

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru

Welsh Local Government Association



CLILC • WLGA

Peer and Senior Programme Support Officer

Recruitment Information Pack



Closing Date: 10th May 2021 (9:00am)

Interview Date: To be confirmed Week Commencing
17th May & 24th May 2021

Peer and Senior Programme Support Officer

Salary: Grade 3* SCP 25 – 29 (£29,577 - £32,910)
Term: 12 months (scope for 3 year or permanent contract subject to confirmation of extended funding)
Reports to: Head of the Improvement Programme
Based: One Canal Parade, Cardiff & Homeworking

Politically Restricted: No

Welsh Language essential: No. The ability to speak and write fluently is desirable for this role.

About the Role

The WLGA improvement team is being funded through a Welsh Government grant for 2021-22. The Welsh Government has given indicative commitment to a three year programme of improvement grant funding to the WLGA from 2021-24, however, the grant is awarded on annual basis subject to submission and approval of an annual business plan. This post is therefore advertised on a fixed term basis, however, it may be extended or made permanent should Welsh Government commit to longer-term grant funding or should core improvement funding be provided to the WLGA through an RSG top-slice agreed via member authorities.

We are recruiting several exciting new roles to our expanding improvement team within the Welsh Local Government Association. This new role will support the new Improvement Programme Manager, two new Improvement Officers and two existing Policy and Improvement Officers. The new team will develop and coordinate an ambitious new programme of sector-led support to local government. You will be proactive and responsive and provide professional support to the team and to senior member and officers from local authorities who will be a key part of the WLGA's peer challenge and support offer to authorities.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordinating and maintaining the WLGA's peer recruitment processes, liaising closely with the LGA, and maintaining up-to-date records of peers, ensuring GDPR compliance.
- Liaising regularly with senior local authority members and officers to help identify and deploy available peers, in often sensitive circumstances, and providing necessary administrative support, including collation and preparation of briefing materials, information and resources and arrangement of travel, accommodation, payment of expenses.
- Ensuring regular and effective liaison with the LGA and LGA Political Group Offices around peer management.
- Undertaking research to support the work of the improvement team, including analysis and summaries of audit and inspection reports and policy documents or research from partner organisations.
- Organising improvement team events, meetings and networks including cabinet members' meetings, officer networks, and managing and conferences/seminars.

- Maintenance of the improvement team's webpages and development of promotional social media content.
- Produce materials to support meetings and events including high-quality PowerPoint presentations and documents.
- Assist the team's budget management, including managing and inputting purchase orders and invoices onto centralised database and keep a record of income and expenditure.
- Accurate and confidential note-taking in a range of meetings, including with senior local government members, officers, WLGA officials and Welsh Ministers.
- Supporting the Improvement Programme manager in producing quarterly reports and financial returns to the Welsh Government.
- Providing other support to the team and wider WLGA and undertake any other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the post.
- Providing quarterly budget reports to principal budget holders including budget profile updates.

Person Specification

Essential

Knowledge & Experience

- Understanding or experience of working with officers, elected members or board members within a public service environment.
- Experience of undertaking research from a range of sources and of producing clear, comprehensive summaries.
- Experience of organising meetings and events.
- Experience of note-taking in meetings.
- Previous administrative experience and knowledge of office systems and procedures, ideally gained in a member services or project based environment.
- Experience or a good understanding of local government or public services.
- Experience of working within a team environment.

Skills & Abilities

- Political sensitivity and the ability to exercise appropriate discretion and judgement when dealing with elected members and senior officers.
- Ability to work on one's own initiative as well as part of a team and ability to manage a range of concurrent projects, programmes or priorities.
- Excellent oral and written skills, with the ability to accurately summarise and convey complex information.
- Good interpersonal skills, with the ability to deal with members, other clients and colleagues with courtesy, tact and sensitivity.
- Excellent organisational skills, with the ability to prioritise work to meet deadlines, and a concern for order and accuracy.
- Excellent IT skills, including experience and understanding of Microsoft Office 365.
- Flexible approach to work, with a keenness to adapt to meet changing work requirements.

Attitude and Motivation

- Understanding of and a commitment to diversity, equalities and local democracy.

- Commitment to personal and professional development.

Other

- Willingness and ability to travel across Wales and other parts of the UK as necessary.
- Prepared and willingness to work weekends and evenings if required.

Desirable

Skills and Aptitude

- Welsh language verbal and written skills.
- Full UK driving licence.

Attitude and Motivation

- Willingness to learn Welsh.
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WLGA Improvement Programme

The Welsh Government has agreed to provide the WLGA with an annual grant of £800,000 to support sector-led improvement. The Welsh Government has a clear expectation that the 2021-22 grant will be used to support councils in the implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. In addition, the Welsh Government provides WLGA with separately managed annual grants of £200,000 to support councils' decarbonisation activities and £500,000 to support digital leadership and transformation through the Chief Digital Officer and Delivery Unit.

The WLGA's approach to sector-led improvement has been endorsed by leaders and chief executives. Sector-led support is predicated on the concept of mutual aid, with political and professional colleagues within the sector providing capacity, support and constructive challenge to address improvement challenges or to support innovation and transformation. The benefits of peer challenge and support are twofold: an authority benefits from receiving expert and experienced peer perspectives in tackling a specific issue or undertaking an assessment/challenge process; and the participating peers are experience other organisations' approaches, cultures and solutions and brings back new organisational, personal or professional insights and learning.

The Welsh Government has a clear expectation that the 2021-22 grant will be used to support councils in the implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The improvement programme during 2021-22 will focus on corporate governance and capability, though there are ongoing discussions with Welsh Government departments about service specific support, for example in education and social services.

The improvement grant provides directly delivered support through the WLGA and Data Cymru and commissioned support through external deliverers or partners around four core themes, a universal offer available to all councils – focused on building strong corporate capacity and capability with councils under four interdependent priorities:

- COVID19 Pandemic Recovery;
- Local Democracy and Member Development;
- Corporate Governance and Performance; and
- Corporate Capability.

The WLGA also provides proactive and reactive support for those councils who need more intensive and dedicated support to help them improve aspects of their business.

The WLGA's improvement activities will be delivered through services provided by Data Cymru and an expanded improvement team of 6 members of staff, reporting to the Head of Policy (Improvement and Governance), including two existing Policy and Improvement Officer roles and four new posts of: Improvement Programme Manager; two Improvement Officers; and a Peer Coordination and Senior Support Officer.

About the WLGA

The Welsh Local Government Association represents the interests of local government and promotes local democracy in Wales.

Our aim is to **promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government** and the interests of local authorities in Wales.

We are a politically led, cross party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. The WLGA is a membership organisation that represents all 22 local authorities in Wales, the 3 fire and rescue authorities and the 3 national park authorities as associate members.

We believe that services are best provided within a democratic framework of local accountability and that the people who use public services should have as much of a say in the way they are organised, managed and funded as possible. Local government is seen as being the tier of government closest to service users and best able to respond to their needs. We support the role of the Welsh Government in setting the strategy for public services nationally but believe that it is down to local government to interpret strategy to deliver services based on local circumstances and local priorities.

Much of our work is focused on the Senedd (formerly the National Assembly for Wales), the Welsh Government and other national stakeholders and partners. We also liaise with the Wales Office and UK Government and work closely with the LGA in London in seeking to influence non-devolved policies and legislation and, in particular, the recovery from COVID 19 and responding to developments around Brexit.

Our work involves engagement with Ministers, Members of the Senedd, and other national and governmental organisations. We promote the important role of local government to Members of the Senedd and seek to enhance and protect councils' reputation and secure positive change to legislation. The WLGA's lobbying work is therefore extensive.

Our Values

In working towards its primary purposes, we seek to be:

- **Ambitious** in our expectations and in our vision for local democracy and local services;
- **Accountable** to our members and member authorities;
- **Proactive** in our defence and promotion of local democracy, our policy development and our engagement with members;
- **Receptive** through listening to and considering the range of views of our membership, partners and stakeholders;
- **Responsive** through our services and support to our members and member authorities;
- **Collaborative** in our approach to governance and partnership working with Welsh Government and other stakeholders.

We also work towards upholding and promoting equality, diversity and human rights; including promoting diversity in democracy and supporting councillors in their role as democratically elected local representatives.

We are committed to equality and fairness and although we are not a statutory body, we operate in the spirit of legislation such as the Equalities Act, Freedom of Information Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Our Aims and Priorities

Our priorities are underpinned by our core aims to secure:

- **Reform, continuous improvement and a commitment to partnership** - we believe in local government reform and seeking continuous improvement as a process for delivering better outcomes and services for the people of Wales, and in ensuring that resources are used as effectively and as efficiently as possible;
- **Fair and flexible funding** – councils need greater fiscal autonomy and flexibility to respond to local needs and priorities. Specific grants should be transferred into the settlement, after an agreed period of time, and the Welsh Government should fully cost and fund any new national initiatives and/or legislation and should commit to multiyear financial settlements, so councils can plan more effectively;
- **Commitment to the principle of Subsidiarity** – the Welsh Government and the Senedd should commit to the European Charter of Local Self Government and the principle of subsidiarity, where the presumption is that power is transferred to the level of government closest to the people. The Welsh Government has a clear national strategic role, but councils want to see momentum behind the devolution of powers beyond Cardiff Bay to local government and to local communities.

We will also:

- **Promote the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders**, emphasising their equal democratic mandate with national politicians.
 - **Ensure maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance** where councils and regions have flexibility in determining regional priorities, services and governance arrangements.
 - **Promote sector-led improvement**, with an emphasis around digital and innovation, supporting authorities in sharing best practice, developing workforce skills and developing a new corporate peer review programme.
 - **Encourage a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity** and enhanced democratic engagement and supporting councillors' development and training.
 - **Support authorities to effectively manage their workforce** through our role as the Employers' Organisation.
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Benefits: Working at the WLGA

The WLGA is an exciting place to work.

The WLGA is in the process of reviewing its office accommodation, with a view to retaining a Cardiff-based office with increased homeworking from September 2021.

We seek to offer staff a friendly, supportive and flexible working environment and staff are entitled to a range of benefits including:

- Incremental pay rises and contributory local government pension scheme
- 26 days annual leave, rising to 29 after 3 years then rising to 32 after 5 years of service, plus 8 days bank holiday
- Agile working policy which encompasses Flexitime, flexible working including options to work from home.
- Cycle to work scheme, travel loan facilities and free staff car park
- A range of supportive policies, including career breaks, job share, leave purchase scheme and other leave arrangements.
- Generous maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave
- Centrally located office in the heart of one of the UK's most vibrant cities

Terms of Employment

Association employees are employed on the conditions of service of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, amended by local agreements. The principal provisions are outlined below:

Salary:

Salary is payable calendar monthly by bank credit on or about the 15th of each month.

Hours of Work:

The working week is 36 hours. Office opening hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday although the demands of the post may necessitate a variable working pattern.

Flexible Working Time:

The Association offers a flexi time policy to all grades up to Head of Policy Level.

Travel and Subsistence:

It is a condition of appointment that staff will be prepared to work on occasion anywhere within Wales, the rest of the United Kingdom or Europe. Travelling and subsistence expenses will be payable, in accordance with the Association's scheme, when staff work away from their fixed centre.

Annual Leave:

The annual leave entitlement for a full year (the leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March in the following year) will initially be 26 days, in addition to statutory holidays. Existing local government employers may attract additional leave based on continuous local government service.

Pension:

The successful candidate will automatically be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme. This is a contributory scheme which has defined benefits for employees.

<https://mpfmembers.org.uk/content/members-currently-contributing-lgps>

Period of Notice:

The period of notice which staff are required to give is one calendar month, commencing on any day in the month. Staff will also be entitled to receive one calendar months' notice, or the current statutory notice period, whichever is greater.

Terms of Secondment (if applicable)

The successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer which, will continue to pay their salary and the Association will reimburse the salary to the employer. In addition, their terms and conditions of employment will remain unchanged. The Association will reimburse business travel and expenses incurred on secondment. Interested applicants will need to be aware of their organisation's secondment policy and obtain prior approval of their employer.

WLGA Politically Restricted Posts:

The WLGA will not appoint as an employee or worker in any capacity, any Councillor who is currently a Member (including co-opted member) of a local Authority or any other member body of the WLGA e.g. National Park Authority or who had been a Member in the previous 12 months (s.116 Local Government Act (LGA) 1972).

The following posts are considered to be politically restricted (in line with those local authority roles as specified in Section 2(1) of the 1989 Act¹:

- All members of Senior Management Team
- All officers paid above Spinal Point 30
- Other officers giving advice to local authorities on a regular basis
- Any officers with a role which involves speaking on behalf of the WLGA to the media.

The Association is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

¹ Part I of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) (Wales) Regulations 2008

Apply Now!

For an initial discussion about the role and the organisation, please contact Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy (Improvement & Governance) on 07900 240939.

To apply, please send a covering letter with a completed application form by the closing date of 10th May 2021 (9:00am) to:

HR Manager
Welsh Local Government Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
Cardiff, CF10 4LG
e-mail recruitment@wlga.gov.uk

Upload directly to our Recruitment Centre – [Click Here](#)

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview via Microsoft Teams during weeks commencing 17th & 24th May 2021 with date to be confirmed.

Shortlisted applicants may be requested to undertake a task before attending for interview, as well as pre-interview tasks on the day, followed by an interview with a selection panel.