



North East Young Dads and Lads

DadVocate Programme Manager

Recruitment Pack

Job Advert

Salary	£39,000 per annum
Hours	Full-time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, with some evening and weekend working expected to meet the needs of the project
Location	Hybrid, with travel across the North East required and activity based in Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Gateshead/Newcastle and County Durham
Contract	Fixed term, 4 years (potential to extend, dependent on funding)
Probationary period	Six months
Responsible to	CEO
Start date	1 September 2026
Closing date	9am, Wednesday 05 August
Interviews	Thursday 13 August

About NEYDL

North East Young Dads and Lads (NEYDL) was founded in 2017 and has grown rapidly to become one of the UK's most recognised organisations supporting young dads, men aged 25 and under in a fathering role. Our vision is for young dads to be valued and supported as parents.

We provide intensive 1-to-1 support and peer group activities to young dads; run DigiDAD, a free co-created digital platform for young dads and the professionals who work with them; and work across the sector to improve father-inclusive practice. In 2024/25 we supported 217 young dads directly and achieved 100% satisfaction among the young dads we work with.



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We are a non-judgmental organisation built on mutual trust, respect and honesty, listening to young dads and working with them voluntarily to find long-term solutions. Many of our staff are young dads themselves or have lived experience relevant to the communities we serve.

About DadVocates

DadVocates is a new four-year project, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, that will train, mentor and supervise young dads with lived experience of young fatherhood to act as volunteer peer advocates for young fathers going through children's social care (CSC) proceedings, including Child Protection, Child in Need and Public Law Outline.

The project responds to evidence from our work with over 800 young dads, which shows that the majority felt negatively about CSC proceedings from the outset: many hold fatalistic expectations about losing contact with their children and are reluctant to engage. By matching young dads with a trained volunteer DadVocate at the earliest possible stage, the project aims to build agency, improve engagement and ultimately improve outcomes for children.

Over four years, the project will train 40 volunteer DadVocates, support 100 young dads through CSC proceedings, and deliver father-inclusive practice training to 160 social workers and other professionals across five local authorities. It will also co-design clear guidance on what good father-inclusive practice looks like within children's social care teams.

This is a genuinely ambitious project, working at the intersection of lived experience, peer advocacy, social care practice and systems change. It was conceived by a young dad who is now a NEYDL trustee and qualified social worker, and has been co-designed with 174 young dads over three years.

The role

The DadVocate Programme Manager will lead this project from the outset. You will recruit, train, mentor and supervise our volunteer DadVocates; chair and manage the project Steering Committee; lead the development and delivery of professional training for social workers; oversee monitoring, evaluation and funder reporting; and manage the project budget.

This is a programme management role, not a casework role. Cases are held by NEYDL's Senior Young Dads Workers; the DadVocates you manage provide peer support within those cases. You will have direct relationships with young dad beneficiaries through steering committee meetings, evaluation sessions and learning events, but your primary responsibility is managing and supporting the DadVocates and the systems around them.

The DadVocates are young dads with lived experience of young fatherhood, not professional practitioners. They will need significant support, encouragement and professional development to operate effectively in what can be a challenging environment. The quality of that management and support is central to the success of this project.

You will work alongside training and research providers, closely with NEYDL's Senior Young Dads Workers as the case holders, and be supported day-to-day by the CEO.

What we are looking for

We are looking for someone with substantial post-qualification experience in children's social work or a related safeguarding role, and a track record of managing funded projects in the voluntary sector. The ideal candidate will bring both: professional grounding in children's



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social care and the programme management experience to lead a complex, multi-strand project over four years.

You will understand the children's social care system from the inside, be able to design and deliver training that changes professional culture, and have the people management skills to support a team of volunteer young dads who are developing professional skills alongside their advocacy role. You will also need to build trusted relationships with young dad beneficiaries, social workers, academic partners and a range of local statutory and voluntary organisations.

We particularly welcome applications from people with lived experience of young fatherhood or young parenthood, from people with personal or professional experience of children's social care proceedings, and from people from minoritised backgrounds.

What we offer

NEYDL is a close, inclusive and supportive team that actively invests in the development of its staff. We are a non-judgmental organisation built on mutual trust, respect and honesty. If you join us, you will be part of a team that genuinely believes in what it does.

In addition, we offer:

- 7.2 weeks' annual leave per year, inclusive of statutory and public holidays
- 5% employer pension contribution
- A flexible hybrid working arrangement
- Regular supervision and fortnightly team meetings
- Funded professional development and training
- Mileage paid at 55p per mile for business travel
- The opportunity to lead a nationally significant project at the forefront of father-inclusive practice

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV (no more than four pages, including two references who can be contacted if successful) and either:

- A covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 (Arial, size 12)
- Or a video of no more than four minutes.

Please explain why you want this role and how your experience meets the person specification.

Send your application to caitlin@inspired-hr.co.uk with the subject line 'Job Application - DadVocate Programme Manager'

Applications must be received by 9am, Wednesday 05 August. For an informal conversation about the role, please email caitlin@inspired-hr.co.uk.

Shortlisting: 05 and 06 August. Interviews: 13 August.

NEYDL is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from people with lived experience relevant to the communities we serve.



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Job Description

Job title	DadVocate Programme Manager
Responsible to	CEO
Responsible for	Volunteer DadVocates; DadVocates Steering Committee
Salary	£39,000 per annum
Hours	35 hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, with some evening and weekend working
Location	Hybrid, with travel across the North East required and activity based in Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Gateshead/Newcastle and County Durham
Contract	Fixed term, 4 years (potential to extend, dependent on funding)
Start date	1 September 2026

Job purpose

To lead and manage the DadVocates project, a four-year National Lottery-funded programme training volunteer young dads as peer advocates for young fathers in children's social care proceedings; delivering professional training to social workers; and working towards the embedding of father-inclusive practice across children's social care teams in five local authorities.

Key responsibilities

1. Project management

- Take day-to-day responsibility for the management and delivery of the DadVocates project across all strands of activity
- Manage the project budget, monitor expenditure and liaise with the CEO and Finance Officer
- Update and maintain NEYDL's Evaluation Framework with DadVocates-specific indicators and methodologies within the first two months of the project start date
- Ensure the project meets its funder milestones and KPIs, maintaining accurate records of outputs and outcomes
- Produce quarterly progress reports for internal review and contribute to annual funder reports
- Commission and manage the external evaluator for the four-year evaluation
- Identify and escalate risks and challenges to the CEO, recommending solutions

2. Steering Committee

- Chair and manage the project Steering Committee, which meets every two months and comprises young dads, NEYDL frontline staff, the safeguarding lead, social work professionals and academic partners
- Induct Steering Committee members, including young dads, into their roles, providing tailored support to ensure they can contribute confidently alongside professionals



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- Use Steering Committee meetings to review progress, identify challenges and agree recommendations for the next period of delivery

3. Co-creating the DadVocate training programme

- Work with training and research providers, young dads and Steering Committee members to co-create a 100-hour peer advocacy training programme for volunteer DadVocates
- Deliver the DadVocate training programme alongside NEYDL staff and delivery partners
- Lead annual reviews of the training programme and update content in response to learning and feedback

4. Managing and supporting volunteer DadVocates

- Recruit and train 10 young dad volunteers per year (40 over four years), all with lived experience of young fatherhood
- Provide ongoing mentoring, supervision and wellbeing support to all active DadVocate volunteers: at least 50 hours per volunteer per year
- Set clear objectives for each volunteer, conduct regular appraisals and team meetings, and support their professional development and progression
- Recognise that DadVocates are young dads with lived experience rather than professional backgrounds, and provide the high level of structured support this requires, including supporting them to navigate professional environments with confidence
- Support the progression of volunteers into employment, further training and community leadership roles

5. Matching DadVocates with young dads in CSC proceedings

- Build and maintain referral pathways with social services, midwifery, Family Nurse Partnerships, Family Hubs and other local networks across target local authorities
- Match 100 young dads over four years with a volunteer DadVocate (10 in year 1, rising to 40 in year 4)
- Work closely with NEYDL's Senior Young Dads Workers, who hold cases, to coordinate peer advocacy support within CSC proceedings
- Maintain oversight of active advocacy arrangements, ensuring DadVocates are appropriately supported and that safeguarding obligations are met at all times
- Engage directly with young dad beneficiaries through steering committee meetings, evaluation sessions and project learning events

6. Professional training for social workers

- Co-create professional training content with social workers and young dads on the Steering Committee, drawing on national research and NEYDL's practice experience
- Deliver half-day induction training to 15-20 social workers per local authority at the outset of each area's involvement, co-facilitated by young dads or DadVocate volunteers
- Deliver annual refresher training in each local authority
- Facilitate quarterly case review and learning meetings with social workers in each local authority, involving DadVocate volunteers



- Co-design guidance on what father-inclusive practice looks like within children's social care teams, with social workers and young dads (first version in year 2; updated version in year 4)
- Organise and host two information-sharing events for social care professionals in years 2 and 4 (approximately 100 professionals per event)

7. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

- Coordinate data collection with young dads, DadVocate volunteers and social workers using NEYDL's evaluation tools and new instruments co-designed for this project
- Produce annual evaluation reports and disseminate learning through NEYDL's wider networks, events and conferences
- Share learning through stakeholder events, professional networks and NEYDL's regular sector-facing activity

8. Safeguarding

- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements are in place for all project activity, particularly for DadVocate volunteers operating within CSC proceedings
- Work closely with NEYDL's Safeguarding Lead to ensure policies and protocols relevant to the project are current, understood and followed by volunteers and partners
- Act as first point of contact for safeguarding concerns arising within the DadVocates project

9. Collaboration and partnerships

- Work closely with NEYDL's Senior Young Dads Workers as case holders, ensuring a joined-up and consistent approach to supporting young dads involved in the project
- Build and maintain relationships with academic, statutory and voluntary sector partners
- Work with the Business Development Manager to help secure longer-term Local Authority funding for DadVocates, using evidence of impact from the project to support conversations with Local Authorities and expand the project's reach beyond the areas and targets in the original funding bid
- Represent NEYDL and the DadVocates project at external meetings, networks and conferences
- Contribute to NEYDL's wider communications and engagement activity

10. Other

- Deputise for the CEO as required
- Report to the Board of Trustees in person or in writing on a quarterly basis as required

11. Standard clauses

- The post holder must carry out their responsibilities at all times with due regard to NEYDL's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, policy and statement, and Safeguarding Policy



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- The post holder is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures relating to health and safety in the workplace are adhered to at all times
- The post holder must respect the confidentiality of data stored electronically and by other means, in line with NEYDL's Data Protection Policy
- This role requires satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance prior to appointment
- This job description is not exhaustive. NEYDL reserves the right to reasonably add to or revise it at any time in agreement with the post holder.



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Person Specification

E = Essential; D = Desirable. We will assess candidates through application (CV and covering letter or video) and interview.

Qualifications

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Professional qualification in social work (e.g. BA/MA Social Work, CQSW, DipSW) or a relevant social care qualification	CV	E
GCSE or equivalent in English Language and Mathematics	CV	E
Postgraduate qualification or training in a relevant field (e.g. children's rights, family law, peer support, project management, research methods)	CV	D

Experience

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
At least three years' post-qualification experience in children's social work or a related safeguarding role	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of designing and delivering training or professional development programmes for practitioners	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of recruiting, supervising and supporting the development and wellbeing of staff or volunteers	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of setting clear objectives, conducting appraisals and facilitating team meetings	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of managing multi-stakeholder relationships across statutory and voluntary sector organisations	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of managing a project budget	CV and covering letter/video	E
Experience of managing or supporting people with lived experience in a professional or voluntary capacity,	CV and covering letter/video	E



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Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
understanding the specific support needs this involves		
Experience of managing a funded project or programme in the voluntary or public sector, including meeting funder milestones and KPIs	CV and covering letter/video	D
Experience of monitoring, evaluation and data management in a project context	CV and covering letter/video	D
Experience of service development and co-production with people with lived experience	CV and covering letter/video	D
Experience of working with young dads, expectant fathers or non-birthing people	CV and covering letter/video	D
Experience of working in or alongside the voluntary sector in a management or programme role	CV and covering letter/video	D
Experience of contributing to or managing externally evaluated programmes	CV and covering letter/video	D

Knowledge and understanding

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Thorough knowledge of children's social care proceedings, including Child Protection, Child in Need and Public Law Outline	CV, covering letter/video and interview	E
Knowledge of the specific challenges, barriers and needs of young dads and expectant fathers within the social care and family justice systems	CV, covering letter/video and interview	E
Understanding of safeguarding requirements in complex community and voluntary settings	Interview	E
Understanding of compliance and governance requirements within funded projects	CV and covering letter/video	E
Understanding of equalities, diversity and inclusion and their application in service design and delivery	CV, covering letter/video and interview	E
Knowledge of statutory and voluntary service provision relevant to young dads and families in the North East	CV and covering letter/video	D



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Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Awareness of peer advocacy models and their application within social care or community settings	CV and covering letter/video	D
Awareness of relevant policy and practice developments relating to young fathers and father-inclusive practice	Interview	D



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Skills and abilities

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Able to manage a complex, multi-strand programme independently, exercising sound professional judgement with limited day-to-day supervision	CV and covering letter/video	E
Strong people management skills: able to set clear expectations, provide structured support, conduct appraisals and develop people, particularly those new to professional environments	CV, covering letter/video and interview	E
Strong facilitation skills: able to chair and manage a diverse steering committee and lead group training sessions effectively	CV and covering letter/video	E
Excellent interpersonal skills: able to build trusted relationships with young men, statutory sector professionals and academic partners	Interview	E
Strong written communication skills: able to produce clear evaluation reports, project documentation, training materials and funder reports	CV and covering letter/video (assessed directly)	E
Strong verbal communication skills: confident presenting to professional audiences and representing NEYDL externally	Interview	E
Numerically confident: able to manage a budget, monitor expenditure and produce financial summaries	CV and covering letter/video	E
IT proficiency: experienced with data recording systems, Microsoft Office and digital communication tools	CV and covering letter/video	E

Personal qualities

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Genuine commitment to NEYDL's values and mission, motivated by long-term change in children's social care as well as individual impact on young dads	Covering letter/video and interview	E
Resilient and calm under pressure: able to manage complex, emotionally demanding situations with professionalism	Interview	E



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Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Highly self-motivated: comfortable working autonomously across multiple sites with a wide range of stakeholders	CV and interview	E
Flexible and adaptable: comfortable navigating a complex, evolving programme and making decisions in conditions of uncertainty	Interview	E
Committed to equity, diversity and inclusion: able to work respectfully and effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds	Covering letter/video and interview	E
Lived experience of young fatherhood, young parenthood or children's social care proceedings (professional or personal)	Covering letter/video	D

Other requirements

Requirement	How we will assess this	E / D
Right to work in the UK	Pre-employment check	E
Enhanced DBS clearance (required prior to appointment)	Pre-employment check	E
Full UK driving licence and regular access to a vehicle with business use insurance	CV	E
Willingness and ability to travel across the North East and occasionally further afield	CV and covering letter/video	E
Willingness to undertake relevant training and professional development	Interview	E

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