Associate Director, Stakeholder Engagement & Public Consultation

Location: Nationwide with travel as required (we offer Hybrid working supported by a Smart Working Policy)

Full Time or Part Time: Full Time

Directorate: Planning & Engagement

Salary: Negotiable DOE

**Company Overview:**

Ardent is the UK’s leading provider of land, consent management, and stakeholder engagement services, supporting major infrastructure and regeneration projects from concept to delivery. With a presence across the UK and Ireland, our dynamic and fast-growing company has supported over 90 Development Consent Orders (DCOs), Transport and Works Act Orders (TWAOs), and their equivalents in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland.

Established in 1992, Ardent has become a trusted partner for clients in the transport, renewables, utilities, and regeneration sectors. We are passionate about delivering life-improving change for communities and future generations, playing a key role in facilitating and delivering the UK and Ireland’s net zero agenda, improving connectivity, enabling the repurposing of high streets and town centres, and delivering new homes for those who need them most.

Our in-house digital solutions team, composed of software developers and AI engineers, and our proprietary platform, Atlas Engage, set us apart in the industry by providing cutting-edge tools and applications that enhance the stakeholder engagement process. We pride ourselves on our community-first approach, ensuring that our projects reflect the needs and voices of all stakeholders, particularly those from seldom-heard groups.

**Role Overview:**

As an Associate Director at Ardent, you will play a pivotal leadership role within the Engagement Service Line, overseeing the delivery of major projects and guiding the strategic direction of our teams across the renewables and utilities sectors. This role is designed for a visionary leader who excels in managing complex, multi-disciplinary projects and has a proven track record of driving business growth through strategic client engagement.

You will be responsible for shaping and executing our engagement strategies, fostering cross-functional collaboration, and ensuring that our projects meet the highest standards of excellence. As an Associate Director, you will also lead on work-winning initiatives, secure new business opportunities, and enhance our market presence. Your leadership will be key to expanding our client relationships and ensuring the success of high-profile projects.

**The candidate will be expected to fulfill the following responsibilities**

* Strategic Leadership & Vision: Lead and manage multiple, large-scale projects within the renewables and utilities sectors. Shape the strategic direction of the Engagement Service Line, driving innovation, excellence, and business growth across all projects.
* Client Relationship Management: Oversee high-level client relationships, ensuring that interactions align with strategic business objectives and consistently exceed expectations. Facilitate effective dialogue between diverse groups, managing high-stakes communications and driving initiatives that enhance client satisfaction and long-term partnerships.
* Work Winning & Business Development: Develop and implement high-level strategies for securing new business. Lead the preparation of proposals for large and complex projects, ensuring they align with Ardent’s strategic goals and contribute to our growth objectives. Your leadership in this area will be crucial for expanding our market presence and securing major contracts.
* People Leadership & Development: Build and lead a high-performing team, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment where all team members feel valued and supported. Mentor and develop consultants, setting the standard for leadership, teamwork, and professional growth within the Engagement Service Line.
* Project Management & Delivery: Oversee the successful delivery of complex, multi-disciplinary projects, ensuring that all aspects—from resource management to stakeholder engagement—are executed efficiently and effectively. Apply your expertise to navigate challenges, manage risks, and deliver outcomes that exceed client expectations.
* Regulatory Compliance & Risk Management: Integrate advanced regulatory knowledge into strategic planning and project delivery, ensuring full compliance with relevant legal frameworks. Guide your teams through complex regulatory environments, using your expertise to secure project advantages and ensure successful outcomes.
* Innovation & Continuous Improvement: Champion innovation across the directorate, proposing and overseeing the development of new services or improvements. Leverage AI and software technologies to drive advancements, enhance project outcomes, and maintain Ardent’s competitive edge.
* Commercial & Contract Management: Demonstrate a thorough understanding of rates, pricing models, and financial management. Oversee contract reviews, manage project financials, and ensure that all financial practices align with Ardent’s goals and objectives.

**Technical Knowledge, Skills & Experience Required:**

* Extensive Sector Experience: Deep expertise in leading stakeholder engagement and public consultation initiatives within the renewables and utilities sectors. A strong understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities within these industries is essential.
* Leadership & Management: Proven ability to lead and manage large, multi-disciplinary teams across complex projects. A strong track record of developing talent, driving performance, and delivering successful outcomes in high-pressure environments.
* Strategic Client Engagement: Exceptional client management skills, with experience in building and maintaining high-level relationships. Ability to influence and guide clients through complex decisions, securing long-term partnerships and driving business growth.
* Business Development & Work Winning: Extensive experience in identifying and pursuing new business opportunities. Proven success in leading bid teams and securing major contracts that contribute to business growth.
* Regulatory & Compliance Expertise: In-depth knowledge of UK and Irish planning regimes, particularly within the renewables and utilities sectors. Experience in navigating complex regulatory environments and ensuring project compliance.
* Innovation & Digital Proficiency: Proficiency with digital tools and AI applications used in stakeholder engagement. A proactive approach to driving innovation and maintaining Ardent’s competitive edge.
* Commercial Acumen: Strong understanding of commercial and contract management, including budgeting, financial reporting, and contract negotiation. Ability to manage project financials to align with overall business objectives.

**Why This Role?**

As an Associate Director at Ardent, you will have the opportunity to lead some of the most critical infrastructure projects in the UK and Ireland, driving the success of our Engagement Service Line and shaping the future of stakeholder engagement in the renewables and utilities sectors. This role offers a unique platform to showcase your leadership, influence strategic decisions, and contribute to Ardent’s ambitious growth plans.

**Why Now?**

Ardent is on a remarkable growth trajectory, with exciting opportunities emerging across the renewables and utilities sectors. The demand for innovative and effective stakeholder engagement is at an all-time high, and we need leaders like you to help us meet these challenges. Joining Ardent now means becoming part of a dynamic and forward-thinking team that is setting new standards in the industry and leading projects that are essential to achieving the UK and Ireland’s Net Zero goals.

**Behavioural Skills Required (Based on our Values) :**

* **Thirst for Knowledge** *(We embrace opportunities to learn and improve for personal and professional growth) -* Demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of yourself, and your people, for your role in a growth company and future role. Coach and mentor others (or actively engage with your Coach) to have a deep understanding of their knowledge and experience. Actively supporting with areas of development and career goals, extending beyond a technical remit and actively developing your business knowledge on an on-going basis.
* **Own It** *(We do what we say we will. We own our individual actions, are accountable for them and take pride in adding value)* - Act like it matters, take pride and caring about the outcome of people in your team, or who you work with, and your clients objectives.
* **Be the Difference** *(Focus energy to make things happen. Be beyond process. Stand up, Stand out)* - Be confident in your decisions and implementing them, taking into account the wider structure and *objectives of the business, working with or alongside peers across the business. Be more than any other competent person in your role.*
* **Enjoy the Journey** *(Have fun, be engaged and be proud to be Ardent) -* Translatinggoals and visions of the business into meaningful objectives for your team in a positive and engaging manner (delivering excellence in your own objectives), demonstrating your commitment to Ardent and the wellbeing and development of your team and colleagues. Understand the needs of your people and colleagues to have, purpose/fulfilment, personal growth, engagement, team culture and fair pay.
* **Adapt** *(We drive change and innovation to deliver growth and new opportunities in an ever-changing world)* - As a growth company Ardent is all about change. You must be a change maker. Demonstrate ability to drive and/or implement change to enable Ardent to continue to excel. Listen to your team and people you work with to actively search for opportunities to create change. Exhibit a resilient attitude, communicate key information in a clear and engaging way to influence others**.**

*Ardent is an equal opportunities employer that is committed to inclusion and diversity. We positively encourage applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of race, colour, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability status or other legally protected characteristics.*

With people at the core of our business, we offer employees an unrivalled career opportunity rather than simply a job. In a fast growing organisation, we train, develop and support our staff to grow and achieve their career goals. This is supported by a number of initiatives to look after the wellbeing of our employees whilst allowing employees to work flexibility and maintain a positive work life balance.

We offer an attractive benefits package to include :-

* Hybrid working
* Smart Working Policy
* Medical health plan
* Career progression
* Coaching
* Cycle to Work
* Electric Car Scheme
* Enhanced maternity and paternity pay

For more information, please see our services page on our website at [www.ardent-management.com](http://www.ardent-management.com)

Interested? Get in touch!

Should you be interested in hearing more about the position or wish to send your cv in to [people@ardent-management.com](mailto:people@ardent-management.com) or contact Stuart Thomas [stuartthomas@ardent-management.com](mailto:stuartthomas@ardent-management.com)