



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Senior Data Scientist	
Directorate	Strategy, Performance and Communication	
Reporting to		
Grade	8	
Evaluation ref:	RP111	Job Family ref:
Role Purpose		
<p>As a Senior Data Scientist, you will lead the development, deployment, and continuous improvement of advanced analytical models that enable proactive, data-informed decision-making across Somerset Council. Your work will focus on machine learning, neural networks, predictive analytics, and simulation modelling — helping services anticipate demand, identify risk, and optimise interventions.</p> <p>You'll be responsible for designing robust, interpretable models and embedding them into operational workflows, ensuring insights are trusted, explainable, and actionable. This role demands deep technical expertise, strategic thinking, and the ability to collaborate across disciplines to translate complex service challenges into data science solutions.</p>		
Accountabilities		
Predictive Modelling		
Build models to forecast risk and enable early intervention in services like social care, housing, and public health.		
Simulation & Forecasting		
Design simulations to test policy scenarios and predict future demand across frontline services.		
Project Leadership		
Manage complex data science projects to ensure quality, business alignment, and stakeholder engagement. Set technical standards, guide architecture, and mentor teams to support enterprise strategy and future readiness of the data platform.		
Ethical Analytics		
Ensure models are explainable, fair, and compliant with governance standards like GDPR and DPIAs.		



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Standards & Governance

Define and enforce best practice in data science, including quality, security, and compliance with governance and regulatory standards.

Mentorship & Development

Support and mentor scientist and cross-service colleagues, promoting best practice, agility, and continuous improvement. Providing matrix task management and/or line management of technical colleagues across the data function.

Stakeholder Collaboration:

Engage with service leads, BI, IT, and governance teams to shape data solutions that meet current and future needs.

Delivery & Optimisation:

Ensure timely, cost-effective delivery of data solutions, optimising workflows and evolving the platform to support transformation and savings.

Innovation & Strategy:

Stay ahead of emerging tech, lead trials of new tools (e.g. real-time, AI/ML), and drive innovation to enhance data capabilities.

Strategic Contribution:

Advise senior leaders on data strategy, risks, and technical options to support evidence-based decision-making, including Chief Data Officer and Head of Business Intelligence and Insight.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Machine learning and statistical modelling, including supervised/unsupervised learning, neural networks, and simulation techniques.	X	
Cloud-based data platforms and tooling (e.g. Azure ML, Microsoft Fabric).	X	



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Model governance and operationalisation (e.g. MLOps, CI/CD for analytics).	X	
Public sector service delivery models and preventative approaches.	X	
Data protection and ethical analytics (e.g. GDPR, DPIAs).	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Modern Delivery Practices: Familiar with CI/CD pipelines and infrastructure-as-code (e.g. Azure DevOps), alongside Agile and DevOps methodologies like Scrum and Kanban to support iterative, reliable delivery of data solutions.		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emerging Tech & AI Integration: Exposure to advanced analytics and AI/ML integration, including tools like Microsoft Copilot, with an understanding of how to embed these into data platforms and pipelines.		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Sector Standards & Strategic Procurement: Awareness of government data standards (e.g. OpenReferral) and data governance practices, plus experience supporting vendor evaluation and selection to inform scalable, standards-aligned tech choices.		X
Experience		
Enterprise-Scale Data Science: Extensive hands-on experience designing, building, and maintaining	X	



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complex data pipelines and infrastructure, with a strong track record of delivering end-to-end solutions across multiple business domains.		
Cloud Platform Implementation & Quality Assurance: Proven ability to implement scalable, secure data solutions using Microsoft Azure and Fabric, ensuring data quality, performance, and compliance through validation frameworks and robust monitoring.	X	
Technical Leadership & Mentorship: Experience of leading a team as a senior scientist or technical lead, influencing best practices, reviewing code, and guiding junior scientist to deliver high-quality, secure, and privacy-compliant data products.	X	
DevOps & Real-Time Architecture: Experience implementing CI/CD and DevOps practices in data projects, including automated testing and deployment pipelines, alongside designing real-time streaming architectures for responsive data solutions.		X
Tech Adoption & Cross-Functional Delivery: Proven ability to lead technology transformation initiatives—like rolling out new data platforms—while collaborating across IT, business units, and external partners to ensure adoption and impact.		X
Strategic Communication & Influence: Skilled in preparing and presenting technical proposals and business cases to senior leadership and governance boards, clearly articulating the value of data initiatives in a business and public service context.		X



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Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Master's degree in Data Science, Computer Science, Mathematics, statistics, or a related field (or equivalent professional experience demonstrating advanced knowledge).	X	
Professional certification in cloud/data science, such as a Microsoft Fabric Data Scientist certification, evidencing advanced competence in modern data science and machine learning technologies.	X	
Additional certifications in relevant areas are an advantage – for example, Microsoft Azure Solutions Architect Expert, Azure DevOps Engineer, or other advanced cloud/data certifications that complement the core skills of the role.		X
Advanced academic qualifications such as a PhD in a related field (Computer Science, etc.), which would further demonstrate expert knowledge and research in data technologies.		X
Skills		
Innovative thinking and creativity in problem-solving, with a track record of devising “outside-the-box” technical solutions or leveraging cutting-edge tools to meet complex data needs.		X
Influencing and change management skills , capable of persuading and guiding stakeholders to adopt new technologies, standards, or		X



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methodologies in data science, thereby driving cultural and process changes.		
Policy and documentation skills , including the ability to draft clear technical documentation, and contribute to developing technical policies, procedures or guidelines for data processes.		X
Continuous learning mindset , demonstrated by staying up-to-date with emerging industry trends, tools, and best practices in data science and quickly adapting these insights to improve internal processes.		X
Working Conditions		
Dimensions of the role		
Senior Data Scientists are central to Somerset's shift toward preventative public service delivery. Your models will directly support frontline services — from social care and housing to public health and education — by forecasting need, prioritising resources, and enabling early intervention. You'll also help shape the council's data culture, championing ethical analytics, model governance, and continuous improvement. By building scalable modelling infrastructure and mentoring others, you'll elevate the council's analytical capability and ensure data science delivers real-world impact.		
Working Arrangements		
Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.		
Corporate Accountabilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.		



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- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Strategy, Performance and Communication Services teams.
- Lead Strategy, Performance and Communication teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Strategy, Performance and Communication service teams.
- Ensure that Strategy, Performance and Communication services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Strategy, Performance and Communication service.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.
- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.



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