

Research, Impact & Influence Officer

Reports to: Cristin O'Brien, Policy Lead

Location: Hybrid with 50% office presence

Contract: Permanent; full time

Salary: £25-35,000 per annum, depending on experience (+6% employer pension contribution)

Closing date for applications: Midnight, Sunday 15th September

The Difference

The Difference is a young education charity, founded to change the story on lost learning. By 2030, we want rates of exclusion and absence to be falling nationally and for schools to be better equipped to support all children, including those who may be vulnerable.

The Difference was born out of [a year of research into school exclusions with think-tank IPPR](#). This research identified a lack of inclusion expertise in schools and proposed a new leadership development programme to fill this gap. In 2018, Difference founder [Kiran](#) hired the team who took this idea from concept to reality, beginning work with our first schools.

The Difference is now a 22-strong team delivering multiple school leadership programmes, alongside a growing research and policy arm. The team is supported by our Youth Advisory Board, made up of young people who have experienced exclusion and who provide their expertise and insights on how school inclusion work should be done. This work is needed more than ever. Effects of COVID-19, coupled with the spiralling cost of living, have substantially increased levels of vulnerability. Schools serving excluded pupils face under-funding. The Difference has had excellent early impact but there is work ahead to capture this, share learning with schools and policy-makers, and grow our capacity to lower exclusions across England.

The Role

The Difference is launching the role of an **Research, Impact and Influence (RII) Officer**. This role focuses on providing administrative, logistical, and operational support to colleagues in the Research, Impact and Influence (RII) team. This is the right role for an individual with good organisational skills who would like to learn on-the-job in a friendly, dynamic and ambitious organisation.

The role works across a small directorate that includes the Impact, Influencing and Fundraising teams, giving the opportunity to get a deep understanding of what each part of the team does and how best to support them.

This role will give you the foundation to grow within the organisation, with the aim that you eventually step into a future role at The Difference as the organisation continues to grow. You will be a valuable member of our hard-working and enthusiastic team, and the team in turn will support you in your development and learning.

Person Specification

- You are **driven by the social injustice of exclusion**, and the work of The Difference and want to join us in our aim of making schools measurably more inclusive, nationally, by 2030.
- You are highly **organised**, and enjoy keeping things in order with systems and processes.
- You have an **eye for detail**, tracking the small stuff and making sure work is high quality and accurate.
- You can **multitask**, working on a number of different projects at one time and are able to prioritise and organise in line with changing deadlines and priorities.
- You're a **good communicator**, able to communicate with a wide range of external stakeholders, as well as communicating clearly with colleagues on when you will deliver work and when you need help or support.
- You're a **team player** who wants to get stuck in when and where needed.
- You're a **self-starter**, happy to take initiative and work out the best way to do things - we are always looking for ways to improve!
- You're agile, **flexible**, and can adapt when priorities change and tasks shift last minute - a common occurrence in small and nimble organisations.
- You're **ambitious** to grow and learn.

Areas of Responsibility

Planning and Logistics across Communications and Research:

- Supporting event planning (e.g. managing venues, hospitality, invitations).
- Working with our Research team to support fieldwork planning and travel.
- Working closely with our Head of Communications to develop and plan social media posts and email campaigns around our work.
- Planning and managing event logistics from round-tables with senior politicians to our annual conference IncludEd.
- Scheduling of meetings for internal team members, important external stakeholders including journalists, research participants (like our headteachers, parents, young people) and policymakers.

Tracking Press, Research and Data:

- Ensuring we are aware of upcoming publications and events relevant to our team or community.
- Ensuring all relevant information is logged on a database Hubspot to continue clear communication between our team and funders/ stakeholders.
- Working closely with the Impact team to manage and log collected data, and support analysis and reporting.

Fundraising Events and Stakeholder Management:

- Supporting the delivery of stewardship and engagement activities for funders and prospects including scheduling meetings, coordinating events and school visits
- Ensuring that the prospect pipeline is up to date and that actions are recorded
- Working across the Impact and Fundraising Teams to ensure fundraising reporting requirements are factored in to impact plans and providing impact and evaluation insight and stats for funder reports and applications
- Ensuring all fundraising information is logged on our database Hubspot

Our Values

- **High Expectations** - We are ambitious for excellence from young people, colleagues and ourselves. We don't believe in writing off someone's potential because of their identity or experience of crisis.
- **Strong Relationships** - We prioritise genuine relationships over transactional interactions, and know that this requires deliberate relational practice. We see colleagues and partners as people first and their roles second; and know this greater trust allows us to take more risks, gain more feedback and have greater impact.
- **Internalised Locus of Control** - We work hard to reframe difficult situations to discover what *we* have within our power in terms of solutions. We take it upon ourselves to walk towards challenges and can take a high level of ownership and agency in our work/
- **Pragmatism** - We believe leadership means recognising current limitations and striving for improvements within and beyond them. We develop consensus and chart new ways forward, challenging false and extreme positions like "zero exclusions" or "no excuses".
- **Scientific approach** - We take a diagnostic approach to unpicking causes of problems. We are loud and proud of our failures, recognising failing fast and often is key to finding the best solutions. We test solutions and are willing to use data and feedback to make adjustments and choose new directions.
- **Not Squeamish about Structural Inequality** - We believe patterns of inequality can and should be disrupted. We strive to be clear-eyed about these inequalities, and both the individual practice and system-changes required to address them. We push ourselves to overcome awkwardness in talking about this; and begin by acknowledging our own biases and blind spots.
- **Asset-based** - We work hard to avoid deficit thinking and aim to start with what's strong, not what's wrong. We are careful not to frame our colleagues and stakeholders - particularly young people and families - as victims but instead to recognise their agency.
- **Wise selves** - To both enjoy work and do their best, we want to make decisions and work with others in our "wise" - or regulated - selves. We also want to bring our compassionate self to those we work with, externally and internally, to support one another through challenging times.

How To Apply

To apply, please complete all sections of the application form by midnight on Sunday 15th September.

First round interviews will be held during **the week beginning 23rd of September**, over video call.

Please indicate if you would not be available to attend an interview during this week.

If successful in this stage, second round interviews will take place on **the week beginning 30th of September**, at our office in Bethnal Green.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role prior to application, please reach out to cristin@the-difference.com.

We are committed to building a diverse team and strongly encourage applications from under-represented groups in the charity sector such as people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, people with experience in the care system, non-graduates and first-in-family graduates.

As part of our commitment to fairer recruitment, all applications will be assessed with names and any protected characteristics redacted.

Recommended Reading

If you'd like to understand more about The Difference and what we are trying to achieve, we would recommend the following:

- The [research](#) which underpins our organisation.
- Our latest [Impact Report](#), sharing our work in 2023