



Country Trust

The Country Trust is the leading national educational charity that connects children from areas of high social and economic disadvantage with the land that sustains us all

Head Office:
Moulsham Mill, Parkway,
Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7PX

www.countrytrust.org.uk
info@countrytrust.org.uk

Charity no. 1122103

Farm Discovery Programme Manager

Contract: Employed

Salary: £40,170

Location: Homeworking

Hours: 35 hours per week. We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements, including slightly reduced hours or compressed hours, for the right candidate.

Reports to: Head of Programmes

Line management: One employed member of the programme support team

Contract management: Strategic and operational oversight of 26 self-employed Farm Discovery Coordinators, including management of contractual relationships and agreed delivery outcomes.

Travel: Regular travel across the UK to support the delivery team and visit our activities, including overnight stays, is a core and essential part of this role. All reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by The Country Trust.

Annual leave: 25 days annual leave plus 8 Bank Holidays (FTE) **Benefits:** Workplace pension

Overview of the role

Through effective team leadership and coordination, and collaboration with colleagues, this role enables a large team of self-employed expert Coordinators to deliver the charity's mission of providing high quality, educational, relevant, safe and impactful Farm Discovery visits and related activities for disadvantaged children across England and North Wales.

The Programme Manager is responsible for the effective delivery and continued development of The Country Trust's largest programme. They will lead and coordinate a geographically dispersed delivery team of 26 self-employed expert Coordinators, managing the contractual relationships and agreed delivery outcomes while respecting Coordinator independence and autonomy in how they provide their services. The role also includes line management of one employed member of the programme support team. The role combines programme leadership and coordination with contract management, quality assurance, data and financial oversight, programme development and partnership working.

A fulfilling opportunity in a growing, energetic charity

Are you an experienced Programme Manager who is outstanding at enabling and leading educators, and has a passion for addressing poverty of opportunity? Could you bring this passion to connecting disadvantaged children to food, farming and nature?

Could you:

- Lead and coordinate our dispersed Farm Discovery delivery team of self-employed expert Coordinators, ensuring that contractual arrangements, communication, administration, reporting, information management, budgeting, evaluation and delivery support enable us to achieve amazing things with primary school communities in disadvantaged areas around the country?
- Work with colleagues to grow and shape our programmes to achieve our vision, including supporting fundraising efforts?
- As an inspiring advocate of our work, build our contribution to the national conversation around food, farming and nature education?

Working for The Country Trust

The Country Trust is the largest provider of farm visits in England. We are the only national-scale charity focused exclusively on giving disadvantaged children access to working farms.

For over 40 years we have been working with farmers to bring the countryside alive for children least able to access it. Last year over 20,000 children had tailored, hands-on and impactful Farm Discovery visits to working farms, growing in curiosity, confidence and connection, and we think well over 600,000 children have visited a farm with us over the last 40 years.

We are living in turbulent times but have a mission that's so relevant to many of the big issues of our time. You'll be joining as we are about to launch our new Strategic Plan and Farm Discovery has a central role to play in it, and in the national conversation about food, farming, the natural world, sustainability and education. You would be working with an organisation with deep roots but with plenty of space to grow.

This is a home-based role, combining focused desk-based work with regular travel across England and North Wales. You will spend time planning, coordinating and monitoring delivery, working with systems and data, managing contractual relationships and supporting the delivery team remotely. You will also travel regularly to visit the delivery team, monitor programme quality, understand challenges and opportunities, and strengthen relationships with Coordinators and partners. Frequent travel, including overnight stays, is an essential part of the role and helps ensure you remain connected to our work on the ground.

Is this the role for you?

We want our team to better reflect the amazing diversity of the children and communities we work with. We are excited about the connections, creativity and inspiration that this will bring and, most of all, we are committed to finding the right people for the job.

Below we have outlined the skills we believe are important for this role. To ensure a fair recruitment process we endeavour to keep all applications anonymous until after selection.

[Please review our FAQs](#) for this role and if you have any remaining questions, please email us at; senior-recruitment@countrytrust.org.uk

We are looking for someone who...

Can walk the walk...

- Who is outstanding at enabling and leading educators and with a track record of strong programme management.
- Is familiar with the way primary education is organised and delivered in England.
- Has a deep understanding of the communities we serve, and the potential that can be unlocked by empowering children to be curious, building their confidence and developing connections.
- Understands and can manage the risks that bringing children and adults with limited experience into outdoor and farm spaces brings.

Inspires confidence...

Lead and coordinate a geographically dispersed delivery team:

- Provide strategic and operational oversight of experienced and newly engaged self-employed Farm Discovery Coordinators, building strong professional relationships and supporting effective delivery of agreed contractual outcomes while respecting their independence and autonomy in how they perform their services.
- Manage contractual relationships with 26 self-employed Coordinators, including onboarding, contractual administration, invoices and expenses, agreed compliance requirements, communication and monitoring of deliverables.
- Ensure the delivery team has the information, clarity and support it needs to deliver consistently high-quality Farm Discovery experiences.
- Assess programme capacity and coordinate appropriate Coordinator capacity to meet agreed programme requirements, responding effectively to changes in demand or unexpected loss of capacity.

Champion quality, health and safety and safeguarding:

- Champion health and safety across the delivery team, working closely with the charity's Health & Safety Lead to ensure that policies and good practice are embedded in day-to-day delivery, risks are identified and managed effectively, and coordinators have the confidence and knowledge to keep children, coordinators and partners safe.
- Ensure safeguarding, EDI and wellbeing are active approaches, not just paper policies.
- Understand and champion our pedagogy, monitoring programme quality and agreed standards, identifying risks, challenges and opportunities for improvement and taking appropriate action within contractual and organisational frameworks.
- Support the identification, selection and onboarding of new self-employed Coordinators, in line with agreed role requirements, contractual arrangements and organisational standards. Promote an inclusive and representative delivery team that reflects the communities we serve.

Manage programme performance, data and impact:

- Manage data closely and accurately, monitoring delivery against agreed contractual outcomes, funding obligations, programme KPIs and impact measures.
- Use data, feedback and evaluation to understand programme performance, identify areas for improvement and inform future programme design and delivery.
- Work with our Impact Lead (currently a consultant) to implement and report against our results framework, ensuring our methodology is regularly reviewed, and potentially to partner in academic research.

Manage resources, budgets and systems:

- Understand programme costs, manage budgets and monitor resources and workflow across the programme. Champion continuous improvement of systems and processes, including the transition to new, more automated ways of working.
- Skilfully lead and facilitate change across the Farm Discovery delivery team, ensuring that new systems and processes are clearly communicated, understood and embedded while respecting the independence of self-employed Coordinators.

Develop the programme and its partnerships:

- Work with colleagues to develop new, high-quality, impactful Farm Discovery opportunities, particularly at scale, including contract-managing Project Managers for larger delivery partnerships and short-term projects, and actively contributing to working groups, steering groups and other partnership forums.
- Build productive partnerships with schools, farmers, funders and other organisations that increase our capacity to deliver while maintaining or improving quality.
- Work with colleagues to identify opportunities to grow and shape Farm Discovery in line with the charity's strategic objectives and funding opportunities.

Communicate, influence and represent Farm Discovery:

- Able to support the delivery team and the charity through both sunnier and more challenging times, using skilled communication, praise and encouragement alongside appropriately managed difficult conversations about contractual or delivery matters.
- Work with colleagues in the Senior Leadership Team to contribute effectively to national working groups and round tables, as well as spotting occasions when Farm Discovery needs to take the lead.
- Support marketing and communications activity, ensuring we have engaging and powerful case studies, spokespeople (including you) and accurate statistics and facts to hand.
- Help translate programme insight, evidence and impact into compelling stories for communications, fundraising and donor reporting.

Will be a great senior team member:

- Champion our organisational objectives of reducing uncertainty (financial and operational) and increasing efficiency (systems and processes) for Farm Discovery and the wider charity, working with our excellent IT, Digital, Business Operations and Finance service support teams.
- Contribute effectively to organisational priorities beyond Farm Discovery, bringing programme insight and expertise to wider discussions and decisions.

We know that we are greater than the sum of our parts. We are an organisation full of possibilities, and we are looking for someone who wants to work and contribute to that kind of environment.

Essentials

We will shortlist against the following experience, attributes and skills that we know you will need to thrive in the role:

Our mission and educational approach:

- Experience of and a strong commitment to providing child-led educational opportunities, ideally to children experiencing disadvantage.
- A strong understanding of the communities we serve and of the potential that can be unlocked by enabling children to be curious, build confidence and develop connections.
- Familiarity with how primary education is organised and delivered in England, and an understanding of the context in which schools and teachers operate.

Programme leadership and management:

- A strong track record of programme management, with the ability to plan, coordinate and continuously improve complex programmes and ensure high-quality delivery.

- Outstanding at enabling and leading educators, Coordinators and delivery teams to deliver engaging, high-quality learning experiences.
- Skilled in leading and coordinating a collaborative, motivated and geographically dispersed delivery team, including self-employed Coordinators.
- Proficient in capacity management, capable of assessing workloads and proactively adjusting resources to meet project needs.
- Solutions-focused - able to respond appropriately in times of change, crisis or sudden capacity loss, including the timely involvement of senior management and colleagues.

Relationship management:

- Proven ability to establish, build and maintain strong professional relationships.
- Understanding of how to form productive partnerships with schools.
- Can demonstrate experience of developing external partnerships that enhance programme reach and impact or can demonstrate the potential to do this.
- Possesses potential or demonstrated experience in developing relationships with funders.

Programme quality, safeguarding and standards:

- Strong focus on maintaining programme quality and continuous improvement, with experience of working within health and safety, safeguarding, EDI, Theory of Change and KPI frameworks.
- Understanding of risk management in educational, outdoor or farm settings.
- Proficient in data collection and analysis to continuously improve programme effectiveness and inform future design and delivery.
- Knowledgeable in relevant sector trends, legislation and best practice.

Operational and systems management:

- Capable of contributing to the continuous improvement of systems and processes, optimising programme delivery and data management.
- Experience of implementing new systems or ways of working and supporting people through change.
- Able to manage competing operational priorities across a complex, geographically dispersed programme.

Financial management and fundraising support:

- Experienced in budget planning, resource monitoring and maintaining accurate cost models to inform programme decisions.
- Skilled in translating technical programme details into compelling stories, working closely with Communications and Fundraising colleagues to ensure insights and impact from the Farm Discovery team flow coherently into fundraising materials and donor reporting.

Communication and cross-organisational collaboration:

- Able to communicate clearly and effectively with self-employed Coordinators, colleagues, partners and senior stakeholders.
- Strategic thinker, aligning programme activities with the broader goals of The Country Trust.
- Proficient in cross-functional collaboration to support seamless operations and organisational alignment.

Safeguarding

The Country Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This is achieved through effective recruitment and retention of competent, motivated staff members who are suited to, and able to, deliver their roles.

All eligible post holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service and regular training is mandatory.

How to apply

For all recruitment information please go to our vacancies page on our website: www.countrytrust.org.uk/get-involved/work-for-us

Enquiries: senior-recruitment@countrytrust.org.uk

Please note: Due to the volume of applications, we will contact **shortlisted** applicants only.

Closing date: Thursday 8th October, Midday