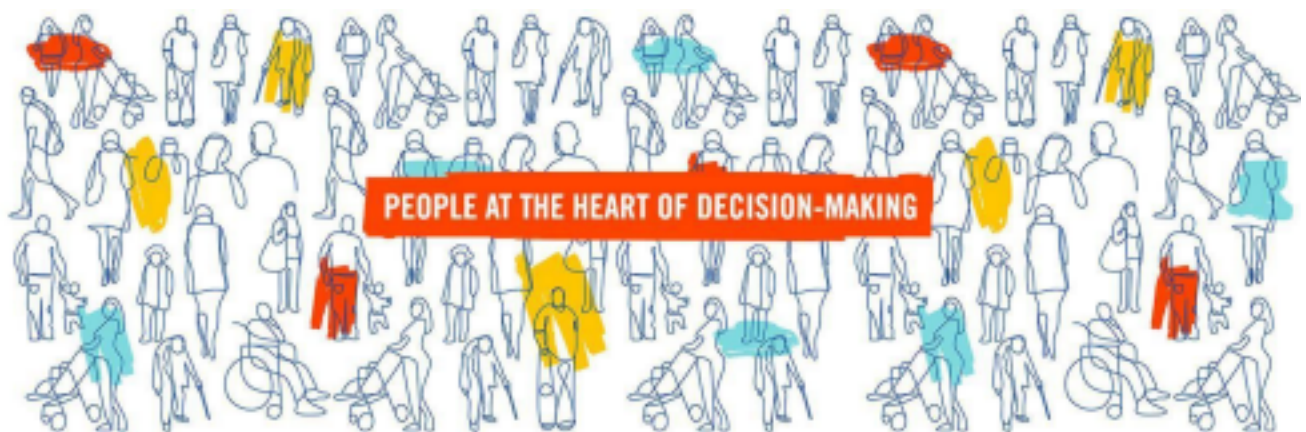




SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER (Northern Ireland)

Job Description



Practical details

SALARY BAND: £38,975 starting salary

LOCATION: Northern Ireland (location flexible for home working but some time in Belfast office will be required with occasional travel across the UK).

HOURS: Full time, (35 hours per week) preferred but we will consider part-time



1. Who we are

We're the UK's leading public participation charity, and we want to build a more vibrant democracy, where everyone can have a say in a society that works for all of us.

Since 2003, we have been working with governments, parliaments, civil society, academics and members of the public to create and deliver new forms of public participation that re-vitalise democracy, improve decision-making, and enable people to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

We are realistic about the challenges faced by democracy, but optimistic about how to overcome them. We are committed to ensuring our democracies are vibrant and fit for the future by putting people at the heart of decision making.

We work across the UK and internationally, with offices in Belfast and London. Many of our staff work from home across the UK or in a hybrid pattern, rather than being based at one of our offices, though we meet up regularly as a team.

02. What we do

Our mission is to lead the UK in making participation and deliberation an everyday part of democracy, to help meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We need to make important choices as a society, but our democracy isn't working as it should. Decision-makers are struggling to get things done. The public are frustrated the system isn't working for them. And everywhere people are feeling divided, distrustful and powerless.

Our work is focused in three areas:

- **Making the case** – demonstrating why participation and deliberation are essential features for a healthy modern democracy, and ensuring that those in positions of power and influence understand and support their use in addressing some of the UK's most intractable issues. [Check out our latest thinking.](#)
- **Embedding change** – building the capacity of public servants and practitioners, and developing the body of evidence, principles and standards that support participatory and deliberative practice. [Check out our resources.](#)
- **Pioneering practice** – encouraging widespread uptake of participatory and deliberative processes, and promoting continuous learning and innovation to improve democracy and deliver lasting solutions in key policy areas. [Check out our practical projects.](#)



All our work builds towards delivering the following six outcomes for our democracy, which we believe will lead to the vibrant, participatory society we want to see.

- **Democratic norms** – Participation and deliberation are recognised as essential features for a healthy equitable democracy by the public, society and decision-makers;
- **Political support** – People in positions of power and influence across society and the political spectrum understand and actively support the use of participatory and deliberative decision-making;
- **Frequent use** – There is frequent use of participatory and deliberative processes supported by the right resources (people and budgets) both inside and outside of political institutions;
- **Evidence and practice** – There is an accessible and well-communicated body of evidence and practice that demonstrates the impact of our vision and how to achieve it;
- **Clear standards** – There are clear principles and standards that support good practice in delivering and embedding participatory and deliberative processes, which are widely understood and followed;
- **Democratic innovations** – There is continuous learning and innovation to improve democracy and work against entrenched inequalities.

Find out more about our work: www.involve.org.uk/our-work/

Our values

- **Collaboration** – because change comes when broad coalitions of people work towards a common vision
- **Equity** – because everyone in society has an equal right to be listened to and participate in decisions that affect their lives. No one should be held back by societal divisions or prejudice;
- **Independence** - because we are committed to the integrity and impartiality of participatory and deliberative processes;
- **Purpose** – because participation must have an impact. We reject tokenistic or ineffectual engagement
- **Quality** - because effective participation requires time, attention and commitment

03. About the role

Involve is right at the forefront of changing our democracy for the better. Combining innovative, high quality practice with making a clear case for a democracy fit for the 21st century, we are showing exactly what our democratic future holds.

We are now recruiting for a new Senior Project Officer team member as we have a number of innovative new projects which offer a range of exciting opportunities for our work in Northern Ireland.



This Senior Project Officer (NI) role is placed within our Innovation and Practice Function. Our team's daily work includes setting up, managing, designing, delivering and reporting on a wide range of participatory and deliberative processes, ranging from small scale, hyper-local community engagements to large, national, multi-event Citizens' Assemblies. Our processes can be face to face, hybrid, or online, and often involve bringing together different groups from members of the public to leaders and experts from across government, business, academia and civil society.

You will be a core member of the team, contributing to all aspects of the Innovation & Practice team's work, but with a special focus on our work in Northern Ireland, including:

- Business development - fundraising for grants and projects, responding to tenders and writing proposals, shaping programmes, building relationships with our funders, collaborators and clients
- Project design - designing processes which use deliberative, qualitative and participatory methods
- Project delivery - project management and logistics, leading a delivery team and facilitating as appropriate, analysis and reporting
- Project impact - recording and monitoring how our projects work, the kinds of impacts they have, and the ways they contribute to Involve's mission.

We are a growing team, with 28 team members based all over the UK, and a larger group of Associate freelancers who help us deliver our work.

We are committed to offering our team complete support for personal growth at work. This includes in-house and external training on all aspects of participation, deliberation, systems thinking around democracy and relevant issues such as how we tackle inequities of power and privilege in society, technical skills development such as design, facilitation and presentation skills; along with relevant professional development such as line management and leadership, communications and public speaking.

04. Key responsibilities

1. Project managing, designing, and leading on projects from small to large

- Coordinating and delivering small, medium, and large projects (for example, a series of events or workshops with the public and stakeholders); leading on delivery and project management for smaller projects and with support for larger engagements.
- Designing participatory and deliberative processes, facilitation plans, and wider engagement plans, leading on this for smaller projects and with support for larger engagements, designing



sessions within a plan.

- Liaising and being first point of contact for clients and partners, dealing confidently with senior level clients and liaising with, briefing and supporting our associates and freelancers
- Managing whole programmes of work as the lead contact (for example our Sciencewise programme) building core relationships and holding the overall programme plan proactively.
- Facilitating confidently and calmly at workshops or small group-size events.
- Liaising with recruitment agencies and with general public participants to “onboard” people into our processes, troubleshooting the things that might make their participation difficult, working effectively with participants on the day, particularly ensuring that individual needs are met.
- Using strong qualitative research skills to deliver high quality reports for the general public, policy making and democracy practice audiences.
- Writing impact reports before and after projects and identifying key learning and best practice; writing externally-facing blogs to communicate our work.

2. Project development

- Contributing to proposal writing, both tender responses and grant applications to attract funding, in line with Involve’s vision, mission, and strategy.

3. Managing self and others

- Manages simultaneous projects by careful diary and task time management, proactive diary management, and seeking out help and support where needed.
- Developing and reading around areas of personal interest in deliberative democracy to help boost Involve’s thought leadership in a particular sector of interest.
- Where applicable, line manages junior staff, ensuring that all line management admin is completed well and on time, especially appraisals, and that the person managed is supported and developed.

4. Contributing to all-team activities

- Contributing to organisational development projects.
- Participating in team meetings, strategy and away-days. Complying with core Involve procedures and policies, such as time recording and leave records.
- Other relevant duties may be undertaken as agreed with the line manager.

05. Key competencies

Essential competencies



Applicants must demonstrate the following competencies:

- Excellent project manager, able to manage and prioritise a diverse workload; deliver key project elements on time, on budget and to a high standard; and contribute accurately to tasks around project finances, budgets, and reporting;
- Public participation skills, or relevant or transferable expertise; able to contribute to discussions advising public servants on designing and delivering effective engagement;
- Experienced facilitator with a good basic level and understanding of deliberative and qualitative practice;
- Shrewd communicator, able to make reliable judgements about which messages should have priority, what level of detail is appropriate, and how to adapt communications for specific audiences;
- Good understanding of policymaking processes and knowledge of how government and related systems work in Northern Ireland
- Committed team player, embodying our values of collaboration, equality, independence, purpose and quality, and passionate about furthering our vision.

Desirable competencies

The following competencies are desirable:

- Storytelling in proposal writing; ability to communicate the value of public participation, in ways which help secure funding for projects which advance Involve's vision.
- Systems thinking; ability to look at operational and project work and see how they might be improved to better achieve our mission.
- Some experience in and interest in supporting staff to be their best, coaching and managing junior staff on projects and as a line manager.
- Personable networker, able to build relationships with a range of people – from members of the public to peers in civil society, academia, government bodies and others who commission us.
- Strong communications skills, a good presenter and/or public speaker and able to communicate key learnings effectively online in blogs and social media.

06. Pay, location and benefits

Job Title: Senior Project Officer

Pay band: £38,975 starting salary

Hours: Full time preferred (but we will consider part time)



Start date: As soon as possible

Location: Northern Ireland (location flexible for home working but some time in Belfast office will be required with occasional travel across the UK).

Reporting to: Head of Northern Ireland.

Leave: All staff get 25 days annual leave (pro rata) in addition to bank holidays and the period between Christmas Day and New Years Day.

Interviews will take place from 27th May. Interviews will be in-person in Belfast and will consist of an interview task plus interview questions. If successful in the first round, you may be invited to a second interview.

We can make reasonable adjustments to our interview process, and to working arrangements, according to your needs. If you are shortlisted for an interview we will explain what the process will involve in advance and check with you if we need to make any adjustments so that you can interview fairly and comfortably.

We're actively building a diverse team and welcome applications from everyone. But simply having a diverse workforce is not enough. We aim to build an inclusive environment, where everyone can contribute their best work and develop to their full potential. We offer a flexible working environment so you can adjust your hours to suit your personal circumstances. We celebrate our differences, and recognise the importance of teams reflecting the communities they work with.

We have physical offices in London and Belfast which are always available to work in. We are flexible in terms of either working from home, or working hybrid from home and a physical office. However the successful candidate must be able to travel to Involve internal meetings and away days and sometimes to include overnight stays. As such, applicants will need to be comfortable with regular travel.

The following benefits are available to staff:

- Workplace pension with employer contribution of 5%
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Childcare vouchers
- Enhanced parental leave package for qualifying employees
- Participation in both external and internal training