Education & Learning Development Officer

Fixed-Term Contract (9 Months)

JOB DETAILS

Job Title: Education & Learning Development Officer

Department: Commercial & Customer Experience

Location: SVR Head Office, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

The postholder will be primarily based at the Railway's offices in Kidderminster but will be expected to travel regularly across the Severn Valley Railway network, including stations, visitor facilities, operational locations, museums and heritage assets. The role will also require regular engagement with schools, colleges, universities, community organisations, funding bodies, local authorities, partner organisations and other stakeholders across the region as required.

Reporting To: Head of Commercial & Customer Experience

Contract Type: Fixed-Term Contract (9 Months)

Proposed Start Date: January 2027

Proposed End Date: September 2027

Salary: Competitive, dependent upon experience

Hours: 37.5 hours per week. Occasional evening and weekend working may be required to support stakeholder engagement, educational activities, events and partnership development.

ABOUT THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

The Severn Valley Railway is one of the UK's leading heritage railways, operating over 16 miles between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth and welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The Railway preserves and operates a nationally significant collection of heritage rolling stock, infrastructure, archives and engineering assets whilst providing education, community engagement and heritage conservation activities that deliver public benefit across the region.

As the Railway continues to develop its charitable and educational impact, we are seeking an ambitious and creative Education & Learning Development Officer to establish the foundations for a sustainable and impactful education programme.

JOB PURPOSE

Thanks to grant funding support, the Severn Valley Railway has created a fixed-term Education & Learning Development Officer position to develop a comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy and establish a sustainable future for education across the Railway.

This is a strategic development role focused on creating a lasting legacy. The successful candidate will work with staff, volunteers, educators, learners, community organisations and external partners to develop learning opportunities for people of all ages, from school pupils and college students through to adult learners, community groups, visitors and lifelong learning organisations.

The role will maximise the educational value of the Railway's unique assets, including:

- The living heritage railway and its operations
- The Engine House Visitor Centre
- Historic locomotives and rolling stock
- Railway archives and collections
- Engineering workshops and maintenance facilities
- Volunteer knowledge and expertise
- Railway history and heritage
- STEM and engineering activities
- Sustainability and environmental programmes
- Skills development and careers engagement

A key objective of this role is to work closely with the Railway's Fundraising Manager to build a sustainable future for education and learning at the Severn Valley Railway. By the completion of the nine-month contract, the postholder will be expected to have developed a robust pipeline of funding opportunities, partnerships and investment prospects capable of supporting the continuation and growth of education activities beyond September 2027.

Success will therefore be measured not only through the development of a high-quality strategy and learning programmes, but also through the establishment of a credible and achievable pathway towards long-term funding and sustainability.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Education Strategy and Development

- Develop a comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Severn Valley Railway.
- Produce a three-year Education and Learning Development Plan.

- Review current educational, interpretive and community learning activities across the organisation.
- Identify opportunities to increase educational impact and community engagement.
- Develop clear educational objectives, outcomes and performance measures.
- Ensure education activities support the Railway's charitable, heritage and community objectives.
- Create recommendations for the long-term development of an Education and Learning function.

Learning Programme Development

- Design and pilot educational programmes and learning experiences.
- Develop learning opportunities linked to:
    - Railway Heritage
    - Local History
    - Industrial Heritage
    - Mechanical Engineering
    - Electrical Engineering
    - Steam Technology
    - Transport Systems
    - Environmental Sustainability
    - Conservation
    - Careers and Skills Development
- Create educational resources and learning materials.
- Develop opportunities for both on-site and digital learning.
- Support the development of engaging interpretation and public learning experiences.

Lifelong Learning and Public Engagement

- Develop learning opportunities that engage people throughout their lifetime.
- Establish relationships with:
    - Primary Schools

    - Secondary Schools
    - Further Education Providers
    - Universities
    - University of the Third Age (U3A)
    - Adult Education Providers
    - Community Groups
    - Heritage Organisations
    - Special Interest Groups
    - Local Authorities
- Develop public learning opportunities including:
    - Talks
    - Lectures
    - Guided Experiences
    - Workshops
    - Demonstrations
    - Community Events
    - Digital Learning Content
- Promote the Railway's heritage, engineering capability and volunteer expertise as valuable educational resources.
- Encourage wider public understanding of heritage conservation, engineering, railway operations, sustainability and local history.

Partnership Development

- Build productive relationships with educational institutions, community organisations and relevant stakeholders.
- Create a network of strategic education and learning partners.
- Establish and facilitate an Education Advisory Group.
- Work collaboratively with Railway staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Represent the Railway at educational, heritage and community forums and events.
- Develop partnerships that support both educational outcomes and future funding opportunities.

Funding and Sustainability

- Work closely with the Fundraising Manager to identify, develop and pursue funding opportunities for education and learning activities.
- Develop relationships with grant-making bodies, charitable trusts, foundations, educational institutions, local authorities, businesses and potential sponsors.
- Support the preparation of grant applications, funding proposals and partnership bids.
- Develop a three-year Education Funding Strategy.
- Create a sustainable operating model for future education provision.
- Identify opportunities for earned income through educational visits, workshops, specialist learning experiences and partnership activities.
- Produce a business case demonstrating the long-term value and sustainability of an Education and Learning function.
- Develop a robust pipeline of future funding opportunities capable of supporting continued education provision beyond the initial grant-funded period.
- Work towards securing funding commitments, active funding applications or identified funding opportunities that provide a realistic pathway for the continuation of education and learning activities beyond September 2027.
- Make recommendations regarding future staffing, governance and resource requirements.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop systems to monitor participation, impact and programme effectiveness.
- Measure educational outcomes and visitor engagement.
- Maintain appropriate records and reporting systems.
- Provide regular reports to management and trustees.
- Produce a final evaluation report and recommendations for future development.
- Present findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholder groups.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The postholder will:

- Act as a positive ambassador for the Severn Valley Railway.
- Work in accordance with the Railway's values, policies and procedures.
- Comply with all applicable Health and Safety requirements.
- Support the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Work collaboratively with employees, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and purpose of the role.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

Experience

- Experience of developing, managing or delivering educational, learning, interpretation or community engagement programmes.
- Experience of project management and delivery against agreed objectives.
- Experience of building partnerships and stakeholder relationships.
- Experience of developing strategies, plans, reports or funding submissions.
- Experience of working with a diverse range of stakeholders.

Skills and Knowledge

- Excellent written, verbal and presentation skills.
- Strong planning and organisational abilities.
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and priorities.
- Ability to work independently and use initiative.
- Strong analytical and report-writing capabilities.

Personal Qualities

- Enthusiastic and highly self-motivated.
- Creative and innovative thinker.
- Strong interpersonal and influencing skills.

- Passion for education, heritage and community engagement.
- Commitment to delivering high-quality outcomes.

Desirable Criteria

- Teaching qualification or educational background.
- Experience within a museum, heritage, railway, visitor attraction or charitable organisation.
- Knowledge of curriculum-linked learning.
- Experience of adult learning and lifelong learning programmes.
- Experience of grant-funded projects.
- Experience of fundraising, bid writing or funding development.
- Experience of working with volunteers.
- Understanding of railway operations, engineering or industrial heritage.
- Full UK driving licence and access to a vehicle.

KEY DELIVERABLES

Strategic Outputs

By September 2027 the postholder will have delivered:

- A completed Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy.
- A three-year Education and Learning Development Plan.
- A stakeholder engagement and partnership framework.
- Recommendations for the future structure and operation of education provision.
- A framework that positions education and learning as a core element of the Railway's charitable and community mission.

Educational Legacy

- Pilot learning programmes serving multiple audience groups.
- Educational resources and learning materials.
- Enhanced utilisation of the Railway's heritage, engineering, operational and archival assets as educational resources.
- New partnerships with educational institutions and community organisations.

Funding Legacy

- A three-year Education Funding Strategy.
- A pipeline of identified funding opportunities and prospective funding partners.
- Education-focused funding applications and proposals developed in conjunction with the Fundraising Manager.
- Strategic relationships with key funding bodies and educational partners.
- A sustainable operating model for future education provision.
- A business case for a permanent Education and Learning function.
- A credible pathway for the continuation and expansion of education activities beyond September 2027.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Success in the role will be demonstrated through:

- Approval of the Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy.
- Establishment of productive partnerships with schools, colleges, universities, community organisations and lifelong learning providers.
- Delivery and evaluation of educational pilot programmes across a range of audience groups.
- Development of a three-year funding strategy agreed by the Railway.
- Creation of a robust funding pipeline in partnership with the Fundraising Manager.
- Submission of funding applications and development of investment propositions where appropriate.
- A clear and deliverable pathway for continuing education and learning activities beyond the initial grant-funded period.
- A robust business case for a permanent Education and Learning function.
- Evidence that education and learning can become a sustainable long-term activity supporting the Railway's charitable, community and heritage objectives.

WHY JOIN US?

This is a rare opportunity to shape the future of education and learning at one of Britain's most successful heritage railways.

The successful candidate will help establish an education function capable of inspiring future generations, engaging lifelong learners, supporting communities and unlocking the educational value of nationally important heritage assets.

Most importantly, they will create the foundations for a sustainable, funded education programme that will continue to deliver public benefit long after the initial project has concluded.

The Severn Valley Railway is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates.