**INNOVATION & GROWTH SPECIALIST**

**JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Contract:** Permanent, full-time (35 hours per week)  
**Based at:** Chesterfield, Derby, Leicester or Nottingham (Lincoln based applicants also considered). Additional travel – locally, nationally and occasionally internationally – required

**Salary:** £42,500 to £45,000 per annum (dependent on skills and experience)

*This contract is funded through Innovate UK until 31 March 2026.*

**1.**  **MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE**

The role will support some of the most ambitious, high growth potential innovative SME’s in the East Midlands Region. The role will also focus on helping SMEs to benefit from national and global opportunities so they could become tomorrow's global success stories.

The Innovation & Growth Specialist will be of exceptional high calibre and capable of being a combination of coach, mentor, critical friend, and champion to this exceedingly demanding group of SMEs. To be successful the Specialist will have experience of supporting and advising SMEs and the senior management teams at various stages of the business life cycle. Experience in UK Government Future Economies is vital, as is a knowledge and understanding of investment raising.

**2.**  **POSITION IN ORGANISATION**

* Reports to the Head of Innovation Services.
* Day-to-day liaison with the Innovate UK Business Growth delivery teams.
* Day-to-day liaison with the Chamber colleagues.

**3.**  **DUTIES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

* To help innovative SME’s to grow and scale at pace:
  + Assess and understand the specific needs of innovative SMEs and support them effectively
  + To analyse the needs of the business and identify challenges and opportunities
  + To address short-term issues, stabilise the business and agree forward actions
  + To understand the regional and national supports available for SMES
  + To monitor and support SMEs, manage innovation and plan for future growth
  + To support high growth plans.
* To act as strategic coach and mentor to clients to support SMEs develop their own long-term innovation commercialisation plans:
  + Support a diverse range of SMEs (from seed to scale) to develop a growth strategy and their own long- term innovative operations and help them develop new markets making use of Innovate UK Business Growth services, those attributed to Innovate UK membership of Enterprise Europe Network and other support organisations
  + Specifically help SMEs manage the issues and risks associated with their business, taking in to account several external factors such as:
    - access to funding and finance
    - digitalisation
    - supply chains to make them ready for internationalisation
    - training, including leadership, investment readiness and pitching to investors
    - access to expert/ specialist resources / infrastructure.
* To facilitate a holistic analysis of the business to gain an in-depth understanding of its current performance and potential for growth. To assist SMEs to prioritise issues and identify potential courses of action:
  + Provide robust strategic advice to SMEs by establishing facts, weighing up pros and cons, examining consequences, and deliver the action plans
  + Able to understand and communicate the key business issues affecting the profitability and growth of an enterprise, along with the factors leading to success in commercialising innovative ideas.
* To select business support services that meet the agreed needs, from the full range of private and public sector providers:
  + Maintain knowledge of network, through attendance at events and other networking opportunities
  + To identify business needs and signpost as necessary and appropriate
  + To work with SMEs to develop an innovation commercialisation strategy and tailor available support to deliver the objectives
  + To promote various sectors initiatives
  + Receive referrals from a wide range of sources responding to leads and enquiries in a diligent and timely manner
  + To refer SMEs to other parts of the Innovation Eco-System where appropriate
  + Work with UKRI, Innovate UK Family and Innovate UK Business Growth colleagues and key stakeholders to identify and map external support available for SME’s.
* Identify innovative businesses with the best growth potential:
  + Be a self-starter, seeking appropriate ambitious businesses through networks and targeted marketing
* Handle leads and enquiries to ascertain suitability for Innovation & Growth support and services and create leads and conversions ensuring documentation complies with Innovate UK requirements
* Account manage a portfolio of clients and deliver bespoke support packages by working with SMEs one-to-one
* Record and update data regularly into the appropriate CRM systems and with agree project protocols.
* Manage performance and achieve targets set for the number of SMEs assisted, new businesses created and growth in employment.
* Prepare project claim paperwork accurately and submit to the Contract and Audit Manager in a timely manner.
* Undertake any other reasonable activities as directed by the Chamber’s Senior Leadership team.

**4.**  **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **Knowledge and experience**   * Experience working in or with the following technology sectors: Creative, Digital, Industrial and MedTech * Knowledge/Experience of working in emerging markets * Demonstrable interest in and understanding of investment finance and business sustainability issues * Knowledge or experience in Innovation Policy and related programmes * Knowledge of SME development issues and other business disciplines that impact on business performance * Knowledge and experience of issues under the Sustainability agenda, including Circular Economy, Energy Efficiency, Infrastructure etc * Knowledge of the strategic choices, practical process and current issues (such as marketing, access to finance, intellectual property, business development, etc.) * Business and innovation strategy (vision and strategic focus on innovation; implementation of strategy) * Knowledge in organisation & culture structures * Innovation life cycle (idea management, process development, launch & continuous improvement) * Enabling factors (HR & Incentives, IT, Marketing) * Change / Transformation management * Market validation and commercialisation of innovative ideas (incl. pricing strategy/model, distribution channels, access to funding & finance) * Experience of working with high growth companies * Preparation of high growth action plans |
| **Specialty Experience & Knowledge** *(general knowledge or specialism in one or more of the following areas)*   1. UK Government Future Economies:  * Experience working in/around identified future economies of   Net Zero, Health and Wellbeing, Digital and Technologies.   1. Funding & Finance:  * Experience of raising finance either through Innovate UK, Horizon Europe or through private sector investment rounds. * Understanding P&L and balance sheets, concepts such as ROI, breakeven, cash-flow and working capital * An understanding of equity finance and what investors are looking for in a company looking to raise finance.  1. Innovation Management:  * Experience using innovation/strategic management tools within an SME environment. Knowledge of GROWTHMapper would be beneficial. * Business acumen and enough experience to credibly mentor C-Suite, Directors & Entrepreneurs in development of differentiated business models * Experience of helping service and manufacturing companies embrace innovation in their processes and business models * Experience of leading workshops in developing and pivoting business models in response to changing market perceptions * Application of ‘Lean start-up’ principles to ensure responsive and effective, dynamic business strategies for innovation fuelled growth (minimum viable product, business model pivoting etc.) * Able to help the companies establish clear, impact driven measurable goals for its innovation strategy with alignment to the overall business growth strategy.  1. Internationalisation:  * Exposure to International collaboration and strategic partnering (challenges/ processes/region specific knowledge) * Have a global mindset and experience in the legal and operational aspects of doing business abroad. |
| **Qualifications**   * Educated to degree level * Professional qualification in business support or evidence of equivalent demonstrating continuing professional development |
| **Skills and abilities**   * Strong drive for results and a high level of resilience * Good financial, analytical, reasoning and decision-making * Ability to assess risk assess business plans, financial accounts and ancillary information, including personal assessment of potential borrowers * Able to express ideas clearly, both verbally, face-to-face, and in written communications and actively listen to others logically and accurately * Able to accomplish the goal by efficiently establishing an appropriate course of action for self and others * Excellent social skills * High level of skill in Microsoft 365, Microsoft teams and other platforms * Comply with the law, including international law and treaty obligations and uphold the administration of justice * Deal with the affairs of the public sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration * Effective in identifying problems, seeking pertinent data and recognising important information to solve complex problems and deal with new issues |
| **Personal attributes**   * Champions our members, our towns, cities, counties, and our achievements * Work collaboratively with our partners, stakeholders, and networks * Be responsible to our communities, people and environment * Be innovative in our thinking, processes and delivery * Full driving licence (able to drive in the UK for business purposes) * Access to own transport, and willing to travel * Tenacious and driven to succeed * May occasionally be prepared to work flexibly in terms of working hours |

 **5. OTHER INFORMATION**

This role is eligible to participate in the Chamber’s agile working policy.

Employee name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_