

A collaborative partnership company  
jointly owned and operated by  
Brockenhurst College and The  
Bournemouth & Poole College.

# Wessex Education Shared Services Limited

Information for Applicants to  
the post of Executive Head

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Brockenhurst College

# WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the position of Executive Head at Wessex Education Shared Services Limited (WESS).

This document provides background information to the Company, its Membership, its Purpose, and its current organisational and governance structures.

Please take some time to read it carefully and follow the weblinks embedded within to explore further information about the Member Colleges and the further education context.

If, having considered the content, you have questions about the organisation that you wish to ask before submitting an application please email [info@wess.ac.uk](mailto:info@wess.ac.uk)

If required, we may arrange a date and time for you to have an informal discussion with the current Executive Head.

Please note that the closing date for Applications is: **23:59 on Sunday 20 September 2020.**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview in Bournemouth during the w/b 28 September 2020.

## INTRODUCTION

Wessex Education Shared Services Limited is an innovative, first-of-its-kind shared service centre providing business support to two Further Education Colleges in central southern England. It was conceived during the years of the coalition government's policy of austerity (when further education sector funding was cut significantly) as a vehicle to maximise the amount of funding directed to teaching and learning. Background information about the creation of WESS is available [here](#).

Across the seven years since it was formed, WESS has secured cost savings for its Member Colleges exceeding £1.5M. At the same time, it has created service resilience and expertise that its Members would have been unlikely to afford individually during the period.

The post of Executive Head is critical to ensuring the success of the collaborative partnership between the two Member Colleges. The Colleges are distinct institutions with their own unique missions and objectives. They compete directly with each other for every learner and apprentice enrolled, and every employer engaged, and with a wide range of other education providers in the local market.

WESS is therefore a dynamic and unique environment which, through the success of its Colleges, helps to make a significant positive difference to the lives of thousands of people of all ages in the communities across Bournemouth, Poole and the New Forest.

# BACKGROUND TO THE WESS COMPANY

## Legal Status

WESS Ltd was created in November 2012 and registered as a company limited by guarantee at Companies House (Company Number: 08301285). It began operating on 1 April 2013 when 68 employees were transferred in from its Member Colleges on 1 August 2013.

It currently has two Member Colleges:

The Bournemouth and Poole College (BPC) ([www.thecollege.co.uk](http://www.thecollege.co.uk))

Brockenhurst College (Brock) ([www.brock.ac.uk](http://www.brock.ac.uk))

Both are General Further Education Colleges regulated and funded by the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) and the [Office for Students](#). College Accounts are available for review [here](#). An overview of FE funding may be found [here](#).

WESS has two Directors: Diane Roberts (Principal and CEO Brock), Diane Grannell (Principal and CEO BPC)

Its registered office is at Redlands, 25 Knyveton Road, Bournemouth, [BHI 3QQ](#). The building is part of the BPC estate and is maintained by the College.

On joining WESS Ltd each Member College entered into a Framework Agreement for the shared services it receives from WESS. This Agreement remains in place until either party terminates. The minimum notice period for termination is one full academic year.

The Company may, with the approval of the Board, admit further Members. WESS may also assume additional services for the Colleges and it has expanded its provision for its Members several times since its formation.

## Governance

The WESS Board sets the strategic direction of the Company and has oversight of service quality and value. It meets three times per year (once each academic term). It is chaired by one of the Directors. Board meeting attendees are:

Director (Brock)  
Director (BPC)  
Vice Principal, Director of Finance (Brock)  
Vice Principal, Chief Operating Officer (BPC)  
College Governor (Brock)  
College Governor (BPC)  
WESS Executive Head

The WESS Operations Group manages the operational delivery of the shared services and exercises direct control over these. This group is also responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the VAT cost sharing group regulations (described below). It meets at least once each half term (approx. six times per year). Operations Group attendees are:

Vice Principal, Director of Finance (Brock)  
Vice Principal, Chief Operating Officer (BPC)  
Assistant Principal for Learners (Brock)  
WESS Executive Head  
WESS Head of MI and Funding  
WESS Head of Finance and Operations  
WESS HR Shared Services Manager  
WESS Systems and Compliance Manager

Regular liaison meetings are conducted between the Vice Principal from each College and WESS Heads of Service to manage and prioritise service levels. WESS Heads of Service also attend each College's Senior Leadership Team.

## **VAT Status**

WESS is constituted as a VAT Cost Sharing Group which permits service charges made by WESS to each College to be VAT exempt, provided the total value of the College's annual VAT liabilities do not exceed a published threshold (set annually by HMRC). The cost share represents the contribution made by each College to WESS for the services it receives (at cost) from WESS. These can be varied but are currently set at:

BPC	61.7%
Brock	38.3%

Cost shares may be varied, with the approval of the Board, according to the value of the services provided to each Member.

## **Financial**

The WESS annual budgets for 2020-21 are:

Revenue:	£2,145,000 (no change from 2019-20)
Capital:	£35,000 (£80,000 in 2019-20)

Approximately 92% of revenue expenditure relates to costs of employment, the remainder being software licenses, utilities, insurances, and consumables. Capital is typically invested annually in upgrades to shared IT infrastructure (e.g. finance and HR systems, client PCs, remote desktop solutions etc) and Redlands maintenance (e.g. roofing repairs!).

WESS aims to break even each year. Any surplus is re-invested in service improvements or returned to the Colleges.

## **Employees**

WESS currently employees 72 staff.

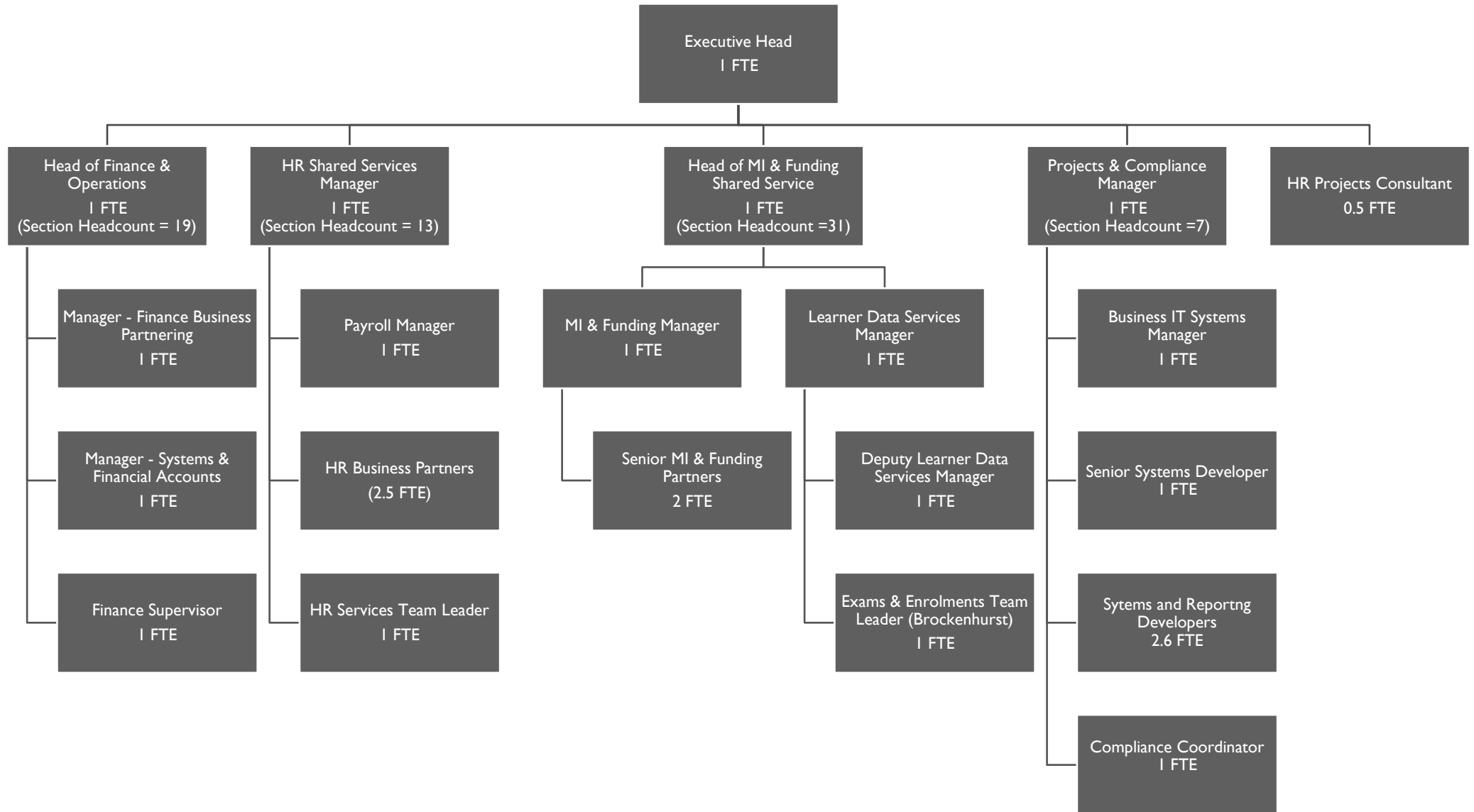
Just over a third of current employees have been with WESS throughout the seven years since its formation. Many of these also have long service prior to that in one of the Colleges.

70% of employees are female. The average age of employees is 43. 68% are employed on full time contracts.

In accordance with Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, employees who transferred in to WESS from the Colleges under TUPE were eligible to retain their existing LGPS pension membership ([www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org)). Employees who have been recruited directly are eligible to join the NEST Pension Scheme ([www.nestpensions.org.uk](http://www.nestpensions.org.uk)). The Colleges guarantee the LGPS liabilities for staff who transferred under TUPE.

A management organisation structure diagram and outline scope for each service are provided below.

# MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE – AUG 2020



# **OUTLINE SCOPE OF SHARED SERVICES – AUG 2020**

The WESS Registered Office (Redlands) is the main workplace for about 65% of WESS employees. About half of these operate in management support and partnering roles that require regular visits to the College campuses in Bournemouth, Brockenhurst or Poole. The other 35% of employees are in customer facing roles (student enrolment and exams and HR business partnering) based permanently on the College campuses.

## **FINANCE SHARED SERVICE**

Management and Financial accounting, cashflow management and reporting  
Annual budget preparation  
Business partnering with College budget holders  
Financial analysis (critical costs & income streams, project viability, funding contracts)  
Direct debit processing, sales ledger, refunds, debtor control  
Purchase ledger invoice processing  
Banking and income monitoring, fixed assets, government reporting  
Finance system development

## **HR and PAYROLL SHARED SERVICES**

Employment contracts and variations  
Recruitment support  
Pre-employment checks and compliance monitoring (inc Ofsted requirements)  
Paternity, maternity, sabbaticals, and special leave  
Sickness recording  
Strategic staffing advisory support  
Employee development and engagement  
Support for Manager: performance, absence, discipline, grievance and dignity at work  
Processing of salary and monthly pay  
Payment of authorised travel and expenses claims  
Pension management  
Support for maternity, paternity and sickness absence pay

## **MI and FUNDING SHARED SERVICES**

Management of Student applications, enrolments and learning agreements  
Student payments  
Student timetables (Brock)  
Apprenticeship enrolments  
Levy/Digital Apprenticeship Service support  
Funding and Quality audit compliance (inc Ofsted requirements)  
Submission of returns to funding bodies including Individualised Learner Record (ILR), HE (OfS)  
Course data management  
Business and curriculum planning  
Funding forecasting  
Exam Entries, registrations, achievements and certification  
Exams event management and exams (JCQ) audit and regulations compliance

## **PROJECTS and COMPLIANCE SHARED SERVICES**

Student information systems administration, reporting and management reports  
Data Protection management  
Compliance monitoring across all WESS services  
Software systems programming  
Systems support for Finance and HR systems