

Head of Partnerships

Dated: June 2022

Contract: Full time, permanent

Salary: £48,000-50,000 per annum

Start date: Immediate

Location: Home based with potential access to desk space in central London, if required; travel across the UK may be required from time to time as part of role (subject to covid guidance)

Reporting to: Director of Strategy and Learning

Direct reports: None at this time

Annual leave: 25 days per year plus bank holidays

About the Centre for Youth Impact and YMCA George Williams College

In April 2022, the Centre for Youth Impact merged with YMCA George Williams College. The merger brings together the Centre's work to progress thinking and practice in impact measurement in youth work and provision for young people with the College's rich history of supporting high quality relational practice with young people and communities. The combined charity works across the UK, including locality working via dedicated regional networks across England. Although still developing the strategy for the newly combined charity, the two organisations have long shared a vision for all young people to have access to high quality provision and services that improve their life chances, and which enable them to achieve their potential in mind, body and spirit. We believe that embedding more meaningful approaches to evaluation, quality improvement and impact measurement at the heart of resilient, learning organisations is key to achieving this vision.

The Centre for Youth Impact was established as a partnership initiative in 2014 and became an independent charity in 2018 before merging with the College in 2022. The College has a 50-year legacy of providing teaching and learning to post-graduate level for all those working with and for young people in communities. We are funded by a range of supporters, including the National Lottery Community Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Our 14-strong team works across the country on a varied portfolio of evaluations, capacity building and learning partner roles, and with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

About the role

The Head of Partnerships is a new and critical role, created as part of our merger with the YMCA George Williams College. We hope the merger will see our quality improvement and training work grow, alongside extending our communities of practice and our offer to them. As such, we created a dedicated post to hold, nurture and grow our approach to working with and through networks, and to oversee our partnership projects.

Networks have long been at the heart of the Centre for Youth Impact's approach. Built over the last eight years, we deeply value our relationships with our Regional Impact Networks across England, and are excited by the emergence of new relationships in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland – and indeed internationally, particularly building on the legacy of the College. There is now the opportunity to revisit our approach to working with and through networks, particularly in

developing a more responsive and 'tiered' offer that reflects and responds to the needs, ambitions, and experiences of our different stakeholders.

The Head of Partnerships will be responsible for implementing a new network strategy, strengthening these relationships (including transitioning existing network leads to potentially new ways of working), and framing the support that we offer to network 'members' across the UK (further details on our existing networks can be found [here](#)). This will include scoping, defining and implementing our approach to supporting/collaborating with members of the YMCA Federation in England and Wales alongside building relationships with the Federations in Scotland and the island of Ireland, as part of the merger with YMCA George Williams College. There is also the potential to work closely with the Director of Strategy and Learning to consider new international learning partnerships.

Over the past few years in particular, the Centre has been increasing its partnership projects: significant programmes of work with one major partner or funder, including cohort-level evaluation, capacity building and learning partnerships. The Head of Partnerships will also manage a range of partnership projects, working alongside other members of the team to initiate, design, and deliver cutting-edge programmes of work. The post-holder will work closely with the Director of Programmes and Director of Strategy and Learning to ensure that we are integrating our learning from our networks into our wider strategy and programmes of work focused on research, evaluation, and organisational learning.

The Head of Partnerships will play a strong role in supporting income generation, particularly for our network support activities. The post holder will also contribute significantly to our communications activities, amplifying the work and voices of our networks, and offering our platform in contribution to greater collective impact.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for an outstanding candidate who is imaginative and responsive, with strong interest and high-level skills in building alliances and collaborations, alongside capacity building for social sector organisations. You will need to have an appetite for understanding and navigating complexity, with an inquisitive mind and interest in youth-focused public policy and system dynamics. An interest and solid understanding of evaluation would be a distinct plus. You will also need to be a strong and confident project manager, with exceptional relationship skills. We take a coaching approach to all of our work, so skills and experience in this area will be a distinct advantage.

You will have the ability to engage with humility and authenticity with a wide range of people and organisations working to support young people. You will be able to spot and make connections between relationships and areas of work and be alive to changes and patterns in the external policy and practice context and the opportunities they present for our charity.

Finally, you will be a skilled facilitator, experienced in both designing and delivering workshops and training. You will also be a compelling and confident writer and presenter who can communicate the breadth of our work. You will be comfortable representing us externally and

acting as a ‘thought leader’: openly reflecting the evolution of your ideas and thinking, and generously sharing your learning with others.

Duties and responsibilities

Develop, implement, and monitor our network strategy

- Refine and implement our new network strategy, working closely with the Director of Strategy and Learning and Lead for Organisational Learning, including ‘success criteria’ and approaches to monitoring and adaptation
- Work with partners/stakeholders to develop specific proposals to diversify and extend the reach of our networks to individuals, groups and organisations traditionally marginalised and under-represented, plus approaches to understanding our progress in this aspiration
- Develop, frame and nurture our relationships in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- Lead our relationships with our existing network leads across England, including transitioning these networks to potential new ways of working in line with the new strategy
- Design, scope and oversee the delivery of a new (potentially tiered) ‘offer’ that responds to our new network strategy and the needs of existing network members, drawing on our broader work
- Co-ordinate the work of network leads where we are formally contracting them as Associates and/or collaborators
- Facilitate and lead training, coaching and workshops
- Work closely with network leads to put in place data sharing agreements in line with legislation and research ethics
- Identify and pursue opportunities to expand our networks through new partnerships/collaborations (particularly post-merger with YMCA George Williams College)
- Provide coaching and mentoring support to network leads in the development of their own impact measurement practice, and their capacity to support peers
- Work closely with the Communications Officer to ensure we are platforming the work of our networks, and have clear, coherent flows of information out to and in from all of the networks
- Initiate and develop funding proposals in order to sustain and grow our network activity

Manage and deliver partnership projects

- Plan, manage and deliver a range of partnership projects, defined as significant programmes of work designed and developed in collaboration with one major partner or funder, including cohort-level evaluation, capacity building and learning partnerships
- Build and support internal (and occasionally external) project teams to deliver on these projects, including allocating tasks, monitoring delivery, budgets and emergent risks
- Report into our Board of trustees on partnership activity as needed
- Work alongside the Lead for Operations to maintain an up to date and accurate map of capacity demands, availability and forecasting across partnership projects
- Support and undertake accurate recording of projects and contacts in our Salesforce CRM
- Prepare reports to funders as necessary
- Lead the identification, design and development of winning tenders, proposals and grant applications that further delivery of partnership projects
- Work with the Communications Manager to produce blogs, updates, and web content about our partnership projects

Scope and develop our relationship with the YMCA Federation (post-merger with the YMCA George Williams College)

- Build a strong understanding of the needs, demands and perspectives of local YMCAs, and how we could respond
- Build a close working relationship with YMCA England and Wales (as the national office for the YMCA Federation in England and Wales) in order to identify and develop opportunities to collaborate and/or work in partnership, including in policy and research, fundraising and international developments
- Align emergent relationships with the YMCA in Scotland and Ireland, alongside local YMCAs in Wales, with our new network strategy
- Establish open and ongoing two-way lines of communication with YMCA England and Wales, and local YMCAs to create closed feedback loops that inform our work
- Identify individual local YMCAs (or thematic/regional clusters) that have shared interests with us, and work with them to initiate and develop partnership initiatives, including seeking the funding to support them
- Work with colleagues across the charity to design, frame and deliver a responsive support offer to local YMCAs in England and Wales, including training, coaching, data gathering and analysis, and guidance around shared measurement
- Work with the Director of Strategy and Learning to develop new relationships with the international YMCA movement, particularly focused on a new learning offer for the movement.

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Experiencing working with and through formal networks in pursuit of positive change
- Solid understanding of what it means for an organisation to play a collaborative 'sector leadership' role
- Understanding of the wider evidence and impact debate in the social sector
- A strong appreciation of how people learn, reflect and support behaviour change in others, drawn from experience of adult education or training delivery
- High-level training and facilitation skills
- Excellent relationship management and collaboration skills: the ability to understand others' contexts and motivations and build a committed team of diverse partners accordingly
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills
- Knowledge of youth policy and the current youth sector context
- Excellent project management skills, including managing multiple projects simultaneously, monitoring budgets, reporting processes and time tracking

Desirable

- Understanding of and strong interest in key themes in the evidence/impact agenda in youth work and provision for young people
- Understanding of systems leadership
- Management level experience in a not-for-profit context
- Experience in coaching, and/or action learning facilitation
- Experience of growing and supporting communities of practice
- Experience of working in a delivery setting with and for young people
- Experience of organisational development

- Track record in significant and proactive income generation; including leading/contributing to development of grant applications and/or responses to competitive tenders in excess of circa £100,000.

Personal qualities we are looking for include:

- Identifying with and embodying the aims and ethos of our charity, including valuing collaborative approaches, challenging and supporting those we work with, and being curious and questioning
- Collaborator and team player
- Reflective and highly self-aware
- Able to have challenging and courageous conversations with compassion
- Understanding of and empathy with our sector
- Focused and thoughtful strategist, balancing project delivery with sector leadership
- Track record of leadership and influence through inspirational communication and passionate advocacy

How to apply

If all of the above sounds appealing, then please send a copy of the following to jobs@youthimpact.uk with the subject line ‘Head of Partnerships application’:

1. Your CV
2. A covering letter (up to 800 words) that states how you meet the requirements set out in the person specification (and stating that you have the right to work in the UK).
3. Equality and Diversity monitoring form

Please complete the anonymous equality and diversity survey form as part of the application. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their background, and welcome applications regardless of sex, gender, race, age, sexuality, belief or disability.

We acknowledge that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented in our staff team and we’re committed to correcting this. We are particularly keen to receive applications from people of colour; disabled people; people who identify as being LGTBQIA+; and people who have a mental health condition. We’d also love to hear from people who have used and benefited from youth provision/services.

We want to support you to show us your best, and to thrive at the Centre for Youth Impact. We can make reasonable adjustments throughout the application process and on the job. If you have particular accessibility needs, please get in touch and let us know of any requirements you have.

The deadline for receipt of your application is 5pm on Wednesday 12 July 2022. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Interviews will take place w/c 25 July and w/c 1 August and will be via Zoom.

For more information about us please visit the Centre for Youth Impact's [website](#). If you have any questions about the role, please email Sarah Rose, Operations Lead, on sarah.rose@youthimpact.uk to arrange an informal conversation.