

Programme Assistants

18 months | 3 x fixed-term contracts

Part-time 0.8 FTE (28 hours a week) | £32,000 per annum FTE (pro-rata)

Programme Assistants

Thank you for your interest in being our Programme Assistant. This pack tells you more about the Henry Smith Foundation, how we work, and details of the role and the people you'll be working with.

About the role

We are looking for three Programme Assistants to join our programme teams.

The work is practical: managing diaries, running meetings, keeping records, answering queries from people applying for grants. But done well, it matters. Programme staff spend their time on grant decisions, not on chasing papers or untangling diary conflicts, because this person has already sorted it.

You will be a point of contact for people who may be applying for the first time, often navigating difficult circumstances. Getting that interaction right - clear, warm, prompt - shapes how they experience us.

If you are organised, steady under pressure, and want to work somewhere with a clear purpose, this is a good role.

Overview

Role summary	The Programme Assistant keeps three programme teams running. That means managing diaries, organising meetings, preparing papers, tracking actions, and handling the queries that come in every day. When this role works well, programme staff can focus on the grant work. When it doesn't, they can't.
Reporting to	Senior Grants Managers
Direct reports	None
Internal relationships	Programme Teams and other Henry Smith Foundation Teams including Grants Operations Team, Finance and Communications
External relationships	Contact with venues, stakeholders and visitors to ensure meetings and events happen effectively
Salary	£32,000 per annum FTE (pro-rata)
Working hours	Part-time, 28 hours per week (core hours are between 10am and 4pm)
Location	Our office is in central London and our employment contracts are office based. Staff work flexibly, including working from home, but are required to attend our office regularly and be available to attend face-to-face meetings, particularly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Attendance is expected at least 2 days per week in the office, but with some variation.

Main Responsibilities

Diary, Travel and Team Support

- Manage the Programme Director's diary and email, prioritising their time and ensuring external contacts get a timely, professional response.

- Keep contact sheets and Contact Management System information up to date.

- Support with team diaries, coordinating meetings, appointments and deadlines.

- Arrange UK travel and accommodation in line with organisational policies.

- Provide general administrative support to the team, including filing management, document preparation and correspondence.

- Work closely with the other Programme Assistants, sharing approaches to common problems and covering for each other when needed.

Meetings, Panels and Events

- Provide end-to-end administration for team meetings, panels, webinars and events, including scheduling, agenda preparation and distribution of papers.

- Attend meetings as required to take accurate notes, record decisions and actions, and ensure timely follow-up and chasing of actions.

- With Head of Governance and Grants Operations Team, support the organisation and smooth running of Grants Panel meetings and Grant-Making Committee, including liaising with internal stakeholders and panel members.

Grants and Process Support

- Input and maintain accurate data on the grants management system if required, ensuring information is up to date and reliable.

- Support the administration of grants processes, ensuring deadlines and governance requirements are met.

Enquiries and Applicant Support

- With the team, act as a first point of contact for enquiries from potential applicants, providing clear, timely and accurate responses.

- Support the handling of applicant correspondence, escalating queries where appropriate.

Budget and Financial Administration

- Support the team's budget administration, including tracking spend, managing records and assisting with basic financial processes in line with internal controls.

Research, Data and Knowledge Management

- Research organisations, topics or questions as requested, pulling together information that helps the team prepare for meetings or make decisions.
- Maintain and update knowledge banks, guidance documents and shared resources to ensure information remains accurate and accessible.

General

- The above list of responsibilities is not exhaustive, and you may be required to undertake other responsibilities and training as requested and as appropriate to your role level.

Person Specification

We recognise that candidates may bring different types of experience, and we would encourage you to apply even if you don't meet all of the criteria. We welcome applications from those who can demonstrate potential and transferable skills.

Qualifications / Education / Training

- No specific formal qualifications required.
- Education to GCSE level or equivalent, including English and Maths, or equivalent practical experience demonstrating strong written communication, numeracy and administrative capability.

Experience

- Experience of working in a grant-making, charity, public or not-for-profit setting (not essential).
- Experience in an administrative or team support role within a busy office environment or demonstrable transferable skills gained through education, placements, volunteering or other relevant experience.
- Experience of supporting meetings, panels or governance processes.
- Experience of responding to external enquiries or supporting applicants or customers.
- Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple tasks and competing priorities effectively.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- High level of accuracy and attention to detail, particularly with data and record-keeping.
- Confidence using standard office IT systems and databases.
- Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team while also using initiative to problem-solve.

Knowledge

- How to organise diaries, meetings and correspondence in a professional setting.

- Understanding of document management, version control and shared filing systems.

- Awareness of how formal meetings, panels or committees operate, including agendas, papers, note-taking, action tracking and follow-up.

- Basic understanding of data protection and information security, for example handling personal or sensitive information appropriately and confidentially.

- How to respond professionally and clearly to external enquiries, including knowing when to provide information directly and when to escalate queries.

- Good numerical and analytical ability, with the ability to support basic financial processes, for example tracking spend and maintaining accurate records.

- Basic experience of budget or financial administration.

Skills and Competencies

- Professional, calm and reliable, with a proactive and supportive approach.

- Discreet and trustworthy, with the ability to handle sensitive information appropriately.

- Flexible and adaptable, willing to support a range of tasks as priorities evolve.

Personal attributes

- An understanding of why the Foundation's work matters, and genuine care about how applicants and grantees experience us.

- Strong understanding of, and commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Other

- Willing and able to work outside of normal office hours occasionally if required.

- Curiosity and a proactive desire to learn and develop, with the motivation to grow in the role.

Our approach to candidates using AI in applications

We recognise that technology, including AI tools, can be helpful when preparing job applications, and we welcome the use of tools that support you in presenting your experience clearly. However, it's important that your application genuinely reflects your own skills, experience, and voice. We therefore recommend reviewing any AI-generated content carefully to ensure accuracy and authenticity.

If you are invited to interview, we'll want to hear directly from you about your skills and experiences. Any significant differences between your application and how you present yourself in person may negatively impact your application.

Requesting reasonable adjustments

We are committed to creating an inclusive recruitment process. If you require any reasonable adjustments to support you during the application or interview stages, please let us know. You can share your needs at any point in the process. Adjustments can be tailored to suit both physical and mental health needs. Our team will work with you to ensure you have what you need to perform at your best.

About the Henry Smith Foundation

- Established in 1628 through the legacy of Henry Smith, a London businessman who dedicated his wealth to support people facing hardship.
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- We have become one of the UK's largest independent funders, funding organisations supporting people through some of life's toughest transitions and points of crisis and pushing for systems that work for everyone.
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Our mission

Everyone deserves to thrive. But not everyone gets the same opportunities, so we're focused on supporting those facing some of the toughest transitions imaginable. We fund organisations working with people at some of the hardest points in their lives - leaving prison, escaping abuse, moving into adulthood without a safety net.

Our Strategy

Our role is to elevate the impact of those delivering change by backing bold ideas, strengthening organisations and standing beside the people driving lasting change. Our funding supports work that tackles social and economic exclusion, offers support when life is at its hardest, and strengthens communities. Because when people get the right support, change lasts.

We're sharpening our focus and concentrating our support around three of life's toughest transitions - moments when the right help can prevent harm and create opportunities. We're also broadening our role, offering more than funding to help organisations grow and lead lasting change in their communities.

Our funding priorities

Our 2025-2030 strategy, Elevate Your Impact, sharpens this focus. We're concentrating our efforts on some of life's toughest transitions where the right support at the right time can make a lasting difference:

- Getting Started - helping families give young children a strong, healthy start in life
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- Building Independence - supporting young people as they move into adulthood with confidence, skills and hope

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- Safer Futures - helping people rebuild after abuse, displacement or prison
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We back organisations with flexible, long-term funding and a commitment to building strong, trusting relationships. We also offer support beyond grants, including learning, leadership development, and peer connection.

Alongside our core programmes, we're developing a new Opportunity Fund - a space to support bold ideas, early-stage work and sector-strengthening initiatives outside our main funding priorities.

While this fund is in its early stages, it reflects our commitment to backing innovation, inclusive leadership and practical solutions that can help shape a stronger, fairer future. You can find out more about our strategy on our website.

Our Culture and Values

- Catalysts for Change - Using our resources to create lasting impact and drive positive change
 - Relationship-centred - Understanding diverse perspectives through compassion and inclusion, putting good relationships at the heart of all we do
 - Forward Thinking - Looking outward, innovating, and pursuing insights
 - Always Learning - Improving continually by challenging, reflecting, holding ourselves to account and sharing learning
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Our Culture and Values Group supports us in bringing these principles to life. With representation from across the team, it helps ensure that our internal culture aligns with our mission, values and ambitions for a more just society.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We want to reflect the communities we fund, in how we recruit, how we make decisions, and how we behave with each other. Our DEI working group meets regularly and feeds into how we work, not just what we say about it. That includes how we write job descriptions, how we run interviews, and what we ask of grant applicants.

Our Staff Team

The Henry Smith Foundation staff team comprises the following teams:

- Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team
 - Grant Operations Team (including Kindred team)
 - Research Strategy and External Engagement Team
 - Programme Teams - aligned to our funding priorities: Getting Started, Building Independence and Safer Futures
 - Finance, Investments and Resources Team
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Programme Teams

The Programme Teams lead all work on the three priority areas: Safer Futures, Building Independence and Getting Started. They design and deliver grant programmes, manage external relationships including with the voluntary sector, government and other funders, and ensure the work we do is impactful.

