

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. JOB DETAILS

Job Title	:	Senior Practice and Research Lead
Reporting to	:	Head of Programme Development
Status	:	Full time, permanent
Salary / Grade	:	£35,000 – £50,000 / Senior Officer level
Location	:	New Local operates a 'work anywhere' policy but will provide office workspace in the UK for those who require it.

2. PURPOSE OF JOB

- To develop and deliver New Local projects with individual councils, the NHS, and other public and voluntary sector bodies to become more community powered.
 - To deploy exceptional facilitation, communication and writing skills to share practice and research work with a range of audiences.
 - To deploy a range of data analysis methods to transform raw quantitative and qualitative data into valuable insights to inform New Local's future practice and research that helps achieve our mission.
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3. KEY TASKS/RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead and support the delivery of New Local practice projects, in particular designing and delivering deliberative workshops and producing compelling outputs which drive impact.
 - Build and maintain excellent relationships with partners for our practice work, placing an emphasis on collaborative working and co-designing solutions.
 - Using quantitative and/or qualitative research skills to design, manage, and conduct a range of research activities deploying varied research methodologies in both primary and secondary analysis (i.e. literature and policy reviews, interviews, surveys and other background research to support high-quality analysis). Supporting colleagues across the organisation with particular elements of quantitative analysis when required.
 - Ensure effective project management of our activities so that we deliver impact within agreed budgets and timelines.
 - Support the development and growth of our practice work, including writing proposals and devising project budgets.
 - Communicate the process and findings of our work, internally and externally, and help to draw out any wider learning.
 - Work collaboratively with the network and communications teams, using your expertise to enhance the effectiveness and impact of New Local's work on community power.
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4. PERSON SPECIFICATION: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

Below we've outlined the core knowledge and skills that are involved in this role. As this is a very varied role, we recognise that candidates may have particular strengths in some areas and may require more support in others. We welcome a wide variety of applicants for this role. If you have demonstrated many of these skills but do not tick every box, we encourage you to put in an application as we will be taking a rounded view of what different candidates may be able to contribute.

Partner Engagement

- Understanding of and commitment to the principles of [community power](#) including how this relates to the work of local government, VCSE sector and wider public sector.
- Ability to lead and support our team to deliver multiple projects from start to end of the project lifecycle.
- Knowledge and capability to use different approaches and methodologies in 'consultancy' work (e.g. workshop facilitation, strategy development, options appraisal, action learning).
- Excellent analytical and writing skills with a demonstrated track record of effectively writing for diverse audiences.
- Brilliant verbal communication skills, able to present ideas and arguments in an engaging way to a variety of audiences.
- Ability to support partners to navigate through complex and challenging circumstances and advising partners on wider issues in the local government sector.
- Experience in designing and delivering evaluation programmes is desirable.

Research and Analysis

- Demonstrable experience in using research skills (qualitative and/or quantitative) to shape and inform practice and policy discussions and ensure relevancy to wider landscape.
- Intermediate level Excel analysis (e.g. pivot table analysis; producing statistics and charts; analysis of survey data).
- Knowledge and experience of using publicly available social, economic and health datasets.
- Research skills: coming up with research questions and hypothesis; synthesising literature; seeing a research project through to publication.
- Ability to spot trends in our practice and research work and transform on the ground learning into thought leadership and insight reports.
- A desire to grow and maintain a strong external research profile with confidence to represent New Local at conferences and events.

Project Management

- Excellent project planning and project management skills with strong attention to detail.
- Capability to work in a highly creative, collaborative, and autonomous way.
- Capability to deal with ambiguity and to support team members and partners to manage uncertainty and work towards clarity.
- Capability to actively contribute to the highly supportive and friendly organisational culture at New Local.

Business development

- Supporting the team's efforts to develop major bids and proposals.
- Driving growth of the business through development and management of partner relationships.

Internal work

- Contributing to internal projects, sharing knowledge and practices to the wider team.
- Working with the wider team to foster a collaborative and open culture within the team and wider organisation as well as contributing to setting wider research strategy.
- Supporting the Network and Events team to develop pioneering content for New Local's core membership.

5. NATURE AND SCOPE

New Local is a think tank and network working to transform public services and empower communities. We publish research on some of today's most pressing issues - like housing, welfare and health - informed by our network of 50 plus local authorities.

At the heart of our work is 'community power' - the belief that people should be given the means to transform the places they live and the services they use. We believe this is key to shifting towards a system focused on prevention and creating more sustainable public services, which can lead to a better society for all.

As a Senior Practice and Research Lead within the Practice and Research team, you will play a crucial delivery role supporting learning of partners in consultancy settings and driving forward New Local's research activities. Sitting within a multidisciplinary team of policy, research and practice experts and reporting to the Head of Programme Development, this postholder needs to bring strong research skills excellent writing and communication skills, and an ability to run deliberative workshops and facilitate member events to achieve our mission. This is an exciting opportunity to be involved in two core functions of our work, which are increasingly closely linked: our research builds on the insight of our partners putting community power into practice, and our practice work builds on our research ideas and helps our partners transform insight into reality on the ground and across the country.

Our work to date has tended to focus on delivering highly dynamic and deliberative workshops for partners followed by insightful reports centred on imaginative recommendations tailored closely to local and organisational circumstances. However, there is no one size fits all for our practice work – we work in a highly collaborative way tailoring our activity to different organisational circumstances. As such, we also use a variety of research methods (i.e. one-to-one interviews, desk-based research, quantitative and qualitative research methods and more) to work with partners to draw out local expertise and experience and use that to develop highly practical and focused recommendations. This role has a particular focus on quantitative analysis skills which are key to both practice and research activities.

Working independently or as part of a team, the Senior Practice and Research Lead role will be expected to lead and be involved in a range of projects at any one time, providing hands-on support to partners and support and guidance to team members. The work we do requires a mix of technical, problem-solving and relationship management skills. Our practice work is entrepreneurial and project-based by nature, meaning the day-to-day activities are often complex and varied.

Whether for practice or research activities, we pride ourselves on delivering high quality, accessible and practical reports that are rooted in activities that are already happening. We don't want to publish dense long texts that sit on the bookshelf, we aim to produce engaging materials that inspire people to make change happen. We are seeking an individual with a brilliant understanding of how to write, edit and oversee extremely high-quality analysis to that end. The postholder should be a great communicator, exercised to deliver change, and keen to deploy a range of methods.

Our current portfolio sees us work across the UK and therefore requires regular travel as a core responsibility. We expect the need to travel approx. 2-3 times per month to locations across the UK, which may involve the possibility of overnight stays and weekend work.

Diversity: New Local is committed to being an equal opportunities employer. We don't just 'value diversity', we think it is central to what makes for a high impact, successful organisation. We positively encourage everyone to apply. As such, New Local recruits, employs, trains, compensates and promotes regardless of age, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, race, national origin, marital status, parental status, religion or belief.

Leave and working hours: We operate a highly flexible policy on working hours and leave. New Local's team core working hours are 10am to 4pm but around this, staff are trusted to determine their own working hours and leave consummate with the fulfilment of their job goals to the highest level of excellence. To ensure well-being, New Local staff are expected to take a minimum of 27 days leave each year (pro rata for PT staff) and work no more than 35 hours a week. New Local employees also receive ten days leave over the Christmas and New Year period. We operate an unlimited leave policy meaning employees are free to take leave beyond their leave allocation as long as it does not interfere with their ability to do their job to the highest standards.

Location: Applications are welcome from candidates no matter where they live in the UK. We operate a 'work anywhere' policy meaning employees can choose to work at home or at any other location that enables them to do their job to the highest standards. New Local provides office space for those who wish to work in an office environment. We are currently meeting as a team in person once a month in central London and team members are expected to attend this. Travel expenses are covered for team members attending this meeting.

Flexible working: We are happy to discuss highly flexible working arrangements.

Well-being: New Local is extremely committed to staff well-being. Working long and late hours is actively discouraged and all staff at New Local are very strongly committed to creating a pleasant, friendly and supportive environment in which to work. Employees complete a weekly anonymous well-being survey to allow monitoring of general well-being in the team.

Health scheme: Employees can join the New Local health insurance and employee assistance scheme. The subscription to the scheme is paid for by New Local.

Parental leave: We take an extremely flexible approach to parental leave (including shared parental leave) to allow new parents as much time as possible to fulfil their parental role. With regards to parental pay, we offer mothers or primary carers twenty-six weeks at full pay. Secondary carers receive four weeks at full pay.

Pension: New Local will contribute 5% to the New Local group personal pension scheme. This benefit cannot be substituted for any other benefit. We operate a salary sacrifice scheme for pension contributions.

Probation and notice: This role is subject to a six-month probationary period and a three-month notice period.

This job description is not exhaustive and is liable to review following discussion with the job holder. The post-holder will be expected to undertake any other reasonable duties as requested by their line manager and commensurate with their job grade.
