors (often outside your control, such as unexpected shifts in national policy and strategy), and I'll be as flexible as I can to meet any changing requirements.

I may suggest helpful additions I can deliver, such as a house style guide (if you don't already have one) or a glossary for the document that could be included in future materials.

Flexible remote working

I usually work from my own home office, which keeps down overheads (and the cost to you). It also means I can be very flexible in my hours, working in the evening, at weekends and on bank holidays if necessary, especially if you need me to take on something at short notice or to very tight timescales.

A lot can be done remotely through email, phone and online face-to-face contact, but, of course, I can travel to your workplace or attend meetings and events if this is what you need. I am based in Staffordshire, in the heart of England, and within easy reach of good transport links to anywhere in the UK. I especially prefer to carry out interviews in person when it is important to capture complex information or discuss sensitive issues.

Robust relationships

Building honest relationships with my clients is an important element of the way I operate. I get a lot of repeat work, and new work through personal recommendation, because I've shown I can handle sensitive and confidential information in the right way. I listen to what people have to say – and can also read between the lines and spot patterns and underlying concerns.

I can be relied on to act diplomatically in handling feedback and contributions from various stakeholders, who may have their own agendas, and trusted to make editorial decisions that always bear in mind the core purpose and aims of the communication.

Business continuity

My working practices aim to ensure that, although my business is small, it is resilient and able to deliver what has been agreed with clients.

Vicky Burman Communications Limited has been registered with Companies House (registration number 07164212) since 2010 and employs a professional accountancy practice to ensure it is fully tax compliant.

The company has ongoing professional indemnity (£1m cover), public liability (£2m) and employer's liability (£10m) insurance but to date has never needed to make a claim on these policies.