

COOPERATIVE FUTURES

Job Title:	Co-operative Development Worker
Salary:	£31,000 - £36,000 pro rata (depending on experience).
Hours:	Full-time (37 Hours per week). We're open to considering part-time hours.
Contract:	Permanent post with a probationary period of six months.
Location:	Remote

About the role:

This is a practical, people-facing role which will support the development of co-operatives and community-owned businesses by providing advice, training, and resources to help them start, grow, and flourish. You'll work closely with workers, communities and networks at a local and national level to promote the co-operative model; contribute to research and policy work; and identify new opportunities for consultancy.

We're looking for someone who enjoys working with people, has a passion for participatory and community-led approaches and a commitment to co-operative values. It's a varied consultancy role where you'll be doing everything from meeting a co-op member over a coffee for business coaching to presenting at a national conference. The role would be suited to someone who would appreciate the freedom to develop new initiatives, manage their own projects and work collaboratively as part of a small, supportive team.

We are looking for someone who can work across the Co-operative Futures core operating areas of the wider West Midlands region, Gloucestershire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The role will lead on developing new networks and contacts in these areas.

How you'll work:

- You'll report to and be supported by the Executive Director.
- We're a small, friendly team, with weekly catch-ups and regular in-person team days.
- You'll mainly work from home and be desk-based, but with plenty of opportunities to get out and about meeting groups, attending events and delivering in-person training. Therefore, some travel will be required across our operating area.
- Some evening and weekend work, including occasional overnight stays, will be needed. But we work flexibly, managing our own time and offer time off in lieu.

About Co-operative Futures:

[Co-operative Futures](#) was established in 2000 and is a business consultancy specialising in co-operative, mutual and community-owned enterprises.

We provide business support, for start-ups and existing organisations including worker co-ops, consumer co-ops, housing co-ops and community co-ops. We work in a wide range of sectors, including retail, leisure, housing and care and have supported all sorts of businesses, including an independent cinema and a service station. We particularly specialise in place-based work and supporting groups of workers or community members to identify and take control of local knowledge, assets and services.

We also support and promote co-operative and community business models, through workshops, policy work with the public sector and campaigning.

We are a [company limited by guarantee](#) and we are committed to the co-operative values and principles, particularly the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

Benefits of working for Co-operative Futures:

- **Annual Leave:** 25 days pro rata and Bank Holidays plus 3 extra days between Christmas and New Year.
- **Generous contributory pension:** 6% employees plus 9% employers.
- **Working From Home Allowance:** Paid monthly to support WFH costs.
- **TOIL policy:** Ability to work flexibly, taking time off in lieu (TOIL).
- **Support for professional development:** We are looking for someone who would like to work with us long-term and develop a career in the co-operative sector. We are committed to providing training and support to help develop skills and experience.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. **Provide bespoke 1-2-1 business support** to start-up and existing co-operatives and social enterprises, (i.e. worker co-ops, consortium / freelancer co-ops, consumer co-ops, housing co-ops, multi-stakeholder co-ops and community benefit societies) including:
 - a. Practical support through set-up stages, including evaluating business ideas, choosing a legal structure and registration.
 - b. Technical advice on business plans, marketing and sales strategy, financial planning, trading practices, member engagement and governance
 - c. Help to raise finance through community share issues and social finance, alongside grant funding.
 - d. Coaching and mentoring clients, to develop their businesses.
2. **Promote the co-operative model** to communities and entrepreneurs through events and by working with local networks to raise awareness of the benefits of democratic enterprise.
3. **Design and deliver training and resources**, which support co-operatives to develop.
4. **Develop research or feasibility projects**, write reports and input into policy work for clients on topics of co-operative and community economic development.
5. **Build networks and links** with local authorities, support organisations, business networks and community & VCSE groups. Participate in local forums and stay informed about community & economic development initiatives which might provide opportunities for co-operative development.
6. **Be involved in the national co-operative movement**, including participating in and presenting at forums, organising national conferences and contributing to strategic and policy work. Stay informed about consultations and changes in legislation.

7. **Manage your own projects** and records, taking ownership of your time and workload against timelines and budgets.
8. **Identify and develop new consultancy** and business opportunities, alongside the team, to bring in income and funding to support the organisation's future sustainability.
9. **Work closely with the Director** to share regular updates and collaborate with colleagues to support each other's work.

You may occasionally be asked to take on other reasonable duties to support the team. We'll review and update the job description with you, as the role evolves.

Person Specification

These skills and experiences could be gained through professional work, volunteering or life experience.

Essential:

1. Knowledge of co-operatives, community businesses, mutuals and social enterprises.
2. Experience of supporting and advising co-operatives, community businesses or social enterprises.
3. Experience of seeking, securing and delivering consultancy contracts and/or grant funding.
4. Experience of designing and delivering training; facilitating meetings; and organising events.
5. Communication and people skills, with the ability to explain technical information clearly; speak confidently to a room of people; network and build relationships.
6. Written skills including being able to write professional documents such as reports, as well as more informal communication such as using social media.
7. Confident IT skills, including using word documents, spreadsheets, and a range of apps and digital tools across Microsoft and Google platforms.
8. Ability to be self-motivated, take a problem-solving approach and be comfortable with managing your workload independently and flexibly.
9. A commitment to co-operative values & principles, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion practice.
10. Driving licence and access to a vehicle.*

** Our policy is to use public transport where possible, but you may need to work in rural areas where a car may be needed.*

Desirable:

1. Local knowledge of an area within our region of operation, including having networks and an awareness of the enterprise, community and voluntary sector.
2. Experience of business start-up and development, through being involved in starting-up or developing a business yourself.
3. Experience of working with and engaging communities, particularly in participatory and community-led development approaches.
4. Awareness of the national co-operative and mutuals movement and/or the wider social business support sector.
5. Experience of being involved in a co-operative as a staff member, board member or volunteer.
6. Experience of undertaking research or feasibility studies.