

AMBITIOUS

CREATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

SUPPORTIVE

## JOB DESCRIPTION

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| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>  | Project Officer - Workforce for the Future (Business and Skills Directorate) |
| <b>MANAGED BY:</b> | Project Manager - Workforce for the Future                                   |
| <b>GRADE:</b>      | Grade 9 - £34,788- £37,849   |

## BACKGROUND

### The Employer: The West of England Combined Authority (WECA)

The West of England is an economic leader with an economy worth over £33 billion a year. With a population of over 1.1 million people, one of the highest rates of employment in the country, and over 45,000 businesses, the region competes on a global scale. The West of England is a place where highly-skilled people work, where ideas flourish, and where businesses grow. It's also a place that a diverse population of people call home.

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) was formed in 2017, to champion the region and drive clean and inclusive economic growth. As a result, significant powers and funding have been transferred to the region through the new Combined Authority and West of England Mayor.

Our aim is to deliver economic growth for the region and address some of our challenges, such as productivity and skills, housing and transport.

WECA is made up of three of the local authorities in the region - Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Building on a strong track record of partnership working in the region, the West of England Combined Authority continues to work closely with North Somerset Council. The Combined Authority also the accountable body for the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

WECA is an equal opportunities employer, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, and invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support they may need during the recruitment process.

### The Project: Workforce for the Future

Workforce for the Future is an £8m programme funded by the European Social Fund and matched by the Combined Authority which seeks to increase collaboration between business and education and develop a more cohesive and joined up skills system which supports Small and Medium Enterprises, SME's, and their workforce to thrive, innovate and sustain growth in the region and beyond.

In particular, the programme will support SMEs to meet current and future skills needs and take a much more active role in realising their workforce for the future by engaging them in skills systems and processes so that they understand how to navigate and use relevant

systems and the best options for them to meet their skills needs both now and in the future.

The focus will always be on support for the SME, but the programme will also enable participants in the programme to make progress through opportunities like apprenticeships, internships and placements within SMEs. Workforce for the Future could also support activity encouraging inspirational activity within schools, meaningful and useful work experience placements and SME engagement with course and curricula development.

WECA will operate as a co-financing organisation with delivery of the activities being carried out by local delivery partners or consortia who are commissioned by WECA through an open and transparent 'call' process resulting in grant funding being awarded to selected consortia/applicants.

## PURPOSE OF THE JOB

The Workforce for the Future Project Officer role is a new appointment to the Business and Skills Directorate at WECA.

Reporting to and working with the Project Manager for Workforce for the Future the Project Officer will be key to helping to deliver a successful and impactful programme.

As the Workforce for the Future programme is in its infancy establishment of sound practices and processes will be crucial to ensure that the programme is successfully delivered. The post holder will therefore need to be highly organised, have an ability to multi-task and prioritise and be a self-starter in order to develop, implement and lead on these aspects to create a good foundation for the programme to move forward.

Initially, the role will also require the post-holder to support the Project Manager in activities, such as briefings and events, to publicise and raise awareness of the programme with external stakeholders.

Key to the role will be the forming and building of relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. Influencing skills will be crucial to ensure that external stakeholders adhere to the governance and reporting requirements of the programme.

In addition to liaising with and building relationships with external delivery partners the post holder will also work closely with the WECA Communications Team to collect and maintain material that can be used to communicate and further publicise the programme and its achievements.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Build relationships with external stakeholders, including bid consortia and DWP, and use influencing skills in order to ensure the successful programme development and delivery.
- Work with the Project Manager and Communications Team to promote and raise awareness of the programme including briefings and events with external stakeholders.
- Lead on the development and implementation of processes and practices to manage the application submission and appraisal processes in order to provide timely feedback on submission outcomes to both internal and external stakeholders.
- Work with the internal Grant Management and Assurance team, to develop recording mechanisms such as tracking of spend and grants paid against consortia performance to ensure accurate and up to date records are maintained, leading on any associated audit requirements.
- Prepare reports, briefings, visualisations, graphics and presentations for a range of stakeholders, both internal and external, on Workforce for the Future's delivery and progress.
- Implement systems and methods for collecting outcomes and outputs of the programme, liaising with delivery partners and using influencing skills if needed, to ensure that the programme's reporting requirements are adhered to and submitted on time and accurately.
- Lead on the amalgamation of delivery partners progress reports, case studies and narrative across the programme, producing annual summaries and reports to provide to Government and other key stakeholders and which can be used to support the wider programme evaluation.
- Provide general project management including helping to contribute to the development, maintenance and monitoring of the programme risk register, issues log, action planning etc.
- Deputise for the Project Manager as and when necessary and appropriate and undertake other such duties and responsibilities as may be allocated from time to time by your line manager to ensure successful project delivery.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

#### Qualifications and Knowledge

- General knowledge of the skills environment as it applies to the West of England and the needs of SMEs in relation to skills and workforce development.
- Advance knowledge of the Microsoft packages including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

#### Experience

- Working within the skills system, either as part of a publicly funded programme, or in an FE College or similar and/or experience of working with businesses, particularly SMEs.
- Working with, supporting and influencing a wide range of stakeholders both internal and external to an organisation to ensure a project or programme's successful delivery.
- Negotiating and influencing external organisations to ensure they meet reporting requirements and timescales.
- Leading on and managing the development of management information systems to record programme or project performance which is then used to produce a variety of reports for a wide range of stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.
- Working with internal teams and directing them on the establishment of systems and processes required to accurately monitor and track financial and/or performance.
- Analysing data to inform decision making, in particular performance and progress of projects against financial spend.

#### Skills and Competencies

- Able to represent WECA effectively with external stakeholders and build strong working relationships.
- Proactive with the ability to use initiative and work independently without close supervision or direction but also work as part of a small team or collaboratively with other teams.
- Sound negotiating and influencing skills.
- Excellent organisational and prioritisation skills.
- Strong communication skills, written and verbal.
- Able to assimilate information quickly and accurately with strong attention to detail.
- Ability and confidence to constructively challenge the status quo.
- Problem solving and analytical skills.

## DESIRABLE

- Understanding of West of England Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership
- Developing and maintaining website content.
- Knowledge of the existing general business support infrastructure in the West of England.
- General understanding of project management principles.
- Awareness of GDPR and Freedom of Information requirements.

## REWARDS AND BENEFITS

WECA staff receive:

- 25 days annual leave, rising to 30 after five years' continuous service, plus bank holidays, pro rata
- Auto-enrolment into the Avon Pension Fund
- Cycle to work scheme and secure bike parking
- Free eye tests for all display screen equipment (DSE) users
- Commuter Travel Club - WECA employees can sign up to receive discounted monthly bus tickets, unlimited bus travel for work or leisure within your chosen zone, automatic ticket renewal and price freeze for 12 months.