

The AHC - our aims

The AHC is determined to raise standards of communications practice throughout health and social care. For our members, we aim to:

- ▶ promote professional, proactive communications
- ▶ influence the national communications agenda
- ▶ link members so that they can share information and good practice
- ▶ build awareness and understanding of key communications issues affecting health and social care
- ▶ represent and support our diverse membership base
- ▶ encourage open partnership working with other communications networks and relevant organisations
- ▶ recognise the diversity and experience levels of our members and commit to canvass their views and represent them accordingly.

Who can join?

Membership of the AHC is open to anyone working in communications, media relations, consumer affairs, marketing or patient and public involvement for the NHS or social care.

You can also join if you work as a freelancer or for a consultancy, provided that a substantial part (at least 50%) of your work is for NHS and social care and health clients.

The AHC is also open to students studying a relevant course, for example media studies, PR/marketing or communications. As a student, you receive:

- ▶ half price membership, with the same benefits as Full members
- ▶ opportunities for on-the-job training or work experience at NHS organisations
- ▶ inside knowledge and experience of how Europe's biggest employer operates and communicates
- ▶ access to job vacancies once you've completed your studies.

If you have any queries about joining or your eligibility for membership, please contact Kate Baldwin, AHC Administrator on **01525 222155**.

How do I join?

There are two grades of membership – Full and Student.

Full membership - £50 a year.

Student membership - £25 a year.

To join, simply complete the application form and send it with your subscription fee to:

Kate Baldwin, AHC, PO Box 4277, Dunstable, LU6 2WU.

If you are applying for student membership, please remember to send either a photocopy of your NUS/university card with your application form, or a signed letter from your course tutor.

You can also download the application form as a pdf file from the AHC website: www.assohealth.org.uk or join on-line at:

www.assohealth.org.uk/membership/application.html

And once you become a Full member, you can save money on your subscription renewal by recommending a colleague to join the AHC. Each **new** member who joins on your recommendation will earn you a £10 discount on your subscription renewal (up to a maximum of £30). Forms must be jointly submitted to qualify.

What happens next?

Once your membership has been accepted, we will enter your details on our membership database and send you a joiners pack. This includes:

- ▶ your AHC membership number
- ▶ the latest newsletter, *AHC News*
- ▶ a full list of discounts and how to claim them
- ▶ a password for the members' protected area of the AHC website.

so join the AHC now...you know it makes professional sense

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jointheahc...
...it makes professional sense

ahc
association of healthcare
communicators

the ahc

the professional network for health communicators

The AHC is the only independent network solely aimed at communicators working in health and social care. We have been serving the needs of our members since 1997* and are a dynamic and growing organisation, committed to promoting professional, proactive communications.

We are here to represent the views and concerns of our members. We provide a recognised 'voice' for the many communications staff throughout the UK, by raising key issues at a national level.

What's more, we are committed to providing professional development opportunities for communications practitioners at all stages of their career so that together we can advance our profession.

We are an organisation that is run *by members for members*. That means the advice, information and support we offer is targeted, relevant and specific to members' needs.

So, if you work in health or social care communications, it makes professional sense to join the AHC. Here's why...

Peer support network

Join the AHC today and you'll be joining a vibrant, modern, professional network which keeps you in touch with what's going on in health communications...and puts you in touch with other members. That means plenty of networking opportunities with people doing similar jobs and facing similar challenges and pressures. Networking opportunities include:

- ▶ access to a searchable database of AHC members and their specific areas of specialism so that you can contact other members for help and advice
- ▶ the chance to learn and share ideas and examples of what works best in communications at the AHC's Annual Conference and Awards

- ▶ assistance in keeping in touch with other members who have knowledge and experience of dealing with specific health issues. Whether you're new in post or have worked in healthcare communications for years, such peer support, advice and information is invaluable.

Sharing ideas and experience

As a member of the AHC, you get the chance to share ideas, good practice and experience with other members by:

- ▶ contributing your views and news to the quarterly newsletter *AHC News*
- ▶ posting information on the AHC's Forum via the website
- ▶ taking part in one of the many training courses on offer
- ▶ participating in the Annual Conference and Awards – your opportunity to tell others about your communications successes and receive reward for your efforts
- ▶ accessing information on the latest ideas and developments via a range of organised events and through an exclusive members' protected area on the AHC website.

Learning and development opportunities

The AHC encourages and supports the development of its members by:

- ▶ providing a range of professional training seminars and conferences covering all aspects of communications – from writing a communications strategy to organising an audit or coping in a crisis. All the seminars are competitively priced
- ▶ providing relevant fact sheets on healthcare communications-related topics in the Members' Area of the website
- ▶ emailing members on a regular basis to inform them of interesting courses, secondment opportunities and job vacancies
- ▶ linking with other similar professional organisations to offer discounted training opportunities that encourage members' continuing professional development.

The benefits

There are plenty of benefits to joining the AHC:

- ▶ expert training at low cost
- ▶ a free quarterly newsletter, *AHC News*, which keeps you up to date with current topics, news and sources of information
- ▶ a range of discounts negotiated specifically for you, advertised in the 'Discounts' and 'Forum' sections of the Members' Area of the website
- ▶ a discounted delegate rate at the annual AHC Conference and Communicating Health Awards
- ▶ discounts on communications training courses run by other professional networks
- ▶ peer network support.

And the AHC's website www.assohealth.org.uk allows you to enjoy even more benefits via a members only protected area, including:

- ▶ a database of freelancers – designers, printers, photographers, website developers, writers etc - recommended by members and divided by region to make it easy for you to find suppliers in your area
- ▶ a database of AHC members – members can opt in to this database and list their areas of experience to make contacting fellow colleagues a lot easier
- ▶ a Forum where you can post messages, offers, queries and advice to other members
- ▶ a Job Vacancies section where you can post or view current vacancies
- ▶ updates on new members' benefits and discounts
- ▶ a series of useful fact sheets on health communications-related topics
- ▶ minutes of all the AHC Committee meetings and agendas
- ▶ a copy of the latest *AHC News*.

* (1984 if you go back to our roots as the National Association of Health Service Public Relations Officers)