

Post Title: Data and Intelligence Project Manager

Reports to: Programme Manager

Grade: SCP36-SCP42 (£43,068-£49,992)

Location: West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian EH54 6FF, with travel throughout Scotland as required. It is anticipated that the role will involve a blended model of office and home working, and this flexible approach will be agreed between employee and line manager. The post-holder will also spend some of their time working with the Scottish Government ELC policy and analyst teams, and working with local authorities across Scotland, therefore travel across Scotland is anticipated.

Duration: Until 31 July 2026 (with possibility of extension subject to funding)

Contract: Fixed Term

Company Overview:

The Improvement Service (IS) is the 'go to' organisation for Local Government improvement in Scotland. Established in 2005, our purpose is to work collaboratively to help councils and their partners to improve the health, quality of life and opportunities of all people in Scotland through community leadership, strong local governance and the delivery of high quality, efficient local services. We do this by providing a range of transformational change and improvement support, data and intelligence services and digital public services.

The IS is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. A Board of Directors governs the company, nominated from its membership, which consists of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities, COSLA and Solace.

The IS supports Local Authorities in a complex and rapidly evolving operating environment which includes extensive policy and legislative developments, a drive for continuous improvement and transformation, a massive shift in digital technology, changes to the wider framework of local democracy, increasing demand and expectations, and diminishing resources. To add value in this context we are responsive and agile and continuously evolving and innovating to meet the needs and expectations of Local Government.

Working for the IS means joining a small family of professionals, who work together to strive for continuous improvement in the public sector and ultimately, better outcomes for Scotland's communities.

Our company headquarters are based in West Lothian, located conveniently for commuters between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Pay is only one of the benefits of working for the IS, our terms and conditions are progressive and flexible, and employees are rewarded with a generous annual leave entitlement of forty days per year.

The Improvement Service is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities to promote inclusive processes, practices and culture.

The IS is a Disability Confident Employer. We are committed to interviewing anyone with a disability who meets the essential criteria.

Part 1 – Job Role

Background:

Funded early learning and childcare (ELC) expanded from 600 hours to 1140 hours in August 2021. The expansion prioritises a high-quality experience for the child, recognising the significant contribution that universally accessible ELC can make to a child's development and to closing the attainment gap.

Since 2017, the IS has played a key role in supporting councils and the Scottish Government with the ELC expansion. This includes sharing good practice and learning across the sector, and providing support for local authorities around specific thematic areas of delivery, including workforce planning and eligible 2 year-old uptake. The IS also provides a range of support for local authorities around data collection and analysis to support ELC planning and improvement.

Purpose:

The Data and Intelligence Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring there is a solid evidence base to continue to provide insight into and understanding of the ELC sector by managing the collection, analysis and presentation of data supporting ELC services. The postholder will maintain and develop data tools and dashboards used by local authorities, provide high-quality analysis and insight for decision-makers and lead on new data and reporting projects. The postholder will be expected to work independently, apply initiative, and proactively identify opportunities to improve data quality, insight, and impact.

Scope:

Supported by the Programme Manager, the Data and Intelligence Project Manager will have responsibility for the technical development, data management and analytical reporting aspects of the ELC Insights Dashboard, a tool developed by the IS which puts in the hands of councils all the data and intelligence they will need to assure themselves of delivering high quality, flexible ELC services. This will require deep knowledge of the data and intelligence that can be brought to bear, and an ability to develop and maintain software systems that make that data accessible.

The postholder will gather, analyse, understand and report on data and intelligence relevant to the status of the ELC sector. This will be done through data collections and engagement with local authorities, as well as sourcing information from third parties. This will include analysing and reporting on the data collected, identifying and presenting key trends and findings to key stakeholders. This will also require working with the Scottish Government, ADES Networks and COSLA in coordinating and managing data collections and sharing findings. The insight generated will support the sharing of good practice to embed the change necessary to improve services.

Key tasks and accountabilities:

Management of the ELC Insights Dashboard

- The postholder will have responsibility for the ongoing technical development, enhancement, and maintenance of the ELC Insights Dashboard, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving needs of users across local authorities and partner organisations.
- Lead on the design and implementation of new features, analytical content, and functionality, applying innovation and best practice in data visualisation and user experience.

- Work collaboratively with the internal IS team, Scottish Government, local authorities, and other stakeholders to identify emerging requirements, prioritise improvements and ensure alignment with wider data strategies.
- Oversee the end-to-end data process supporting the Dashboard, including data collection, validation, transformation and analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Act as the main point of contact for queries and technical issues, coordinating communications with external organisations and providing support and guidance to users.
- Lead on maintenance planning and managing communications with external organisations to ensure continuity of delivery of the dashboard.

Data Collection and Reporting

- Collect, validate, and analyse data on key indicators such as funded ELC settings uptake, workforce composition, quality and tracking trends in numbers of commissioned services in the private, voluntary and independent sector in place for delivering funded ELC
- Review processes with the Scottish Government, local authorities, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure data quality and consistency through clear validation, documentation, and feedback to data providers.
- Develop reports and presentations for internal use and external audiences, identifying key trends and drawing attention to any outliers where action may be required.
- Use this data and insight to build, manage and maintain the IS's Council Profiler, bringing together all pertinent data on the delivery of ELC services.

Local Authority Engagement and Support

- Engage with local authorities to better understand where data and intelligence can be used to support ELC planning and improvement.
- Share intelligence with Scottish Government policy teams, providing context and interpretation of local data.
- Support ELC projects and workstreams with targeted analysis on areas such as workforce capacity, service quality, and delivery gaps.

Part 2 – Person Specification

REQUIREMENTS (E = Essential; D = Desirable)	E	D
Education <i>Enter an 'X' in either essential or desirable</i> - Educated to degree level or equivalent relevant experience - As a minimum 2:1; in a relevant subject	X	X
Skills - Knowledge of, or a willingness to learn, the R language - Familiarity with the R shiny package - Advanced MS Excel skills - Familiarity with Power BI and Power Query within Excel - Excellent numerical and analytical skills - Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills - Demonstrable ability to gather and analyse data - Quantitative research techniques - Strong problem-solving ability and use of initiative to address data challenges independently - Demonstrable ability to organise and prioritise workload - Demonstrable ability to multi-task and work to deadlines - Demonstrable ability to engage and work productively with partners/stakeholders - Demonstrable ability to adopt innovative and creative practice - Knowledge and understanding of project management skills - Ability to support internal and external audiences to use relevant dashboards	X X X X X X X X X X X	X X X
Knowledge - Applied knowledge of good practice and information governance in data analysis, visualisation and management - Understanding of automation and reproducible workflows - A good level of knowledge of social and public policy issues and priorities - Understanding of the early years learning and childcare policy and delivery environment	X X	 X X
Previous Experience - Experience in data analysis, interpretation, visualisation and reporting - Experience of undertaking descriptive statistical analysis in Excel - Experience in collecting and maintaining information libraries - Experience of report writing, developing content for external publication, and developing presentations for external audiences - Experience of managing projects - Experience of working in the Scottish public sector / local government / ELC sector	X X X	 X X X
Other Requirements Full driving licence		X

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