

# Victoria Henslow

Communications Director

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Communications director with 14 years of experience across corporate comms, public affairs, and crisis management. Currently leading a team of 11 at a FTSE 250 infrastructure firm, covering everything from investor relations messaging to government stakeholder engagement. I've managed comms through two M&A integrations, a major safety incident, and a CEO transition — the work I'm best at is the stuff nobody plans for.

## Experience

**Director of Communications**, Balfour Beatty, London

Mar 2020 – Present

Lead all corporate communications, public affairs, and internal comms for the UK construction and infrastructure division.

- Manage a team of **11 across corporate comms, internal comms, and public affairs**
- Led comms for the **£1.6 billion A14 road project** handover — coordinated with Highways England, local councils, and national media
- Managed crisis communications during a site safety incident — **contained media exposure to 48 hours** and protected share price
- Rebuilt the internal comms strategy for **12,000 UK employees**, increasing intranet engagement by 37%

**Head of Communications**, Thames Water, Reading

Jun 2015 – Feb 2020

Ran external and stakeholder communications for the UK's largest water utility, serving 15 million customers.

- Managed comms through the **Ofwat PR19 price review** — drafted customer-facing materials, media briefings, and MP correspondence
- Led the comms workstream for a **£200 million investment programme** in sewer infrastructure across London
- Built relationships with **40+ MPs and councillors** across the Thames Water operating area
- Oversaw a team of **7 comms professionals** plus 2 agency retainers

**Senior Communications Manager**, Weber Shandwick, London

Sep 2012 – May 2015

Client lead for corporate and public affairs accounts in energy, infrastructure, and financial services.

- Led a **5-person account team** servicing National Grid, SSE, and Aviva
- Managed National Grid's **community engagement programme** for the London Power Tunnels project — 23 public consultations with zero formal objections
- Wrote and placed **60+ opinion pieces** in FT, The Times, and trade press for senior client executives

**Communications Officer**, Department for Transport, London

Jan 2010 – Aug 2012

Press office and stakeholder comms for the HS2 development phase and rail franchising announcements.

- Drafted **ministerial briefings, press notices, and Q&A packs** for HS2 consultations
- Handled **200+ media enquiries** during the West Coast Main Line franchise controversy in 2012

## Education

**MA in Public Relations**, University of Westminster, London

Sep 2008 – Sep 2009

Distinction. Thesis on *corporate reputation recovery following infrastructure failures in UK utilities*.

**BA (Hons) in Politics**, University of Exeter, Exeter

Sep 2005 – Jun 2008

Upper Second Class Honours.

## Skills

Corporate Communications Strategy • Crisis Communications • Public Affairs & Government Relations • Internal Communications • Stakeholder Engagement • Media Relations & Press Office • Executive Speechwriting • Investor Relations Messaging • Team Leadership & Development • Agency Management

## Certifications

**Chartered Practitioner (MCIPR)**, Chartered Institute of Public Relations

Jan 2016

## Languages

English (native) • French (working proficiency)

## Projects

**A14 Handover Communications – Balfour Beatty**

Jun 2023 – Mar 2024

Managed all communications for the handover of a major road infrastructure project.

- Coordinated messaging across **Highways England, 3 local councils, and 6 national media outlets**
- Organised a ministerial visit and press event with **coverage in BBC News, ITV, and The Guardian**
- Produced a **12-minute documentary** on the project used for industry awards submissions

### **Internal Comms Transformation – Balfour Beatty UK**

*Jan 2021 – Dec 2021*

Redesigned internal communications for 12,000 UK employees, many of whom work on-site without desk access.

- Launched a mobile-first employee app reaching **8,400 users in 6 months**
- Intranet engagement increased by **37%** and CEO townhall attendance doubled to 2,200 live viewers

### **References**

#### **Andrew Kilpatrick**

Chief Operating Officer, Balfour Beatty, andrew.kilpatrick@balfourbeatty.com, +44 7700 900 771

#### **Catherine Phelps**

Director of Corporate Affairs, Thames Water, catherine.phelps@thameswater.co.uk, +44 7700 900 482

### **Extra Curricular Activity**

#### **Trustee – Media Trust**

*Jun 2019*

Board trustee for the charity connecting media professionals with community organisations. Attend 6 board meetings per year and chair the communications sub-committee.

#### **Mentor – CIPR Mentoring Scheme**

*Jan 2018*

Mentored 5 early-career PR professionals over 6 years through the CIPR's formal mentoring programme.