



“Doing good things in Midd”



Middleton Co-operating

Development Lead Recruitment Pack

**Applications close 11.59pm
on Sunday 6th September 2026**



Welcome!

Hello, and thanks for opening this pack.

Over the past few years, we have helped Middleton residents turn ideas into action across housing, community energy, arts and culture, local enterprise, community ownership and the future regeneration of our town.

Some of that work has happened through major town-wide projects.

Some of it started over a brew.



Thanks to National Lottery players, we have secured almost £4.5 million of Solidarity Fund support over seven years.*

That means we can invest in people, relationships and long-term organising. It means we can grow our team, support new areas of work and build practical answers to issues people face in everyday life.

We are looking to recruit people who can build trust, work across differences, use initiative and help turn needs, frustrations and possibilities into organised action for community benefit.

You don't need to have followed one particular career path. Relevant experience might have come through paid employment, community organising, running a group, volunteering, campaigning, caring, running a home, starting something yourself, supporting other people or living through the issues our work is trying to address.

We are interested in you as a person.

We want to understand your values, how you work with people and what you could help Middleton become.

We hope this pack gives you a clear sense of our organisation and what working with Middleton Co-operating would involve.

*Thanks to National Lottery players, Middleton Co-operating has received almost £4.5 million from The National Lottery Community Fund. The funding will be used to make good things happen with people in Middleton; to increase community power and build a fairer local economy through co-operation, community ownership and resident-led action.

A bit of background

It all started in 2019 with a conversation between Middleton residents in The Olde Boar's Head.

The topic was a long-standing problem in the town: Warwick Mill.

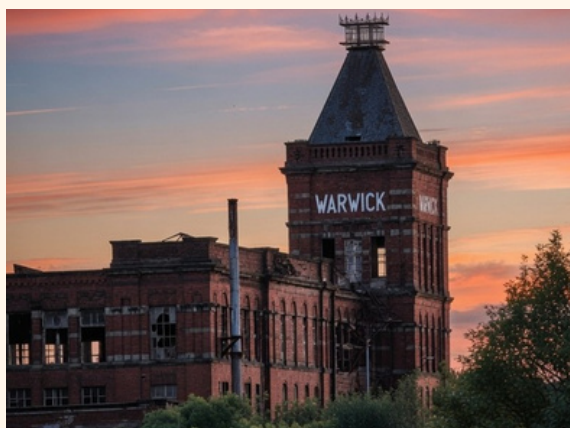
The Mill is five storeys of decaying, derelict neglect towering over the centre of Middleton.

A group of Middletonians, including Mark, Kallum and James, who are still part of the Midd Co-op team, met to discuss how community-led action could push things forward.

We dreamt of a huge community-led, co-operative and community wealth-building project that could transform the Mill and the town.

After setting up the Warwick Mill Action Group, we dreamt some more.

We decided the principles of co-operation, community power and community wealth building should not be restricted to one building. They should be town-wide.



Middleton Co-operating was born.

Today, we are a registered Community Benefit Society.

We still want to see a community-led plan to redevelop Warwick Mill, and our work has expanded into arts, housing, renewable energy, town centre regeneration, local business development, and reforming social security.

We work with residents, community groups, businesses, co-operatives, public bodies and other partners to build a fairer, more connected and community-powered town.

We exist to benefit the wider community rather than generate private profit.

There's loads more we want and need to change, which is why we're recruiting.

Our ambition is to help Middleton become Greater Manchester's first co-operative town - in the borough where the modern co-operative movement began, and to demonstrate a new way of working that puts community power at the heart of building a different kind of economy that maximises local ownership, minimises extraction, and works for the benefit of local people and communities.

How we work

The work begins with conversations with residents. We are rooted in Middleton and build strong personal connections across the town.



Circles

Our circles build on the needs of Middleton and the foundational economy.

What needs fixing in Midd? What can we help to improve? What do Middletonians want to develop? Some of our most established circles include:

Housing Justice

Our Housing Justice Circle grew after Langley residents came into the Lighthouse Project, where we are based, and told us about their struggles with their social housing provider. We worked with them to create a Middleton branch of Greater Manchester Tenants Union, now run by the people who first raised the issue.

Arts & Culture

Our Arts & Culture Circle grew from the need for a welcoming town-centre space where artists and residents could work creatively. Culture Co-op brought Arts Council England funding into the town, and we developed Art House Middleton.

Town Centre

Our Town, Our Future began because Middletonians needed a proper say in the huge regeneration planned for the town through the Mayoral Development Corporation. We took the conversation into schools, businesses, events, community spaces and Art House. Nearly 2,000 people completed the survey, more than 500 joined face-to-face conversations and over 1,300 asked to stay involved.

Green Energy

Our Energy Circle grew from local people wanting climate action to mean something practical for Middleton. We helped set up Middleton Community Energy, bringing residents and technical expertise together to develop renewable energy projects with local schools and explore how more of Middleton's energy could be owned and generated locally for community benefit.

Addiction & Mental Health

Our addiction recovery and mental health work grew through our relationships with local people with lived experience who wanted a safe, pressure-free place to meet and support each other.

GM Living Income

Greater Manchester Living Income Campaign works to transform our social security system, starting with a guaranteed living income pilot that would show that when people are given the resources they need (both money & genuine caring support), all of our communities do better. We're part of a GM-wide coalition of great organisations who are driving this work forward.

We also want to develop work on green spaces, early years/childcare, transport, food, adult care, youth spaces, advice, work and skills, migration & sanctuary support and other areas of the foundational economy that don't currently work well for local people.

Principles

We do things with Middleton, not to Middleton.

We don't arrive with a finished answer and ask residents to approve it.

We listen, connect people, understand what is already happening and develop ideas with the people who will live with the result.

Not every idea can happen, and people will not always agree. We are honest about the limits while making room for people to influence priorities and decisions.



We help people connect, organise, make decisions and act. Tangible progress might happen straight away or take years of patient work.

Nobody in the Midd Co-op team should become the only person who can hold a project together.

We want team members who strengthen and support other people, share knowledge, build and maintain relationships between people and organisations, support new leaders and build things that can continue beyond one individual.

That means knowing when to lead, facilitate, support and step back.

We combine imagination with proper systems. We like creative ideas, informal conversations, festivals, exhibitions, parties and trying things differently.

We help make people's ideas and visions real while maintaining sound governance, safeguarding, financial control, clear decisions, good records and honest reporting.

Why go to a meeting when you can go to a party?

How we make decisions



Most of our work is developed through circles that bring together members, residents, staff and people with relevant knowledge and/or lived experience around a defined area of work.

We are committed to learning and practising sociocracy.

Our strategic conversations and decisions happen through our management collective, bringing together directors, the staff team, our freelancers, expert advisers and key partners.

For significant decisions, we aim to reach informed consent rather than rely only on a majority vote.

Circles help us share responsibility, make authority clearer and include the people closest to the work.

Sociocracy is not about everybody deciding everything. It is about putting decisions in the right place, giving people appropriate authority and making accountability clear.

We are always learning. We don't expect new colleagues to arrive as experts in sociocracy, but we do expect them to be willing to learn and take part.

Working at Middleton Co-operating

We operate a four-day, 28-hour working week. Full-time roles come with a full-time salary and employment entitlements, with the 28 hours worked over four days.

We made this choice because rest, family, friendship, community involvement, personal interests and life outside work matter, and because we want our people to stay healthy.

Employment at Middleton Co-operating is based on agency and autonomy.

We do not operate rigid daily start and finish times. Colleagues organise their working time around the needs of the role, the people they work with and their own circumstances.

Our work sometimes happens during evenings or weekends - events, festivals, conversations. When this happens, working time should be adjusted elsewhere.

Flexibility has to work both ways. It relies on communication, shared planning and taking responsibility for commitments.

Our work is rooted in Middleton. We support hybrid working, and employees are normally expected to spend at least half of their working time in the town.

Our current employment arrangements include:

- A four-day working week - 28 hours.
 - 25 days' annual leave plus bank holidays, pro rata.
 - Up to 12 weeks' contractual sick pay at normal salary within a rolling 12-month period.
 - An 8% employer pension contribution.
 - Flexible and hybrid working.
 - Work equipment and expenses.
 - Compassionate, emergency and carers' leave.
 - Learning and role support.
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Working with us

Middleton Co-operating is ambitious, growing and still developing.

We have some solid systems in place, and others still need work. As we grow, you will help shape the structures and ways of working we need next.

The work can be unpredictable. A planned day may change because a resident needs support, an opportunity appears or something urgent happens.

Community work can be emotionally demanding. People may share experiences of distress, poverty, poor housing, discrimination, ill health, isolation or institutions that have let them down.

So, you will need compassion and empathy, good boundaries, safeguarding awareness and the ability to work through disagreement.

It is brilliant too.

You might help somebody arrange their first community meeting, see someone develop into a confident local leader, bring a neglected space back to life or help a vision become real.

We welcome applications from people with different backgrounds, experiences and routes into this work.

We will make reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process.

Right, here's the role...

Development Lead

Salary - £43,000 to £46,000 FTE

When people join us, their starting salary is normally at the bottom of the scale. We would consider a proposal for this to be different if you can make a strong case based on your previous experience. We give annual increments of £1,000 until the top of the scale is reached, and we agree an annual inflation uplift.

Hours - 28 hours over four days, which is our full-time working week.

We also welcome part-time and job-share applications.

Working arrangements - We are a four-day week employer with flexible working arrangements.

Annual leave - 25 days (i.e. 6.25 weeks) plus bank holidays, pro rata.

Pension - 8% employer pension contribution.

Contract - Permanent.

Location - At least half of your working time will be based in Middleton. You can work from home or elsewhere for the rest. We are currently based at the Lighthouse Project in Middleton Shopping Centre.

The Role

Middleton Co-operating is a sociocratic Community Benefit Society that aims to do good things in our town. We operate through a number of separate but connected “circles” that focus on specific areas of work.

Our busiest circles and areas of work currently include Housing Justice, Arts and Culture, Town Centre Regeneration, Energy, Greater Manchester Living Income Campaign and addiction recovery/mental health.

We want to consolidate and strengthen these current areas of work, and develop new circles around green spaces, early years/childcare, transport, food, adult care, youth spaces, advice, work and skills, migration & sanctuary support and other areas of the foundational economy that don't currently work well for local people.

We're looking for someone to help drive our vision for making life better for people in Middleton.

Development Lead

Our new Development Lead will join our existing core team to help develop and deliver our strategy, build our organisational capacity, and coordinate and energise our current circles while developing new ones.

You will enable people to work collaboratively while embedding social justice principles, community power, co-operative values, equity and inclusion into everyday practice.

You will play a key role in our organisational development, learning and strategic thinking - connecting our work to the local, regional and national networks we are part of.

The role requires an experienced community-focused person with a track record of leadership with/in community-led organisations, co-operatives, social enterprises or similar environments.

Core responsibilities

- Co-lead our strategy, partnerships and relationship-building, and operational delivery.
- Facilitate and support the work of our circles and our circle facilitators through a community organising approach, embedding co-operative and caring ways of working alongside principles of ownership, community power and community wealth building.
- Contribute to the development of our organisation's "internal" operations, taking the lead where appropriate on:
 - Governance.
 - Finance and budgets.
 - Policies and processes.
 - Learning and evaluation.
 - Events and community engagement.
- Support our team's development in caring, compassionate and inclusive ways.

Wider responsibilities

You will be willing to:

- Learn, explore, take part in organisation-wide work and adventures.
- Be guided by social justice and anti-oppressive practice.
- Challenge behaviour that reproduces harm, including classist, ableist, colourist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist behaviour.

We expect everyone to:

- Care for each other.
- Be curious, listen well and share space.
- Challenge people when they are out of line.
- Learn and have fun.

Person Specification

If you see yourself doing this role, we encourage you to apply even when you have gathered your skills and experience through a range of routes.

We are committed to recruiting fairly, transparently and inclusively, and to removing barriers that might disadvantage people whose skills and experience have come through less traditional routes.

Your supporting statement, any interviews and any other tasks or activities give you the opportunity to show us your skills, experience and knowledge against the criteria below.

Essential: these are the things you need to demonstrate to be considered for the role.

Desirable: these are things we would ideally like, but please still apply if you do not meet all of them.

Essential:

- You understand the limits of current national and local economic models and have sound knowledge of the new economy approaches including community wealth building, co-operation, community ownership and community power.
- You have a strong commitment to solidarity, social justice, equity, inclusion and anti-oppressive practice.
- You have experience of supporting projects from idea to completion including set-up, project planning, financial management, governance and policies.
- You have experience of organisational learning and recognising and demonstrating success beyond the usual outcome measures.
- You are an experienced, relationship-centred leader who can listen with empathy, help team members grow and learn, and work supportively with everyone involved in our circles.
- You understand the importance of wellbeing, self-care, and reflective practice.
- You are an experienced facilitator who can confidently enable meetings, conversations and gatherings in caring, supportive and inclusive ways.
- You are a confident communicator who can:
 - share information in a way that makes sense to the different people we work with, from grassroots communities to people working in larger systems.
 - challenge constructively when individuals and organisations behave in an extractive, excluding or exploitative way.
- You are able to work in different styles and paces, from autonomous decision-making and time and workload planning to peer support and active, mutually supportive teamwork.

Desirable

- You already have a connection to Middleton.
- You have a lived experience of the challenges that we're trying to address through our different circles.
- You have experience of organising, planning and delivering events.
- You have experience of working in less hierarchical, consent- or consensus-based spaces and can support others to work in this way.

How to Apply

You can apply in writing or by audio.

Online

Visit: middleton.coop/jobs/development-lead

Email your application to people@middleton.coop:

Please send us:

- A one-page CV (this could be a word-like document or a PDF)
- Either a two-page supporting statement (this is ideally a word-like document to support our blind recruitment process)
- or an audio recording of no more than three minutes (for us to be able to listen to it so the format is ideally MP3, AAC, M4A or WAV).

By post

Post your CV and supporting statement to:

Middleton Co-operating - Recruitment Team
c/o Lighthouse Project
Second Floor
Middleton Shopping Centre
Middleton
M24 4EL

Your supporting statement should show how you meet the essential and desirable criteria. We know it's hard to fit everything in. We're particularly interested in work (paid or unpaid/voluntary) you have been involved in that matches the skills and values we are looking for. **You may also want to tell us how you would develop our existing and new circles.**

We recognise that the use of AI technologies can be useful in reducing the work that goes into job-hunting, and make it more accessible. However, we kindly request that you use your supporting statement to help us learn more about you as a person through sharing examples of your experience.

Please do not include your name or contact details in the supporting statement, or don't say your name in the audio recording. The audio applications will be transcribed and anonymised before they are shared with the shortlisting panel.

Fair Recruitment

Blind recruitment information

We will use an anonymised first-stage shortlisting process (sometimes called blind recruitment) - we're doing this to lower the impact of unconscious bias we acknowledge we all have.

This means that, for the first-stage shortlisting process, we will only read your supporting statement and only see your experience history (i.e. paid or unpaid employment/experience/volunteering).

One member of the team who is not involved in scoring will separate your CV and contact details from your supporting statement, give each application a reference and remove obvious identifying details such as names & pronouns.

The shortlisting panel will assess only the anonymised supporting statement and the experience history (that would have been copied/taken out of the CV) against the published essential criteria.

Audio applications will be transcribed and anonymised before being shared with the panel.

The full CVs will be reviewed only after the first-stage shortlist has been agreed.

Further fairer recruitment steps

To support our approach to equity, we will offer an interview to any candidate who meets the essential criteria and identifies as disabled or as having a disability.

To make sure all applicants are treated fairly, we will only consider information submitted as part of the application process when making shortlisting decisions.

We will not look at online profiles or seek personal comments from shared contacts.

Access and other ways to apply

Please email people@middleton.coop if you need support with your application because of your access needs, or if you would like to submit it in a different way.

We will make every effort to support you.

Deadline and Recruitment Timetable

Applications close at 11.59pm on Sunday 6 September 2026.

We plan to complete the first-stage shortlisting and inform everyone of the outcome by Friday 11 September 2026.

First-round interviews will take place during the week commencing Monday 28 September 2026.

Second-round interviews, if needed, will take place on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 October 2026.

We will respond to everyone who has sent us their application to confirm whether or not they have been shortlisted.

We will not be able to provide individual feedback in the initial application stages. We will offer feedback to everyone who has an interview with us.

We will tell shortlisted candidates about the next stage when we contact them. The exact process will depend on the number of applications, but we will give people enough notice to take part.

We won't accept applications via recruitment agencies.

Questions and conversations

If you have any questions about the role or would like a conversation with someone from the team, email info@middleton.coop with "Development Lead question" in the subject line and we will arrange a time.

Useful Information

Please read all the information in the recruitment pack before deciding whether to apply.

When thinking about your experience, consider your whole life. Paid and unpaid work, school or college, community activity, hobbies, caring responsibilities and what you do at home can all give you skills and experience that are relevant to this role.

We are committed to recruiting in a way that is fair, transparent and inclusive. We actively work to remove barriers that could disadvantage people whose experience has come through less traditional routes, and aim to assess applicants only on their ability to do the role, not on unrelated characteristics or circumstances.

We ask all candidates about their access needs and whether they require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process.

Adjustments might include:

- Extra time.
- Breaks.
- Information in another format.
- An accessible venue or an interview online.
- Support for people whose first language is not English.

We will make every effort to meet people's needs.

Further Information

At Middleton Co-operating, we acknowledge that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

We are committed to preventing abuse and neglect, safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults we come into contact with through our work, and creating a safe, positive and open culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

We do not hold a Sponsor Licence and therefore cannot accept applications that require sponsorship to work in the UK.