



Candidate Pack for Democratic
Services and Engagement Lead

Welcome

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this important role at the Co-op.

We're one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives, owned by millions of members. In addition to being one of the UK's leading retailers, insurers and funeral providers and employing nearly 70,000 people, we're a recognised leader for our social goals and community-led programmes. We exist to meet members' needs and stand up for the things they believe in. Put simply, we're here to do right by you.

Our Council and Democracy team work for member-owners by making sure their voice is heard, enabling them to choose and connect with their elected representatives locally and nationally and supporting Council to represent their interests in the decisions our Co-op makes.

We are now looking to appoint a Democratic Services and Engagement Lead, who will play a key role in supporting our Group and Council Secretaries to deliver robust and engaging democratic processes, to empower our member-owners to engage with their elected representatives all year round. You'll connect directly with our 6 million member-owners and work closely with our National Members' Council, Board, and senior leaders, providing a fantastic opportunity to lead a large-scale democratic process, and make a positive impact on everything Co-op stands for.

Bringing a robust track record of leading large scale democratic processes and systems, as well as of engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, you will be a keen strategic thinker, able to ensure our democratic processes are aligned with our strategic priorities. Committed to our values and mission, you will ensure that the Co-op lives up to its motto of "Owned by you. Right by you".

Kate Brown
Secretary to the Council



About us

At Co-op, we do things differently. We're founded on a set of values and principles describing a different, fairer and better way of doing business. Our co-operative values and principles are as relevant today as they were when we were founded in 1844, and they're at the heart of our approach to addressing the challenges that our Co-op and society as a whole face today.

We're owned by our 6 million members and exist to create value for them. Our members and their voice are at the heart of the decisions we make; we're only accountable to them, not shareholders.

Our members choose how we spend our profits, supporting over 36,000 community projects local to them; from community fridges, to care for the elderly, to vital projects like Co-op Academies. To find out more, [please follow this link](#).

Member-owners also shape and influence Co-op directly and by voting for other member-owners to represent their interests on our Board and Council. You can find [more information about our governance here](#).

Our Values

We're founded on a set of values and principles describing a different, fairer and better way of doing business. It's why we say we're 'Owned by you. Right by you.'

These shared values are upheld by the International Co-operative Alliance.

We try to demonstrate our commitment to these values and principles in everything we do, and here's just some of the ways Co-op does that:

Self-help

Members joining together and making a difference. Whether it's supporting a national charity like British Red Cross or working in their local community.

Self-responsibility

Every member doing their bit, making our co-op a success by supporting its activities and using its products and services. They encourage others to support it too.

Democracy

All members are equal. Voting power can't be bought – it's one member, one vote.

Equality

Our co-op gives all members an opportunity to get involved, like campaigning for fair trade.

Equity

Co-op is committed to fairness.

Solidarity

Together we're stronger, so members join together to help their co-op achieve even more

Job Description

Job title: Democratic Services and Engagement Lead

Reports to: Secretary to the Council

Role purpose

In this role you'll lead our Democratic Services and Engagement team and support our Group and Council Secretaries to deliver robust and engaging democratic processes aligned to our Co-op Group Rules, to empower our member-owners to engage with their elected representatives all year round. This will include collaborating with and influencing teams across Co-op to create a program of formal and informal ways our member owners can engage with their Co-op and its leaders, linked to our strategic priorities. You'll also lead the end-to-end project management of member focused events as well as coming up with innovative opportunities for member-owners to have their say. You'll connect directly with our 6 million member-owners and work closely with our National Members' Council, Board, and senior leaders, providing a fantastic opportunity to lead a large-scale democratic process, and make a positive impact on everything Co-op stands for.

Main responsibilities

- Be accountable for delivering member-centric formal and informal democratic processes aligned to our overall business strategy so our member-owners can elect and engage with their elected representatives and formal processes.
- Discharge Co-op Group rules by acting as Deputy Returning Officer for our elections and formal democracy to make sure our democratic processes are robust and in line with all requirements.
- Lead on innovative solutions to drive member engagement and participation with our democracy so that member-owners feel empowered to exercise their ownership rights.
- Manage our key democratic events making sure that they're engaging and all elections and motions are carried out to high standards of administration in line with our democratic principles and objectives.
- Make sure that member-owners have timely and relevant access to information about how their Co-op is run, how decisions are made and how they're at the heart of decision making.
- Oversee the development of candidates who are representatives of our Council and Board, making sure they have the right skills and knowledge to support them in moving into an elected position.
- Work closely with the Board, Council and business leaders to establish priorities for member democratic support to drive business performance.
- Deputise for our Council Secretary regarding the discharge of their responsibilities within the Co-op Group rules.

Person Specification

Knowledge and experience

- Significant experience of leading large scale democratic processes and systems, aligned to corporate strategy in formal or regulated environments.
- Extensive knowledge of formal, rules-based electoral and democratic processes and innovation in large complex organisations.
- A track record of effective stakeholder engagement, both internally and externally, within an organisation of comparable complexity.

Skills and abilities

- Strong and sharp strategic thinker, able to ensure our democratic processes are aligned with our strategic priorities.
- Strong political and commercial acumen, with the ability to bring fresh ideas and new ways of working.
- Excellent relationship building and influencing skills up to executive and Board level with experience of collaborating cross-functionally to achieve corporate objectives.
- Able to communicate complex concepts and new ideas clearly and persuasively to key internal and external stakeholders at all levels.

Styles and behaviours

- Values driven with a strong commitment to our mission and to championing and embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do.
- Deep interest in, and commitment to developing, robust and representative democratic structures.
- A natural collaborator, able to work with and engage colleagues throughout the group.



Terms of Appointment

Salary

The salary range for this role is circa £84,500-£90,000 per annum on a permanent, full-time basis.

Location

This role is based in Manchester City Centre – hybrid working with 2 days a week in the office and some evening and weekend work.

Pension

Up to 10% employer contribution.

Annual leave

28 days holiday plus bank holidays (rising to 32 in line with term of service).

Additional benefits

- Private healthcare.
- Company car or car allowance.
- Coaching, training, and support to help you develop.
- Annual incentive scheme.
- Discounts on Co-op products and services.



How to Apply

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/coop-dem-ser-eng-lead/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Please also note the relatively condensed timetable below; if you progress through the process, we may require your time at relatively short notice, and so would be grateful if you could ensure you are available on the following dates:

Closing date	Friday 7th February 2025
Preliminary interviews	16th and 17th February 2025
Final Panel interviews	27th or 28th February 2025

Disability Confident Scheme

The Co-op is actively building diverse teams and welcome applications from everyone. If you have a disability, we can make reasonable adjustments to our recruitment process according to your needs. The Co-op is also part of the Disability Confident scheme, meaning disabled candidates who apply through the scheme are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for a job.

If you would like to be considered under the Disability Confident scheme, please make a note of this in your Cover Letter.

If we invite you to take part in the recruitment process for any of our jobs, we'll ask you if you need any reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate.

You can find out more about the Co-op's Disability Confident scheme and all their commitments to diversity and inclusion at www.colleagues.coop.co.uk/diversity-inclusion-and-wellbeing.

