

Application Lead

Permanent role, based in Kingston and Sutton

Grade: I/J bar 38

Reports: 2-3 direct

Budgetary responsibility: Approx. £100k depending on the levels of transformation work

Shared Digital & IT Service

Digital and IT is a Shared Service between Kingston and Sutton Councils.

Kingston and Sutton Councils have already undergone significant digital and technological transformation. We're committed to delivering great public services that are not only highly effective but also easily accessible. We've championed the digitisation of services as well as adopting a 'mobile first' model to ensure that this commitment is fulfilled. There continues to be great opportunity to revolutionise the way we deliver key services.

Role purpose

The Councils are focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for their communities. To do this we need managers who thrive in a networked organisation and who can provide strong operational leadership.

There are a number of roles across the department at Grade K, J or I that are designated as Lead or Manager. These roles have a dual purpose in that they are expected to have specialist knowledge and skill within their own area and also play an active part in the operational management of their team. They will do this by:

- Understanding and supporting the Digital Strategy
- Working with their line manager and other leads/managers within the team to manage the team workload
- Directly managing a small number of reports and/or managing a virtual team working on a specific task or project
- Managing other resources such as physical or logical technology/software and vendor services
- Providing appropriate analysis and reporting within their area of expertise
- Coaching less senior members of the team both professionally and technically
- Acting as a lead across the department and the wider customer base in promoting, communicating and developing their area of expertise
- Seeking opportunities for innovation and collaboration
- Demonstrating the culture and values on a day-to-day basis.

All Lead and Manager postholders (at grades I, J and K) are expected to be able to deputise for their line manager (typically an L or M grade).

The Application Lead role reports directly to the Application Manager and is responsible for the provision of application support, management and development services, either directly to users of the systems or to service delivery functions. Its main purpose is to:

- Review releases, upgrades and fixes available from software suppliers and implement as appropriate. Maintain awareness of existing and emerging software and hardware solutions and develop upgrade plans
- Tailor software to ensure that the functionality of the application is fully exploited

- Coordinate application upgrades and prepare software implementation procedures with fall back contingency plans
- Analyse test requirements, design and build test case suites, test scripts, and test procedures, with expected results
- Investigate, diagnose and resolve application and database problems in accordance with service level agreements, communicating progress and escalating as necessary
- Investigate available information sources to establish what information is available
- Assesses the integrity of data from identified sources
- Assist users or act on their behalf to extract and manipulate data from applications and databases on an ad hoc basis
- Apply a variety of analytical and presentational techniques, in consultation with experts if appropriate and with sensitivity to the limitations of the techniques
- Ensure that all documentation is written, maintained and executed to the highest standards and act as a champion of the Quality Management System (QMS)
- Contribute to the Change Advisory Board
- Make the best use of resources and time to deliver business benefit to the Councils including flexibility in the resourcing approach that allows for variation in demand
- Empower the team by creating a supportive environment for team members to excel at their roles and develop their careers within the department and the wider Councils
- Ensure that requests for support are properly logged, assigned and responded to in a timely manner and according to agreed standards and procedures
- Investigate potential and actual service problems and recommend solutions
- Develop and use formal procedures to plan and test proposed solutions
- Work within and act as a champion of the Council's ITIL Framework.

Main duties of the job for appointment at or progression to Grade J:

- Design and develop user code to enhance or customise applications to satisfy business objectives and tailor applications to ensure maximum efficiency
- Gather performance statistics from the IT platforms to enable recommendations for the tuning of applications. Tailor application parameters to maximise throughput and efficiency
- Initiate action by systems development staff or software suppliers for system enhancements to overcome known problems or further fulfil user requirements
- Take responsibility for investigative work to determine business opportunities, and specify effective business processes. Specifies their implementation through improvements in information systems, data management, practices, organisation and equipment
- In liaison with colleagues in information governance and information security, contribute to the development and maintenance of corporate data standards
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the data management policy within the organisation.

Key activities

Leadership

- Provides inspirational and constructive leadership to the Application team to ensure high performance within a networked operating model
- Facilitates change and innovation, building a team culture that encourages innovative, smart and collaborative working
- Listens to, and works with colleagues to develop team goals in line with corporate strategy, and influences and motivates others to achieve this

Commissioning and Performance Management

- Commissions services and activities to secure the best outcomes for service users and deliver optimum value for money, in line with the Council's commissioning and contract management frameworks
- Translates internal and external intelligence in order to continually adapt and improve the services in line with demand
- Manages the performance of the team, working with colleagues to define outcomes, set targets and monitor performance, within a culture of continual improvement
- Develops operational plans to ensure that the resources within the teams are used to best effect and impact
- Ensures that the best use is made of financial resources and achieves balanced budgets and income and savings targets, as required.

Customers and Partners

- Builds strong working partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors to enable the service to be delivered in an outcome-focused and efficient way
- Promotes community cohesion and Kingston's commitment to valuing diversity, ensuring the development and implementation of effective social inclusion

Digital/New Ways of Working

- Continually looks for ways to improve and modernise our service to customers, including developing and implementing digital/automated processes and eliminating paper wherever possible.
- Champions the use of new technologies, particularly Google, to enable modern working practices to thrive.

Equality and Diversity

- Embeds equity, equality, fairness and diversity into all aspects of team management and service delivery

Corporate responsibilities

Kingston Council requires managers to undertake and support a range of important corporate responsibilities including:

- GDPR
- Election duties
- Emergency planning and business continuity
- Engagement & Collaboration
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding – protection of vulnerable adults and children
- Volunteering/social impact
- Complaints handling and investigation

NB. The requirements of this post could include attending meetings and other events outside normal hours as expected with a post of this nature and the postholder will need to manage their work life balance flexibly to meet the needs of the role.

The person

In order to successfully deliver the responsibilities of the role, you will need to:

- Have strong leadership skills, modelling a performance culture and constructively building achievement, confidence and skills in others
- Question and challenge conventional thinking, with a continual eye on the bigger picture in terms of the corporate context and external environment
- Role model agility and adaptability in mindset and ways of working
- Work successfully with key stakeholders including Members, residents, businesses, communities, partner organisations and other public services
- Demonstrate commitment to own personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the role
- Demonstrate a high level of innovation and creativity.

Experience

- Experience of working in digital transformation across an organisation
- Experience in the management of the processes, systems and functions in complex IT and cloud environments
- Experience of complex application support environments
- Management of 3rd party contracts to ensure delivery of products and services to the agreed standard and timeline
- Budget management of environments and staff to minimise costs and ensure cost-effectiveness
- Experience in automated systems supporting specific business functions or processes. Examples: social care, housing management, libraries, customer services, finance
- Familiar with applications/processes which enable selective access to information held within some form of database or "data warehouse". Examples: Exporting data to a spreadsheet via ODBC, writing SQL statements, using Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services or Business Objects
- Proficient in Business Process Improvement Techniques for streamlining business processes which have been modelled and understood. Examples: error-proofing, value added assessment, process cycle time reduction, future-proofing, resilience, reliability, cost effectiveness.
- Principles, methods, techniques and tools for the effective allocation of resources to development projects and business as usual activity
- An understanding of ITIL practices and an appreciation of service hand over.

Our leadership competencies

Leadership

- Ability to demonstrate successful leadership and build a strong, capable and highly motivated team

Partnering for Excellence

- Ability to apply commercial judgement to make decisions that will deliver cost efficient and effective results for Kingston Council and the Kingston community

Communication and Influencing

- An ability to understand and respond to the evolving economic and social environment within which Kingston Council operates
- Seeks, listens to and responds to the views and ideas of staff and customers
- Keeps staff informed of information that affects them

Putting the Customer First

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to service excellence, customer care and continuous improvement
- Identify and understand the needs of both internal and external customers by providing excellent customer service in all areas of Council business

Being the Best

- Support performance improvement by challenging the status quo and providing enough scope for staff to experiment with new or innovative solutions

Our Values

Being an enabling council is a key principle that runs through our organisational development and is embedded in everything we do. Underpinning this are the following values:

Innovative:

- Promote a culture that encourages creativity
- Embrace new ideas and ways of working
- Ambitious to push the boundaries to realise potential

Open:

- Respect and recognition - everyone has a voice that is heard and we are all valued
- Collaborative - working together with new and existing partners
- Empowering staff and residents to encourage informed decision-making
- Inspire trust by acting with integrity in all we do

Smart:

- Commercial acumen to find solutions and best value
- Agile working
- Customer driven, listening and responding to consistently deliver excellence

Digital & IT Behaviours

In Digital and IT, we want to encourage behaviours that support the values of both of our Councils.

- Within teams and across the broader Digital and IT department, we'll be expecting more senior team members to play an active part in developing, mentoring and buddying the less senior members of the team, even if they do not have direct line management responsibility for them. This way, we aim to build a high-performing and flexible team that supports one another and is able to deliver both ongoing service and transformational change for Digital and IT customers and communities.
- All team members have the opportunity to develop and display leadership qualities by taking ownership of the work they do and being committed and present in their interactions with other team members and with our customers
- We expect every member of staff to invest in their own personal development and breadth of experience and capability. This is not achieved purely through formal training courses but also by getting involved, being inquisitive, challenging yourself and seeking out other opportunities to learn and to stay up-to-date with technology and business direction
- We have the responsibility of digitally enabling our Councils and communities - so every team member should be an ambassador for our solutions and technologies,

whether or not they are in a technical role. We need to set the example by using our digital capabilities and facilities in full and with our customers so that they are inspired by what technology could do for them.