

AMBITIOUS

CREATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

SUPPORTIVE

## JOB DESCRIPTION

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| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>  | Workforce for the Future Lead Project Officer (Business and Skills Directorate) |
| <b>MANAGED BY:</b> | Enterprise Manager  |
| <b>GRADE:</b>      | Grade 9   |

## BACKGROUND

### Working at the West of England Combined Authority

The West of England is a fantastic place to live and work; a place where ideas flourish and businesses grow, and a diverse population calls home. With a highly-skilled workforce, innovative businesses, rich cultural and natural assets, and excellent connections, the West of England competes on a global scale.

In 2017, the West of England Combined Authority was formed to bring the region together to drive economic growth. Significant powers and funding were transferred to the region to support work to ensure residents have better skills, more job opportunities and a better quality of life. In May 2021, the second Metro Mayor for the West of England was elected, and we're working with our regional partners and with Government to deliver against our ambitious agenda, protect the environment and ensure the West of England continues to be a thriving, successful and innovative place for future generations.

Covid-19 has had a big impact on the West of England, and we are leading the regional economic recovery, bringing people together to ensure our region continues to build on its success.

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

We are an equal opportunities employer, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, and invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support needed during the recruitment process.

## PURPOSE OF THE JOB

The Workforce for the Future Lead Project Officer role is based within the Business and Skills Directorate. Close liaison with colleagues in both the Growth Hub and the Workforce

for the Future programme team will be an essential part of the role, as will forming close and trusted working relationships with the range of external partners.

This role will coordinate enquiries to, and support offered by, the Workforce for the Future programme, which is designed to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with their workforce planning, retention and upskilling. This will involve collecting high level diagnostic information about the company's people and skills needs and making considered referrals as required.

To be successful in the role you will provide a high quality professional business support service, managing a diverse portfolio of business relationships and ensuring a quality and seamless customer journey.

### 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.

The focus will always be on support for the SME, but the programme will also enable individuals involved 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.

Local delivery partners or consortia will be commissioned by WECA through an open and transparent funding 'call' and partners will be brought in based on their specialist knowledge in skills in one area of the SME journey.

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Build professional relationships with businesses at a strategic level and delivering a high level business support service.
- Developing a range of business diagnostic tools to support the structured development of businesses growth, adaptation and skills needs, including workforce and business planning, people and skills, operational delivery.
- Using this approach, critical issues and barriers as well as options for resolution will be identified, with the business able to be referred to the most appropriate Workforce for the Future delivery partner to help achieve the businesses goals and needs.

- Provide in-depth account management support to drive, monitor and evaluate progress to ensure business needs are effectively fulfilled. Maintaining accurate information within the CRM system and ensuring a high-quality customer journey.
- Ensure that data capture and reporting is in line with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requirements and to demonstrate its impact and adhere to the Workforce for the Future's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- Work with the wider Growth Hub team, Workforce for the Future team and Communications team to promote and raise awareness of the Workforce for the Future programme, generating businesses leads to refer on to delivery partners.
- Work closely with the delivery partners and the Workforce for the Future team to identify trends and data/intelligence around business need to support the future direction of the Workforce for the Future programme, including shaping any further sector or geography specific funding calls.
- Work closely with the Workforce for the Future team to capture and analyse business feedback on the support received and use this to negotiate adaptations and improvements to delivery partners activities.
- Working closely with all teams within the Enterprise and Inward Investment service to raise awareness of the business support offer available through Workforce for the Future through attendance at key networking events.
- Engage with key external stakeholder relationships in the region to support businesses (UAs, Universities, business associations, Local Enterprise Partnerships champions) to share key messages and discuss Growth Hub (GH) approach to delivery and the Workforce for the Future programme.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

#### Qualifications and Knowledge

- Educated to degree level, in Business or another related subject, or extensive business management/adviser experience.
- 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.
- Excellent understanding of the West of England business support and finance landscape.
- Good knowledge of the characteristics of the West of England economy and the business planning, finance and operational delivery across multiple sectors.
- An understanding of the issues and barriers of engaging in business support faced by small businesses.
- An appreciation of what motivates business people and what drives business growth and skills progression.

#### Experience

Demonstrable experience of using business diagnostics tools to support business and workforce development.

- Experience of working with business owners at strategic level and challenging existing thinking to clarify future direction.
- Experience of developing and managing partnerships and managing external provider delivery.
- Strong administration and organising skills.
- Experience of monitoring and evaluating actual performance and outcomes against planned activity.
- Experience of business account management and delivering programmes against defined targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Experience of analysing business performance and identifying solutions.
- Experience of developing, presenting and achieving buy-in to proposals that will lead to business and workforce development.

## Skills and Competencies

- Ability to create strong partnerships to benefit WECA's Business and Skills, and specifically the 'Enterprise Team' and 'Workforce for the Future' service objectives.
- Ability to work without close supervision - able to prioritise, problem-solve and multi-task.
- Proven organisational and prioritisation skills with the ability to work to often tight deadlines.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and inter-personal skill - questioning and listening to achieve a common understanding of complex issues.
- Ability, confidence and credibility when dealing with senior business leaders or external partners to develop or deliver solutions and make good decisions.
- Demonstrable interest in and understanding of the business support landscape including market trends and appraising growth opportunities and how these relate to the skills system.
- Able to assimilate information quickly and accurately.

## DESIRABLE

- Understanding of West of England Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership
- Understanding of the wider skills and employment environment.
- General understanding of project management principles.
- Awareness of GDPR and Freedom of Information requirements.

## REWARDS AND BENEFITS

### 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 - all 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.
- The Combined Authority has adopted a Hybrid working approach, which enables employees to split their week between working in the workplace and working remotely. Hybrid Working forms just part of the flexible working options that the Combined Authority is offering as the new way of working. Flexible working is an arrangement that enables employees to have a way of working that suits employee and employer needs whilst maintain a work-life balance.

## WE PAY THE LIVING WAGE

We're proud to have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer

Living Wage accreditation means that everyone working at The West of England and Combined Authority receives a minimum hourly wage of £9.90 - higher than the government minimum for over 23s, currently £9.50 per hour



It also means that anyone who provides services to, or has contracts with us, must pay the Living Wage, setting the bar for good employer practices in the region. This includes those who provide services to The West of England and Combined Authority, such as cleaning and facilities management contracts, as well as those who have contracts with us - such as IT providers.