

Candidate Specification

Team Administrator/ Personal Assistant

Salary:	Circa £28k per annum, plus benefits
Location:	123 Buckingham Palace Road, London
Term:	2 years FTC (possibility to become permanent)
Hours:	Full-time hours (37.5 hours per week)

Overview

Nesta is looking for a Team Administrator and Personal Assistant to support the Management Team of the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWC-CSC). This is an exciting dual-role in what will be a high-performing, busy and friendly team. The candidate will need to have excellent communication, relationship and administrative skills and be highly organised and able to manage competing priorities.

The Director of Operations and Company Secretary require a Team Administrator who can support the production and maintenance of key contractual, financial and planning documentation. The Executive Director (ED) will have a lot of demands on their time and requires a Personal Assistant who can prioritise and schedule a busy diary and deal effectively with external and internal stakeholders. The successful candidate will also manage the ED and Centre email inboxes on a day-to-day basis, following-up on actions, managing correspondence, organising contacts and other tasks as required.

The role

- Handling important documentation such as contracts and invoices following business processes, e.g. checking details, arranging signatures, copying and filing
- Scheduling team meetings (e.g. checking diaries, booking rooms, setting up video and conference call facilities).
- Assisting with the organisation of events, workshops or training (e.g. finding suitable venues, ordering catering, preparing materials, managing guest lists and invitations).

- Ensure the Executive Director is always in the correct place, on time and with all relevant papers and information required.
- Take responsibility for the diary of the Executive Director of The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care ensuring that time is used efficiently and in line with agreed priorities. This will include scheduling meetings, appointments and public speaking engagements, booking rooms and refreshments, including larger meetings (4+ people) organised by the team.
- Book all travel arrangements including international, organise accommodation and provide itineraries.
- Act as an ambassador for the Centre, building strong relationships with the team and external stakeholders; managing incoming calls for the Centre and Executive Director, taking messages as appropriate; managing incoming mail and invites and overseeing received correspondence.
- Respond to and resolve a range of queries, channelling to the appropriate area as necessary or screening politely, leaving the Executive Director to concentrate on the most important matters.
- Preparing or typing correspondence and research as and when required and creating and managing contact databases.
- Compiling professional standard presentation materials and documents
- Undertake administrative duties such as stationery orders, printing, monitoring and renewing subscriptions and memberships for the whole team.
- Working with other members of the team to provide support and cover as required.
- Communicating with people outside the organisation (e.g. partners, funders, clients) by telephone, email and in person.

The person

- Highly organised with the ability to manage competing priorities with very good attention to detail. Able to work under pressure and remain calm. Essential.
- An excellent communicator. Essential.
- Proven track record of building strong relationships with individuals at all levels both within the organisation and externally. Essential.
- Discretion, good judgment, adaptable and versatile individual with a helpful, friendly and informal style. Essential.
- Can identify and implement new ways of solving problems avoiding bureaucracy and not constrained by the way things have been done before. Desirable.
- Experience providing PA support at a senior level, including diary management in a busy environment and very high standards of work. Desirable.
- Extensive experience in e-mail and calendar systems and pro-actively managing diaries.
- Advanced Level PC Skills (Google docs, sheets and slides, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint & Excel) and use of a CRM are helpful
- Experience working within a related sector, e.g. voluntary sector, public sector, or government.
- Positive and flexible - someone who enjoys being part of a busy team.

Introduction to the Centre

The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care is being created to foster evidence-informed practice in the children's social care sector.

The Centre faces two challenges if it is to be successful:

- *Creating a better evidence base* – by sponsoring new practice-focused research in areas where existing research is absent, of inadequate quality, or lacking relevance to decision-makers.
- *Ensuring that the Centre's work results in change, not just knowledge* – by investigating and addressing the barriers that might otherwise prevent practice leaders and practitioners from using insights from evidence to inform their decisions.

Addressing these challenges will not be simple.

Making decisions about where to focus the Centre's research budget will require it to build an understanding of where research evidence could have a real impact on practice. To achieve a greater impact, the Centre will also need to influence other researchers and research funders. This will require strategic clarity, an understanding of how evidence is created and used in practice, and the capability to build networks of influence in academia.

Making research insights both useful and accessible to decision makers will mean moving beyond the world of reports and portals. The Centre will work with practitioners to build innovative products and services that practitioners and practice leaders use and value. This will demand specific capabilities in entrepreneurship and product development.

Over and above the mechanical tasks of ensuring that useful evidence exists and is accessible, the Centre will need to work with leaders at all levels of the social work system to help them to effect a change in culture. These leaders want to establish the most effective norms for using the best available evidence in the 152 local authority areas in England, not to mention in their partners in other public services, in the policy-making and regulatory bodies, and amongst voluntary, community and private sector organisations that work for and alongside them in delivering services. The Centre's role is to help them do that.

Context to the Centre's work

As big a challenge as this initiative represents, this is an opportune moment to be taking them on. The Department for Education has a clear, coherent, and consistent reform programme that for several years has worked towards its vision of a profession moving away from paperwork and process compliance, to embrace professional freedom and accountability. The Centre's goal, of supporting the profession to make use of evidence both in practice, and in the development of practice systems, is extremely well aligned to that reform programme¹. The Centre is not working alone; it will have the support of central Government, local authorities and representative

¹ Detail on the policy context can be found in the 2011 [Munro Review](#), and in DfE's 2016 strategy paper [Putting Children First](#)

bodies, a variety of voluntary and community sector organisations, and practitioners and practice leaders keen to help shape and use the Centre's work.

The Centre will also benefit from being part of the network of What Works Centres – now ten in total – with ever greater influence and profile. This includes the What Works Centres for [Education](#), [Early Intervention](#), [Crime Reduction](#), [Local Economic Growth](#), [Health and Social Care](#), [Wellbeing](#) and [Ageing, and others](#). Led by the Government's National Adviser on What Works, Dr. David Halpern, and supported by a dedicated team in the Cabinet Office, the What Works Network will provide the Centre and its leaders with a group of peers who will be a valuable sounding board for strategy and organisational development, as well as a resource for collective influence².

The Centre is currently being established by a development team, led by innovation charity Nesta. Using £5m of set-up funding from the Department for Education, the development team is responsible for recruiting the Centre's founding leaders, supporting them to establish its strategy and build the organisation, developing and testing different ways of working with the sector, and providing an injection of capacity early in the Centre's life so that it can make a rapid start in its work.

In parallel with the work of the development team, the Department has commissioned a Research Partner for the Centre. The Research Partner team, led by Cardiff University, will develop a set of standards of evidence and then – through a programme of reviews, trials and other evaluations – strengthen the evidence base around effectiveness and cost-effectiveness within the sector. It too has around £5m of Government funding, giving the Centre and its research partner a combined budget of almost £10 million over 3 years.

The Centre's Executive Director will direct and be accountable for the work of both Incubator and its Research Partner, and will report to the Centre's Founding Board, chaired by Sir Alan Wood. The Head of Research will report to the Executive Director.

The Incubator and Research Partner contracts run until March 2020, after which there will need to be a new financial settlement to fund the Centre's ongoing programme of work.

If the Centre is successful in its mission then the simple question 'what works?', will be generating answers which are used by practitioners to make better decisions, and by practice leaders to design better systems, all across England. The 700,000 children and their families who are supported by social workers and their colleagues each year will be living better lives as a result.

² More information on the What Works Network and its constituent members can be found in the recent publication What Works – Five Years On, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/677478/6.4154_What_works_report_Final.pdf

About Nesta

Nesta is a global innovation foundation. We back new ideas to tackle the big challenges of our time.

Our mission is to spark and shape new ideas that improve how the world works for everyone. We use our knowledge, networks, funding and skills - working in partnership with others, including governments, businesses and charities. We are a UK charity but work all over the world, supported by a financial endowment.

- We see - we spot opportunities in challenges
- We spark - we generate novel ideas to solve big problems that matter to everyone
- We shape - we provide the help needed for promising ideas to grow and adapt
- We shift - we join with others to back world-changing ideas

How to Apply

To apply, please email your CV and a supporting statement outlining clearly how you would succeed in the role to recruitment@nesta.org.uk, citing "WWC Team Administrator" in the Subject line.

Deadline for applications: 17:00 on 4th February 2019