

Programme Manager

Help shape the future of children's care, regional sufficiency and collaborative commissioning across the East Midlands.

Advertised: 14th August 2026

Closing date: 27th September 2026



Welcome

The East Midlands is creating one of the country's new [Regional Care Co-operatives \(RCCs\)](#): a major public sector reform programme designed to improve outcomes for children, strengthen regional sufficiency and support collaborative improvement across children's care.

Covering all ten upper-tier local authorities across the East Midlands, the RCC will bring together regional commissioning, sufficiency planning, fostering development, market engagement, data and improvement activity through a powerful new collaborative model.

This is not simply another programme. It is a unique opportunity to help establish a new regional infrastructure for children's care: ambitious, practical, evidence-led and deeply rooted in partnership working across local government, health, youth justice, policing and the voluntary sector.

As the East Midlands RCC is established, you will play an important role in bringing partners together around this shared ambition. Working as part of the founding RCC team, you will help build the relationships, culture and foundations needed to create lasting change across the region. We are looking for people who can inspire collaboration, build trust across complex systems and keep the voices of children, young people and carers at the heart of everything they do. Most important is your belief in what this programme can achieve.

We hope this pack gives you a sense of the opportunity ahead and the difference this role can make. We look forward to hearing from you.

East Midlands Directors of Children's Services



Role Overview

Job Title	Programme Manager
Salary & benefits	£50,000 - £60,000 a year, 27 days annual leave plus bank holidays, generous pension scheme, hybrid working arrangements. Secondment arrangements may differ.
Start date	November 2026
Contract type	Fixed-term contract or secondment opportunity until 31 st March 2028, with continuation subject to funding and approval. Any secondment arrangement will be subject to agreement with the successful candidate's current employer.
Basis	Full time (37.5 hours)
Employment location	The role will be based in Leicester, with regular travel across the East Midlands.
Job category	Programme management, project management, children's social care and commissioning, sufficiency, market shaping and improvement.
Host organisation	RCC roles will be hosted by SDSA Leicester on behalf of the East Midlands local authorities.
Key responsibilities	Lead the coordination of the East Midlands RCC programme, working across local authorities, workstreams and partners to create clarity and accountability, maintain momentum, strengthen governance and assurance and turn the region's strategic ambitions into organised, measurable and sustainable delivery.



Regional Collaboration

The East Midlands already has a strong culture of collaboration through its Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA), long-established regional commissioning networks, one established regional fostering hub and strong collaboration between local authority fostering services across the wider region. The RCC will work alongside the established Foster for East Midlands Councils (FFEMC) partnership and support wider collaboration between local authority fostering services across the region by providing a natural strategic framework for continuing collaboration, shared learning and alignment.

The RCC will build on this mature foundation to create a genuinely influential regional platform for change.

East Midlands RIIA

The East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA) has become one of the strongest examples of sustained regional collaboration nationally. Its recent Impact Evaluation demonstrated:

- strong regional trust
- mature peer support
- influential leadership networks
- innovation across workforce, SEND, commissioning and social care reform
- tangible impact on improvement capacity across the region

The RCC will work closely alongside the RIIA, benefiting from established Heads of Service networks, commissioning collaboration, peer challenge infrastructure, workforce development and a mature culture of collective problem-solving.

About SDSA

The RCC Core Team will be hosted by [SDSA](#), the East Midlands' long-established business support partner.

SDSA is a not-for-profit organisation with a strong track record of supporting education, children's services and regional collaboration since 2005. It provides programme infrastructure, commissioning support and partnership coordination across the region and already works extensively with the East Midlands Directors of Children's Services (EMDCS) and RIIA.

Hosting the RCC within SDSA provides stability, agility, established resources and systems, regional connectivity and the ability to mobilise quickly. The core office base for this post will be at the SDSA office in Leicester City Centre, with regular in-person collaboration expected, alongside flexible and hybrid working arrangements.



About the role

The RCC Programme Manager will help provide the organisational discipline, coordination and delivery confidence needed to turn the East Midlands RCC's strategic ambition into organised, measurable and sustainable delivery.

The role will maintain programme plans, governance, reporting and assurance across multiple organisations and workstreams, helping partners manage complexity, maintain momentum, clarity and accountability.

The successful candidate will help create the infrastructure that turns strategic ambition into organised, measurable and sustainable delivery. We are looking for a calm, organised and collaborative programme professional who can create structure, maintain momentum and support confident delivery across a complex regional partnership.

Experience and Background

We are open to candidates from a range of professional backgrounds and recognise that exceptional people not always emerge through conventional career pathways. Successful candidates are likely to be able to demonstrate significant delivery experience within children's services, public services, commissioning, partnership environments or similarly complex systems.

What matters most is your ability to work across systems, build relationships, inspire confidence and help turn regional ambition into practical improvement for children and families.

Key Candidate Attributes

- Excellent organisational and programme coordination skills
- Strong attention to detail while maintaining strategic awareness
- Ability to manage complexity calmly and constructively
- Confidence working across multiple stakeholders and priorities
- Strong communication and facilitation skills
- Commitment to delivery and follow-through
- Ability to create clarity and structure in evolving environments
- Positive, enabling and collaborative approach
- Interest in regional reform and partnership working



Role Description

▶ Programme planning and coordination

- Maintain the integrated programme plan, milestones, deliverables and critical path across RCC workstreams.
- Coordinate activity across workstream leads, ensuring actions, decisions and dependencies are clear and followed through.
- Turn strategic priorities into practical delivery plans, supporting teams to maintain pace and focus.

▶ Governance and reporting

- Coordinate programme governance, meeting cycles, papers, decisions and action tracking.
- Produce clear, timely reports for the RCC Director, boards, partners and national stakeholders.
- Develop proportionate programme controls, templates and ways of working that improve consistency and accountability.

▶ Risk, assurance and performance

- Maintain programme risk, issue, dependency and decision logs, ensuring timely escalation and resolution.
- Track delivery against milestones, outcomes and benefits, identifying slippage and supporting corrective action.
- Provide programme assurance through accurate information, constructive challenge and evidence-based reporting.

▶ Partnerships and continuous improvement

- Build effective relationships across local authorities, RCC workstreams, SDSA and regional and national partners.
- Facilitate workshops and meetings that create clarity, shared ownership and practical next steps.
- Support continuous improvement, learning and the development of a sustainable RCC operating model.



Person Specification

Experience and qualifications	Essential (E) Desirable (D)
Relevant degree, programme or project management qualification, or equivalent experience.	E
Significant experience coordinating complex programmes or projects within a partnership, public-service or similarly complex environment.	E
Recognised programme or project management qualification such as MSP, PRINCE2, APM/APMP or equivalent.	D
Programme capability	
Strong programme planning and coordination skills, including milestone tracking, action management, reporting and maintaining delivery discipline across multiple workstreams.	E
Experience establishing or improving a PMO, programme controls or governance framework.	D
Risk, assurance and performance	
Experience managing risks, issues, dependencies, decisions and benefits.	E
Ability to identify slippage, support corrective action and provide clear, proportionate assurance.	E
Experience reporting to senior boards, funders, government departments or formal programme governance.	D
Organisation and delivery	
Excellent organisational skills with strong attention to detail and the ability to manage competing priorities, deadlines and information.	E
Consistent commitment to delivery and follow-through.	E
Experience mobilising a new programme, service or partnership operating model.	D
Communication and facilitation	
Clear and confident communicator with strong facilitation, report-writing and presentation skills.	E
Ability to create clarity, secure agreement and communicate complex information accessibly.	E
Experience facilitating multi-agency workshops, boards or senior stakeholder sessions.	D
Partnership working	
Ability to build trusted relationships and work positively across organisational boundaries, balancing different priorities while maintaining shared focus and accountability.	E
Experience working across local authorities, children's services, regional partnerships or public-sector reform programmes.	D
Personal approach and values	
Calm, constructive and solutions focused.	E
Ability to maintain strategic awareness while managing detail, create structure in evolving environments and enable others to deliver.	E
Positive, collaborative and committed to improving outcomes for children.	D
Knowledge of children's services, regional reform, commissioning or sufficiency.	D



Application process

Please apply by submitting the following three documents to jobs@sdsa.net:

- 1. CV** - including an explanation of any gaps in employment.
- 2. Supporting statement** - a maximum of two sides of A4 demonstrating how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the requirements set out in the application pack.
- 3. Application form** - a short form which captures your contact details, references and equal opportunities information. The form is available to [download here](#).

Interview process

Applicants who are shortlisted will be invited to take part in a selection process which will likely comprise of a formal interview, presentation and task. We will provide further information and guidance about the process in advance.

Interviews will be held at the SDSA Office in Leicester City Centre.

Questions

We welcome informal enquiries about the role. If you would like to discuss the opportunity in more detail or have any questions, please email jobs@sdsa.net outlining the nature of your query. We will then ensure that the most appropriate member of our team gets in touch with you.



Email applications to:
jobs@sdsa.net



Closing date for applications:
Sunday 27th September at 10pm



Successful applicants contacted:
By Friday 2nd October



Interviews held:
Week commencing 5th October



All applications will be acknowledged:
Via email, within 48 hours of receipt.

