Northumberland County Council

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| **Post Title:** Research Officer | **Service:** Policy and Partnerships, Performance Group | **Office Use** |
| **Band:**  6 | **Workplace:** County Hall, Morpeth | JE ref: 1523 |
| **Responsible to:** Policy or Intelligence Officer  | **Date:** December 2010 | **Manager Lever:** |
| **Job Purpose:** To deliver a high-quality research and intelligence service to meet the needs of the County Council and the wider partnership, in accordance with the agreed policy framework for the county |
| **Resources** | Staff | Not applicable |
| Finance | Contribute to the efficient and effective running of the team |
| Physical | Maintain and operate key corporate policy and research systems |
| Clients | Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, council policies and procedures. |
| **Duties and key result areas:*** To undertake research and information analysis, including undertaking surveys involving the collection, input and extraction of data into and from databases and websites, and compile intelligence reports for publication
* To produce relevant and up-to-date research reports, and promote its findings through information bulletins and briefing meetings with appropriate stakeholders
* To manage information and develop an understanding of data sources
* To provide analytical support, where appropriate, to enable data and information to be used more effectively, including assisting this work through the collection, collation and cleaning of raw data as required
* To establish and maintain relevant information systems, including profiling tools, databases, analysis software (e.g. SNAP, SPSS), geographical information systems, and market testing tools
* To provide professional advice to and develop constructive working relationships with senior managers and support staff across both the Council and the partnership on undertaking research and surveys, and in collecting, collating and analysing information
* To support corporate benchmarking initiatives and provide analytical support to enable data to be used more effectively
* To manage the content and updating of the dedicated NSP and InfoNet websites as a vehicle for communicating and promoting the work of the partnership
* To undertake and respond to ad-hoc enquiries and requests for information including assistance and advice to colleagues/partners on data sources and data collection
* To inform the development ofboth the Council’s corporate and the partnership’s policy framework
* To support the implementation of both the Council’s corporate and the partnership’s performance management framework and its approach to continuous improvement
* To undertake specific professional and service related projects or delivery initiatives in accordance with given terms of reference or objectives
* To identify opportunities and provide support for funding bids, grant applications and claims relating to externally funded projects and initiatives
* To assist in the supervision and mentoring of any apprentices or trainees
* To actively promote and represent the interests of Northumberland and the County Council in relation to policy and partnership development at a local, regional and national level as appropriate
* To assist to develop policy, procedures, delivery strategies, promotion and funding initiatives to bring the service’s business plans and objectives into effect
* To undertake research, investigations, assignments and assessments as required and in accordance with service standards
* To contribute fully to the planning, delivery, monitoring and recording the outcomes of the team’s service plan
* To contribute to the maintenance of effective management and communication systems within the service in conjunction with senior colleagues
* To maintain appropriate work records to the required service standards, observing data protection, privacy and confidentiality rules and procedures
* To assist to monitor relevant budget headings to ensure effective spend against established targets and compliance with financial regulations.
* To adopt effective and constructive relationships with colleagues and external contacts in order to promote effective partnership arrangements for the delivery of high quality services.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this job description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis. |
| **Work Arrangements** |
| Physical requirements:Transport requirements:Working patterns:Working conditions: | Sedentary office work with occasional need to stand, walk and lift. Will involve travel to meeting venues, area offices or training venues throughout the County and further afield on occasion.Normal office hours but flexi-hours may apply if colleagues provide cover. Some attendance at evening meetings.Mainly indoors |

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **Post Title:**  **Policy Support Officer** | **Director/Service/Sector: Transformation Service** | Ref: 1523 |
| **Essential** | **Desirable** | **Assess by** |
| **Qualifications and Knowledge** |
| NVQ Level 4 or equivalent standard in a relevant subject.Qualification in a subject illustrating competence in data handlingA good level of theoretical, practical and procedural knowledge relating to both performance and budget managementSound knowledge of research, information and intelligence issues and techniquesAn active awareness of and interest in the work of the Policy and Research team.An understanding of sound project and/or task management principles. | A degree or relevant professional or technical qualificationActively undertaking on-going continuous professional/personal development.Understands the diverse functions of a large complex public organisation.Understands the relationship between costs, quality, customer care and performance. |  |
| **Experience** |
| Experience of applying research techniques and models, including the undertaking of surveys and data acquisition Experience of having undertaken tasks/projectsRecent experience in giving advice and counselling service users.Experience in organising and scheduling work, resources and/or eventsExperience of providing practical support to ensure the successful delivery of projects, events and activities.Experience in engaging effectively with others and building productive partnerships. | Experience in a particular specialist area of relevance.Experience in project management.Experience of working with the public, voluntary and community, and business sectorsExperience of preparing, considering and submitting work proposals and specifications |  |
| **Skills and competencies** |
| Able to undertake analysis, draw appropriate conclusions and present these to an audienceEffective IT skills and able to use ITC to achieve work objectives.Prepares written, verbal and other media that are rational, convincing and coherent.Able to work independently and take the initiativeAdopts a collaborative approach to work. Effectively expresses own views using appropriate means depending upon the audience.Numerate and skilled at analysing/reasoning with complex business related statistics.Applies a methodical approach to problem solving.Good negotiation skills and able to persuade others to an alternative point of view.Remains calm and logical in stressful and difficult situations. | Advanced IT skillsHas a professional approach to project/task management |  |
| **Physical, mental, emotional and environmental demands** |
| Normally works from a seated position with some need to walk, bend or carry items.Need to maintain general awareness with lengthy periods of enhanced concentration.Some contact with public/clients in dispute with the County Council.Some exposure to working outdoors. |  |  |
| **Motivation** |
| Dependable, reliable and a good timekeeper.Demonstrates and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, openness and respect for others. Helps to create and encourages a positive work culture, in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued.Proactive and achievement orientated.Tackles problems systematically.Able to work with minimum supervision and manages own time effectively. |  |  |
| **Other** |
|  Able to meet the transport requirements of the post |  |  |

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits