

Head of Impact

Reports to: Director of Research, Impact and Influence

Start date: ASAP

Location: London or Flexible Working (remote with weekly travel to London)

Contract: FT or 0.8FTE, Permanent

Salary: £50-57k per annum, skills and experience dependent (+6% employer pension contribution and sector-leading parental leave policy shared with all applicants)

Closing Date for Applications: Sunday 28th April 23:59

[Link to Application form](#)

Person Specification

The Difference is looking for someone who can lead the team's impact function as the charity goes through a really exciting period of growth and development. You will refine our monitoring and evaluation work in order to drive continuous improvement across the charity, and to shape future programme design. You'll feed into the development of new tools for use by schools to better understand and respond to their own inclusion data. You'll also play a key role in helping The Difference and its partner schools to understand the mechanisms for change in our programmes, and identify what supports and hinders change. Our programmes work with schools as they become more inclusive, support all of their students to succeed, and reduce the amount of learning lost to exclusions and absence.

You will have real ownership over your area of work, be happiest in a flexible and ambitious environment, and enjoy testing out new ideas. You will have experience in working on programme evaluation, impact measurement or applied research, and will combine strong data and project-management skills.

Essential knowledge, experience and skills

- Experience of designing and carrying out both formative and summative evaluation understanding how to appropriately design, collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data.
- Organisation & project management skills, demonstrable through past work whether this was delivering a project independently or coordinating a team. You feel confident planning multiple workstreams, working to timelines and juggling deadlines.
- Strategic communication – Confident in organising ideas and information to highlight the more salient and strategically significant elements, with internal and external audiences. Experienced in communicating with stakeholders from different backgrounds, from CEOs to service-users or young people.

- Experience in contributing to organisational change processes - working with senior leadership to utilise insights from programme evaluation to support the evolution of programme design and using evaluation to identify areas for continuous improvement.
- Values – A career (or voluntary experiences) which evidence shared values with The Difference - see these values below - plus a personal commitment to our mission to improve life outcomes for vulnerable young people.
- Self-directed – Evidenced capacity to take high levels of ownership in your work and over your own development, proactively diagnosing skills and information gaps, and making use of others’ expertise.
- Agile & solutions-focused – Ability to thrive in a fast-paced start-up environment, comfortable with making decisions in ambiguous contexts and casting a critical eye on systems, processes and practice.

Desired knowledge, experience and skills

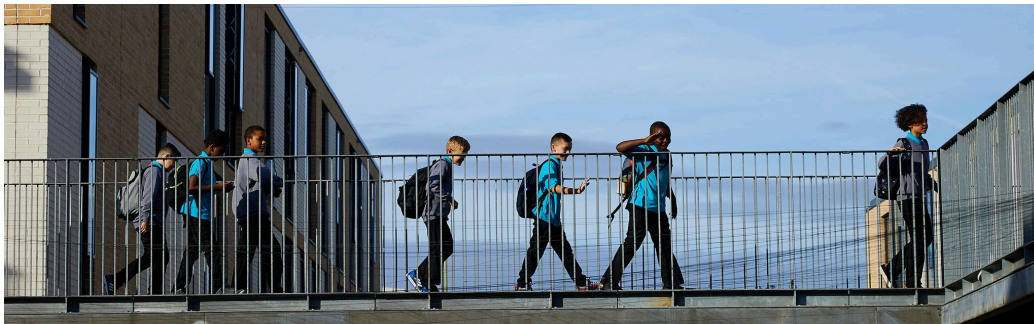
- Knowledge of the education sector and school data systems.
- Experience in the start-up or small charity sector. An ability to thrive in the flexible, fast-paced and sometimes ambiguous context of start-up.
- Quantitative data analysis skills. Experience using software to analyse large datasets (e.g. R, SPSS, Stata), and ability to interpret results, plus confidence in using Excel and other programmes to present this.
- Insight through work or life into school experiences of over-excluded young people, including young people with experience of the care system, of mental ill health, of special educational needs, or racism.



Why Work for The Difference?

Schooling isn't working for the children who need it most. Every week in England 109 children – equivalent to three full classrooms – are permanently excluded. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Since the pandemic, school suspensions have risen significantly, as has persistent absenteeism. 1 in 5 children are missing more than 10% of their time in school. Children who are excluded or persistently absent are much more likely to already be experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. They are more likely to live in poverty, have additional learning needs, suffer mental health challenges, or experience a lack of safety outside school. Certain ethnicities are also disproportionately affected, notably Gypsy Roma Traveller and black Caribbean children.

Exclusion and high rates of absence can have a dramatic effect on life chances. These young people are more likely to drop out of education or employment, become vulnerable to long-term mental ill health, or be at risk of criminal exploitation. The Difference believes that children and young people deserve better and that the education system has to change.



Our Organisation

The Difference is a young education charity, founded to change the story on lost learning. By 2030, we want rates of exclusion and absence to be falling nationally and for schools to be better equipped to support all children, including those who may be vulnerable.

The Difference was born out of [a year of research into school exclusions with think-tank IPPR](#). This research identified a lack of inclusion expertise in schools and proposed a new leadership development programme to fill this gap. In 2018, Difference founder [Kiran](#) hired the team who took this idea from concept to reality, beginning work with our first schools.

The Difference is now a 22-strong team delivering multiple school leadership programmes, alongside a growing research and policy arm. The team is supported by our Youth Advisory Board, made up of young people who have experienced exclusion and who provide their expertise and insights on how school inclusion work should be done. This work is needed more than ever. Effects of COVID-19, coupled with the spiralling cost of living, have substantially increased levels of vulnerability. Schools serving excluded pupils face under-funding. The Difference has had excellent early impact but there is work ahead to capture this, share learning with schools and policy-makers, and grow our capacity to lower exclusions across England.

The Task Ahead: Head of Impact

In 2022, The Difference established a Research, Impact and Influencing Directorate, indicating the growing importance of this work to our mission. We're doing more to understand (and evidence) how school leaders who take part in our programmes are driving impactful inclusion in their schools. And we intend to use this to have a national impact on how schools are measured and driven to put pupil wellbeing, safety and belonging at the heart of their work. Improving our understanding of the impact of inclusion is key to successfully changing the story for students currently struggling in schools.

Key Tasks for this role include:

- Strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and impact systems: using methods that are both qualitative (interviews, case-studies, roundtables) and quantitative (staff and student surveys, school data tracking), and collating and analysing the data collected to diagnose successes, challenges and opportunities within our work streams.
- Act as an internal consultant with the team: bringing stakeholder feedback together in clear presentations for other staff members and acting as a “critical friend” during delivery and strategy planning. Identify insights that point to continuous improvement of our programmes and work with Programme Team to utilise insights.
- Develop our qualitative framework to better track and measure whole-school inclusion. This framework will aim not just to support improved work for children in our schools, but to define what good looks like in the sector.
- Progress our ambition to make inclusion more tangibly measurable: plan user-research with school partners to identify inclusion data needs and use these findings to develop impact tools that collate exclusion, attendance and demographic data. Work with others in the sector using innovative methods to measure inclusion through national datasets.
- Expand our work on measuring school inclusion through student experience of safety, wellbeing and belonging. Grow the reach of our current survey tools and collaborating with others in the sector doing innovative work on student voice and inclusion.



Our Values

- **High Expectations** - We are ambitious for excellence from young people, colleagues and ourselves. We don't believe in writing off someone's potential because of their identity or experience of crisis.
- **Strong Relationships** - We prioritise genuine relationships over transactional interactions, and know that this requires deliberate relational practice. We see colleagues and partners as people first and their roles second; and know this greater trust allows us to take more risks, gain more feedback and have greater impact.
- **Internalised Locus of Control** - We work hard to reframe difficult situations to discover what *we* have within our power in terms of solutions. We take it upon ourselves to walk towards challenges and can take a high level of ownership and agency in our work/
- **Pragmatism** - We believe leadership means recognising current limitations and striving for improvements within and beyond them. We develop consensus and chart new ways forward, challenging false and extreme positions like “zero exclusions” or “no excuses”.
- **Scientific approach** - We take a diagnostic approach to unpicking causes of problems. We are loud and proud of our failures, recognising failing fast and often is key to finding the best solutions. We test solutions and are willing to use data and feedback to make adjustments and choose new directions.
- **Not Squeamish about Structural Inequality** - We believe patterns of inequality can and should be disrupted. We strive to be clear-eyed about these inequalities, and both the individual practice and system-changes required to address them. We push ourselves to overcome awkwardness in talking about this; and begin by acknowledging our own biases and blind spots.
- **Asset-based** - We work hard to avoid deficit thinking and aim to start with what's strong, not what's wrong. We are careful not to frame our colleagues and stakeholders - particularly young people and families - as victims but instead to recognise their agency.
- **Wise selves** - To both enjoy work and do their best, we want to make decisions and work with others in our “wise” - or regulated - selves. We also want to bring our compassionate self to those we work with, externally and internally, to support one another through challenging times.

How To Apply

To apply, please complete all sections of [the application form](#) by midnight on **Sunday 28th April**.

[Link to our application form on Applied](#)

First round interviews will be held during **the week beginning 13th May**, over video call. Please indicate if you would not be available to attend an interview during this week.

If successful in this stage, second round interviews (including a task to be completed the same day) will take place on **the week beginning 20th May**, at our office in Bethnal Green.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role prior to application, please reach out to anna@the-difference.com.

We are committed to building a diverse team and strongly encourage applications from under-represented groups in the charity sector such as people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, people with experience in the care system, non-graduates and first-in-family graduates.

As part of our commitment to fairer recruitment, all applications will be assessed with names and any protected characteristics redacted.

Recommended Reading

If you'd like to understand more about The Difference and what we are trying to achieve, we would recommend the following:

- The [research](#) which underpins our organisation.
- Our latest [Impact Report](#), sharing our work in 2023

