



## JOB AND TASK DESCRIPTION

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**Job Title:** Head of Events and Protocol

**Grade:** F

**Division:** Corporate Services Division

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**Reports To:** Chief Operating Officer

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### **General information**

The Events and Protocol Section provides comprehensive coordination for all aspects of any events or meetings held by the Secretariat including planning, coordination and delivery of events services for the Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministerial and other pan-Commonwealth meetings in London, Commonwealth member countries or other capitals. The team works closely with Secretariat divisions and collaborates closely with member governments on all administrative and logistical matters for Commonwealth meetings. A particularly high-profile activity is the organisation of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM). The Head of Section is responsible for advising internally and externally on Commonwealth protocols and ensuring they are communicated, understood and adhered to. The team also has a key role in coordinating major events convened at the Secretariat's headquarters in London.

### **Job summary**

The Head of the Events and Protocol Section is responsible for the planning, delivery and continuous development of a high quality, customer focused service across the Secretariat of all Commonwealth conferences/meetings and other high profile events held under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat, ensuring they meet the professional standards expected of a major international organisation. The post-holder reports to the Chief Operating Officer.

The Head of Events and Protocol also works closely with the Secretary General's Office to plan, coordinate and execute the Commonwealth Day Events and annual staff events. The post holder will be expected to communicate with all Divisions across the Secretariat and manage the different meetings and events within the Secretariat to ensure high standards are met with a great attention to detail.

This is a very high profile role where the post holder will be expected to interact with a wide range of personnel ranging from The Head of the Commonwealth, Heads of Governments of Commonwealth countries as well as Ministers and other Government officials from all the Commonwealth countries and UN and World Bank officials.

### **Task description**

The post-holder:

- Is responsible for the planning, development, management and execution of key Commonwealth Secretariat events including the Commonwealth Heads of



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Government Meeting (CHOGM), Ministerial and Senior Officials meetings, working in collaboration with the relevant Member Governments and lead Secretariat Divisions;

- Develops and implements policies, strategies, guidelines and procedures relating to conference management and delivery for the organisation that aligns with the Strategic Plan;
- Takes the lead on all Commonwealth protocol and ensures that protocols are understood and met at all Commonwealth meetings and events;
- Provides advice on protocol matters including Commonwealth practices and procedures and helps ensure impeccable administration of attendance at meetings and events by Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministers and other high-level personalities;
- Plans and delivers the annual Commonwealth Day reception hosted by the Secretary-General, including liaison and planning in respect of the attendance of members of the Royal Family and Heads of Government;
- Develops, plans and manages complex logistical arrangements for major Secretariat events including negotiation with production companies, travel agents, hotels and other service providers to ensure the most attractive and cost-effective terms;
- Prepares and manages budgets for all Commonwealth Secretariat conferences and events ensuring compliance with the Secretariat's financial and procurement rules and regulations;
- Develop roles and responsibilities for staff members participating in overseas conferences in consultation with relevant Directors;
- Coordinates scheduling, planning and implementation of the annual Commonwealth Secretariat conference programme including the selection and contracting of meeting/conference space outside of the UK;
- Prepares guidance notes on the organisation of conference and negotiates with national authorities the hosting arrangements for meetings held away from headquarters, in particular the hosting of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM);
- Undertakes conference planning missions and site visits overseas; briefs Ministers and senior government officials on the requirements for hosting meetings and where necessary proposes solutions to overcome any challenges. Prepares a written assessment of the host country's conference preparations;
- Reports to the Chief Operating Officer on the outcomes of planning missions and also prepares conference and meeting reports;
- Provides advice directly to the Senior Management Committee (SMC) or the Corporate Affairs Committee on any critical matters concerning the arrangements for Commonwealth Heads of Government or Ministerial Meetings;
- Is required to design, develop and manage a robust system for the collation, recording and use of feedback from all the various conferences and events. This



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will include concise recommendation reports that will be communicated to Senior Management for feedback and action;

- Communicates and resolve problems effectively and in a timely manner with event organisers and officials from member states;
- Directs the activities and line manages the staff of the Conference Section, and approves work plans;
- Supervises local staff teams on site and, where necessary, helps to develop local capacity in conference management;
- Develops internal guidelines and procedures to promote greater awareness within the organisation of conference practices and procedures. Reviews procedures and processes and proposes ways to improve and modernise them in line with best international practice. Proposes the introduction of new technologies and other ways to improve relevant administrative procedures;
- Ensures the provision of quality support services with regard to conferences and to this end ensures all meeting documentation is prepared in accordance with Secretariat guidelines and house style, and to appropriate standards;
- Actively develops and maintains a network of relationships with relevant national authorities, civil society and international organisations as well as Secretariat partner divisions;
- Is responsible for overseeing events being held in Marlborough House (the Commonwealth Secretariat headquarters), including developing and maintaining a system for booking and managing events and conferences;
- Liaise with internal and external partners wishing to use the Marlborough House Fine Rooms ensuring the implementation of rules and regulations surrounding use of the House. Including the co-ordination of Marlborough House tours;
- Has a responsibility to help ensure the preservation of the Secretariat's property and resources.

### **Person Specification**

#### **Education**

University graduate or equivalent professional qualification.

#### **Experience**

- At least seven years direct conference management experience with overall responsibility for events at a senior level;
- Well-developed operational management expertise including; sound financial management, commercial acumen, and good business development skills;



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- Ability to plan, direct and evaluate a complex operation, regardless of workforce, time, funds and other resources available to you for the accomplishment of long and short term goals;
- Good understanding of global political matters and most particularly those of Commonwealth member countries;
- The ability to deal confidently and effectively at the highest level of government and with international organisations and to establish effective working relations ensuring the utmost tact and diplomacy at all times;
- Excellent organisational, analytic and problem solving skills with the ability to lead and facilitate team and project planning, coaching and developing individual and team resources;
- Outstanding communication skills including strong written and oral communication skills;
- Ability to travel extensively, often at short notice, and to work effectively under pressure whilst retaining professional composure;
- Experience of line managing a large staff team;
- Excellent IT skills including databases and Microsoft suite;
- Able to meet and ensure accurately met deadlines;
- Excellent planning and prioritisation skills;
- Team player, collaborative. Ability to work effectively with other colleagues across the organisation and to engender an ethos of team working;
- Ability to be creative and take initiative;
- Ability to solve complex problems and situations effectively;
- Highly effective negotiation skills, coupled with the ability and determination to achieve best possible outcomes;
- Ability to manage effectively difficult or controversial exchanges;
- Adhere to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy; and
- Perform any other duties that may be required from time to time.

### **Desirable:**

Knowledge of the activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat and of Commonwealth member countries.



## Competencies:

### **Respect for Diversity**

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds. Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.  
Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.  
Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.  
Encourages others to evaluate systems, processes & behaviour to ensure respect for diversity is demonstrated

### **Working with Others**

Manages conflict and works towards mutual solutions.  
Identifies organisations with which to partner for specific solutions.  
Encourages others and provides them with the autonomy to pursue relationships.  
Uses personal influence to establish compromise and agreement when faced with conflict.  
Demonstrates balance between directness and diplomacy in negotiations.  
Uses influence to persuade partners and third parties toward Commonwealth Secretariat aims.  
Encourages and supports others in demonstrating cultural awareness when working with others.

### **Managing Resources**

Manages programme and cross team activities against specific objectives/results.  
Manages available resources in order to meet objectives e.g. by effective and efficient use of budget inter alia.  
Identifies the best method and resources when high level course of action has been identified.  
Analyses available resources and what activity they will enable.  
Takes responsibility for multi team/programme activities.  
Manages diverse motivations of a range of groups in large scale programmes.

### **Decision Making**

Determines what can be realistically achieved when deciding on strategic solutions.  
Is proactive and responsive in making decisions on complex, technical issues based on appropriate information.  
Considers the relevant justifications for a particular course of action.  
Takes context into consideration when making decisions.  
Makes effective decisions when acting on behalf of a senior colleague, seeking advice where appropriate.  
Bases actions and approaches on the root cause of an issue, rather than the symptoms.

### **Accountability**

Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines.  
Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters.  
Takes responsibility for own shortcomings and compliances.  
Supports subordinates, provides oversight and takes responsibility for all delegated assignments.

### **Leadership & Development**

Reinforces vision throughout organisation e.g. by acting accordingly inter alia.  
Identifies and develops leadership skills in others.  
Empowers others to take control of their own development and progression  
Offers sound guidance and direction on complex and critical issues.  
Maximises the potential of others e.g. by creating suitable opportunities for development inter alia.