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Head of Software Engineering

Crown Commercial Service

Apply before 11:55 pm on Monday 9th March 2026



Reference number

450231

Salary

£72,771 - £80,776

A Civil Service Pension with an employer contribution of 28.97%

Job grade

Grade 6

Contract type

Permanent

Type of role

Digital

Working pattern

Full-time

Number of jobs available

1

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Location

Birmingham, Liverpool, Newport (Gwent)

About the job

Job summary

Crown Commercial Service (CCS) will become Government Commercial Agency (GCA) on 1 April 2026. Please visit our [website](#) for further details.

Insight into CCS - Webinar

Watch our Webinar on the above link and gain valuable insight into CCS and our recruitment processes.

Call to action

We are seeking a highly experienced and inspiring Head of Software Engineering to lead our technical capability and drive the design, development, and operation of modern digital services. This role is central to the department's mission, requiring a leader who can blend exceptional technical expertise with a commitment to service led model and public value.

Job Summary

The Head of Software Engineering will provide strategic leadership and professional direction to our engineering community. You will be responsible for defining the technical standards, architectural principles, and engineering culture required to deliver world-class digital services. You will move the department away from legacy "point solutions" toward a unified, API-first, and cloud-native digital estate, ensuring our services are secure, scalable, and meet the GDS Service Standard.

Job description

Key Accountabilities:

1. Technical Leadership & Strategy (Driving Excellence)

Engineering Strategy and Standards: Co-Define with Strategy and Architecture team and champion the long-term technical vision and technology strategy for the department's services and platforms, ensuring alignment with central government technology policies (e.g., cloud-first, open standards).

Work with Heads of (Architecture, Delivery, Testing, Product) to implement the digital strategy using best practices

Establish and enforce best practices in CI/CD, SRE, TDD, and secure coding (OWASP).

Modernisation: Drive the roadmap for retiring legacy systems (e.g., migration of legacy portals to an Integrated Procurement Platform) while managing technical debt.

Open Standards: Ensure all software is "Open by Default," promoting reuse across the Civil Service and alignment with the Technology Code of Practice.

Be the ultimate owner of engineering quality, setting robust standards for clean code, test-driven development (TDD), CI/CD, and Site Reliability Engineering (SRE) practices across all engineering teams.

Lead the development and modernisation of complex, large-scale systems, including integrating with legacy government systems

Ensure all software development meets the high standards of the Government Service Manual and passes all relevant Digital Service Assessments (Alpha, Beta, Live).

2. People & Capability Leadership (Growing Talent)

Build the Community: Act as the "Head of Profession" for software engineering, fostering a culture of continuous learning, psychological safety, and radical collaboration.

Capability Building: Lead recruitment, retention, and career development strategies. Define the "Definition of Done" and engineering excellence standards across all multidisciplinary teams. Establish and evolve the department's DDaT (Digital, Data and Technology) Engineering Capability, defining clear career pathways, skills matrices, and professional development plans (including coaching and recruitment).

Mentorship: Coach Lead Developers and Senior Engineers, helping them grow into strategic technical leaders.

Line management and Activity management: Manage the development team of perm staff and Manage a balanced mix of civil service and third party resources, ensuring knowledge transfer, transition planning is built in technical delivery plans and building a sustainable in-house technical team.

3. Delivery, Governance & Stakeholder Management (Delivering Public Value)

Agile at Scale: Partner with Delivery Managers and Product Managers to ensure engineering capacity is aligned with the departmental roadmap (Now-Next-Later).

Assurance: Lead technical assessments and peer reviews to ensure services meet WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards and high-performance benchmarks.

SRE & Operations: Oversee the transition from "Build" to "Run," championing Site Reliability Engineering (SRE) and DevOps mindsets to ensure 24/7 service availability.

Represent the engineering function to senior internal and cross-government stakeholders, clearly articulating technical debt, risk, investment cases, and strategic decisions in non-technical terms.

Promote a culture of working in the open and sharing reusable components and best practices with the wider Civil Service DDaT community.

Person specification

Essential Criteria (to be assessed at application stage):

Technical Depth: Proven experience in a senior engineering role (e.g., Head of Engineering, Lead Developer or Architect) building large-scale, distributed systems using modern languages (e.g., Java, Python, Node.js)

and cloud infrastructure (AWS/Azure/Google) in UK Civil service or similar public sector environment.

Leadership: Experience managing "managers of managers" and leading large (20+ person) multidisciplinary engineering functions.

Strategic Vision: Ability to translate complex policy requirements into sustainable technical roadmaps.

Stakeholder Influence: Experience in communicating technical risks and trade-offs to non-technical senior leaders (Directors and Ministers).

Modern Practices: Deep expertise in DevOps, Infrastructure as Code (IaC), and building "Security-In" rather than "Security-On."

Behaviours

We'll assess you against these behaviours during the selection process:

Leadership

Changing and Improving

Communicating and Influencing

Delivering at Pace

Technical skills

We'll assess you against these technical skills during the selection process:

Modern development standards

Development process optimisation

User Focus

Benefits

Alongside your salary of £72,771, Crown Commercial Service contributes £21,081 towards you being a member of the Civil Service Defined Benefit Pension scheme. Find out what benefits a Civil Service Pension provides.

What we will offer you, here are some of the benefits you can expect:

Competitive salary

Generous pension scheme

A discretionary non-contractual performance related bonus

Working remotely in addition to working in advertised office location

Flexi time scheme (available for B1-B6) - Remove this bullet for SCS roles

Minimum 25 days annual leave to a maximum service related 30 days excluding bank holidays

Explore fully how we will reward your work.

Want to make a difference? Find out more about the rewarding work that we do in our candidate pack.

The Civil Service is committed to attract, retain and invest in talent wherever it is found. To learn more please see the Civil Service People Plan and the Civil Service D&I Strategy.

We want to make our recruitment process accessible to everyone, so if there is any way that we can support you, please contact recruitment@crowncommercial.gov.uk

Working flexibly, delivering outcomes

CCS operates a smarter working model that balances flexibility with collaboration. Successful candidates are expected to spend at least 26 days per quarter (approximately 2 days per week, pro-rata) at their contracted office, another CCS site, or off-site for meetings. For the remainder of the time, you may work from home or another suitable location that meets business needs.

Things you need to know

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action. Please see our [candidate guidance \(opens in a new window\)](#) for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

Selection process details

This vacancy is using [Success Profiles \(opens in a new window\)](#), and will assess your Behaviours and Technical skills.

Assessment

Shortlisted candidates will complete an Alternative Leadership Assessment . These assessments are not pass/fail; instead, they provide insights to help the panel explore specific areas during your interview. For more information, [read the gatenby sanderson assessment types](#).

Selection Process

A reserve list may be held for up to 12 months, which the Civil Service may use to fill future suitably similar vacancies across government for candidates who are considered appointable following interview. Should you be placed on a

reserve list and want to be removed please contact recruitment@crowncommercial.gov.uk.

Please note that as part of this recruitment process, if you are unsuccessful at the interview stage but are close to the benchmark score you may be considered for and offered a role at a lower pay band within the same job family.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview or assessment.

Security

Successful candidates must undergo a criminal record check.

Successful candidates must meet the security requirements before they can be appointed. The level of security needed is [counter-terrorist check \(opens in a new window\)](#).

[See our vetting charter \(opens in a new window\)](#).

People working with government assets must complete [baseline personnel security standard \(opens in new window\)](#) checks.

Nationality requirements

This job is broadly open to the following groups:

UK nationals

nationals of the Republic of Ireland

nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK

nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020

Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

[Further information on nationality requirements \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Working for the Civil Service

The [Civil Service Code \(opens in a new window\)](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants.

We recruit by merit on the basis of fair and open competition, as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's [recruitment principles \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equal opportunities. As such, we run a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Civil Service is committed to attract, retain and invest in talent wherever it is found. To learn more please see the [Civil Service People Plan \(opens in a new window\)](#) and the [Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Apply and further information

This vacancy is part of the [Great Place to Work for Veterans \(opens in a new window\)](#) initiative.

Once this job has closed, the job advert will no longer be available. You may want to save a copy for your records.

Contact point for applicants

Job contact :

Name : The Recruitment Team

Email : recruitment@crowncommercial.gov.uk

Recruitment team

Email : recruitment@crowncommercial.gov.uk

Further information

Our recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles details of which can be found at <http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk>

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles, and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact recruitment@crowncommercial.gov.uk in the first instance.

If you remain unsatisfied with the response you receive you can then contact the Civil Service Commission at info@csc.gov.uk

#CCS26

<https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/careers-with-ccs>

