

Role Profile

Job Role: Head of Young People's Services

Accountable to: Director of Operations

About Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone:

Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone is a 21st century youth hub located at the heart of Blackburn and a dedicated site in Darwen, open to young people aged 5 to 25 years old, aiming to change the prospects offered to young people in the area. Our vision is to be at the heart of the community, collaborating to create a more cohesive and prosperous Blackburn and Darwen.

We are one of the leading youth organisations in Blackburn, with a membership of over 5000 young people. We are open 7 days a week, 52 weeks of a year and offer over 40 different activities and opportunities in our open-access youth club.

Context of Role:

Our Head of Young People's Services is a critical, strategic and operational role within Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone. As a supporting member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), you will work closely with the Director of Operations, CEO and the Director of Finance to ensure the charity delivers its vision and strategic objectives. This includes strategies for sustaining and overseeing the ongoing transformation of Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zones' operational business plan and its operational processes and infrastructure. Your leadership skills will play a crucial role (in conjunction with the leadership team) in establishing a platform and environment for growth by creating a best-in-class, people-first, employee-of-choice that changes the prospect of local children and young people (aged 5 to 25 years). You must be abreast of new opportunities (sourced independently and through your colleagues) and advise the leadership team and board on all Universal and Targeted Service operational matters, including its performance, risk, forecast/trajectories, and the general state of play.

You will need to show exceptional skills and the ability to meet KPI's relating to (but, not limited to) leadership skills, the ability to design and deliver organisational operational plans, risk management, departmental budget management, stakeholder relations and organisational safeguarding responsibility.

Main Responsibilities:

- Work with the Leadership Team to develop and implement an annual Young People's Programme, which is delivered on a termly basis and aligned to strategic pillars, which include Social Integration, Aspirations, Skills and Employment and Health and Wellbeing.
- To develop effective and sustainable operational plans (aligned to our strategy and business plan) with the operational senior team (OLT) and young people's committee (occasionally with the board) and to distil them into individual SMART work plans for all services for children and young people.
- Establish and enforce quality standards for youth programmes, continuously assessing and improving service delivery to enhance the overall impact on young people.
- Provide effective leadership to teams responsible for delivering youth services, fostering a positive and inclusive culture that promotes the well-being and development of young individuals.
- Work cohesively with supporting departments including fundraising, HR and back office to help initiate, coordinate, and implement systems, policies and procedures. Take lead responsibility for their effectiveness and follow through within operations.
- Oversee the training and professional development of staff involved in youth service operations, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to support young people effectively.
- Be abreast of income opportunities (sourced independently or via colleagues) and/or opportunities to lower overheads/running costs, seeking to progressively benefit our financial sustainability.
- Work closely with the finance team to develop and manage operational budgets, ensuring effective use of resources and financial sustainability.
- Oversee the management of physical facilities to ensure they are safe, well-maintained, and conducive to the delivery of youth programs (eg climbing wall)
- Ensure that all youth service operations comply with legal and regulatory requirements, particularly in areas of safeguarding and child protection.
- Develop and implement risk management strategies to mitigate operational risks.
- Act as the charity's Designated Safeguarding Lead (on call for agreed evenings), working openly in partnership with key agencies including LSCB and social services.
- Identify and implement improvements to operational processes, systems, and workflows to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

- Oversee the implementation and management of technology systems that support operational efficiency and programme delivery.
- Maintain a culture of continuous improvement (eg processes, systems, policies)
- Foster a positive organisational culture by promoting teamwork, professional development, and effective communication among operational staff.
- Establish mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on operational performance, impact and delivery, providing regular updates to senior leadership and the board and to feed continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with contractual obligations, delivering what we have funding for.
- Responsible for the proper and robust auditing
- Collaborate with external partners, vendors, and service providers to ensure seamless coordination and delivery of operational support services.
- Ensure excellent engagement with external stakeholders and organisations to integrate Youth Zone’s work into other organisations/statutory bodies.
- Promote the active participation and input of young people in the design and evaluation of programs, ensuring their voices are heard and incorporated into decision-making processes.
- Ensure young people are engaged in flagships events (Patrons Dinner, Festival of Making etc)

These responsibilities highlight the critical role of the Head of Young People’s Services in providing leadership, optimising processes, and ensuring the efficient functioning of the Youth Zone’s universal youth provision.

Measurable Outputs (as per the business plan):

- Membership KPI’s including attendance and retention
- Measurable need, outcomes and impact for children and young people
- Staff engagement, retention and happiness
- Income and sustainability

Education/Training/Qualifications:

- Five GCSEs or equivalent at Grade C or above. (*Essential*)
- Professional leadership and/or coaching qualification to level 3 or above (*Desirable*)
- Youth Work Level 3 or equivalent (*Desirable*)
- First Aid (*Essential*)

Person Specification:

Experience:

- At least five years’ previous management experience in a youth or children’s work setting (*Essential*)

- Experience of successfully leading and managing a team of staff and volunteers (Essential)
- Knowledge of safeguarding and health and safety regulations relating to an ever-changing working environment. (Essential)
- Proven record of accomplishment of project management with a minimum of 3 years experience (Essential)

Skills/Abilities *(All Essential):*

- Excellent personal, organisational/time management skills.
- Proven passion for the well-being of young people.
- Positive and resilient attitude.
- Able to remain calm and professional in challenging situations.
- A mature approach to senior-level teamwork, with a positive attitude towards collaborative working.
- Good insight and understanding of organisational and contractual aims and objectives.
- Proactive in initiating ideas.
- Excellent administration skills
- Able to challenge poor performance, and manage difficult conversations
- Adaptable.
- Able to actively promote the cultural values of the Youth Zone amongst peers.
- Able to motivate others to perform with excellence.
- Able to resolve issues and handle pressure with a positive outlook.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the principles of good youth work practice *(Essential)*
- Ability to identify and challenge discrimination and discriminatory behaviour, taking appropriate action as necessary *(Essential)*
- Understanding of issues affecting young people's lives *(Essential)*
- Knowledge and understanding to Safeguard Children & Young People *(Essential)*
- Ability to work in accordance with national, local and organisational Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures *(Essential)*
- Ability to identify and appropriately respond to cases of potential or actual child abuse *(Essential)*

Working hours

Usually Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm, but you must be flexible to working unsocial hours to meet the needs of the service you lead. You will determine your work schedules based on where you feel your time is best served, and regular and routine evening QA's and support are to be expected in the evenings and weekends.

Remuneration package

Salary: £38,000 to £45,000 (depending on experience)
Holidays: 33 days inclusive of 8 Bank Holidays
Pension: Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone operates a workplace pension scheme with Royal London for auto-enrolment purposes. You will contribute 5% of your gross earnings whilst the Youth Zone will contribute 3%. If you meet the criteria you will be auto-enrolled into the scheme within 3 months of commencement of your employment although you have the option to opt-out if you so wish.

Other Benefits

- Flexibility for Hybrid Working
- Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme (24/7 Support and Advice)
- FairQuid (Financial Wellbeing Support)
- Enhanced Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Pay

Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable groups. This post is subject to a safer recruitment process, including the disclosure of criminal records through an enhanced DBS check and completion of appropriate vetting checks. We promote safer working practice across our Youth Zone and all successful employees and volunteers will be expected to share this commitment.

Application Process

Please email your CV and covering letter to HR@blackburnyz.org, setting out your reasons for applying for this position.