

Job description

Head of Employment

- Grade: PO11
- Reports to: Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth
- Direct reports: 23
- Your team: Employment Service
- Service area: Inclusive Economy
- Directorate: Community Wealth Building

Special requirements of the post

Workstyle: Roaming (Medium presence, two to three days a week)

- Colleagues whose activities are a mix of remotely and periodic onsite work and/or meetings with third parties and businesses, going on site visits, and occasional resident engagement

This post is subject to the council's declaration of interest procedure

Our mission

Islington is a place rich with diversity and culture. As a council our sense of purpose couldn't be clearer: we serve. It's in the logo. We are committed to challenging inequality in the borough and as one of the largest employers we know that to look after the place and the planet, we have to look after our people. **Together we can change the future.**

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

Overview of the role

The Head of Employment provides strategic leadership for Islington's employment services, driving inclusive growth and improved employment outcomes for residents. The role leads the development and delivery of comprehensive employment and youth progression services, with a strong focus on reducing poverty, tackling systemic employment barriers, and supporting marginalised groups. Working closely with employers, schools, partners and council services,

the postholder ensures high-quality, accessible pathways from education into sustained employment, while securing funding, overseeing performance, and embedding innovation across the service

Key responsibilities

- Lead and deliver a comprehensive employment service, improving pre-employment support, in-work retention, and employer engagement to reduce poverty and improve employment outcomes for Islington residents, with a focus on marginalised groups.
- Develop and drive strategies to build an inclusive local economy, addressing systemic employment barriers and creating equitable opportunities for residents, particularly for young people, people with disabilities, and underrepresented communities.
- Oversee the Youth Progression Service, ensuring high-quality education, careers advice, employment, and training pathways for young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET, through collaboration with schools, FE colleges, and youth services.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships with local employers in key sectors, fostering a culture of good work, local recruitment, retention, and career progression for Islington residents.
- Lead employer engagement efforts, supporting businesses in recruiting, retaining, and advancing local talent, including inspiring young people through in-education World of Work activities, ensuring alignment with the council's community wealth-building and inclusive growth goals.
- Collaborate with council teams and external partners, integrating employment and skills development into broader strategies to tackle inequality and provide seamless support to residents from education to employment.
- Innovate and create accessible employment pathways for residents facing barriers, particularly in priority sectors like construction, healthcare, and digital, ensuring residents have opportunities for career progression.
- Lead multi-disciplinary initiatives to test new employment solutions, securing external funding and aligning with national policies and local needs to improve employment outcomes.
- Oversee service performance, ensuring key targets are met and continuously improved through data-driven insights, providing regular reports to senior leadership on progress and challenges.
- Develop and implement community-based engagement models to ensure employment services are accessible and effective for unemployed and underemployed residents, particularly in estates and marginalised areas.
- Lead communications strategies to engage employers, residents, schools, and community organisations, promoting participation in employment programs and fostering collaboration.

- Identify and secure funding for employment services, working with internal teams and external partners to sustain and expand services, ensuring long-term financial support and resource allocation.
- Any additional duties consistent with the grade and level of responsibility of this position, for which the holder possesses the required experience and/or training.

Budget responsibilities

Overall responsibility for service budgets and external funding streams, ensuring effective financial management, value for money, and income maximisation

Compliance

Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and policy requirements under GDPR, Health and Safety, Employee Code of Conduct and in your area of expertise by identifying opportunities and risks, and escalating issues as necessary.

Person specification

Your application form needs to demonstrate how you fulfil the role's requirements. It is essential to address the criteria, as this will be used to evaluate your suitability for the position.

Essential and desirable criteria

Essential: the basic requirements that must be met for someone to be considered for a particular job. These criteria are mandatory and cannot be negotiated. Essential criteria directly impact the core qualifications or skills necessary to perform the job effectively.

Desirable: the additional qualities, skills, or qualifications that would be advantageous for a candidate to possess but are not mandatory. Not meeting them does not automatically disqualify someone from consideration for the job. This also allows candidates who do not possess certain desirable criteria the opportunity to explain how their other knowledge, experience and skills relate to these and what they may be in the process of doing or willing to do to achieve these.

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable –
1	Education to degree level, Teaching/IAG qualification or equivalent experience	Essential
2	Accredited qualification in project or programme management or equivalent experience	Essential
3	Extensive senior management experience developing and implementing strategic policy in complex public-sector environments	Essential
4	Proven track record delivering complex programmes with measurable outcomes and continuous improvement	Essential
5	Senior leadership experience within local government, employment or education services	Essential
6	Experience driving service improvement, governance, assurance and risk management	Essential
7	Expertise in youth employment, NEET reduction and evidence-based “world of work” initiatives	Essential
8	Exceptional leadership skills in managing cross-functional teams and senior stakeholders	Essential
9	Excellent written and verbal communication skills	Essential
10	Strong influencing and negotiation skills with professional credibility	Essential
11	Advanced analytical and policy interpretation skills	Essential
12	In-depth knowledge of post-16 education, training and youth employment landscape	Essential

Our accreditations



Our accreditations include Disability Confident Leader, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, London Living Wage Employer, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Employer with Heart.