

Head of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE PROJECT- (Léargas)

Specific Purpose Contract – (scheduled for review 1/6/2029)

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST	Head of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE PROJECT- (Léargas)
REPORTING TO	ASPIRE Project Manager (Education Authority NI) & Executive Director of Léargas
JOB PURPOSE	<p>To support Léargas to achieve its operational and strategic vision through the successful implementation of the programmes we deliver.</p> <p>Provide operational and strategic leadership and direction for all aspects of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE, and within the project partnership. Coordinate workstream leads across all areas of ASPIRE. Responsible for the management of all delivery targets associated with ASPIRE, ensuring that the project delivers financial and other output targets. Provide line management to staff delivering on primary and post primary components in Léargas.</p>
PAY GRADE	<p>Léargas utilises Civil Service Pay Scales</p> <p>Appointment refers to Assistant Principal (H) PPC - successful candidate commences strictly at point 1 €89,432</p>
APPLICATION DEADLINE	5pm on 22 nd January 2026

Léargas manages national and international exchange programmes in adult education and schools, vocational education and training, youth, sport and volunteering. These activities connect people in different communities and countries and bring an international dimension to the work of organisations across Ireland. We are the National Agency for Erasmus+ in Adult Education, School Education, VET and Youth, and the European Solidarity Corps (volunteering and solidarity). We have built a national and international reputation for effectively managing significant levels of funding to support international collaboration. We are a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity (CHY 8317).

The Education Authority in Northern Ireland, Léargas, Early Years Northern Ireland, National Childhood Network and Fermanagh Trust collaborate to implement the PEACEPLUS Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education (ASPIRE) programme. ASPIRE targets early years settings, primary, and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, focusing on schools with little or no previous experience in providing shared education opportunities. The programme aims to build a culture of good relations among school children, equipping them with the skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a society free from sectarianism and intolerance, and a culture of cooperation and collaboration is the norm.

Job Purpose:

The overall purpose of the role is to co-develop, co-lead and co-manage a partnership consortium and a team to deliver the ASPIRE Programme which will contribute to the advancement and embedding of Shared Education across Northern Ireland and Shared Learning within the border counties in Ireland. The role is accountable for ensuring that project delivery is focused on meeting the needs of children and young people, in relation to the specified outcomes and compliance framework stipulated by the ASPIRE project and the PEACEPLUS Programme. They must provide leadership of transformational change and the implementation of strategy, policy, and processes to support the specified duties.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

The responsibilities outlined in this job description are not exhaustive and may be adjusted or expanded as necessary, to align with the needs of the project and Léargas. The individual in this role will provide strategic and operational leadership to the team, ensuring excellent collaboration and work practices across the project partnerships and teams. They will facilitate capacity building through knowledge sharing, mentoring, and collaborative partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders. As a member of the Léargas Management Team, the appointed candidate will play a key role in organisational strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement, and communication of key messages.

Leadership Responsibilities of the Head of ASPIRE-PEACEPLUS in Léargas:

Setting Vision and Strategy

- Contribute to the development of a strategic plan for Shared Education and Collaboration through PEACEPLUS ASPIRE and lead the implementation of the project-specific plan.
- Translate the vision of partner organisations into a clear project-specific direction.
- Lead the project and oversee the development of all related processes and procedures.
- Ensure the programme aligns with national policies, reports, and research findings.
- Manage PEACEPLUS ASPIRE in Ireland, collaborate closely with the Lead Partner in Education Authority, and attend meetings as required.
- Formulate and implement strategies and establish processes and procedures that enable the programme to achieve agreed outcomes and results.
- Challenge conventional approaches, harness new technologies, and maximise efficiencies.

Leadership and Management

- Lead, manage, and develop a high-performing team that provides support and advice to schools and other stakeholders, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and responsibilities.
- Promote continuous learning and professional development within the team.
- Encourage staff involvement and engagement in the strategic development and operational delivery of the project.
- Plan, allocate, and evaluate the work undertaken by the team. Convene structured meetings of staff teams as appropriate.
- Delegate responsibility for project work, initiatives, and areas of work to specific project officers for management.
- Actively encourage teamwork and self-development, creating opportunities to maximize individuals' potential, stimulate innovation, and foster connections at all levels.
- Promote a positive culture of performance management within the project through individual and team accountability.

- Foster a culture of constructive feedback, learning, and a commitment to regular and effective appraisals.
- Ensure robust financial management procedures are in place that meet all the requirements of SEUPB and EA.
- Ensure the efficient and effective use of all available resources.
- Provide financial and performance reports and information on budgets to Léargas, EA, and the Project Management Board as required.

Building Relationships and Working with Others

- Build and maintain effective and professional stakeholder relationships.
- Collaborate with education sector partner organisations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery.
- Ensure efficient and effective internal communication with staff in the project.
- Build and maintain effective working relationships and clear lines of communication with other project leads within partner organisations.
- Work closely with partner organisations and colleagues to lead, manage, and monitor change.
- Develop and maintain clear lines of communication and effective working partnerships with relevant external stakeholders and project user groups.
- Lead and manage engagement with staff, schools, and the public on major changes in the project that may affect them.
- Contribute to organisational learning within Léargas and across the project partnership by sharing information and experiences with colleagues and participating in, or leading, cluster groups on relevant themes.
- Take personal responsibility for own personal and professional learning and development, including active involvement in the Léargas Performance Management and Development System.
- Demonstrate Léargas citizenship behaviours and values in your work.
- Perform any other tasks assigned by the Executive Director or Project Partnership.

Person Specification

This is a post seeking an innovative and forward-thinking individual with a proven track record in leadership, management, and curriculum/staff development. In addition, it is essential that the individual has strong interpersonal skills.

Essential Qualifications and Experience

Qualifications:

- Hold a degree or equivalent qualification preferably in the field of education
- Have a minimum of 5 years' experience working in leadership and management roles including staff leadership within an educational service
- Have a minimum of three years' experience in building and managing collaborative partnerships within and/ or across diverse communities
- Experience of working in an international and intercultural context

Knowledge

- Extensive knowledge of Northern Ireland and Ireland's government policy on education matters, including Shared Education.

- Understanding of current and anticipated challenges facing education within both the Northern Ireland and Irish context.
- Deep knowledge and understanding of strategies for supporting the development of Shared Education in schools in both jurisdictions.

Skills

- Proven leadership skills, including the ability to direct and manage staff.
- Proven ability to strategically plan for the efficient and effective delivery of educational services and projects.
- Skilled in resource management and accountability against targets.
- A commitment to the improvement of Shared Education, including its management and standards.
- A strong commitment to a customer-focused approach to service delivery.
- A strong commitment to Inclusion and Diversity.
- Effective communication skills, both oral and written.

General Requirements for All Léargas Staff

Key capabilities required include:

- Building Future Readiness
- Evidence Informed delivery
- Leading and Empowering
- Communication and Collaboration
- Drive and commitment to public sector, European and Léargas values
- Networking and influencing.

We expect our people to show leadership, exceptional organisational and planning skills, and to be analytical and conceptual thinkers with excellent digital, IT, networking and influencing skills. We expect excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including presentation and facilitation skills, combined with an ability to fit within a team that works to support the vision and mission of Léargas.

Application Process

Submit your CV and a concise letter of motivation (max 500 words) by 5pm on Thursday January 22nd.

In your letter of motivation, using the Public Service Capability framework for Assistant Principal Officer grade, please detail your experience under each listed competency, and demonstrate how these will support your delivery of objectives in this role.

A panel of successful candidates may be formed following interviews, and candidates placed on the panel may be considered for future vacancies. Should a work permit be required for employment in Ireland, candidates must bring this to Léargas' attention and obtain the necessary documentation.

Working Conditions

- **Location:** Dublin, with frequent travel within the specified regions targeted by this project as well as national and international travel required. Access to transport is essential to fulfil the requirements of the post.
- **Hours:** 35 hours per week in a flexible work environment.
- **Hybrid Work Arrangement:** Combination of office, home, and on-site work.
- **Benefits:**
 - Generous annual leave
 - Defined contribution pension scheme
 - Staff development and further education support
 - Flexible working/unpaid leave schemes
 - Paid sick leave scheme
 - Death in service benefit
 - Employee Assistance Programme

Léargas is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from people with disabilities