

RECRUITMENT PACK

Executive Director



Executive Director

- **37 hours per week**, permanent position to commence as soon as possible
- **Post No.:** RS26/27/31
- **Salary:** £58,286.15 - £61,808.36 per annum
- **Responsible to:** Principal & Chief Executive Officer, Bishop Auckland College Group

Responsible for: Embody the key behaviours expected of leaders at Bishop Auckland College Group.

The Executive Director is the strategic and commercial leader of South West Durham Training, accountable to the Principal & Chief Executive Officer for the growth, reputation and long-term positioning of the Centre.

The role exists to expand SWDT's scale and influence across the region: building the relationships with employers, industry bodies and regional stakeholders that shape the Centre's future direction, and ensuring SWDT's standards and curriculum stay tightly aligned to live industry developments. The Executive Director is the public face of SWDT in the sector – expected to spot opportunity, open doors and convert relationships into growth, while holding the Centre to a standard of excellence that develops its reputation as one of the region's leading training providers.

Supervisory responsibility: Staff as detailed on SWDT structure.

Candidates for the post of **Executive Director**, must possess the following qualities:

	Essential	Desirable	Where identified
Qualifications	Qualified to a minimum of level 4 in a relevant discipline, or equivalent significant senior leadership experience Minimum of a level 2 safeguarding qualification (to be achieved within 6 weeks of appointment) Designated Safeguarding Lead qualification (to be achieved within 6 months of appointment)	Degree in a relevant discipline Management qualification Relevant Equality & Diversity qualification (to be achieved within first year of appointment)	Application Form Certificates
Experience	Significant experience of working within the engineering/ manufacturing sector, combined with experience of education or training delivery Experience of effective people management and developing high performing teams Experience of attaining challenging performance targets Experience of managing resources and resource utilisation	Direct experience of leading or being involved in an Ofsted inspection (for example, being an aspect or subject lead) Experience of growing an engineering and advanced manufacturing curriculum offer over time, in response to employer and industry need Experience of developing a commercial training offer	Application Form References Interview

	Essential	Desirable	Where identified
Experience	Effective engagement with a range of stakeholders including but not limited to regional bodies, local employers and external agencies Effective budgeting and financial management to meet agreed targets. Implementing strategies for quality improvement and quality assurance.	Experience of safeguarding leadership, such as acting as a Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy Previous responsibility for capacity planning Recent curriculum management experience	Application Form References Interview
Knowledge and skills	Credibility to engage with employers at a senior level, demonstrating a good level of knowledge of the engineering/ manufacturing sectors Thorough understanding of the range of funding streams and how these might be maximised Current knowledge of curriculum reforms and developments including key national policy issues Knowledge of the Education Inspection Framework and the Ofsted inspection process The ability to meet deadlines		Interview References

	Essential	Desirable	Where identified
Personal qualities, attitude and behaviours	Embody the key behaviours expected of leaders at Bishop Auckland College Group A professional approach A strong commitment to continuous quality improvement Self-motivated and able to work under pressure The ability to lead and motivate staff and if necessary, make difficult decisions	Experience of safeguarding leadership, such as acting as a Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy Previous responsibility for capacity planning Recent curriculum management experience	Interview



Specific Responsibilities

Initial allocation of functions of which the post holder will have direct responsibility:

1. Quality, curriculum and performance

- a) Ensure SWDT's curriculum range is shaped by, and stays ahead of, the needs of employers and industry, reviewing organisational structures annually to keep pace with demand.
- b) Maintain high standards of teaching, learning, assessment and support, working with the Director of Quality and the Director of Teaching Excellence, in line with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.
- c) Maintain strong learner success rates and positive destination outcomes, through pathways designed to promote progression to apprenticeships, jobs and higher education.
- d) Ensure SWDT's curriculum and student support are genuinely inclusive, meeting the needs of learners with SEND and high needs, working closely with the Head of Aspire and other relevant colleagues across the Group to ensure the right specialist support, resources and pathways are in place.
- e) Provide the Vice Principal – Curriculum & Quality with timely, considered intelligence and advice on SWDT's performance, market position and emerging opportunities.
- f) Continue to evaluate and develop effective strategies for learner recruitment and employer engagement.

2. Strategic growth and regional influence

- a) Drive the growth of South West Durham Training, identifying and converting opportunities to expand the Centre's scale, reach and commercial performance.
- b) Build and sustain SWDT's profile and influence across the North East, positioning the Centre as a leading voice in regional skills, training and apprenticeship policy.

c) Represent SWDT at regional and national forums, employer networks, and skills partnerships, ensuring the Centre has a seat at the table wherever the future of regional training provision is being shaped.

d) Bring forward proposals to the Principal & Chief Executive Officer on strategic priorities, market opportunities and growth options, grounded in national, regional and local intelligence.

e) Identify and pursue new income streams, contracts and commercial partnerships that strengthen SWDT's financial base and broaden its offer.

f) Work closely with the Assistant Principal Business and Community to ensure SWDT's growth, employer engagement and commercial activity are aligned with, and contribute to, the wider strategic and commercial direction of the Bishop Auckland College Group.

3. Industry relationships and standards

a) Build deep, lasting relationships with employers and industry bodies that go beyond day-to-day delivery – relationships that actively shape SWDT's curriculum, investment priorities and future direction.

b) Keep SWDT's standards, equipment and curriculum tightly aligned to live industry developments, anticipating change in the sectors SWDT serves rather than reacting to it.

c) Use employer and industry intelligence to continuously raise the bar on training quality, ensuring SWDT's reputation for excellence is earned and visible in the sector.

d) Champion SWDT within national and regional industry networks, trade bodies and employer groups, building the Centre's credibility as a partner of choice.

e) Translate industry relationships into tangible outcomes – new partnerships, investment, programme development – rather than relationship-building as an end in itself.

4. Operational and people leadership

- a) Provide inspiring, motivational leadership within South West Durham Training and across the Bishop Auckland College Group.
- b) Lead the SWDT team to deliver an exceptional service to employers, learners and stakeholders.
- c) Provide direct line management of staff identified within the agreed structure, with support from HR where appropriate.
- d) Contribute to the leadership and success of the wider Bishop Auckland College Group through participation in appropriate forums and activities.
- e) Act as campus leader for the Aycliffe Business Park site, taking day-to-day responsibility for the premises, estate and on-site operational standards, and acting as the senior on-site point of contact for staff, students and visitors.

5. Financial performance and business development

- a) Work with the Bishop Auckland College Assistant Principal Finance and Resources to develop a reliable, ambitious budget and maintain effective financial monitoring and reporting.
- b) Ensure that financial and growth targets are achieved, safeguarding the interests of South West Durham Training and the wider Bishop Auckland College Group.
- c) Work with the Assistant Principal - Business & Community to drive business development activity that meets income targets and generates commercial income, in partnership with employers and other stakeholders.

6. Health and Safety

- a) Hold overall responsibility for the formulation, development and implementation of the Centre's health and safety practices, working closely with the Health and Safety Adviser.
- b) Ensure clear, accountable health and safety duties are allocated across the organisation, with adequate resource and training in place to support staff.

- c) Establish a system of duty management so the Centre remains safe during occupation at all times, including when the Executive Director is off-site.
- d) Ensure SWDT is an active participant in the Group's safeguarding and health and safety committees, and that health and safety is embedded within curriculum delivery and the Centre's self-assessment and quality improvement processes.

7. Safeguarding

- a) Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across SWDT, including online safety and the Prevent duty, keeping training and knowledge of developments up to date.
- b) Provide advice, support and expertise to staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, and act as a point of contact with the relevant safeguarding partners.
- c) Take responsibility for managing referrals to the local authority, Channel, the Disclosure and Barring Service or police as required, and ensure accurate, secure record-keeping of concerns and referrals.
- d) Ensure all staff understand and apply SWDT's safeguarding policies and procedures, with annual review, and that a lead or deputy is always available, including during annual leave.

8. Additional points

- a) Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted and embedded in all aspects of the operation of South West Durham Training.
- b) Ensure that South West Durham Training meets all relevant legislative requirements, including safeguarding and health and safety.
- c) Carry out any other duties as required by the role and as directed by the Principal & Chief Executive Officer, Bishop Auckland College Group.

All members of staff have an important role to play in achieving the vision, mission and values stated in the College's Strategic Plan.

Bishop Auckland College Group's mission:

Creating positive change through education and learning.

Our cultural behaviours

*Constantly strive to improve...***yourself, others and the group**

*Group over self...***do what's right for the group**

*Pick up the litter...***never be too big or too busy to do the things that need to be done**

*Communicate with kindness and clarity...***be positive and constructive**

*The difference is in the detail...***focus on the inputs and the outputs will look after themselves**



About South West Durham Training

South West Durham Training (SWDT) is one of the North East's most respected specialist engineering and advanced manufacturing training providers. Founded in 1967, the organisation was established by a consortium of leading engineering and manufacturing employers in response to the UK's growing demand for skilled technicians and engineers. The centre was created following the Industrial Training Act 1964, with a clear purpose: to provide world-class technical training that would support regional industry and economic growth.

Located on its dedicated campus at Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe, SWDT has continually evolved alongside the engineering sector it serves. From its original training workshops, the centre has expanded several times – in 1969, 1975, 1994, 1998 and again with a £3.6 million advance manufacturing extension in 2011 – to ensure learners and employers benefit from industry-standard facilities and emerging technologies.

Over almost six decades, more than 10,000 apprentices and students have trained at SWDT, many progressing to senior leadership positions within engineering and manufacturing businesses across the UK and internationally. Alumni include leaders within organisations such as Gatwick Airport, Cummins, Husqvarna, Stanley Black & Decker and Nifco, demonstrating the lasting impact of the organisation on the UK's engineering workforce.

SWDT has long been recognised for excellence in technical education. It became the first training centre in England to achieve Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) state and was described as “world class” by the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. In 2014, SWDT achieved an Outstanding Ofsted judgement across every inspection area, becoming the first Group Training Association in England to receive this distinction.

Since entering into a strategic partnership with Bishop Auckland College in 2014, SWDT has become an integral part of Bishop Auckland College Group, combining its specialist engineering expertise with the wider strengths and resources of the Group. Together they deliver technical education from Level 2 through to Higher Education, apprenticeships and commercial workforce development, supporting employers across advanced manufacturing, engineering, building services and emerging technologies.

With engineering and advanced manufacturing identified as national priorities for economic growth and significant investment being directed into apprenticeships, technical education and advanced manufacturing, SWDT is exceptionally well positioned for its next phase of development. The Executive Director will have the opportunity to build on an outstanding legacy whilst shaping the future direction of one of the UK's most established engineering training organisations.

Why this role matters now

Engineering and advanced manufacturing are central to the UK's future economic growth. The transition to net zero, advances in automation and digital manufacturing, investment in defence, transport and clean energy, and the continued expansion of high-value manufacturing all depend upon a skilled technical workforce. At the same time, employers across the North East continue to face significant shortages of engineers, technicians and manufacturing specialists.

South West Durham Training is uniquely positioned to respond to this challenge.

With nearly 60 years of heritage, deep-rooted employer relationships and a reputation for excellence in technical education, SWDT has built a legacy that few specialist providers can match. As part of Bishop Auckland College Group, it combines this specialist expertise with the scale, stability and ambition of one of the region's leading further education groups, creating an organisation with both strong foundations and significant potential for growth.

The next Executive Director will inherit an organisation with an outstanding reputation, but also one entering a pivotal period of opportunity. The challenge is no longer simply to maintain excellence, but to shape the next chapter of SWDT's development—expanding its reach, strengthening partnerships with employers, influencing regional skills priorities and ensuring its curriculum continues to anticipate the needs of industry.

This is a role for a leader who is as comfortable engaging with chief executives, industry bodies and regional stakeholders as they are leading high-performing teams. Someone who can spot opportunities, build influential partnerships and translate ambition into sustainable growth.

For the right individual, this is an opportunity to lead one of the UK's most established engineering training organisations at a time when technical skills have never been more important. The decisions made in this role will help shape the future workforce of the North East and contribute directly to the region's economic prosperity for years to come.

SWDT Timeline

