



Job Description	
Job Title:	Senior Research Officer
Directorate/Team:	Strategy Unit
Location:	16 Summer Lane Birmingham B19 3SD
Responsible to:	Head of Research, Intelligence, and Inclusive Growth
Responsible for:	Research Officers, Interns
Key working relationships: (internal)	Strategy Unit Research and Intelligence Community of Practice Policy Leads
Key working relationships: (external)	West Midlands Intelligence Network West Midlands Universities University Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) Mayoral Strategic Authority Senior Researcher Forum UK Research and Innovation Economic and Social Research Council Midlands Compact

Purpose of the Post
The Senior Research Officer leads the development of the West Midlands research ecosystem, connecting policy, research, intelligence and evaluation to support evidence-informed decision making. The postholder coordinates strategic research priorities, develops partnerships across universities, local authorities and national bodies, builds organisational research capability, and delivers high-quality research, intelligence and evidence products which support the strategic regional priorities in the West Midlands Growth Plan and wider objectives to achieve inclusive growth for everyone.

Accountabilities
- Research ecosystem leadership - Areas of research interest (ARI) leadership - Research governance and ethics - Research capability building - Oversee a portfolio of insight projects - Attracting funding into the region to support research priorities

Responsibilities
Strategic
Lead development of the West Midlands research ecosystem, strengthening collaboration between WMCA, local authorities, universities, government departments, and research funders.

Commented [PN1]: Should we add something on attracting research funding into the region and toward WMCA priorities here?

Re: the SU, do we also need to add new responsibilities here around research and insight coordination across the WMCA to align task with expertise and provide timely insight to policy and delivery teams at key points through the policy life cycle?

Do you want this role to cover OPSI support, or do John and Akshita now have this covered? If you do want it to be retained by this role, that also covers oversight of a portfolio of research and impact evaluation projects.

Commented [SL2R1]: Thank you-added

- Oversee a portfolio of insight projects
- Attracting funding into the region to support research priorities

- Lead the development, refresh and delivery of the West Midlands Areas of Research Interest (ARI) programme, working with internal and external stakeholders to identify, prioritise and mobilise research around regional challenges. - Manage relationships with academic, research and policy networks including UPEN, ESRC, ADR UK, university partners and other Mayoral Strategic Authorities. - Develop and maintain collaboration agreements and partnership frameworks that increase the region's ability to secure and utilise research funding. - Lead knowledge exchange and evidence mobilisation activities, ensuring research findings influence policy, strategy and decision making. - Support the translation of research into policy and practice through action-learning approaches, policy engagement and evidence-informed decision-making. - Supporting policy and preparedness work for future devolution.
People
- Develop organisational research capability through training, communities of practice, mentoring and professional development. - Coordinate and support the Research Champions network. - Support the development of research, intelligence and evaluation skills across WMCA and partner organisations. - Provide line management, coaching and development support for research staff, apprentices and interns.
Operational
- Lead and oversee the development, coordination and dissemination of insights (research, intelligence, and evaluation) projects and outputs including the West Midlands Insights on Society and Economy newsletter, briefing papers, strategic evidence reviews and commissioned research. - Lead research governance processes including research ethics, data governance and quality assurance. - Ensure research activity complies with legal, ethical and information governance requirements. - Provide advice on appropriate use of research evidence and data. - Contribute to organisational design, operating models and governance arrangements relating to research, intelligence and evaluation.
Financial
- Develop and manage research commissioning, collaboration and co-funding mechanisms with academic and external partners. - Identify, develop and support external funding opportunities and collaborative bids. - Develop and support collaborative bids with universities and partners. - Advise on research investment priorities and pilot funding opportunities.
Other
Represent WMCA in regional and national research, intelligence and evidence networks and deputise for the Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth where appropriate.

Commented [PN3]: It would be good to transfer leadership of this to the new apprentice. With a little support, there's not too much that needs to be done other than contributing to horizon scanning, editing, and adding to the website/sending the email.

It can stay in this JD for now, but with less pressure on providing 'analysis', this is product is less complicated now than originally envisaged.

Commented [SL4R3]: Agreed; reworded to "lead and oversee" so that the directly responsible individual is still the senior research officer, but that this might be delegated.

Commented [PN5]: There's an extra bullet here. This could say "contribute to the State of the Region report".

Commented [SL6R5]: Added to bullet point #1 to "insights (research, intelligence, and evaluation) projects and outputs"

Person Specification					
Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	Essential / Desirable		How Evidenced?		
Experience	E	D	A*	I*	T*

Working with universities and research institutes.	X		X	X	
Strategic thinking and planning	X		X	X	
Research planning and prioritisation.	X		X	X	
Assessing research proposals.	X		X	X	
Liaison with ethics committees.	X		X	X	
Building and maintaining strategic partnerships.	X		X	X	
Developing Areas of Research Interest or research priority programmes.		X	X	X	
Managing research governance and ethics processes.		X	X	X	
Securing or supporting funded research programmes.	X		X	X	
Leading communities of practice, networks or capability-building initiatives.	X		X	X	
Working across research, policy, intelligence and evaluation functions.		X	X	X	
Providing line management and staff development.		X	X	X	
Skills / Knowledge	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Knowledge of research methods, techniques & application of these in more complex projects	X		X	X	
Thorough knowledge of research methodologies, methods, and the latest techniques, including main quantitative, qualitative and evaluation methods	X		X	X	
Understanding of the pros and cons of different research methods so can advise, critique and make independent direct use of such methods	X		X	X	
Up-to-date knowledge of methodological developments including the role of innovative methodologies; applies these methods when and where appropriate; makes use of appropriate new developments from other analytical professions	X		X	X	
Translating a policy question into a viable researchable questions and well-designed research specifications	X		X	X	
Ability to identify gaps in the evidence base and to make sound recommendations for how this can be managed	X		X	X	
Ability to identify salient points and trends from research or other information and draws out sound, logical inferences, for example, picks out key messages from dense data sets	X		X	X	
Ability to build relationships with, influence and manage senior stakeholders across a complex matrix organisation and partner networks.	X		X	X	
Understanding of the legal and ethical compliance needs of research projects, and knows when to seek further support on legal or ethical issues	X		X	X	
Qualification / Education / Training	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Minimum Level 6 qualification (that is, foundation degree-level or equivalent) or equivalent experience	X		X	X	
Evidence of ongoing professional development and a commitment to undertake further training and development.	X		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.

Commented [PN7]: This might have to be desirable. I'm not sure how many you would get that meet this.

Commented [SL8R7]: Agreed - thanks

Commented [PN9]: I think this would need to be desirable. I don't think many (even in academia) would have experience managing research governance and ethics processes.

Commented [SL10R9]: Also agreed - thanks

Commented [PN11]: I would keep this desirable so as not to rule out academics without policy or evaluation experience.

Commented [SL12R11]: And this!

Commented [PN13]: This could be desirable if there are no line management responsibilities for the year? You may want to bring on a social science research apprentice, in which case, keep it in.

Commented [SL14R13]: And this! The training/etc. will depend on need.

Commented [PN15]: Should we add influencing skills? I think these are pretty important? Could add something on influencing key colleagues, senior, and regional stakeholders. Or put something in about stakeholder management.

Re: the SU, should we also add 'strategic thinking and planning'?

Commented [SL16R15]: Thanks for this added "Ability to build relationships with, influence and manage senior stakeholders across a complex matrix organisation and partner networks."

Commented [SL17R15]: Added "Strategic thinking and planning" to Experience

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.
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

Our culture is underpinned by what we do and how we do it. Our behaviours outline the ways we need to work to deliver success, become truly inclusive, and make the organisation somewhere where everyone can give their best contribution.		
Value	Competency	Behaviour
Collaborative	Team Focussed	Works as part of team, managing and leading.
	Service Driven	Customer, resident, and partner focussed.
Driven	Empowered & Accountable	Takes ownership and leads when needed.
	Performance Focused	Ambitious and going the extra mile.
Inclusive	‘One Organisation’ Mindset	Believe in each other’s expertise.
	Open & Honest	We do what we say we are going to do.
Innovative	Forward Thinking	Embrace change and open to new possibilities.
	Problem Solving	Go for clear and simple whenever possible.

Additional Post Requirements

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

Job Evaluation Details

Date Evaluation Agreed	JEP Reference	Grade	Job Family
09/02/2023	405	30-34	