



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

**Senior Practice  
Development Coordinator**

(upto one year secondment or fixed term contract - maternity cover)

**Candidate brief**

Dear candidate

Thank you for your interest in the Senior Practice Development Coordinator role at What Works for Children's Social Care.

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) is an exciting 'social start-up' and a fantastic opportunity to make a difference to the lives of children and their families in England. Every year over 700,000 children and young people, and their families, have contact with the children's social care sector. Changes in how the sector supports these children and their families can have hugely significant effects that resonate throughout entire lifetimes.

The Government's reform programme is increasingly giving control over how services should be run – along with accountability for the results – to the practitioners and practice leaders who are closest to children, young people and their families. Local authorities up-and-down the country, supported by a range of other organisations both statutory and third sector, are using that freedom to try different ways of designing and delivering children's services, and £200m has been provided through the Department for Education's Innovation Programme to support this work.

With so much innovation taking place – and so much potential for change – the sector needs an independent organisation to look across all of this work and systematically develop the evidence base on what works, for whom, under what circumstances, and how. This is the best encapsulation of WWCSC's mission – to collect the best evidence on what we already know, work with the sector to prioritise the many questions that remain unanswered, fund research, and determine how best to make evidence relevant and accessible to decision makers. What Works Centres have been a great success in other policy areas – including in education, policing and healthcare – and we are working to follow in their footsteps.

Now, we are looking for a Senior Practice Development Coordinator to join our team, and to help us deliver new projects in a wide variety of domains.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Anna Bacchoo**

Director of Practice, What Works for Children's Social Care

## The role

- Operational project management of our Practice in Need of Evidence programme, including supporting social care organisations to define their interventions and theory of change.
- Bringing a social care practice perspective to research activities across the organisation.
- Contributing to improving research-mindedness in the children's social care sector by delivering training sessions and workshops.
- Developing tools and resources to improve practitioners' use of evidence.

## The person

### Essential criteria

Applicants should have experience in one of the following areas, with a keen interest and willingness to learn about the other once in the role.

1. Experience of statutory children's social care practice **or**
  2. Experience of undertaking primary research in the social care sector or related field
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
  - Demonstrable ability to manage multiple projects and priorities effectively.
  - Project management skills including the ability to accurately record and track the progress of work and adapt to changing priorities.
  - Developing and delivering a variety of training and workshops to a range of audiences
  - Understanding of GDPR legislation and data security.
  - Experience of working with a range of key stakeholders with competing perspectives.
  - Commitment to social work values and ethics.

### Desirable criteria

- Experience of evaluating interventions or practice with children, young people, families or the workforce.
- Experience of children's safeguarding, either through lived experience or in a professional context.
- Political awareness.

### Qualifications

- Degree-level qualification.
- DBS check will be required.

## Initial Terms and Conditions of Appointment

- **Remuneration:** £30,000 - £42,000 pa dependent on experience
- **Time commitment:** full time, 37.5 hours a week
- **Location:** central London. Following government guidelines for working during COVID-19
- **Term:** up to one year secondment or fixed term contract (maternity cover)
- **Other** - candidates must have the right to work in the UK. We are not able to sponsor visas

## Introduction to the Centre

### About us

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) 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. We generate, collate and make accessible the best evidence for practitioners, policy makers and practice leaders to improve children's social care and the outcomes it generates for children and families. Our research looks at the point of referral through to permanence, including adoption, care-leaver support and targeted early help. We focus on children's social care practice in England and draw on and share learning at the international level.

We were commissioned by the Department for Education and work with a range of stakeholders. Engagement and co-design are central to our approach and we are working in close consultation with leaders, practitioners, children and young people, families and researchers across the sector to:

- Identify gaps in the evidence, and create new evidence through trials and evaluations
- Collate, synthesise and review existing evidence
- Develop, test and publish tools and services that support the greater use of evidence and inform the design of the future Centre
- Champion the application of robust standards of evidence in children's social care research.

WWCSC collates, produces, and translates research about "What Works" in Children's Social Care through a variety of different methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, to conduct research that can be used by social workers, leaders in the sector and policymakers to

support children and their families.

To do this, all of our research needs to adhere to our four principles:

- Research needs to focus on impact – how does a piece of practice work, how does it impact on social workers, and if we take one action rather than another, what happens as a result?
- We need to bear in mind the nuance of social care. The lives of children and families are complex and complicated, and there are many factors involved in successful social work. What works in one setting for one family might not work in a different circumstance. We need to design our research to take into account – and even celebrate – this complexity.
  - Studies have to be useful – if we can't identify who we think should be able to make use of a piece of research, it's not for us. While there is certainly value in more exploratory research, this is not part of the Centre's mission and objectives.
- Everything we do needs to help empower the profession. Our research needs to be conducted with the profession, and not done to them – it needs to provide recommendations, not prescriptions, and it needs to support existing and innovative practice to grow the evidence base.

### How to apply

To apply, please send your CV and a supporting statement outlining clearly how you meet the above criteria to [hr@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:hr@whatworks-csc.org.uk), citing "Senior Practice Development Coordinator" in the subject of the email.

Deadline for applications: 29th November 2021, 5pm