

Job Description

Job Title:	Strategic Lead - Changing Futures (2.5 Yrs FTC)
Directorate/Team:	Employment, Skills, Health and Communities
Location:	16 Summer Lane
Responsible to:	Head of Systems Change and Inclusion
Responsible for:	Project Officer – lived experience, Project officer – information governance and data, Project officer – systems change
Key working relationships: (internal)	WMCA statutory officers, all WMCA Directorates, OPSI programme team, Health & Communities team, Homelessness Taskforce
Key working relationships: (external)	Local Authorities, West Midlands Police, ICS/ICBs, NHS Mental Health Trusts, VCFSE sector, MHCLG, Cabinet Office and other government departments.

Purpose of the Post

The Strategic Lead - Changing Futures will provide system leadership for the West Midlands Combined Authority's Changing Futures programme, working across Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton to support improvements in outcomes for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage.

The role will lead the design, coordination and delivery of a system change programme, focused on improving how services work together to support individuals experiencing overlapping disadvantage, including homelessness, mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system.

Operating within the Office for Public Service Innovation (OPSI), the postholder will work at a regional level to support local authorities and partners to test, learn and embed new approaches, while ensuring strong alignment with national MHCLG requirements, including delivery plans, the system maturity framework and programme evaluation.

The role will provide leadership across a small internal multidisciplinary WMCA team (including lived experience, data and systems change functions), ensuring that delivery is supported by strong learning, insight and co-production, and that learning is disseminated across the region.

The postholder will operate in a highly collaborative and politically sensitive environment, influencing partners across local government, health, criminal justice and the VCFSE sector, while maintaining a clear focus on system change rather than creating parallel delivery structures.

Accountabilities

- Lead the overall coordination and delivery of the Changing Futures programme across the West Midlands
- Provide strategic leadership on system change, supporting partners to improve coordination and outcomes across services
- Oversee development and delivery of the programme's delivery plan, ensuring alignment with MHCLG expectations
- Establish and maintain programme governance, reporting and assurance arrangements
- Lead and manage the WMCA programme team (including Lived Experience Lead, Data & Information Governance Lead and Systems Change Lead)
- Ensure a strong focus on lived experience, co-production and learning across all aspects of the programme
- Strengthen partnership working across local authorities and wider system partners
- Ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and participation in the national programme
- Identify, assess and manage programme risks and dependencies
- Act as a senior representative for WMCA, influencing regional and national partners

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Lead strategic coordination and mobilisation of the Changing Futures Programme, ensuring alignment with WMCA priorities and national guidance.
- Establish and manage programme governance, reporting and assurance arrangements across OPSI and partner structures.
- Oversee the management of the annual MHCLG grant across the Combined Authority and local authority partners, ensuring transparent financial oversight, compliance with funding conditions, and effective deployment of resources to achieve programme objectives.
- Lead strategic relationships with senior leaders across local authorities, ICSs/ICBs, NHS providers, police and criminal justice agencies, MHCLG, VCSE organisations and central government, ensuring effective partnership working, system alignment and collective ownership of Changing Futures outcomes.
- Oversee delivery of the Changing Futures programme, ensuring insight, evidence and lived experience inform system change activity and drive improvements in outcomes for people experiencing severe multiple disadvantage.
- Provide strategic advice, briefings and updates to WMCA senior leadership, governance boards and the Mayor's Office.
- Identify, assess and manage programme risks, ensuring effective mitigation and escalation.
- Embed a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the partnership, ensuring insights, evidence and lived experience inform programme delivery, system change and future decision-making.
- Align delivery with wider WMCA programmes including Public Service Innovation, Place Based Budgets Pilot, West Midlands Works and Prevention Accelerator.

People

- Build and maintain strong, trusted relationships with local authorities (Birmingham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton) ICSs/ICBs, NHS providers, police and criminal justice agencies, MHCLG, VCSE organisations and central government
- Operate as a collaborative system leader, supporting shared ownership and joint working across organisational boundaries
- Lead engagement with partners across health, housing, criminal justice and the VCFSE sector
- Provide leadership and coordination across programme partners, enabling effective joint working, problem-solving and decision-making.
- Provide strategic leadership for lived experience and co-production, fostering a culture of trust, inclusion and psychological safety that enables people with lived experience to meaningfully shape priorities, services and system reform.
- Model and promote trauma-informed, strengths-based and inclusive leadership practices, creating the conditions for effective collaboration, trust and innovation across the partnership.
- Lead, line manage and develop a multidisciplinary team, creating a culture of collaboration, learning and continuous improvement.
- Act as a senior ambassador for WMCA, representing the organisation in regional and national forums and influencing partners to support programme objectives.
- Navigate and resolve tensions between organisational priorities, funding constraints and statutory responsibilities to enable practical implementation of place-based approaches.

Operational

- Oversee development and delivery of the Changing Futures delivery plan, working with local partners to co-produce implementation arrangements and achieve agreed outcomes.
- Coordinate programme mobilisation, including governance, partner alignment and delivery readiness.
- Establish robust programme management arrangements, including reporting, milestones, risk management and performance oversight.
- Ensure effective implementation of continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning processes.
- Support development of local delivery models, ensuring alignment with programme principles and the needs of people experiencing severe multiple disadvantage.
- Lead system mapping and identification of barriers to effective delivery, supporting partners to develop solutions and drive improvement.
- Ensure programme learning is captured, synthesised and disseminated across the region, including to local authorities not directly involved in the programme.

Financial

- Support financial planning and oversight of the Changing Futures programme, ensuring effective use of resources and alignment with funding conditions.
- Monitor programme spend and delivery against budgets, ensuring value for money and compliance with WMCA and central government requirements.
- Work with partners to identify and develop opportunities for budget alignment and, where feasible, pooled budget across local services to embed new ways of working beyond the lifetime of the programme.
- Support the development of financial models and investment cases that demonstrate the value of integrated, place-based approaches.
- Identify financial risks and constraints, including those related to funding rules, accountability and statutory responsibilities, and work with partners and central government to mitigate these.
- Articulate the economic and social value of prevention and early intervention, supporting the development of invest to save cases.
- Ensure Value for Money and follow the appropriate governance processes for dealing with any financial activities.

Other

- Contribute to organisational and programme learning, capturing and disseminating insights on system change, multiple disadvantage delivery models, funding alignment and scalability.
- Support WMCA's contribution to national Changing Futures learning, including engagement with MHCLG, Cabinet Office and cross-government partners.
- Represent WMCA in regional and national forums related to public service reform and multiple disadvantage, ensuring a strong and consistent narrative.
- Contribute to wider WMCA Public Service Innovation, health and homelessness priorities, ensuring alignment and integration across programmes.
- Represent the WMCA in a professional manner.
- Undertake such tasks as may reasonably be expected commensurate with the scope and level of the role.

Person Specification					
Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	Essential / Desirable		How Evidenced?		
Experience	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Proven experience leading complex, multi-stakeholder programmes in public sector environments	X		X	X	
Experience of programme mobilisation, governance and delivery planning	X		X	X	
Experience working with senior stakeholders across local government, NHS or central government	X		X	X	
Experience in public service reform, system change or integrated delivery programmes	X		X	X	
Experience of evaluation, learning and evidence-based programme design	X		X	X	
Experience working with or within local government, police, criminal justice, health or combined authorities	X		X	X	
Experience of funding alignment, commissioning or pooled budgets		X	X	X	
Experience working in emerging or ambiguous policy areas, with the ability to shape direction where precedent is limited		X	X	X	
Skills / Knowledge	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Strong programme management and strategic planning skills	X		X	X	
Excellent stakeholder engagement and influencing skills	X		X	X	
Ability to operate in complex, politically sensitive environments	X		X	X	
Strong analytical and problem-solving capability	X		X	X	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	X		X	X	
Understanding of public service systems, governance and funding structures	X		X	X	
Qualification / Education / Training	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Degree or equivalent experience in public policy, public health, programme management or related field, or equivalent experience.	X		X		
Post-Graduate Degree or equivalent experience in public policy, public health, programme management or related field, or equivalent experience.		X	X		

*Key: A = Application, I = Interview, T = Testing/Assessment

Core Expectations	
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health, safety, and wellbeing of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or

	omissions at work; and co-operate with their employer so far as is necessary to enable it to successfully discharge its own responsibilities in relation to health, safety, and wellbeing.
Equality & Diversity	Promote and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of the role.
Learning & Development	Participate in and take responsibility of any learning and development required to carry out this role effectively.
Performance Management	Actively engage in the performance management process and take responsibility for managing performance outcomes.
GDPR	Ensure the reasonable and proportionate protection, processing, sharing, and storing of WMCA information in accordance with the relevant legislation, corporate policies, and in the best interests of the data subjects (Data Protection/GDPR), the WMCA, our partners, and the West Midlands, in all aspects of the role.
Adherence to Policies	Be aware of and comply with all organisation policies.
Matrix Working	Work in a matrix way when required by actively collaborating across traditional boundaries—such as directorates, functions, or geographic areas—to achieve shared goals. Depending on your role, you may contribute to multiple projects or workstreams, often working alongside different teams and leaders.
Business Continuity	All staff should actively participate in business continuity training and exercises when required, ensuring they understand and follow business continuity plans and procedures to maintain organisational resilience during disruptions.
Other	There may be a requirement to work outside normal office hours on occasion, including a requirement to work within stakeholder and partner offices within the WMCA constituent area on a regular basis.

Values

Collaborative	We work as one organisation, building trust, connection and shared purpose across teams and partners to create the biggest impact for our region.
Inclusive	Every voice matters – we create belonging, fairness and psychological safety so everyone can thrive.
Innovative	We think future and act smarter – embracing curiosity, creativity and continuous improvement to shape the future.
Driven	Focused on impact – leading with clarity, care and courage to deliver meaningful results for the West Midlands.

Our culture is built on collective leadership, where everyone plays a part in shaping how we work and succeed together. Guided by our values, we create an environment where people feel valued, supported and able to contribute their best. Through behaviours grounded in clarity, care and courage, as set out in our Leadership Statement we are making the West Midlands Combined Authority the best place to work and belong.

Additional Post Requirements

Politically Restricted Post		Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)				Vetting	
Yes ☐	No ☒	Basic ☐	Standard ☐	Enhanced ☐	None ☐	Yes ☐	No ☒

Job Evaluation Details

Date Evaluation Agreed	JEP Reference	Grade	Job Family
	JEP850	SP46-SP50	
Position Reference			