

Job description and person specification

Job title: Head of Practice

Reporting to: Director of Practice and Programmes

Status: 1-year fixed term (maternity cover), full-time or 0.8 FTE considered, secondment or freelancers considered

Salary: £60,000

Location: New Local operates a 'work anywhere' policy but provides office workspace in London for those who require it. Applicants must have the right to work in the UK and be resident in the UK.

About us

New Local has a mission to transform public services and unlock community power. We publish research, lead peer learning, influence government and work with public sector organisations on some of today's most pressing issues, informed by our network of 50-plus local authority members.

All of our work is guided by a belief in community power – the principle that communities themselves have the best insight into their own circumstances and should be able to participate in shaping their places and services. We believe that active, empowered communities should be at the heart of a wider shift towards place-based public services and a system focused on prevention, which can lead to better outcomes and a more sustainable system for all.

About the job

Purpose

This role sits within our Practice and Programmes team. You will lead the development and delivery of a portfolio of **practice** work whilst also contributing to New Local's **policy** and **thought leadership** work. We are committed to strengthening the feedback loops between practice and policy locally, regionally and nationally and this role is key to this.

In our **practice** work you will solve challenges alongside councils, other public sector partners and communities, supporting them to deepen the impact of innovative place-based approaches and to understand the conditions needed for them to grow. You will be leading projects, working alongside delivery partners where needed, managing other New Local team members, to deliver high-quality work and impact for our partners.

Our **thought leadership** and **policy** approach is deeply rooted in our practice and peer-learning networks. You will draw on the pioneering work we see in places, and with our members, to support New Local's work to inform the national policy conversation about the conditions and enablers needed for places to accelerate and grow innovation in place-based, preventative and relational working.

Key tasks and responsibilities

- **Manage a portfolio of practice projects**, ensuring effective project management so that practice work is delivered within budget and to agreed timelines.
- **Lead the delivery of projects within our practice portfolio**, using a range of innovation and practice approaches including design, facilitation, strategy development, user-centred design, adaptive and collaborative learning, and approaches that enable partners to test, learn and adapt.
- **Build and maintain excellent relationships with partners and clients for our practice work**, across local government, the wider public sector and communities, placing an emphasis on collaborative working, co-design and building the relationships needed to support meaningful change.
- **Develop and grow our practice work and generate revenues** through deepening client relationships, creatively developing and responding to new partnership and business opportunities, including writing proposals and devising project budgets, aligned to our organisational purpose and vision.
- **Lead effective project management of our activities**, working with colleagues and partners to deliver high-quality work and impact within agreed budgets and timelines.
- **Work with clients and the wider New Local team to connect practice, strategy and policy**, drawing out learning from innovation and working with partners to translate this into changes in policy, strategy, systems and services, while contributing to wider thinking about the conditions needed to enable and scale change.
- **Model and promote the integration of practice and policy**, through testing and iterating New Local's integrated policy and practice model and proactively contributing to our thought leadership and policy work.
- **Model and promote collaborative working across New Local**, including with our network and communications teams, using your practice expertise and learning from projects to strengthen the wider impact of our work on community power and public service reform.

Person specification: knowledge and skills required

- A champion for community power, who understands and is committed to its principles.

- Excellent understanding of local government and the public sector and confidence to work with senior officials and councillors to improve outcomes, providing constructive challenge as required.
- Knowledge, expertise and networks in at least one area of specialism of relevance to New Local's work (this could be in relation to a specific part of the public sector, e.g. local government, NHS, or linked to a thematic specialism, e.g. organisational development, user-centred design).
- Keen interest in public service reform, public policy and influencing policy through practice.
- An entrepreneurial mindset with a track record of partnership initiation, business development including experience of developing a pipeline of work.
- Experience using a range of innovation and practice approaches, including programme and service design, facilitation, strategy development, user-centred design, adaptive and collaborative learning.
- Excellent analytical and writing skills applied in a practice improvement context.
- Excellent communications skills with the ability to put forward highly compelling and persuasive findings and recommendations which drive change in practice.
- Excellent project planning and project management skills with strong attention to detail.
- Ability to work creatively, collaboratively and with a high degree of autonomy.
- Ability to work effectively with ambiguity and lead colleagues and partners to navigate uncertainty and work towards clarity.
- Ability to actively contribute to the highly supportive and friendly organisational culture at New Local.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector is a plus.

How to apply

To apply for this role, please email recruitment@newlocal.org.uk including your:

- **CV.**
- **An answer to the following questions:**
 - Why are you interested in joining New Local, and what is it about our work on community power and public service reform that particularly motivates you? – max 200 words
 - Tell us about a change or innovation project you have led. What was the challenge, how did you lead the team, what approaches or methodologies did you use, and what difference did your work make? – max 300 words

- The government's recent publication on "Rewiring the State" sets out an ambition to change how public services and the state work. In what ways do you think New Local's practice work could contribute learning and insight on the 'how' of implementing this vision? – max 250 words
- Completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (if you wish) N.B. all equal opportunities forms will be separated from the application.

If you require any help applying for this role or taking part in the recruitment process, then do not hesitate to contact us at recruitment@newlocal.org.uk.

If you previously applied for our Head of Policy & Insights maternity cover, please note that you do not need to reapply, as we will not be progressing previous applications.

New Local will process and store your personal information (this means any information that identifies or could identify you) for the purposes of recruitment, for a period of up to six months after the closing date, after which it will be securely disposed of. For more information, please refer to our job applicant privacy notice.

Recruitment timeline

Post advertised	18 th August 2026
Deadline for applications	9 th September 2026, 9.00am
Candidates contacted for interview by	15 th September 2026
Interviews 1 st round, online, incl. task	23 rd September 2026
Interviews 2 nd round	30 th September
Start date	As soon as possible

If you are unable to attend interviews on these dates, please let us know when you apply.

Our values and the benefits of working for New Local

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. 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. To support well-being, New Local staff are expected to take a minimum of 27 days' leave each year (pro rata for PT staff). New Local employees also receive ten days leave over the Christmas and New Year period.

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 has an office in a central London location for those who wish to work in an office environment, and we are currently reviewing our hybrid arrangements. The Practice and Programmes team meet on a regular basis, at least fortnightly in central London. We currently meet as a whole organisation in person regularly in central London and team members are expected to attend this. Travel expenses are covered for team members attending this whole organisation team 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 and more detailed annual anonymous well-being survey to allow monitoring of general well-being in the team.

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

Family Friendly leave: New Local offers a range of enhanced parental and family friendly leave.

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.

Bonus, salary rises and promotions: We operate an annual bonus scheme based on financial performance. This bonus is shared equally between all team members. A cost-of-living rise is applied

to all salaries each year based on inflation. All bonuses and salary rises are awarded at the discretion of the New Local board.

Death in service benefit: A death in service benefit at three times your annual salary is provided should you die in service. All New Local employees between the ages of 16 and 69 are covered and cover ceases when a staff member reaches their 70th birthday or leaves the organisation.

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.