

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Early Careers Lead
<b>MANAGED BY:</b>	Learning & Organisational Development Manager
<b>GRADE:</b>	10

### THE ROLE

The Early Careers Lead will shape and deliver the organisation's end-to-end early careers strategy, creating a clear and coherent approach to attracting, developing and retaining emerging talent. The role ensures early careers activity is fully aligned with workforce planning priorities and long-term organisational objectives, building a sustainable pipeline of future skills.

The role is central to supporting significant regional growth across the West of England. The postholder will champion an inclusive approach to early talent, positioning the organisation as a collaborative and innovative public sector service leader and ensuring young people across the region can access meaningful opportunities. By designing a strategy that reflects the needs of a greener, more digital economy, the Early Careers Lead will empower young people to thrive while strengthening employer engagement and regional partnerships across the West of England.

A key part of the role is developing strong, productive relationships with schools, colleges, universities, training providers and wider skills partners. The postholder will ensure the organisation plays a visible, influential and impactful role within the regional skills and employment landscape, contributing to shared ambitions for inclusive growth.

### ABOUT THE MCA

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), exists to make a real difference for the people who live, work and study in the region

We are investing in the things that matter most, reliable transport that helps people get around, affordable homes in the right places and opportunities to develop the skills needed for the green jobs of the future.

Over the next 10 years, our region is set for major change. There will be new jobs, new homes, and major improvements to the transport network. We are building stronger partnerships, attracting investment, and creating the conditions for people and businesses to thrive.

You will be joining the organisation at a genuinely exciting moment. You will be part of the work that shapes the future of the West of England and see the impact of your contribution in the communities around you. The actions we take now will deliver real, positive change for the people who call this region home, and you will be helping to make this happen.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Shape and deliver a comprehensive early careers strategy aligned to organisational priorities, regional growth ambitions and workforce plans.
- Establish a clear framework for early careers pathways including apprenticeships, graduate schemes, internships and work experience.
- Monitor and evaluate programme effectiveness, using data and insight to drive continuous improvement.
- Ensure all early careers programmes actively support equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.
- Design initiatives to attract high-quality, diverse early careers talent.
- Align early careers activity with current and future skills needs across the organisation and region.
- Build sustainable talent pipelines for critical roles and emerging priority sectors.
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with schools, colleges, universities and training providers across the West of England.
- Represent the organisation at careers events, outreach activities and regional partnership forums.
- Identify and lead collaborative opportunities to enhance talent attraction, development and progression.
- Work closely with senior leaders, HR colleagues and hiring managers to understand workforce needs and future capability requirements.
- Provide expert advice on early careers best practice, programme design and emerging trends.
- Influence and engage stakeholders to secure long term commitment and successful programme delivery.
- Oversee the end-to-end delivery of early careers programmes, ensuring a high-quality and inclusive participant experience.
- Work collaboratively across the wider People & Culture team to align early careers activity with organisational career pathways, job families, workforce planning and future capability needs, ensuring clear progression opportunities across the organisation.
- Design structured development pathways including learning interventions, placements, mentoring and progression routes that support long-term career development across the organisation.
- Lead and evolve a diverse portfolio of early careers programmes, including apprenticeships, graduate pathways, internships, industry placements and work

experience initiatives, ensuring programmes remain scalable, inclusive and aligned to future organisational capability needs.

- Ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place including mentoring, coaching and line manager capability development.
- Manage programme timelines, budgets and resources effectively to ensure efficient and impactful delivery.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

#### Qualifications and Knowledge

- Strong knowledge of early careers pathways, including apprenticeships, graduate schemes, internships and work experience models, including how they contribute to organisational workforce planning and capability development.
- Clear understanding of inclusive attraction and development practices, with the ability to embed these principles into programme design, delivery and evaluation.

#### Experience

- Experience in designing, delivering or managing early careers programmes such as apprenticeships, graduate schemes, internships or work experience.
- Strong stakeholder management and relationship-building capability, with a proven ability to influence, collaborate and gain commitment at all levels across an organisation and with external partners.

#### Skills and Competencies

- Ability to develop and implement an end-to-end early careers strategy aligned to workforce planning, including the design of structured pathways such as apprenticeships and graduate schemes.
- Excellent project management and organisational skills, with the capability to manage multiple priorities, programmes and deadlines effectively.
- Strong communication skills and influencing skills, able to build credibility with senior leaders, hiring managers and external partners such as education and training providers.
- Proven ability to establish, manage and sustain effective partnerships with external organisations, ideally within the education, skills or employment landscape.
- Ability to plan, deliver and evaluate multiple programmes simultaneously, managing timelines, risks, resources and interdependencies.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to engage diverse audiences including young people, senior leaders and external partners.

- Ability to design structured, inclusive development pathways and learning experiences that support progression, retention and long-term capability building.
- Strong analytical skills with the ability to use data such as recruitment, progression and diversity metrics to evaluate impact and drive continuous improvement.

## DESIRABLE

### Experience

- Experience working with universities, colleges and training providers within regional skills or early talent.
- Coaching or mentoring experience supporting individuals' development, confidence and progression.