

Background information for the post of LocalMotion Middlesbrough Community Worker (May 2026)

1. About MVDA

1.1 Our vision and mission

Our vision is that local communities are active, strong and engaged.

MVDA exists to support an effective, enterprising and inclusive voluntary and community sector that makes a difference to the lives of local people and to their communities.

1.2 Our services

In support of voluntary and community action, we:

- provide practical support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, including help around set up, governance, funding and sustainability
- provide training, information and resources, and regular bulletins
- support volunteers and volunteer involving organisations
- promote and support VCSE sector influence in local planning activity, representing VCSE sector interests at partnership meetings
- bring VCSE organisations together at a range of themed forums and events, including opportunities for networking with others
- work to enable local people and communities more generally to influence the design and delivery of services intended to meet their needs
- also run projects to fill gaps in services and support the development of new initiatives.

1.3 Our values

Delivery of our mission is underpinned by a commitment to:

- social justice and prioritising work with the most economically, politically and socially disadvantaged communities
- the belief that strong communities are characterised by diversity and inclusion
- promoting awareness of the rights and needs of different groups of people on the basis that choice and opportunity should not be limited by age, belief, class, disability, gender identity, race, sex or sexual orientation
- collaborative and co-operative approaches to meeting the needs of Middlesbrough people
- the importance of independent challenge in formulating effective policy and planning and upholding the rights of people experiencing disadvantage and discrimination
- good stewardship of MVDA's resources and honesty and openness in our dealings with others.

1.4 Our strategy

Our long-term strategy covers four areas in which we expect to have an impact:

- i. Local VCSE organisations are in a stronger position to meet the needs of local people
- ii. Public policy and services better reflect community needs
- iii. More local people from all backgrounds are engaged in their communities
- iv. MVDA has the resources and capacity it needs to deliver on its strategic plan.

Each of our impact areas are supported by several outcomes, which provide the focus of our delivery work.

2. About LocalMotion Middlesbrough

LocalMotion Middlesbrough is part of a national movement working across six places in England and Wales to explore new ways of creating long-term social, economic and environmental justice.

In Middlesbrough, LocalMotion brings together local people, community organisations, public sector partners, funders and institutions to work collaboratively on the root causes of inequality and create the conditions for communities to thrive. Our shared purpose is to grow stronger communities, create connections and opportunities, and to reimagine a more just future for everyone.

LocalMotion is different from traditional programmes or funding models. It is based on long-term relationship building, collaboration, shared learning and experimentation. The work recognises that complex issues such as poverty, inequality and exclusion cannot be solved by individual organisations working alone or through short-term transactional approaches.

Instead, LocalMotion supports communities, organisations and institutions to work together in more connected, equitable and community-led ways, building trust, sharing power, learning from experience and testing new approaches to change. We recognise that systems change work is often complex, evolving and sometimes uncomfortable, but we believe lasting change happens “at the speed of trust”.

LocalMotion Middlesbrough’s long-term plan, sets out a shared ambition for the period to 2031 focused on:

- growing stronger and more inclusive communities
- supporting community wealth building and wellbeing
- strengthening collaboration across sectors and communities
- creating more equitable and participatory approaches to decision-making
- developing new ways of working that tackle root causes rather than symptoms.

The work of LocalMotion Middlesbrough continues to evolve through learning, reflection and collaboration with local communities and partners. Current and recent activity has included:

- developing and supporting Middlesbrough Voices, a resident-led group creating space for local people to shape conversations, priorities and local decision-making
- facilitating collaboration around poverty and wider systems change work across Middlesbrough
- supporting work around equity, diversity, inclusion and community cohesion
- strengthening relationships between communities, organisations and local institutions
- supporting learning, participation and capacity building across Middlesbrough communities.

LocalMotion Middlesbrough is hosted locally by Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA), which acts as the Local Fiscal Host for the programme.

LocalMotion nationally is funded through a collaboration of funders including:

- City Bridge Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Lankelly Chase Foundation
- Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The Tudor Trust was one of the founding funders of LocalMotion, contributing financial resources for the initial design and development phases of the initiative.

3. The role of Community Worker

We are recruiting to this new post of Community Worker to support a broad programme of community-focused work in line with the ethos and priorities for LocalMotion Middlesbrough.

A key focus of the work will be to take on responsibility and further develop the work of Middlesbrough Voices – the resident-led participation platform within LocalMotion Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Voices creates structured opportunities and is attended by individuals who live, work, volunteer and study in Middlesbrough, many of whom have lived experience of inequality. The aim of the group is to be a place for co-

production to inform local priorities, services and decision-making. The next phase for Middlesbrough Voices will focus on deepening reach, strengthening participation infrastructure and embedding clear feedback loops linked to regular interaction with local decision-makers.

This is an exciting opportunity to help shape and develop community-led work within LocalMotion Middlesbrough at a time of growing momentum and collaboration across the town. The role will involve supporting existing activity while also helping to identify, develop and respond to emerging community priorities, ideas and opportunities.

The role will suit someone who is relational, adaptable and community-focused, and who is comfortable working within a collaborative and evolving environment. We are looking for someone who can build trusted relationships, support meaningful participation and help create the conditions for communities and organisations to work together differently.

We recognise that valuable experience comes from many different backgrounds and welcome applications from people with lived, voluntary, grassroots and professional experience relevant to the role.

Salary and contract

The grade for this post is NJC points 18-21 (currently £31,537-£33,143), with a starting salary for this post is £31,537 plus up to 6% employer pension contribution, which is matched to the employee contribution and subject to any statutory minimum requirements as defined by law.

We welcome applications from individuals on a full-time basis, job share or secondment.

Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS)

We have assessed this post and concluded that at the current time, clearance through a DBS check is not required.

Interviews

We expect interviews to take place on Thursday 2 July. Please let us know with a covering note to your application if you know that you will not be available on this date as it will inform our interview planning after we have concluded the shortlisting process.

The recruitment process will include an interview panel involving representatives from LocalMotion Middlesbrough and MVDA.

To apply

The closing date for completed application forms is **12noon on Thursday 18 June**. Applications that arrive after this time will not be considered.

Further information

If after reading the recruitment material, you would like to know more, contact Helen Hargreaves, LocalMotion Middlesbrough Programme Co-ordinator on 07463669563 or Helen.Hargreaves@mvdauk.org.uk

Appendix 1: LocalMotion Middlesbrough Plan submission summary

Feelings and momentum

LocalMotion will pave the way for a thriving, growing and resourceful Middlesbrough; building on our strengths to create an equitable, fairer place created by our diverse communities for all our communities. We will build impetus to rebalance power within our place, bringing it closer to our communities, through communities empowered to affect change and ensuring everyone's voice is both heard and valued.

We recognise that the challenges of our place require systemic change underpinned by a sense of common purpose. Traditional hierarchical, competitive, and transactional ways of working have not achieved our aspirations. A lack of positively critical reflective practice to really define success has prevented an open dialogue about what has worked and not worked, stifling progress. These systemic changes can only come about through a more collaborative approach built on common purpose with progress at the speed of trust.

To achieve our dream for Middlesbrough we need to establish a stronger shared purpose; nurture relationships between all sectors and communities; recognise, acknowledge, celebrate, and invest in what is already working well; develop new and more truly collaborative ways of working; develop our people; redistribute and devolve power; and nurture a more inclusive economy.

And to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is the 'golden thread' throughout our LocalMotion, we are developing guiding principles that will always apply to our systems change work.

Awareness and storytelling

Our stretch is to create a shared vision for our place that everyone from all sectors is behind. To achieve this we need to find, develop, and embed ways of working together to imagine and bring about transformation in the systems and structures in Middlesbrough to improve the lives of everyone here. We want to create a system that is driven by the communities it serves – redistributing power and ensuring the needs of all the community are aligned, with the flexibility to be brave and agile to respond to the voices of the community. To enable these changes, we aspire for our LocalMotion to do the vital work of making space for openness, trust, and shared vision to arise.

Our Core Group feels more inclusive, settled, and stable, whilst being comfortable to challenge, and be challenged. We've improved and streamlined our decision-making processes. We have stronger links with funders. Our connections with, and involvement from, Public Health is strengthening. We have a better understanding of the value statutory bodies can bring to our work.

Capacity has been a significant challenge for everyone involved with our LocalMotion. This has impacted on delivery of activity and, in some cases, created feelings of

overwhelm. At times, it has felt challenging to maintain clarity about the initiative and changes around processes. Because of capacity issues, time for reflection has also felt limited. Another challenge is maintaining and developing involvement from, for example, statutory bodies.

A particular success for us has been deepening relationships and building trust within the Core Group. We feel many of the right people are 'around the table', and we are growing in confidence through increased ownership and shared direction. We think our work around community engagement has been particularly successful.

By 2031 we will see a clear, proven improvement in people's lives, through a tangible plan; we will have established trust across all sections of Middlesbrough; we will have an established, inclusive approach.

Beyond 2031 we will have a shared vision for Middlesbrough led by innovation on root causes that creates a regenerative approach to leadership making Middlesbrough a beacon of innovation, fairness and vibrancy; we will have trust in communities and institutions that they can innovate and create together to 'solve' big structural issues like poverty, the economy, etc; we will lead on our own narrative: Middlesbrough is the leading light in creating a fairer and more equal political and economic system.

To achieve this we need funding and other support to do the real work of innovation and to strengthen our fragile ecosystem in Middlesbrough. We need to establish a clearer and more shared purpose; we need to be bold, courageous and brave together; we need to involve more people and organisations; we need to identify and learn from what already works; we need critical friends to provide support and challenge from outside our Core Group, and resources and support to 'hold the space' for capacity building. In terms of non-financial support and tapping into the expertise and support from funders, we need input on systems thinking, leadership capability building, and place-based change.

Decision-making

We have found decision-making to be particularly challenging as an area where our aspiration to do things differently came into contrast with traditional processes, such as procurement and accountability. The evolution of decision-making has been iterative, learning as the work has progressed. However, there remain tensions that impact on our decision-making. As we progress, we recognise that there will be a challenge between building momentum through engaging with more people and stakeholders and designing a decision-making process that is inclusive, where people feel they have a stake, but that is not burdensome, unresponsive to local needs, or bureaucratic. To help with this, we have established a set of broad milestones (three, nine, and fifteen year horizons), guiding principles, success criteria (from short term/within the Core Group, to long

term/across Middlesbrough) and year one actions to achieve devolved decision-making power within LocalMotion Middlesbrough and more widely.

Collaboration and relationships

The main systems change mechanisms we are planning to use are

- **capacity building** – collaboration, supporting new ways of working, developing people, nurturing a more inclusive economy, building capacity and skills, investing in those we want to involve more.
- **convening** – nurturing relationships, establishing shared purpose, being bold, courageous, and brave together, ‘holding the space’.
- **devolving budgets** - to redistribute and devolve power.
- **learning** – to acknowledge what is working well and embed learning.

Our intention is to make more and better use of systems tools to continue to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the system(s) we are living and working in. We will use these new insights, alongside our existing insights, to inform how our investments around capacity building, convening, and devolved budgets are allocated, including being clear about which ‘leverage points’ they aim to target. We can clearly see how a combination of investment activities focused in this way, and informed by ongoing use of systems thinking tools, will give us our best chance of successfully changing the systems we are most concerned with over the next eight years, and the longer term.

Budget

We will weight the unrestricted aspect of the budget across the high-level areas of investment that will be needed, as follows:

- **Investment area 1: Capacity:** staffing costs, supporting organisations and people to take part, capacity for collaboration, co-design and co-production, investing in people.
- **Investment area 2: Convening:** all costs associated with nurturing relationships - ‘holding the space’ to establish shared purpose, be bold, courageous, and brave together.
- **Investment area 3: Devolved budget to address structural inequalities and support innovation:** with a particular emphasis on empowering communities who are marginalised and discriminated against.
- **Investment area 4: Learning:** resources to engage a local learning partner.

Our budget will need to adapt and flex in response to learning across the eight years. We will therefore use the budget in a way that reflects the dynamic and emergent nature of working in a systems and complexity informed way.