

Programme Lead – Skills (Maternity Cover)

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Design Council

Job Summary

Job title: Programme Lead – Skills (Maternity Cover)

Reporting to: Head of Programmes

Location: Central London/ Hybrid

Contract type: Fixed term – Upto 1 year

Salary: £57,200+

About the Design Council: Making Life Better by Design

From everyday objects to complex systems, everything not made by mother-nature has been designed.

Established in 1944 and a royal chartered charity since 1976, the Design Council is the national champion for the effective use of design, helping designers, government and business harness design's power to think creatively, drive good growth, transform communities and places, and build a regenerative future for all.

Dedicated to all design disciplines, we showcase design brilliance, lead on new thinking, evidence value and influence policy to create an environment for design to thrive. We demonstrate value of design and impact of design thinking through our projects, policy and advocacy work and the knowledge and toolkits we've developed and launched, and our purpose is to make life better by design.

Design also has a powerful role to play in fighting the climate crisis, and with 80% of the environmental impact of products is determined at the design stage, our [Design for Planet](#) mission aims to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people working in the UK's design economy to help address the climate crisis and achieve net zero and beyond, making design regenerative, not extractive.

A small team of 30 people, we are based in Clerkenwell in central London.

Our Values

- *Boundless Curiosity* - Our spirit of inquiry, questioning and expanding our knowledge.
- *Inspire Possibility* - Our drive to envision, instigate and catalyse positive change.
- *Powerful Together* - Our belief that collaboration, inclusivity and diversity lead to greater impact.

About the Role

This role sits within the newly formed Programmes Team led by the Chief Design Officer and has responsibility for leading the development and scaling of programmes to upskill 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030.

Reporting to the Head of Programmes, you will act as our design skills champion, creating the frameworks and content to support the upskilling of the current and future design community, and partnerships to deliver this at scale.

The programme covers three audiences: school pupils, Further Education and Higher Education students, and designers working in industry. It also includes three types of work:

- Championing activity working closely with partners or organisations across the design sector that are upskilling designers in green skills
- Influencing activity aimed at supporting other partners to embed our Skills for Planet blueprint and upskill designers either directly and/or through policy levers
- Creating interventions that fill the gaps where no-one else is focusing on green skills

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities include:

- Building on the movement that has developed so far during Years 1 & 2 of the programme, continue to ascertain the strategic priorities and alignment of the Design Council's Skills for Planet programme for designers, prioritising funded activity and initiatives which can have the most impact.
- Working directly with the Chief Design Officer and the wider skills programme team oversee the delivery of Year 3 of the skills programme, with a balance on achieving scale through partnerships and developing funded programmes to fill gaps.
- Working with the Chief Design Officer, Fundraising and Partnerships Lead and Head of Programmes, **create** a set of Skills for Planet programmes that are fundable and funded – either from core grant or securing additional funding from a variety of potential partners
- Maintain strong partnership relationships as part of the movement building/ecosystem approach to delivery: **influencing** partners to embed the Skills for Planet Blueprint and **championing** those that are doing so.
- Manage and deliver Movement Makers quarterly meetings (alternative form of a Steering Group) so members contribute actively to the overall ambitions and impact of the skills programme.
- Work with the Community and Programme Manager to oversee ways for Design Council Experts to embed the Skills for Planet Blueprint, either through delivery of our own skills programmes, or through their own work.
- Act as the guardian of our Skills for Planet Blueprint, supporting Programmes team colleagues to embed these into proposals, our services and existing projects and programmes.
- Work with policy colleagues to shape and **influence** Government priorities, standards/regulation and funding around green design skills, and/or develop skills programmes that tap into Government funding (in particular at the regional level).
- Measure the impact of the Skills Planet programme, using the theory of change to measure output and outcomes, and working with the Marcomms team to communicate this to funders and partners, building a movement. Work closely with Research and Impact Lead to ensure the M&E approach is fit for purpose as the Skills programme progresses.
- Be actively engaged in external networks and attend events relevant to Skills for Planet audiences (i.e. design higher education, design schools, design businesses), and develop thought leadership around regenerative design skills
- Business planning and budget management for Skills programmes and ensuring that planned activities can be achieved within current financial and resourcing constraints and that they remain strategically aligned with the overall organisation's objectives
- Line management responsibilities for the Community and Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator.

About You

- The role requires a hands-on individual used to working at a fast-paced senior level, with a track record of developing and delivering skills and capability programmes within design and innovation, working across a large number of partnerships to catalyse a movement of activity. You have an entrepreneurial mindset, seeking out opportunities to fund the development of the programme, and working in partnership to deliver it.
- You will bring an understanding of regenerative design, skills development and pedagogy, are comfortable working in the unknown and have strong project management and delivery skills that will enable you to thrive in an environment with competing priorities.
- You must be excellent at building and nurturing relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders, and also effectively collaborate internally across the organisation.
- You are passionate about our Design for Planet and Green Design Skills missions and demonstrate an ability to think strategically as well as commercially and work collaboratively.

Skills and Experience:

- At least 5 years' experience in a project / programme management environment
- Effective at fostering relationships with both public and private sector organisations at regional and national level to develop funded programmes, deliver impact and value to build long term partnerships
- Strong relationship management skills and experience in working with a large group of diverse stakeholders to research and agree a collective way forward.
- Knowledge and experience of skills theories and learning styles.
- Proven excellent project management, including resource planning, client relationships, people and communication.
- Effectively able to communicate the value of design to others
- Demonstrable commercial acumen
- Have line management experience and a passion for developing people

You will also:

- Be a confident and excellent communicator
- Thrive in external engagements and new environments / with new people
- Be able to be diplomatic, able to act with confidence and integrity in all situations while influencing others
- Be excellent at synthesising diverse perspectives into clear, concise and accessible communication
- Willing and able to attend regular external events (London and elsewhere in the UK)
- Empathetic, pragmatic and adaptable, with a solutions-mindset
- Proactive, hands on and willing to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in
- Confident working at different levels within an organisation
- Willing and able to take a risk-based approach to making decisions
- Curious and open to new ideas and ways of working
- A team player but also comfortable working on your own
- Resilient and comfortable with navigating and leading through change

- Aware of some of the challenges and rewards of working in the not-for-profit sector
- Passionate about Design for Planet

How to apply

If you think this is the role for you and you would like to join us, please submit your CV and a covering letter via this [link](#) by **25th September 2026**.

Please email Ishbel Allotey, our Head of People if you have any questions about the role: recruitment@designcouncil.org.uk

The Design Council is fully committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We welcome applications from everyone who meets the criteria. If you need any additional support, please do send in an early alert to this email address.

Visit [Design shapes the world - Design Council](#) to discover more about our work and mission.