



Job Description, Roles and Responsibilities

SENIOR RESEARCHER - Service and Systemic Change Evaluator

Key responsibilities

Overview:

This role is for an experienced social researcher and evaluator looking to work in an innovative, fast-paced and practically applied research environment. Whilst the role is varied, the primary focus is the **formative, developmental and summative evaluation** and **iterative refinement** of a range of **service-level** and **place-based and/or systemic change initiatives** focused on **improving outcomes for children, families and communities**. The work involves applying mixed methods and working with an inter-disciplinary team (internally and with collaborating partners).

Approaches will be tailored depending on the needs of each project but are likely to include theory-driven approaches such as **theory of change, realist evaluation** and **contribution analysis** alongside **experimental or quasi-experimental** methods.

The candidate need not be expert in all but must have a curiosity and willingness to learn and apply different methods in relation to service level and complex, multi-site or place-based evaluation contexts.

Specific responsibilities:

- Lead on the development, application and integration of methodological approaches related to the evaluation of services for children and families, alongside complex, place-based and systemic change programmes (building confidence, skills and capabilities of the wider team).
- Build strong and trusted relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders in communities, voluntary and public sectors to enable effective engagement and/or co-production to support research, evaluation and design activities.
- Clearly present and communicate research and evaluation findings, through engaging reports, presentations, blogs and talks.
- Raise funds and bid for strategically aligned projects and wider work of the Lab (with guidance and support).
- Line manage less experienced members of the team (with guidance and support).
- Lead multiple project teams in the design and delivery of innovative and applied social research initiatives, including but not limited to the evaluation of complex, place-based and systemic change initiatives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually strive to embed an equitable and anti-racist approach to all research and evaluation activities, using reflection and feedback to maintain accountability. • Contribute to the intellectual life of the organisation, by networking, keeping abreast of developments in the field and sharing these with the wider team. • Contributing to a positive working culture. • Forge and maintain positive relationships with clients. • Ensure high-quality delivery of work, on time. • Monitor and tightly manage project budgets. • Take a lead role in creatively disseminating outputs and learning from the work.
<p>Specific skills and experiences:</p>	<p>Below is a list of skills and experiences we are looking for, with an emphasis on developmental, formative and summative evaluation. However, we don't expect candidates to meet every requirement and are open to candidates with wide-ranging experience applying for this role, and a willingness to learn and apply different methods depending on the specific questions and context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and skills in the design and delivery of evaluation of services for children, alongside place-based and complex system change initiatives. This will involve mixed methods approaches, tailored depending on the needs of each project. This may include theory-driven approaches such as theory of change, realist evaluation or contribution analysis alongside experimental or quasi-experimental methods. • Experience in all stages of programme evaluation from developmental, formative through to implementation and process evaluation, and impact evaluation. • Qualitative research skills, including research design, delivering interviews and focus groups, qualitative coding, inductive and deductive approaches, thematic analysis and qualitative reporting. • Quantitative research skills, including questionnaire design, statistical power analysis, data cleaning and matching/linkage, and descriptive and inferential statistics. • Knowledge of appreciative inquiry and iterative, emergent and participatory approaches to evaluation. • Conceptual understanding of place-based systemic change. • Proven ability to build relationships with communities of place and strong engagement and/or co-production skills to support evaluation with and for people in communities of place. • Understanding of administrative data for services and supports and/or population health data. • Use of range of qualitative and quantitative analytical software tools (such as NVivo, R, Python, SPSS or similar). • Experience in ethical design and preparation of ethical reviews, including experience in relation to safeguarding, transparency, equality and equity. • Strong applied knowledge of information governance policies and processes (including legal basis of processing, GDPR and data protection legislation). • Knowledge, interest and experience in relation to anti-racist research and design approaches. • Proven and exceptional multiple project management skills (including effective use of relevant software).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong skills in written and verbal communication for diverse audiences. • Strong understanding of client needs and attention to client satisfaction. • Excellent facilitation skills. • Well-established line management and supervision skills. • Excellent IT proficiency, including: Office 365 suite of software, cloud-based file management, email management.
<i>Purpose and level of external relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming new strategic relationships with collaborators or supporters. • Possess advanced communication skills for developing and maintaining important relationships at client level. • Ability to reconcile different priorities and achieve cooperation. • Experience in facilitating large, complex or high-stakes workshops or events. • Represent the organisation at external forums, including seminars, talks and external presentations.
<i>Autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is guided by broad objectives, with a high degree of autonomy and flexibility. • Key performance indicators and milestones are reviewed.
<i>Income generation responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and contribute to a range of project proposals. • Identify and further opportunities for strategically aligned and impactful work.
<i>Project management responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Executive or Lead role on multiple/concurrent projects, delivering high quality work on time and budget.
<i>Financial responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for delivering projects in which they are a Project Lead within time and budget (flexing with agreement with Project Executive/SMT).
<i>Management of people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct line management of multiple junior staff members (if sufficient staff available to manage).
<i>Decision-making</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine a broad variety of decisions within a defined work area, some of which may affect others. • Determine improved working methods, set short-term targets and how these can be best achieved. • Be comfortable working with emergent project objectives and updating outcomes light of new needs.
<i>Interests, knowledge and experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of evidence and social research innovation in the development of policy and practice. • Good understanding and experience of the design, structure and functioning of public systems in the UK (children's services, early years, education, social care, physical and mental health, etc.). • The science of human and child development. • Systems Thinking and User-centred Design. • Communications, dissemination and design. • Leadership and development of organisational culture.

<p>Personal qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual curiosity. • Committed to improving outcomes of those using services or public systems. • Willingness to develop professional knowledge and new ideas. • Excellent time and workload management. • Strong interpersonal skills. • Attuned ability to listen. • Self-motivation. • Attuned ability to listen, empathise and reflect, including on the presence and impact of power and privilege in research on communities experiencing marginalisation, including those experiencing racial inequity. <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a varied workload. • Think logically and be methodical. • Work within a tight-knit team. • To work remotely and independently. • Use initiative but to know when to ask for help. <p>Willingness to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be supervised and receive constructive feedback. • Learn. • Be flexible and use initiative. • Travel and spend occasional nights away from home. • Where possible, flex working patterns as projects demand.
<p>Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five years' experience working within research and/or the social sector (voluntary or statutory).
<p>Qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Master's level qualification and/or PhD-level qualification in a related field; • And/or equivalent work experience in applied social research or relevant field.