



Job Description

Job Title:	Strategic Lead – Place-Based Budgets (12-month FTC)
Directorate/Team:	Employment, Skills, Health and Communities
Location:	16 Summer Lane
Responsible to:	Head of Health and Communities
Responsible for:	0
Key working relationships: (internal)	WMCA statutory officers, all WMCA Directorates, Health & Communities team, OPSI programme team.
Key working relationships: (external)	Local Authorities (including DCS and DPH networks), ICS/ICBs, NHS Mental Health Trusts, DWP, VCSE sector, MHCLG, Cabinet Office and other government departments.

Purpose of the Post

The Strategic Lead for Place-Based Budgets will lead the mobilisation, coordination and delivery of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Place-Based Budgets (PBB) pilot focused on adolescents with mental health needs who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) across the Black Country.

The role will provide strategic leadership across programme design, governance, stakeholder engagement and delivery, ensuring alignment with national MHCLG guidance, the Office of Public Service Innovation (OPSI) agenda, and WMCA's health and inclusive growth priorities.

Operating in a highly matrixed environment, the postholder will coordinate partners across local government, NHS, DWP and the VCSE sector to test new approaches to aligning and pooling budgets, redesigning services around a defined cohort, and delivering integrated, preventative public services that improve outcomes for young people while demonstrating a scalable model for public service reform across the West Midlands and nationally.

Accountabilities

- Lead strategic coordination and mobilisation of the Place-Based Budgets pilot, ensuring alignment with WMCA priorities and national guidance.
- Establish and manage programme governance, reporting and assurance arrangements across OPSI and partner structures.
- Oversee commissioned activity including needs assessment and youth engagement, ensuring outputs inform delivery.
- Lead senior stakeholder engagement across local authorities, ICS/ICBs, NHS providers, DWP, VCSE and central government.
- Support development and implementation of pooled and aligned budget approaches across partner organisations.
- 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.
- Ensure robust evaluation and learning, contributing to local and national Place-Based Budgets evidence base.
- Align delivery with wider WMCA programmes including Public Service Innovation, West Midlands Works and Prevention Accelerator.
- Drive system-level change across partners, influencing strategic decision-making to enable alignment of funding, priorities and delivery models.

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Translate national Place-Based Budgets policy and MHCLG guidance into a coherent and deliverable regional approach, ensuring alignment with WMCA priorities, the Office of Public Service Innovation (OPSI) agenda, and Health Creation principles.
- Lead the development of integrated, place-based service models that align mental health, employment, skills and local authority services around the defined cohort, ensuring a focus on prevention, early intervention and improved system outcomes.
- Provide strategic leadership on system reform, identifying opportunities to redesign pathways, reduce fragmentation and improve coordination across organisational boundaries.
- Shape the long-term direction of the Place-Based Budgets programme, including contributing to WMCA's wider ambitions on integrated settlement, devolution, and public service reform.
- Ensure alignment with regional and national policy agendas, including economic inactivity, mental health, and wider determinants of health, positioning WMCA as a leading testbed for integrated public service delivery.
- Ensure all programme design and delivery is explicitly focused on improving outcomes for adolescents with mental health needs who are NEET, including addressing inequalities within this cohort.
- Work flexibly and with integrity to meet the needs of the WMCA and the Employment, Skills, Health and Communities function.

People

- Build and maintain strong, credible relationships with senior stakeholders across local authorities, Integrated Care Systems (ICS/ICBs), NHS providers, DWP, VCSE organisations and central government.
- Operate effectively in a highly matrixed environment, facilitating collaboration across organisational and sector boundaries to enable shared ownership and delivery of the programme.
- Provide leadership and coordination across programme partners, enabling effective joint working, problem-solving and decision-making.
- Support inclusive engagement approaches, ensuring that the voices of young people, communities and underrepresented groups are reflected in programme design and delivery.
- Act as a senior ambassador for WMCA, representing the organisation professionally 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

- Establish and maintain robust programme management arrangements, including delivery plans, milestones, reporting frameworks and governance structures.
- Oversee delivery of the feasibility and baseline phase, including management of commissioned providers delivering needs assessment and youth engagement activity, ensuring outputs are high quality and directly inform implementation.
- Coordinate pilot mobilisation and implementation across Black Country local authorities, ensuring consistency of approach while enabling local flexibility.
- Lead system mapping activity, including mapping of services, pathways and funding flows, identifying duplication, gaps and opportunities for integration.
- Identify, assess and manage programme risks and issues, ensuring appropriate mitigation strategies are in place and escalated where necessary.
- Ensure readiness for pilot implementation, including governance, partner alignment, delivery models and operational planning.
- Monitor progress against agreed outcomes and milestones, ensuring delivery remains on track and aligned to programme objectives.

Financial

- Support financial planning and oversight of the Place-Based Budgets 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 arrangements across health, employment, skills and local authority services.
- 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, delivery models, funding alignment and scalability.
- Support WMCA's contribution to national Place-Based Budgets learning, including engagement with MHCLG, Cabinet Office and cross-government partners.
- Represent WMCA in regional and national forums related to public service reform, mental health and economic inactivity, ensuring a strong and consistent narrative.
- Contribute to wider WMCA Health and Public Service Innovation 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?		
	E	D	A*	I*	T*
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, NHS 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 <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Standard <input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Job Evaluation Details

Date Evaluation Agreed	JEP Reference	Grade	Job Family
8/5/2026	JEP821	SP46-SP50	
Position Reference			