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1. Welcome from David Wallace, Deputy Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in this new and exciting opportunity within Student Loans Company (SLC).

Under our new Chief Executive, Paula Sussex, we have the strategic vision to deliver outstanding digital products and services to SLC's customers and stakeholders and aim to respond effectively, quickly and flexibly to the demands of ministers and policymakers at the Department for Education and the devolved administrations. That said, we acknowledge SLC will face a number of challenges in the year ahead; associated with the number of customers set to further increase, alongside their growing expectation for an efficient modern digital service.

Student finance is and will continue to be a topic of interest across the UK, yet the SLC has struggled to convey the good news story of what we do. Last year alone SLC processed 1.8 million applications, made over 7 million payments, handled nearly 6 million telephone calls and managed over 8 million customers. Reflecting this, and in line with the Chief Executive and Board's desire to adopt a more proactive approach to external communications, we are now looking to recruit into the newly created role of Head of Corporate Affairs.

The Head of Corporate Affairs will be focused on creating and communicating a favourable public image for SLC, building and maintaining effective relationships with a range of diverse external stakeholders and ensuring focus remains on improving communications standards across the organisation.

A key appointment within SLC's senior management structure and supporting the wider transformation programme, the Head of Corporate Affairs will also lead our existing internal communications function responsible for communicating SLC's key business messages to its 3,300 staff across five sites.

Whilst this role will be both demanding and challenging, I firmly believe it will also be hugely rewarding and interesting. As our new Head of Corporate Affairs, you will be presented with the rare opportunity to make a real difference both internally to our organisation and, importantly, in building a greater understanding of and support for our strategic objectives amongst our key stakeholder groups.

If you are excited by the opportunity to help change the overall perception of SLC, sharing our story and unique capability of the business across the UK and will bring high levels of energy, drive and enthusiasm we would love to receive an application from you!

David Wallace

Deputy Chief Executive

2. The Company

Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit making organisation established in 1989 to provide loans and grants to students in Universities and colleges in the UK.

Owned by the UK Government Department for Education and the devolved administrations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the SLC's purpose is to enable customers to invest in their futures by delivering secure, accurate and efficient assessment, payment and repayment services.

The growth of the SLC can be mapped by the volume of new responsibilities handed to it by the governments of the day. Starting off as a source of mortgage-style maintenance loans in 1990, income-contingent loans were added from 1998 and fee loans in 2003, with further changes made following Lord Brown's review of England's higher education system in 2012.

Last year the SLC processed 1.8 million applications, made over 7 million payments (totaling £18.2 billion), handled nearly 6 million telephone calls, managed over 8 million customers and a loan book totaling £117.8 billion – dwarfing the same statistics from as little as five years ago. This rapid growth is set to continue over the next three years.

Operating in a complex macro environment with constant change across the political, economic, social technology and legal dimensions, SLC's key business focuses and priorities for 2019 include:

- Delivery of existing products throughout each academic year, securely, effectively, sustainably and efficiently
- Implementing new policy in a timely manner, balancing lowest practicable cost against quality, primarily through reusable modular products
- Delivering an outstanding digital customer experience and reducing avoidable contact
- Ensuring SLC as an organisation has a highly productive, skilled, engaged and properly rewarded workforce
- Increasing repayments and safeguarding the proper administration of the loan book

Further details can be found by visiting <https://www.slc.co.uk/>

3. The Opportunity

Following the appointment of Paula Sussex as SLC's new Chief Executive in September 2018 and reflecting the desire to adopt a more proactive approach to their communication strategy and engagement with key external stakeholders (including appropriate media), the SLC are looking to recruit into the newly created role of Head of Corporate Affairs.

The Corporate Affairs function sits within the Product Development and Digital Customer Directorate, which is led by the Deputy CEO. The Corporate Affairs team provides communications support across the business, providing expert advice on media relations, internal communications and corporate communications. The Corporate Affairs team also plays a key role managing the organisation's reputation and ensuring that SLC communicates effectively with its key stakeholders, internally and externally.

4. The Role

Job Title: Head of Corporate Affairs

Reports to: Deputy CEO; Chief Customer Officer; and Executive Director of Product Development and Digital Customer

Location: Glasgow

Role Overview:

The role holder will be responsible for creating and communicating a favourable public image for SLC through communications campaigns that reach students and sponsors, Higher Education Institutions, employees, media, sector commentators, government agencies and other stakeholders.

They will also be responsible for building and maintaining effective relationships between SLC and external stakeholders, including the media, Government and the Devolved Administrations; as well as leading SLC's internal communications, responsible for communicating SLC's key business messages to its 3,300 staff across five sites.

Ensuring a two-way flow of information and feedback between SLC's executive leadership team, senior managers and staff, the new Head of Corporate Affairs will work closely with HR and Operational Excellence colleagues to ensure SLC's internal communications contribute to improved employee engagement and continued focus remains on improving communications standards across the organisation.

Role Responsibilities:

- Acting as a trusted advisor and strategic counsellor to the CEO, advising on strategic communications and reputational risks / opportunities associated with the delivery of student finance
- Leading the Corporate Affairs team, including ensuring there is a two-way flow of information across the business; all press responses / releases are in line with our communications strategy; staying updated with commentary and sentiment on student loans; anticipating potential problems or opportunities so that SLC can get its messages out in a timely manner; and championing insight and evaluation of communication activities
- Leading on continually improving consistent communications standards across the organisation

- Ensuring there is effective planning and horizon scanning, and delivering internal and external multi-channel communications campaigns aligned to SLC's strategic objectives
- Identifying opportunities to raise the profile of SLC externally
- Maintaining a strategic approach to government and external relations, and to increase understanding of SLC's vision and purpose
- Developing a corporate communications strategy that has clear and measurable objectives, is based on audience research and insight and has a plan for delivery and evaluation metrics
- Providing strong professional (dotted line) leadership, support and challenge to other internal communications professionals embedded within SLC's Directorates and working across the organisation to improve communications standards and ensure consistency
- Collaborating with SLC's Customer Communications and Marketing teams to ensure consistency across Information and Guidance materials and our corporate affairs messages
- Continually seek to develop the Corporate Affairs function through a collaborative process with key stakeholders
- Occasionally expected to carry out other reasonable management instructions or requests to suit the business needs

As a recognised leader within SLC, it is anticipated that the Head of Corporate Affairs will devote circa 30% of their time to the following activities:

- Actively promote and support transformation to achieve the SLC Strategy
- Show ownership by guiding improvements to current operations and processes
- Put the customer at the heart of decision-making, resource allocation and delivery, recognising the value and interest of the 'front-line view'
- Take ownership of and deliver to the Company's Financial plans and drive efficiencies and cost savings underpinning the Strategy
- Empower, guide and enable staff to deliver
- Recognise and celebrate individual and team achievements
- Promote SLC values, behaviours and the SLC Way through your own actions and influence on others
- Exercise your accountability to shareholders and fulfil your responsibilities to relevant stakeholders, including colleagues and staff

5. Preferred Candidate Background

This role requires an exceptional senior level strategic communications and external affairs professional who can demonstrate their energy, drive and enthusiasm for the role.

An accomplished communicator, you will also have instant credibility when engaging with both internal and external stakeholders.

Key Skills / Knowledge / Experience

- Demonstrable success in designing and implementing high-quality and compelling communications and external affairs strategies in a large and complex organisation subject to significant public and media scrutiny
- Evidence of highly developed interpersonal, influencing and stakeholder engagement skills with a demonstrable ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with the media and a wide range of internal and external stakeholders
- Experience of successfully leading and developing high-performing teams, with a track record of creating a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in the quality of communications
- Evidence of strong political awareness and professional judgement, with a track record of providing clear, balanced advice at executive and senior management level
- Experience working with Government and sound understanding of parliamentary processes and the public policy landscape
- Proven ability to evaluate the effectiveness of communication against objectives, reviewing lessons learned and comparing communications best practice to identify areas for improvement for future strategies
- Evidence of the ability to think and plan strategically
- Demonstrated experience in advocating and leading change and creating a culture which is focused on continuous improvement, customer service excellence and inspirational customer engagement

Personal Attributes

- An inspirational leader who encourages excellence and delivers high performance
- The maturity, credibility and well-developed interpersonal skills to form relationships with a wide range of staff
- A highly skilled negotiator with a record of achieving successful outcomes and building excellent relationships and partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders
- Open, supportive and visible management style which earns the confidence and respect necessary to effectively deliver the agenda on major change
- A catalyst for change where necessary with a willingness to challenge convention
- Absolute personal integrity – the public profile of the organisation is of paramount importance
- High levels of tenacity, resilience, drive and motivation to deliver results
- Intellectual flexibility to move easily between significant detail and the bigger picture
- Strong ambassadorial and presentation skills with the ability to express views convincingly and coherently using a variety of media
- The ability to operate effectively and rationally in a highly politicised environment
- Exercises good judgement, confident in own knowledge and able to give advice to others and be accountable for the advice
- Significant personal drive and resilience

6. Remuneration

A competitive salary and attractive pension arrangement will be supported by a range of other benefits.

7. The Recruitment Process

The recruitment for this position is being managed by advising consultants, Livingston James.

Interested candidates should provide a covering letter and a tailored CV to Douglas Adam at douglasadam@livingstonjames.com.

All third party applications, enquiries and direct approaches to SLC will be referred to Livingston James.
