

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru

Welsh Local Government Association



CLILC • WLGA

Head of the Improvement Programme

Recruitment Information Pack



Closing Date: 24th May 2021 (12:00noon)

Interview Date: To be confirmed

Head of the Improvement Programme

Salary: Grade 7 – SCP 50-52 (£51,603- £59,358)
Term: 3 Years (scope for permanent contract subject to confirmation of extended funding)
Secondment welcome (agreement with employer in advance of application)
Reports to: Head of Policy (Improvement & Governance)
Based: One Canal Parade, Cardiff & Homeworking

Politically Restricted: Yes

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.

This is an exciting new role within the Welsh Local Government Association, working with the Head of Policy (Improvement and Governance), to develop and lead an ambitious new programme of sector-led support to local government. You will be adaptive, flexible, innovative and responsive and sensitive to the challenges and political environment in which local authorities operate.

Working in partnership with the Chief Digital Officer for local government and Data Cymru and working closely with the LGA, the Improvement Programme Manager and team will commission and provide a range of support to local authorities to support member and leadership development, promote effective corporate governance, improvement and transformation to drive continuous improvement and make optimal use of resources.

The role will oversee and provide often sensitive support and critical friend challenge to senior members and officers in local government and will be responsible for establishing and coordinating a peer challenge and support programme (including new statutory panel assessments) to local authorities in Wales.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Oversee the commissioning and delivery of the WLGA's improvement programme, including activity and projects, covering:
 - COVID19 Pandemic Recovery;
 - Local Democracy and Member Development;
 - Corporate Governance and Performance;

- Corporate Capability; and
 - Bespoke support for those councils who require more intensive and dedicated support.
- Lead and line-manage the WLGA's improvement team (c5 staff), building a culture of flexible and collaborative teamworking to ensure that the WLGA's annual improvement business plan is developed and delivered successfully.
 - Promote and support innovation and transformation, facilitating networking, sharing of good practice and knowledge transfer.
 - Develop and maintain constructive and effective relationships with WLGA political leaders and professional networks including SOLACE, Society of Welsh Treasurers, HR Directors, Lawyers in Local Government, ADEW and ADSS and ensuring their commitment and contribution to the sector-led improvement programme.
 - Working with authorities and partners, maintain up-to-date knowledge about local government performance and ensuring proactive improvement support is available to authorities when required.
 - Establish and manage a new statutory panel assessment offer to local authorities in Wales and establish a peer programme and oversee the WLGA's peer challenge support, working with the LGA, including managing WLGA staff, elected member and officer peers and partners in delivering peer support and peer challenge.
 - Oversee the recruitment and deployment of member and officer peers, developing close working relationships with peers, providing feedback and support their development.
 - Oversee the commissioning and delivery of a range of programmes to support local authorities' successful implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
 - Oversee the WLGA's member development offer and support leadership development, working with partners including Academi Wales and SOLACE.
 - Represent the WLGA at the Welsh Government's quarterly Improvement and Support meeting (a meeting of national inspectorates, regulators and Welsh Government).
 - Develop and maintain constructive relationships with senior political and professional leaders within local government and associate member authorities.
 - Work closely with Data Cymru and the Chief Digital Officer for local government in providing a coordinated and complementary programme of improvement and transformation support to Welsh local authorities.
 - Develop and maintain constructive and effective relationships with partners including the LGA, Audit Wales, Academi Wales and the Welsh Government.
 - Manage the WLGA's improvement grant budget and maintain effective grant management relations with the Welsh Government's sponsoring Local Government Division, providing quarterly monitoring reports, financial claims and developing and submission of annual business plans.
 - Provide advice and support to the WLGA's political leadership and WLGA Management Team
 - Deputise for the Head of Policy and undertake any other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the post.

Person Specification

Essential

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or equivalent professional qualification.

Knowledge & Experience

- Understanding of the political structures and environment in which local government and the WLGA operates.
- Understanding of the key issues, priorities and pressures affecting local government in particular the governance, improvement and/or policy agenda.
- Demonstrable experience of working with senior officers, senior elected members or senior board members.
- Record of achievement in complex political environments, preferably in local government or a public service environment.
- Demonstrable experience of leading successful projects/programmes, particularly within financial management, human resources, organisational development, governance, improvement or the transformation arena.
- Understanding of the concept or experience of peer challenge and support.
- Experience of commissioning high-quality research/insight work and knowledge of and experience of commissioning evaluations.
- Proven ability to collaborate, building and maintaining effective relationships and partnerships.
- Experience of developing and leading teams and managing budgets.

Skills & Abilities

- Political sensitivity and the ability to exercise appropriate discretion and judgement when dealing with elected members and senior officers.
- Confident and resilient with excellent people skills, able to develop positive internal and external relationships.
- Credibility with senior elected members, senior officers and stakeholders.
- Excellent organisational skills and the ability to deliver under pressure, prioritising work against competing demands to meet deadlines.
- Strong influencing, negotiating and relation-building skills.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, with ability to draft reports and present complex concepts clearly and critical messages in a constructive and sensitive manner.
- Excellent financial and resource management skills.
- Analytical skills and experience of applying these skills in practice.
- Intellectually agile and innovative, capable of translating new ideas into policy and practice and ability to influence and negotiate.
- Demonstrable leadership skills and ability to manage teams of consisting of a diverse range of participants with a variety of skills/backgrounds.

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: Head of the Improvement Programme; two Improvement Officers; and a Peer and Senior Programme 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 24th May 2021 (12:00noon) to:

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

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview via Microsoft Teams 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.