



What Works *for*  
**Children's  
Social Care**

# Programmes Manager

Candidate Brief



Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Programmes Manager roles at What Works for Children's Social Care.

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) is a dynamic organisation working to transform the life chances of the 700,000 children and young people in England, who have contact with the children's social care system. For too long these children have been left behind. WWCSC was established to bring energy, passion and new research methodologies to the children's social care sector. We aim to improve outcomes for children by supporting and rigorously evaluating innovative practice in children's social care. This presents an exciting opportunity for practitioners in local authorities up and down the country, together with local communities, charities and research organisations, to try different ways of designing and delivering services for the benefit of some of society's most vulnerable children and young people. Programmes Managers at WWCSC play a central role in unleashing this innovation and ensuring our investments deliver impactful learning to improve the lives of the children we serve.

As well as addressing critical gaps in practice through innovation and research, WWCSC aims to mobilise learning, ensuring findings are actionable and accessible to practitioners and policy makers. The recent Independent Review of Children's Social Care highlights the urgent need for reform of the children's social care system. It also emphasises the importance of evidence and the crucial role of organisations like WWCSC in achieving meaningful and sustainable change:

*"This moment is a once in a generation opportunity to reset children's social care. [...] To increase the quality and consistency of help, funding should be accompanied by [...] a focus on the use of the best evidenced interventions to realise these outcomes."*  
*Josh McAllister, Chair 2022 Independent Review of Children's Social Care*

We are proud of the innovative portfolio of programmes already being pioneered with the support of our grants. We are looking to recruit new Programmes Managers with the passion and potential to manage grant programmes, ensuring excellence at every stage from initial scoping, through rigorous grant management and to ultimately ensuring findings make a genuine difference in policy and practice across the country. You will be part of a friendly and professional team, with opportunities to learn from more senior colleagues and build your skills as a grant-maker and develop specialist knowledge in children's social care.

If you are motivated by our mission and excited by the opportunity to develop as a Programmes Manager, then we look forward to hearing from you.

**Jermaine Ravalier & Chris Cuthbert**

Co-Directors of Programmes, What Works for Children's Social Care



## About us

What Works for Children's Social Care seeks better outcomes for children, young people and families by bringing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision makers across the children's social care sector.

You can find out about us by visiting: <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/>

## The Programmes Team

The mission of What Works for Children's Social Care is to improve the lives of children and families through setting standards in research and **generating the best evidence into what works for children's social care**. We aim to do this by using funding as a mechanism to: support the creation of new research; influence the standard and priorities of research in the sector; attract new experts to the field; and encourage other organisations to invest in children's social care innovation and research.

The Programmes team plays a central role in delivery of this mission. Our role is to oversee a portfolio of innovative services in children's social care, ensuring rigorous grant management of service delivery and commissioning robust independent evaluations.

We aim to:

1. Raise the standards - and volume - of good quality research in the sector, by maintaining a core focus on rigorous research, providing appropriate support, and by leading by example in the work that we fund.
2. Encourage sector-led innovation and research in key priority areas identified by the Centre.
3. Attract experts and influential organisations from other sectors to children's social care research, to broaden expertise in the sector and create opportunities for collaboration.

The work of the Programmes Team is broadly divided into two complementary strands:

- funding of projects (supporting organisations to deliver their interventions)
- commissioning of evaluations (supporting researchers to examine the impact of these interventions on outcomes of interest; as well as implementation and process evaluation).

## The role

We're looking to recruit additional Programmes Managers to join a well-established Programmes Team, supporting the delivery of existing programmes and the design and delivery of future funding streams.

### Programme management:

- Leading the day-to-day management of funded grant programmes (both the delivery of a programme by an external organisation(s) and its independent evaluation), including working closely with external grantees to monitor performance against milestones, and monitoring risks and issues.
- Advising and coordinating internal project teams on programme management including planning, stakeholder management, monitoring, and reporting.
- Managing and refining programme and evaluation specific budgets and reporting.



- Ensuring that evaluation methodology is adequately reviewed by the research team and methodological issues addressed.
- Reviewing interim and final reports produced by delivery partners and evaluators, coordinating quality assurance and peer review process, and liaising with internal communications and policy teams for the publication and dissemination of any findings.

### **Funding processes**

- Supporting the set-up of new funding calls, including coordination of the process, development of call documents and scoping of themes .
- Leading on the roll out of established funding rounds, including coordinating the internal team and process.
- Coordinating the rigorous assessment and review of applications.
- Leading the coordination of external funding Committees, including sourcing Committee members, drafting terms of reference, and managing the review process.
- Ensuring that decision-makers have all the information required to be able to make quality decisions about which projects to fund, and which evaluators to appoint.

### **Other**

- Contributing to the continuous improvement of WWCS guidance, decision-making and grant management processes.
- Contributing actively to continuous learning and improvement of the Programmes Team and wider organisation
- Representing the organisation at external meetings and events, including short presentations and webinars.
- Presenting specific projects to internal advisory groups (stakeholders, young advisors, evidence ambassadors).
- Other ad-hoc duties, as required.



## The person

- Commitment to the mission of WWCSC and the children and families we serve.
- A passion for innovation in public services and belief in evidence-based policy and practice.
- Ability to work collaboratively and flexibly as part of a fast-paced and dynamic team.
- Thirst for continuous learning and developing your skills and expertise as a Programmes Manager.

## Knowledge and experience:

- Experience independently leading day-to-day delivery of projects (E)
- Experience of one or more of: commissioning; contract management; grant management (E)
- Experience managing and overseeing budgets (E)
- Experience working in a fast-paced environment. (E)
- Knowledge of current issues in children's social policy and practice (D)
- Knowledge of children's services and the delivery landscape in England (D)
- Appreciation of the challenges and barriers to rigorous impact research in children's social care. (D)
- Familiarity with randomised controlled trials and other evaluation methodologies. (D)

## Skills and abilities:

- Ability to work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, NGOs, front line practitioners and academics
- Ability to work independently with responsibility for day-to-day delivery of individual projects
- Highly organised and able to develop rigorous and realistic project plans
- Ability to prioritise competing demands and deliver quality outputs on time
- Ability to monitor progress and manage risks, with sound judgement about when to escalate concerns
- Ability to collaborate effectively with others, open to new ideas and the value of diverse perspectives
- Attention to detail and ensuring quality
- Ability to set and monitor project budgets, and work effectively with finance specialists
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills including the ability to explain research to non-technical audiences
- Commitment to continuous learning and improvement

## Initial terms and conditions of appointment

- **Remuneration:** £30-42k
- **Time commitment:** Full time role (37.5 hours per week)
- **Location:** Central London, minimum of 2 days a week in the office. Travel around England may be required occasionally.
- **Term:** Permanent
- **Other:** Reports to a Senior Programmes Manager or Head of Programmes



## How to apply

Please send your CV and a supporting statement (of no more than 2 pages A4) outlining clearly how you meet the above criteria to [hr@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:hr@whatworks-csc.org.uk), citing “Programmes Manager” in the subject of the email.

Deadline for applications: **August 1st 2022**

Please note, we will be reviewing applications on a rolling basis, and while we anticipate keeping the applications open until August 1st, we plan to review at two points in time. If we receive sufficient successful applications we may close recruitment, so we encourage you to get your application in early!

- Review 1 Deadline: 11 July
- Review 2 Deadline: 1 August

Interviews will also take place on a rolling basis, on the following dates (these are indicative and are subject to change):

- Interview Round 1: Wednesday 20 July
- Interview Round 2: Monday 15 August

If you have any questions about the role, please contact: [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk)