

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES

Dated: November 2021

Contract: Full time, permanent

Salary: £54,000 – £58,000 per annum dependent on skills and experience

Start date: Immediate

Location: Home based with potential access to desk space in central London, if required; travel across the UK may be required from time to time as part of the role (subject to covid guidance)

Reporting to: CEO.

About the Centre for Youth Impact

The Centre for Youth Impact is a small charity with a UK-wide reach. We work across the informal and non-formal youth sector to progress thinking and practice in impact measurement in youth work and provision for young people. Our vision is for all young people to have access to high quality provision and services that improve their life chances. We believe that embedding more meaningful approaches to evaluation, quality improvement and impact measurement at the heart of resilient, learning organisations is key to achieving this vision.

The Centre for Youth Impact was established as a partnership initiative in 2014 and became an independent charity in 2018. We are funded by a range of supporters, including the National Lottery Community Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The Centre's twelve-strong team works nationally, including supporting our Regional Network Leads across England. We have recently begun to expand our work into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In November 2021, we announced our intention to merge with the YMCA George Williams College in Spring 2022, in order to strengthen our collective support for quality practice.

About the role

The Director of Programmes is a new and critical role for the Centre for Youth Impact, and brings with it the opportunity to significantly support and influence evaluation practice - and therefore, quality - in informal and non-formal youth provision in the UK. This role has been created as part of our planned merger with the YMCA George Williams College, which we hope will see our practice development and training work grow. As such, we are recruiting for a new, dedicated post to lead delivery of the Centre's programmes of work to support the youth sector.

We believe in the power of evaluation to build a collective commitment to understanding and improving the impact of youth work and provision for young people. We also believe in the power of quality relational practice to change lives and communities.

The Director of Programmes will lead the design, development, and delivery of the Centre's portfolio of programmes, securing new sources of income and supporting effective project delivery. Reporting to the CEO, the Director of Programmes will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and will line manage and coordinate the work of three thematic Leads (Research and Evaluation, Data, and Organisational Development) across the Centre's 20+ strong portfolio of projects. The

Director of Programmes will work alongside the Resources Manager to play a high-level project management role across the portfolio: monitoring budgets, capacity, quality, and delivery. The Director of Programmes will also contribute directly to project delivery, particularly through high-level research and evaluation skills, advising on ethics and methodology.

As part of the Senior Leadership Team, the Director of Programmes will develop and lead the Centre's research, data and evaluation strategy, including fostering new relationships with funders and partners, and enabling the organisation to deliver complex and cutting-edge programmes of work, with high quality. The Director of Programmes will have unparalleled opportunities to convene and work closely with committed groups of funders and practitioners to learn about, design and test new ways of understanding impact and quality in youth work and provision for young people. To achieve this, they will play a critical role in strategic income generation: initiating and supporting reactive and proactive proposals for new areas of activity, building on the Centre's expertise and understanding of need.

The Director of Programmes will ensure that we are integrating our learning across our thematic areas, so that our portfolio of projects represents more than the sum of its parts. The Director of Programmes will also lead our own internal evaluation, helping the organisation to understand how and where its own work is contributing to positive change for young people and communities.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for a truly outstanding candidate with an established leadership profile and a track record of influencing thinking and practice in the social sector. A thoughtful and experienced evaluator, you will be familiar with a range of research and evaluation methods and how this can be applied to social programmes. You will understand the interplay between research, evaluation, and equity, and be excited to develop this aspect of the Centre's work. You will have a strong interest in the role of open and shared data within the social sector and drive our ambition to grow our digital presence in data collection, analysis, and visualisation. An understanding of how the context of informal and non-formal provision for young people influences research and evaluation design and implementation would be advantageous.

You will be an exceptional project manager, with expertise in managing both grant-funded and contracted projects. You will be skilled in managing budgets, plans and capacity allocations, across multiple programmes. You will be able to navigate with agility between the strategic big picture and the detail of individual projects, deliverables, and relationships. You will be able to spot and make connections between different areas of work and be alive to changes and patterns in the external policy and practice context and the opportunities they present for the Centre.

You will need to be highly responsive to the needs of partners, funders, and our networks, with excellent listening and negotiation skills - a true 'servant leader'. You will be a proactive and dynamic member of our Senior Leadership Team, requiring agility and adaptability to respond to fast-moving opportunities. You will also need to be an excellent and empathic manager and leader of people, supporting and empowering your team to grow and deliver with excellence. Your standards will be high, and you will support others to achieve them. Skills and experience in taking a coaching approach to supporting others will be a distinct advantage.

Finally, you will be an outstanding communicator: highly experienced in both facilitation and training, confident in growing a coaching approach across our team and our networks. You will also be a compelling and confident writer and presenter who can communicate the science and evidence behind impact, measurement, and improvement in social programmes. You will be comfortable representing the Centre externally, and acting as a ‘thought leader’: openly reflecting the evolution of your ideas and thinking, and generously sharing your learning with others.

The post holder will:**1. Design, develop and deliver the Centre's programme of support to the youth sector**

- Maintain oversight of a portfolio of projects across the Centre's thematic areas of data, evaluation and organisational development
- Lead design, implementation and continuous improvement of the Centre's approach to project management in line with organisational and funder requirements (including design of rigorous project procedures and project methodology documentation)
- Lead the Centre's internal quality assurance processes ensuring consistently high standards of delivery/performance, and driving our internal approach to evaluation and understanding the impact of our own work
- Work alongside the Resources Manager to maintain an up to date and accurate map of capacity demands, availability and forecasting across the portfolio of projects
- Lead identification and effective management of risks associated with project delivery, mitigating financial and reputational risks for the organisation
- Maintain oversight of project budgets, providing support to the Leads and project managers to maintain accurate and up-to-date forecasting cross-referenced against the organisation's budget
- Build and hold the Centre's relationships with its network of Fellows
- Lead and support accurate recording of projects and contacts, including the development of associated metrics and dashboards, and oversight of the Centre's Salesforce CRM
- Review and approve monitoring reports for funders
- Act as Project Director on specific projects, providing high level skills and support to project managers, particularly in managing risk
- As part of SLT, support the Centre's trustees to understand the range of activity and strategic contribution across its project portfolio

2. Lead the Centre's research and evaluation strategy as part of the SLT

- Design and lead the Centre's research, evaluation and data strategy, ensuring alignment and connection with other areas of the Centre's work
- Nurture and develop relationships with government, funders, researchers, other youth sector partners and young people themselves in support of the Centre's vision and mission
- Proactively conceive innovative and evidence-led ideas for future research and evaluation activity
- Lead the design and development of winning tenders, proposals and grant applications that further delivery of the organisation's strategy
- Work with SLT to develop the Centre's strategy, and undertake reviews of progress in achieving it
- Bring expertise in research and evaluation and understanding of developments in the field into organisational planning processes

3. Contribute high level research and evaluation expertise to the Centre

- Lead on the Centre's approach to and understanding of ethical evaluation and research
- Lead the Centre's emerging work on equitable evaluation
- Advise on and design research and evaluation methods in specific projects
- Proactively ensure that digital tools, platforms, technologies, services, and processes are embedded in our strategy and across our programmes
- Design and deliver high quality training for a range of audiences (practitioners, leaders and evaluation specialists)
- Support and contribute to high quality outputs, including web content, reports, podcasts and webinars
- Deliver key elements of specialist or technical project activity, including research/evaluation design; development of tools and resources; data gathering, analysis and visualisation; reporting; training and consultation

4. Line management and development of team

- Provide effective line management and supervision of Leads (who in turn line manage Project Managers and Research Assistants)
- Design and deliver internal training and skills development sessions (specifically relating to evaluation and research) to strengthen and support the team

5. Represent, communicate and engage with the Centre's partners

- Build strong relationships with key partners and supporters of the Centre's work
- Act as an ambassador for the Centre in leading and supporting quality practice across the sector
- Engage in external thought leadership through writing and presenting, both as part of project delivery and more widely
- Facilitate and lead training, coaching and workshops, both as part of project delivery and more widely
- Lead the Centre's approach to listening to and engaging practitioners in the development of its work (the Practitioner Panel)
- Lead the Centre's approach to listening to and engaging young people in the development of its work (including our Young Evaluators Panel)

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Significant relevant experience in the charity/not-for-profit sector, in roles focused on evaluation and learning, research, and programme management
- Management level experience in a not-for-profit context
- Line management and supervision experience
- Excellent project management skills, including managing multiple projects simultaneously, monitoring budgets, reporting processes and time tracking
- Track record in significant and proactive income generation; including leading development of grant applications and/or responses to competitive tenders in excess of circa £100,000.

- Significant experience in designing and implementing evaluation and research projects for complex social programmes
- High-level technical skills and expertise in conducting evaluations including developing Theories of Change, designing evaluation methodologies and quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Confident in data collection, analysis and data management
- Strong writing skills and exemplary communication with the ability to vary across audiences
- Passion for keeping up to date with best practice in impact measurement, evaluations and programme quality
- Ability to build and manage strong working relationships with people across teams and at all levels
- Highly organised, with the ability to plan, prioritise and manage deadlines across multiple workstreams

Desirable skills and experience

- Experience of supporting participatory research, ideally with young people, and of needs-led approaches
- Publication through a variety of media (reports, journals, podcasts etc)
- Experience of developing good practice, systems and processes to improve impact measurement and evaluation
- Knowledge of effective research, evaluation and impact assessments techniques in youth provision, including measures of social and emotional learning
- Experience of growing and supporting communities of practice
- Professional qualification in a structured project delivery technique (eg. Prince2 or comparable)

Personal qualities we are looking for include:

- Identifying with and embodying the aims and ethos of the Centre for Youth Impact, including valuing collaborative approaches, challenging and supporting those we work with, and being curious and questioning
- Collaborator and team player
- Reflective and highly self aware
- Able to have challenging and courageous conversations with compassion
- Understanding of and empathy with our sector
- Focused and thoughtful strategist, balancing project delivery with sector leadership
- Track record of leadership and influence through inspirational communication and passionate advocacy

How to apply

If all the above sounds appealing, then please send a copy of the following to jobs@youthimpact.uk with the subject line 'Director of Programmes':

1. Your CV
2. A covering letter (up to 800 words) that states how you meet the requirements set out in the person specification (and stating that you have the right to work in the UK).
3. Equality and Diversity monitoring form

Please complete the anonymous equality and diversity survey form as part of the application. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their background, and welcome applications regardless of sex, gender, race, age, sexuality, belief, or disability.

We acknowledge that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are particularly underrepresented in our senior staff team, and we're committed to correcting this. We are keen to receive applications from people of colour; people with disabilities; people who identify as being LGBTQIA+; and people who have a mental health condition. We'd also love to hear from people who have used and benefited from youth provision/services.

The Centre for Youth Impact takes a range of measures to protect the people who come into contact with the Centre from harm, abuse, neglect and mistreatment of any kind. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The deadline for receipt of your application is 9am on Monday 13 December 2021. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Interviews will take place on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 December 2021 and will be via Zoom.

For more information about us please visit the Centre for Youth Impact's website: <http://www.youthimpact.uk/> If you have any questions about the role, please email Bethia McNeil, CEO, on bethia.mcneil@youthimpact.uk to arrange an informal conversation.