



**PRCA Public Affairs Board Executive Committee Elections 2020  
Candidate Statements**

**Laura Blake MPRCA, Partner, Connect**

I have been delighted to serve on the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee this year. The Board has the potential to be a real force to drive ethical public affairs and push up standards within the industry. However, it is still in its infancy, and we need to do more to work with members to champion and enforce the Code of Conduct, in partnership with the PRCA. I am keen to continue to serve on the committee to ensure that the Board is seen as positive force by members, and is representative of the whole public affairs industry.

I am a Partner and co-owner of Connect and work across the public, private and charitable sectors. I have a strong commitment to promoting diversity in public affairs and have helped develop the careers of many women in the sector. I was appointed a Trustee of the Young Women's Trust in 2015. I have a longstanding commitment to upholding ethical standards and was a founding member of the Young Consultant's Committee over 10 years ago.

## **Emily Fermor MPRCA, Director, Hanbury Strategy**

Over the last three years, I have built the public affairs practice at Hanbury Strategy which I now jointly lead. I'm fortunate enough to work with a fantastic team on exciting and varied briefs, including advising start-ups, big tech and cultural institutions on UK political strategy and engagement.

Alongside building the public affairs practice at Hanbury, I have taken time out to support the Liberal Democrats: jointly managing the media campaign for Jo Swinson's successful bid for the leadership, working as an aide on the Leader's Tour in the most recent general election, running as a candidate in 2017, and I have been a councillor since 2016.

It is with this experience that I am seeking election to the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee.

My priorities on the committee are threefold:

1. A commitment to a more inclusive and representative industry;
2. To uphold the highest ethical standards; and,
3. To bring a fresh perspective from a newly established public affairs consultancy.

What does this mean in practice?

First, I will bring a commitment to a more inclusive and representative industry. We must do more to widen access to our industry to diverse talent, and promote diversity of thought within it. From ensuring our leadership bodies better reflect our society as a whole, to committing time and energy to opening up the industry to people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, I will work with others to prioritise inclusivity and diversity.

Second, I will uphold the highest ethical standards. I know how the industry and those of us who work within it can suffer when a few bad apples let us down. On the committee I will uphold ethical standards and do this fairly and transparently. This means not throwing stones in glass houses, but it also means putting the people who work hard and are passionate about what they do first in all decision-making.

Third, I will bring a fresh perspective. As a practice leader in a newer and smaller agency, I bring with me recent experience of building and growing a team from scratch in a short period of time. This gives me a different perspective, helping to make sure the executive committee better represents our industry as a whole.

## **Gavin Devine MPRCA, Director, Park Street Partners**

I have put myself forward for another stint on the Executive Committee of the Public Affairs Board for two reasons.

First, I am passionate about public affairs. As an industry we face big challenges, such as making sure that a career in our sector is open to everyone and recognising more clearly the great work being done in the devolved nations and regions of the UK. The biggest issue of all is securing the recognition we deserve for the professional and vital work we do. This is an urgent task when it looks like we will come under scrutiny once again in the next few months, both from procurement departments wanting to save money and legislators looking to deflect from their own problems.

As a Public Affairs Board we have to be strong advocates for our industry and say clearly that what we do is an important part of a successful democracy. We have to be passionate and forthright and make clear where the fault really lies when our industry comes under attack.

Second, I hope that my experience means I can help the Board achieve big changes. I've worked in public affairs for more than 16 years, and around Parliament and politics for not far off three decades in all. I am a past Deputy Chair of the APPC, and a current Board member of the PRCA. I have run big full-service agencies, worked with medium-sized firms and I have my own small consultancy. I want to use that experience to work within the PRCA and the Board to make real and practical changes that benefit all members.

So, amongst other things I'd like us to tackle:

- Continuing the fight to ensure that the principles of the Transparency of Lobbying (etc) Act apply to a broader array of professions – and the way it is administered and the fees we have to pay do not go unchallenged.
- Ensuring that everyone, from politicians and the media to potential recruits to the industry, understand what we do and what we don't do, and value it.
- Pushing for an end to the current rules that allow former MPs to hold Parliamentary passes.
- Using the strength and size of the PRCA, working constructively and with the grain, to build up the range of services offered to members of the Public Affairs Board and to increase the strength of our public voice, achieving more than the sum of our parts.

I am fiercely proud of our industry. I hope that through the Executive Committee I can be a strong advocate of what we all do every day.

**Alan Boyd-Hall MPRCA, Head of Public Affairs, Grayling**

Alan is a board director of Grayling Communications and heads its public affairs teams across England, Wales and Scotland.

With 20 years' experience in Public Affairs, he has worked in Parliament, in-house, and in agencies large and small.

If successful, he would represent the interests of the PA industry from across the UK at this particularly important time. In addition, he would work closely with the PRCA Diversity Network to ensure that the public affairs sector of the communications industry is more representative of the nation.

He is a strong supporter of the Public Affairs Code and the role that it plays in ensuring transparency and trust in the industry, providing a 'kitemark' of quality for professional political consultants.

## **Lionel Zetter FPRCA**

### **MANIFESTO**

I believe that the main thing I have to offer the PRCA PA Executive Committee is experience.

I have been actively involved in the public affairs industry for four decades, and whilst now semi-retired, my interest in the industry is undiminished. I still have the energy to be an active participant in the work of the committee, and I now have more time to devote to it. I consider that the fact that I am not involved in day-to-day lobbying gives me an objective perspective which has value.

The merger between PRCA PA and the APPC went comparatively smoothly, but there is still much work to be done to complete the integration process. One of the main rationales for the merger was to ensure that the industry speaks with a united voice, and in order for that to happen unresolved issues flowing from the merger need to be resolved.

Meanwhile the public affairs industry faces many challenges, not least the imminent recession flowing on from the Coronavirus pandemic. This recession will not stop the media from continuing to carry out its attacks on lobbying. We need to have the confidence to understand that some of these attacks are justified – whilst most are not. Where the attacks are indeed justified, we need to firmly address the underlying issues. Where they are not justified, we need to push back – hard.

The PRCA has an important role to play in regulating its members. However, it can only perform this role effectively if it has a good working relationship with the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists. If elected to the committee I will play an active role in nurturing that relationship.

In summary I believe that I have the experience, the time and the energy to be an active and effective member of the committee, and on that basis I ask for your support.

### **CURRICULUM VITAE**

In the past I have been President of the CIPR, and Chair of the Government Affairs Group. More recently I was Chair of PRCA PA. I am also the founding patron of Conservatives in Communications, and I am currently a director of the Enterprise Forum, and Vice President of PublicAffairsAsia.

In terms of experience I have worked in-house, at large and small consultancies, and as a freelancer. Agencies I have worked for include APCO, Political Wizard, PR+CI and Westminster Advisers. I have won numerous awards, including PRCA Public Affairs Outstanding Contribution, Public Affairs News Outstanding Contribution, Public Affairs News Personality of the Year, and the CIPR Douglas Smith Award.

I am author of one of the standard reference works for public affairs – *‘Lobbying – the Art of Political Persuasion’*. I have also been very active in setting up awards programmes, including the Gold Standard Awards, the UK Public Affairs Awards, and the EuropAwards.

## **Alex Challoner MPRCA, Managing Director, Cavendish Advocacy**

About 22 years ago, my agency at the time had just relaunched itself. This should have been a time for optimism as the agency prepared to go from strength to strength. However, amongst the glamour and glitz of the launch, an impending disaster was about to implode the agency. An off-hand, boastful comment by a member of staff was about to unleash a series of events which destroyed a great public affairs brand. Over the ensuing 6 to 12 months about half the agency departed, followed by our clients. The brand eventually had to change entirely as it never recovered.

Fast forward to 2020 and that event remains seared into my mind. I will never forget the painful lesson of how a trusted brand, which took years to create could be destroyed in a matter of seconds. In all the years that I ran my own business, a responsibility to maintain the highest standards and levels of transparency have always been my bywords, whatever the situation demanded. If elected, I will ensure these same standards govern what we do on the Public Affairs Board.

It is well documented that myself and the PRCA leadership stood on different sides of the debate to merge the PRCA and APPC into one entity. My major concern was (and remains) the dilution of any standards for our industry which could expose the sector. Being bigger did not in my view necessarily equate to being better. But with new leadership at the helm of the Public Affairs Board I now have the confidence that there is a clear commitment to better standards, and I would be happy to serve for the first time on the board.

My next major priority if elected is to help young people enter our industry. There is a recession coming which will have extremely damaging consequences for young people wishing to break into the public affairs industry. It is a hard industry to crack even in the best of times, but with a severe downturn coming it is suddenly going to become even harder.

I am committed to look at new ways to get young people interested in our industry and to explore how we can promote their careers. I was one of the first in the industry to end internships as a way of recruitment, as I saw the system as favouring those kids from the same families who always did OK, and replaced it with a graduate placement scheme which gave successful candidates a proper salary and a way into the industry. I am interested in discussing how we can broaden this out to encourage more agencies to do the same, and even in some cases look at how bursaries can be used to promote youth and talent from all walks of life.

Lastly, we need more diversity in our industry. We must be honest that there are far too many white middle class males in our industry, and I want to see how we can shake up the status quo and break down barriers to an industry that many consider “not for them”.

So, my priorities if elected:

- (1) Higher standards of transparency and accountability for the public affairs sector
- (2) Looking at ways we can help more younger people access our industry from all walks of life; and particularly in the face of a very severe economic downturn; and
- (3) Widen the talent pool to improve diversity at every level within our industry.

If elected I look forward to working with the Public Affairs Board to achieve these goals.

## **Leon Cook MPRCA, Founder, Atticus Communications**

I have worked in public affairs for over twenty years in London, Washington DC, the Middle East, Brussels, and The Hague, amongst others. Having worked for the global big three agencies, the largest independent, and in-house for three major corporations, I have seen much of what the industry has to offer, learned from it, and contributed. I have worked on lobbying, diplomacy and impactful public policy campaigns across the globe and worked across every crisis imaginable. I am often approached by people at varying stages of their public affairs careers for advice on what they should do next. I enjoy engaging and helping people that share my passion for politics and would seek to encourage the committee to actively make the case beyond Westminster and those already engaged to answer the question 'why politics.'

As a former Vice-Chair of the CIPR Public Affairs Committee, I understand the role and importance of an active membership body as a voice for the industry. In this capacity, I was primarily engaged in the set-up of events with parliamentarians and Ministers for the membership – something I would relish the chance to do for the PRCA. Notwithstanding this, something I am keenly passionate about is standards and the uniformity of their application. This is something I would keenly champion if elected to the committee.

Last year, I took the plunge and set-up my own public affairs agency; so far providing opportunities to four young lobbyists of diverse backgrounds beginning their PA journey. Atticus Communications staffing and recruitment is built around my passion and what I believe should be the cornerstone for any communications operator – politics. I believe in equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace, something that is reflected in Atticus' multicultural team. I have always put myself forward to pass on the learnings from my career to those just starting out, whether that be as a mentor to junior team members, through my pro-bono work, or by offering paid internships to those wanting to get on the ladder. The Public Affairs Board would further enable me to use my wide and varied experiences to help new entrants in understanding international public affairs and how it can be a vehicle for change.

The public affairs industry is living history through COVID-19, the change of the workplace, Brexit, and a potential United Kingdom referendum. Never before has there been a greater need for the voice of the very people connecting industry, campaigns and wider society to policymakers. I believe that through my network and multi-geographical experiences, I can play a positive role in the development of the industry that I have, for the last twenty years, called home.

**Tiffany Burrows MPRCA, Account Director, Newington Communications**

I joined the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee as the Chair of NextGen PA last year and was extremely grateful for the opportunity to represent those in the first ten years of their public affairs career. I took over as Chair as we rebranded from the Young Consultants' Committee to NextGen PA, representing in-house professionals as well. In the 18 months as Chair, we effectively raised the profile of the Group and reached more people by: establishing active social media accounts, producing a monthly newsletter, and creating an about us booklet to share with Public Affairs Board members. I am keen to use the experience I have gained from promoting NextGen PA to an audience who weren't familiar with the Group and its mission and apply it to the Public Affairs Board, which should have a higher profile and be a more integral part of the industry both for agencies but also for in-house professionals. I believe that the energy and enthusiasm I brought to NextGen PA would be a good fit for this task and for the Executive Committee more broadly.

I think it is important that the Committee maintains a balance between comprising industry leaders and those who are starting out and progressing in public affairs. Having this balance allows the Committee to reflect the industry as a whole, to continue championing different perspectives, and to act in the interest and encourage those coming into the industry to remain in the industry. It is also critical for ensuring that the next generation of public affairs leaders understand the importance of ethical lobbying, the need for high standards and see the benefit of protecting and promoting good practice, something that is rightly championed by the industry heavyweights on the Committee at present.

I would like to see a more diverse industry and it's on each and every one of us to make this happen. The PRCA public affairs census last year highlighted that the industry is London-centric (67%), male-dominated (64%) and white (79%), with over a fifth of those in the industry attended a fee-paying school [the national average is 7%]. This has to change if we as an industry want to attract the best talent, be creative, and make an impact. I was pleased that the previous Co-Chairs Emma and George, prioritised this, and since joining the Committee, I have led its diversity and inclusion work. There is unfinished business on this diversity work, and I would welcome the opportunity to play my part working with Liam and the rest of the Exec Committee in achieving a more representative public affairs industry and supporting its work in promoting lobbying as a career choice.



**Tom Frackowiak MPRCA, Managing Director, Public Affairs, Cicero/AMO**

I am Managing Director of Cicero/AMO's UK public affairs practice and am seeking your nomination for re-election onto the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee 2020/21.

Under my leadership Cicero/AMO has been ranked as the UK's largest Public Affairs agency by revenue in the both the 2019 and 2020 PR Week comms rankings.

I am seeking re-election to the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee on the basis of three principles:

1. To ensure that the Public Affairs Board is a vocal champion for transparency, high ethical standards and self-regulation.
2. To support the Public Affairs Board's priority to increase talent and diversity within the public affairs industry.
3. To ensure there is strong governance and accountability on the role of Public Affairs Board.

If re-elected I will also continue to play a leading role on the Executive Committee to improve the existing regulatory framework for public affairs and support efforts to maintain an up to date and relevant Public Affairs Code.

I have worked in public affairs for almost 20 years and I believe my experience in government, a FTSE 100 bank, trade body and consultancy give me a varied range insights and perspectives that can help to shape the direction of the industry moving forward.

I continue to believe that the Public Affairs Board would benefit from a new contingent with fresh ideas from the next generation of leaders in the industry and I hope to increase the contribution I can make.

## **Martha Dalton MPRCA, Managing Director, Lodestone**

Public affairs – done right – is a critical part of making politics better. As a public affairs professional with over 12 years' experience in agency, Parliament and on political campaigns, I believe in the power of public affairs as a force for good – for our clients, sure, but also for the economy, citizens, democracy and for society as a whole. As a sector, we are campaigners, problem-solvers and message translators – raising issues up the agenda and helping change the world for the better. I am standing for the PRCA Public Affairs Board (PAB) Executive Committee to focus on 3 things:

### 1. Promote ethical public affairs as a force for good

We should build on the PRCA's great work in developing clear codes of conduct and promoting transparency, and all become advocates for our sector. From this platform of ethical public affairs, we should be proud of what we do and the positive role we play for our clients. We must be better at making the case for our contribution. I am standing for the PAB Executive Committee to be a voice for those ambitious about our collective mission – to promote public affairs as playing a positive and crucial part in politics.

### 2. Champion diversity

We must champion diversity. Our sector is not reflective of society and that makes us weaker. We should amplify the voices of those in under-represented groups and challenge ourselves to do the hard, not easy things to drive real change. We can only do this through collaboration and I stand ready to listen and work with others on this important task.

### 3. Drive a member-led agenda

Our sector has not been immune to the impacts of COVID-19, and while many are doing well, we need the PRCA to get closer to its members so it can provide a clear offer of support during this challenging time. I plan to drive a focus on understanding members' needs and reaching out to our in-house colleagues to make the case for membership.

By way of background, I have been part of the PRCA PR and Communications Council for over 3 years, a judge for the PRCA Awards (often, sadly, as one of the only women), a contributor to the PRCA's Review of Political Predictions and was named one of PR Week's 30 Under 30 in 2016. I am one of the co-founders and Managing Director of Lodestone Communications which was shortlisted for PRCA Public Affairs Awards Consultancy of the Year 2018.

**Gemma Doyle MPRCA, Managing Director, FTI Consulting**

I am a Managing Director at FTI Consulting, seeking your support to join the PRCA Public Affairs Board.

I was previously a Member of Parliament (2010-2015) and briefly served on the Energy Select Committee before being appointed as a Shadow Defence Minister (the first female MP to serve in a defence frontbench post), a position I held for four and a half years. Since leaving Parliament I have given evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee on 'Women in the House of Commons'. My term as an MP was dominated by the Scottish Independence Referendum. I worked with MSPs in the Scottish Parliament earlier in my career, and with Parliamentarians and officials in building fledgling democratic systems around the world. I also worked at Interel before moving to my current role. Whilst working across all industries I have specific expertise in the defence, fintech, leisure and telecoms sectors.

As someone who has been on both sides of the fence, the integrity of our industry is extremely important to me. We play a vital role in supporting engagement between politicians and external organisations and, perhaps understandably, too often undersell our unique skills as an industry and our role political eco system. Levelling up across companies is vital for the reputation of this sector. It is clear however that there are inconsistencies and points of unfairness thrown up by the new legislation and framework of the previous years. The Public Affairs Board should be at the forefront of leading the conversation around the reforms which may be needed, ensuring rules are applied fairly and pushing back on over-regulation.

It's vital that our industry is open and welcoming to people with expertise in relevant sectors as well as providing supportive career paths for young consultants. At FTI I have introduced dedicated blind recruitment internships to increase and open up access routes into public affairs jobs. I have volunteered with the Taylor Bennett Foundation and Reach Out and routinely mentor consultants in my own team and across the business. Diversity is not homogenous or an add on, and as an industry we can all be better.

The coronavirus crisis has been challenging but has also shown how talented and committed our people are. We should reflect together on the resilience within our sector, consider how expectations of the workplace have changed and learn lessons to make sure we are as prepared as possible for the challenges of the future.

Public affairs works best when we blend the experience of those who have long standing experience of the business with new perspectives. As someone who is proud to work in public affairs, I would be delighted to bring my perspectives and collaborative approach to working to the Public Affairs Board.

**Chris Hogwood MPRCA, Senior Partner, Portland**

I have been lucky to work in public affairs – both in-house and agency – for over 15 years. During that time, I have been grateful to work with some of the most prominent voices in the sector, each of whom have helped shape my views on the ethics underpinning our industry.

We should all take pride in our industry – the value it delivers to different organisations and the standards to which it holds itself.

I am putting myself forward to stand on the PRCA Public Affairs Board Executive Committee because I am proud of my industry and am determined to champion it.

To champion it both externally, to those who may wish to detract from the outside, and internally, working with our colleagues across the sector to encourage the highest standards of conduct.

My strong belief is that our industry is at its best when it is outward facing and confidently explaining both the value and the legitimacy of public affairs.

While there have been a few ‘lobbying scandals’ in my time in the industry, very few of them have involved actual lobbyists – often being media stings.

There is a clear reason for this – most of our profession operates in an ethical manner and in compliance with the code. As an industry, we need to be confident about this track record so that we can in turn confidently talk about the value we have brought to public life – the regulations improved, the value and jobs created. And about our sector as a legitimate career opportunity, thus, helping members to address the lack of diversity that we know is an area where public affairs significantly lags other sectors.

I am not complacent about the need for the Executive Committee to play its role as a self-regulatory body – ensuring our high standards are maintained.

However, I am clear that when this role is exercised, it is important that it is done collaboratively and constructively rather than in a puritanical drive to catch each other out.

We need to hold each other to the highest standards. But the way in which we hold each other to account matters. The tone with which we engage in potential breaches of the code is an important factor in defining the legitimacy of our sector. If we act like we are always on a witch hunt, we shouldn’t be surprised when people conclude that we’re an industry full of witches.

Proper, professional conduct will help to maintain confidence in our sector – confidence from the clients who buy agency services, confidence from the CEOs who see the value in our work and thus resource it appropriately.

Through every action, we should be seeking to champion our industry – externally and internally. And this is what I promise to do if elected to the Committee.

## Tim Snowball MPRCA, Partner & Head of Public Affairs, FleishmanHillard Fishburn

I am ambitious for the Public Affairs Board in the year ahead.

I am standing for election, not for the opportunity to tinker with or endlessly consult on the Code, but to encourage the Executive Committee to look beyond this core function, to ways in which the Board and wider PRCA might support and improve our industry overall.

If elected, I will seek to:

- 1. Significantly expand training:** The Public Affairs industry currently lacks in-depth professional development and training opportunities and I will work with the PRCA to change this. When the APPC merged into the PRCA, expanding training was one of the potential benefits promised. I want to help further unlock this potential, working with the Board, the PRCA's staff and a broad range of industry leaders to create, coordinate and deliver a more comprehensive training programme, creating professional development opportunities for entry, mid and senior levels. The scope should look to develop the full range of professional capabilities we expect from modern public affairs consultants and reinforce the Code in practice.
- 2. Champion diversity:** Public Affairs has a diversity problem and I believe that the Public Affairs Board has an important role to play in solving it. Women in Public Affairs set out a positive agenda for change last year and the NextGen PA group is doing excellent work to build networks and supportive engagement for those under 30. The PRCA Board should support the work of these groups, help establish a new diversity taskforce, and champion both networking and mentoring opportunities. We should actively seek to promote careers in public affairs beyond the narrow and sometimes restrictive confines of the Westminster bubble. We should also promote measures to create a professional environment that supports diversity and use the forum of the Board's open meetings to facilitate important dialogue on race and equality.
- 3. Promote and uphold ethical practice:** In order for it to have value, the Public Affairs Board must robustly promote, uphold and defend the standards outlined in the Code to which we have all subscribed. Much effort has been made to tighten the Code in the last year. We must now increasingly champion and uphold it. This means not being afraid to call out bad practice, whether by members or non-members, in order to defend the reputation of our industry.
- 4. Improve communications:** I would like to see the Public Affairs Board communicate more with members and our staff, building up an industry wide communications list to communicate its work, best practice and training opportunities.

In my day job, I am a Partner and head the Public Affairs practice at FleishmanHillard Fishburn. I previously led Public Affairs at the PHA Group. This experience means that I understand well the different needs and perspectives of both large global agencies and smaller independent ones. This is vital for the Executive Committee, which must represent the full range of agencies and professionals which make up our industry.

## **John Higginson, Founder, Higginson Strategy**

Since leaving the Parliamentary Journalists Lobby in 2013 I have been struck by the ability of public affairs to be a force for good.

It was my belief in the good that public affairs can do that emboldened me to set up my own agency in 2017 aimed squarely at purpose driven organisations.

Across all industries public affairs practitioners on both sides of any argument are vital in writing good considerate vital legislation.

But the job of public affairs practitioners does not stop there.

Today public affairs is part of a cross discipline where practitioners need to think more clearly about collaborative end results.

The modern public affairs practitioner provides a much wider remit of support than those of the past. From supporting clients in their relationship with NGOs to campaign groups, politicians and other stakeholders.

We are in a world that is at a crossroads. Britain is leaving the EU at the end of the year. Britain is trying to grow its economy today while many are still fearful of leaving their homes.

The reality of climate change and the huge effects it is having on our planet is not something that can be resolved by people working in silos and companies only working out of self-interest.

Public affairs practitioners have a huge beneficial role to play as multinationals, national governments and their citizens work to resolve these issues while not impoverishing themselves.

Public affairs practitioners will often be the oil that speeds up the processes.

They will shine light where there is darkness and untangle the knots that are holding back change.

As a former journalist I come from a less worn path than many in public affairs. While the usual route into public affairs is through some form of politics the usual route for former journalists is into PR.

I believe my background acts as a strength for our profession as we move to be more tightly integrated with other communications disciplines.

I have also, in my seven years in the profession, been a great champion of lobbying. I have been ready to stand up, in public, for the industry and point to those, often who sit outside of the industry, who tarnish the vital role we play in society.

Through my own company I have create public affairs campaigns that have championed and pushed for legislative change on female empowerment, air pollution and sustainable development.

And while as a public affairs practitioner I am paid to take a side. For my industry in general I will fight equally for all members.

I will use my role on the board to push for better communications about the important and vital role Public Affairs of all stripes play in modern Britain.

## **James Dowling MPRCA, Director, Lansons**

This is the time when the public affairs industry can and should show its worth and relevance. We are gradually emerging out of lockdown into the worst downturn in over a century. These are tough times to do business. However, as the £300bn of Government support has showed, this is also a time when businesses need high quality advice to help them manage the downturn and spot opportunities.

This is a time for the Public Affairs Board to build on the good work of the past few years to raise the profile of our industry as a vital partner of business and Government – and ensure the value proposition of being a member is unequivocal. Membership of the PAB should be recognised as a badge of quality by consultants and in-house practitioners alike.

The following are my clear priorities for the PAB over the next year:

- Support during the COVID crisis – COVID has forced new working practices upon everyone right across the economy. Although there are some clear efficiencies, many staff have also been at home by themselves, often with little support. More junior and younger staff, in particular, often do not have access to separate areas to work, and those who are in cramped or shared accommodation have inevitably struggled. The PAB should be encouraging all member firms to work with staff to identify and support those who have struggled financially, mentally or physically.
- Diversity – Black Lives Matter shows the need to ensure our society works for all people from whatever background. This applies as much for our industry as for society at large – and as professionals we cannot expect our sector to be able to give well-rounded advice to clients if are unable to draw on perspectives from across society. We should continue to increase the visibility of public affairs professionals from under-represented groups. This is about pipeline and aspiration as much as recruitment of people mid-career – among our membership, we need to boost the representation of senior people from under-represented groups. Equally, building on the excellent work done in previous years, we should continue to encourage more people from minority groups to consider careers in public affairs.
- First class professional development – training is a key part of the membership offer and something which helps embed our value proposition as an industry. I want to see PAB lead the way in ensuring that new entrants to the profession have every opportunity to develop a high level of professional skills. This should be complemented by a focus on continuing professional development for experienced practitioners.
- Ethical public affairs – I strongly agree with the New PAB Chair that we need to work vigorously to engage with politicians and the media making the case for lobbying as an ethical and beneficial practice in a democracy. And in doing so, we need to be seen to lead from the front, speaking out and robustly policing the standards which we expect all member firms to uphold.

I have just returned to consultancy, rejoining Lansons after two years as a Special Adviser. I believe it is the responsibility of Public Affairs Board to help create a positive business environment and culture from which all can benefit. I would work on the PAB Exec to deliver this.

**Jessica Goodrum MPRCA, Senior Account Director, Hanover**

### **Upholding values within the industry**

I am proud of my role advocating for political change on behalf of clients, but I have found that lobbying typically has negative connotations from those who don't understand the work that we carry out. Having and implementing high standards is important to ensure that the image of the Public Affairs industry improves and appeals to future talent. I want to work with the Public Affairs Board Executive Committee to ensure that the reputation of the sector is upheld, and that members and their employees are working in an ethical manner. Those of us who work within the industry should be proud of our wider profession and trust in the ability of our counterparts to build and enhance the wider reputation of the sector.

### **Diversity and supporting talent**

Diversity within the industry is severely lacking; with the Public Affairs Census finding that only 10% of the industry are from a BAME background and 36% are female. More needs to be done to increase this representation, including outreach across the industry to ensure that the benefits of a diverse industry are well understood. The first Census was an important step in establishing this benchmark, but I would like to work with the new Chair of the Public Affairs Board and the Executive Committee to do more to improve diversity across the industry and ensure that Public Affairs is considered a viable career route for those who may have typically felt excluded or know it was an option. The Public Affairs Board should be advocating for members to make tangible commitments to improve the diversity of their teams and bring about real change.

It is not just about the recruitment of talent in the industry, but also the retention of staff in the sector. Public Affairs by its nature needs to adapt to the latest political developments of the day, but often this is at the expense of providing training and long-term skills development which help employees to feel supported and progress. The Public Affairs Board should work closely with the NextGen Committee to ensure that professional development needs are addressed and encouraged across all members.

### **Background**

I have worked within the Public Affairs industry for over 5 years and worked in Parliament before moving to consultancy. I currently work as a Senior Account Director at Hanover Communications.



**Mo Hussein MPRCA, Director of Public Affairs, PLMR**

I have put myself forward for membership of Executive Committee of the Public Affairs Board for three reasons.

Firstly, I believe a strong, organised public affairs sector can provide a vital public service to our democracy and to our country. Government and other public bodies make better decisions when they are exposed to and have to consider the front-line experiences, evidence and data from organisations and individuals at the coal face. It is also this front-line perspective that is best placed to identify quickly any failures in legislation and highlight when things won't work practically on the ground. Our sector can help to inform the gap between policy intent and effective delivery by ensuring that those making decisions are aware of all the issues before taking action. And with this, there is potential to achieve real, tangible, meaningful changes and improvements to people's everyday lives across all sectors, whether it's through attracting investment, safeguarding jobs, tackling climate or improving health outcomes. The list could go on.

Secondly, I believe the industry should reflect the communities it serves and be seen as a truly national industry. This is particularly resonant now with the Government's levelling up agenda and increased focus on devolution meaning that not all the action will be in Westminster, Holyrood or the other political centres. More access to opportunities, ongoing training and development, further professionalisation, clear career paths and progression and championing transferable skills are all vital for attracting and retaining talent as well as ensuring a healthy pipeline for the future.

Thirdly, I believe the insight and experience I can bring from my 10 years' experience working in national Government both as a Special Adviser and a civil servant comms officer – my experience of public affairs from the other side – will provide a useful voice on the Board, helping the PRCA to keep evolving, future-proofing and going from strength to strength.

**Robert Khan FPRCA, Assistant Director (Public Affairs and National Offices), General Medical Council**

I'm standing to be a member of the PRCA Public Affairs Board Executive Committee because I want to provide a strong voice on behalf of the in-house public affairs community. I've been working in public affairs, on an in-house basis, for over twenty years. My previous roles include running the public affairs function for London Councils, for the Commission for Social Care Inspection, for the Care Quality Commission and for the Law Society (where I also served as the executive director for external affairs, running a combined public affairs, policy, stakeholder engagement, international and communications directorate of 135). After ten years in the legal sector I recently moved back to the healthcare world where I now lead the public affairs, stakeholder engagement and national office functions of the General Medical Council. In my spare time I also write plays including most recently BREXIT, which played at the Edinburgh fringe and in London.

I've also always been a strong contributor to the wider public affairs community, serving on a number of committees including the original UK Public Affairs Committee as a founder member and as a current member of the PRCA professional practices committee. My focus - if elected to the public affairs board committee - would be to focus on more in-house public affairs recruitment.

While I have worked closely with many good friends from the consultancy side of the public affairs world, I think we can do even more to enhance and improve the PRCA's offer to the world of in-house. I would also like to focus on building more events that are focused on attracting leading politicians and players. From 2004 until 2008 I was Secretary then Chair of the CIPR public affairs group organising events and chairing speaker meetings with among others Theresa May, Michael Gove, David Cameron, Lord Ashdown, Nick Brown, Nick Clegg, Bob Worcester, Armando Iannucci, Andrew Pierce and David Dimbleby.

It would be great to bring a focus to bringing us all together to hear and meet with leading political figures as well as bring an impetus to the work of our in-house community, and that would be my focus, if elected to the Committee.

## **Anderona Cole MPRCA, External Relations and Public Affairs Officer, Jisc**

I have had the pleasure of working in dynamic roles in different sectors within the public affairs sphere for some time. This year has been intense (to say the least!) and it's clear that the world as we know it is going through a period of transition. One monumental shift that we have seen, as practitioners, is that following the upheaval sparked by the killing of George Floyd, institutional actors and politicians alike have reflected on what they can do to bring about meaningful and lasting change.

**I think it's high time that I step forward and lead from the front on initiatives that will ensure that our sector is not only dynamic- but that it also better reflects society as a whole.**

In the periods that I have worked for industry bodies, trade associations and on behalf of clients in an agency, I have seen a familiar pattern. Many individuals have educational backgrounds that mirror one another's and, within teams, when I join it soon becomes apparent that people have similar familial backgrounds and shared experiences.

I believe that good things come from working with people who are different to yourself and there is a joy that comes out from engaging with others that are different to you. Diversity can bring about a positive shift in a working environment and can transform the variety of policy ideas that come forth. Ultimately, having a range of different perspectives in a team can result in policy outcomes that you might have never previously envisaged.

According to the results of the PRCA's 2019 census, 10% of public affairs professionals are from a black or another minority ethnic background (BAME). Although this may seem like an encouraging statistic, I can't think of many people in senior leadership positions that have the same background as me. Given the way things are looking in the external climate, I think it's time that we seek to do something about the barriers that may keep people from progressing so that we can ensure the continued success of the industry that we love.

I am no stranger to making an effort to initiate industry-wide change. I worked on diversity initiatives during my time working for an IT institute and I have recently spent over 18 months working to make the video games industry diverse. I have successfully spearheaded a programme of work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which, amongst other things, ensured the launch of the UK games industry's first ever data collection initiative to explore the diversity of the sector.

If selected to play a role in the committee, I am confident that I can utilize my experience to make a genuine difference. I would dedicate my time and energy to ensuring that it embarks upon meaningful initiatives to help evolve the careers of talent as well as attract the brightest and best, regardless of their background, to this brilliant industry.