



Partnerships Manager

Job Description and Person Specification

Background

The Blaggrave Trust is an endowed Trust established in 1978 that has been supporting charities predominantly based in Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and Sussex since its establishment. From 2015, the Blaggrave Trust has been partnering with youth organisations whose mission is to help young people aged 14-25 make a successful transition to adulthood. Our grant funding has been increasing gradually – this year we will give away c. £2 million.

We have a strong emphasis on ‘how’ we fund, believing that how we work as a funder is key to enabling effective organisations to deliver social change. We have explicit values of partnership with the organisations that we fund that supports open and trusting relationships. See www.blagravetrust.org for more information. We are committed to learning and believe that one of our best strengths as a relatively small funder is to be agile, responsive to what we are hearing and to try out new approaches, continually refining our strategy. In this sense, our work is evolving.

We currently focus on 3 areas:

Supporting transitions: Funding charities that are working directly with young people to develop emotional capabilities, employability skills, and stable personal circumstances that enable them to succeed as adults. We do not prescribe specific approaches, leaving that to the expertise of the charities concerned. Rather, we do our research, assess the available evidence and make informed decisions. Our work therefore spans a number of ‘sectors’ including skills development, employment, advice and guidance, mental health, and participation. We prioritize work with young people whose needs are greatest and increasingly in areas where there are higher rates of poverty. An increasing number of grants are proactively identified.

Ensuring young people are given a voice, listened to and enabled to act: Supporting learning, practice and research that advances thinking on how the social sector and funders can better listen and respond to those they serve and the difference this can make. Unless young people have a stake in decisions that affect them, at a programmatic and policy level, then any gains made in social sector will be short lived. We want to support initiatives that put young people at the centre of efforts designed to support them, and that give them a voice to influence decisions and resource allocation in their communities and nationally. We are also interested in

how the funding system itself can evolve to better serve communities, rather than absorbing huge amounts of resource in servicing transactional relationships.

Knowledge sharing, learning and influencing policy for long term sustainable change: This area of our work is in its infancy. We recognize that we can play a key role facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration between and among our *existing* charity partners and are already doing so through an annual partner event as well as a community of practice that we run. In addition, we are interested in and see a role in facilitating dialogue in local areas with a wider group of stakeholders to find new local solutions to old problems faced by young people. We also recognize that there are pieces of research, influencing and campaigning that we are currently not funding that go beyond immediate needs to addressing root causes of problems that are an important part of long-term change, and may occasionally involve us funding outside of our immediate region.

The role

The position of Partnerships Manager is a new post to join the small team. The Blagrave Trust Director oversees all the work of the Trust. In addition, we have a Regional Partnerships Manager, based in Wiltshire, who has primary responsibility for identifying new grants in the region and for monitoring existing work. We also benefit from some finance and admin support provided through Rathbones Trust Company.

We are looking for an engaged and energized individual who is excited by the opportunity to bring about real change in young people's lives and where there is considerable scope to shape thinking. We are particularly interested in individuals who have some experience of policy and research in the youth space and who have a strong commitment to youth voice. The job title reflects the fact that whilst the role will comprise elements of a more traditional 'Grants Manager' role, it is also as much about holding relationships and identifying collaborations with other funders, youth organisations, academia and other stakeholders; researching specific areas of work that we are interested in, identifying opportunities and advancing and providing analysis that supports our thinking.

Key Tasks

- To work closely with the Director and the Regional Partnerships Manager on a range of tasks relating to all aspects of Blagrave's work, strategy and direction. These may change as work evolves, but will include elements of all the following:
- Supporting on assessment of charities, through thorough research and in situ visits, and meeting with young people
- Maintaining relationships with key partners during the life of a grant, to support a positive collaboration and learning.
- Networking and maintaining key relationships with other funders and stakeholders in the sector, to enable proactive development of collaboration/co-funding opportunities, joint research, and up to date understanding of both local and national contexts
- Supporting the regional learning events and convening initiatives of the Trust in

both their conception and execution

- Staying abreast of developments in the youth sector and in the delivery of public services for young people
- Providing analysis of the policy context for young people, through research and scoping of existing initiatives, gaps in the sector, other key players
- Making recommendations about potential direction of the Trust's work on policy, research and advocacy, and potential key strategic partners
- Representing the Trust at Association of Charitable Foundations and other relevant learning events either in London or in the region.
- Attending Board meetings up to 3 x per annum as and when requested
- Working as a team ensuring that all the administration of the Trust is kept up to date, complying with our commitments under Charity Commission regulations.
- Supporting the Director on any other ad hoc initiatives

Essential skills

- Energy and passionate commitment to young people and social change. Strong understanding of issues affecting young people in 2017
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate and represent the Blagrave Trust empathetically and clearly
- Strong commitment to the values of the Trust – summarized here <http://www.blagravetrust.org/commitments-organisations-fund/>
- Experience working in the voluntary and/or public sector
- Strong writing skills including ability to summarize information into briefings or proposals
- A degree or equivalent qualification
- Analytical capacity – ability to reflect and maintain up to date analysis on context of social change work e.g. relevant policy initiatives; changes to funding and commissioning; and thematic areas that Blagrave funds.
- Resourceful with an ability to think creatively, see opportunities and use initiative
- Flexible approach to work including excellent time management and self-motivation
- Excellent team working skills and the ability to act independently when necessary.
- Willingness to travel regularly around the South-East region

Terms and Conditions

This post will initially be offered initially as a 12-month contract, with the option to renew as a permanent position thereafter.

The salary will range between £28,000-£35,000 subject to skills and experience.

This post is offered either as a full-time or part time position (min. 3 days p week) for the right candidate.

We offer 25 days annual leave p.a. excluding bank holidays, a pension scheme and full reimbursement of travel expenses. For any post-holder using their own vehicle for travel to visit partners we provide an annual car allowance.

The Blgrave Trust does not have its own permanent office space though it does have the use of premises in Central London from which this post-holder would be able to work. Alternatively, the post-holder may work from home in which case they must have access to telephone, PC, Microsoft Word, Excel, and internet (support provided where needed). The Regional Partnerships Manager primarily works from home, when she is not travelling around the region which she does extensively. The Director generally works 2 days in London, with the remainder working from home or travelling.

For practical reasons, we are looking for candidates who are from one of the counties where we fund or based in London.

To apply: Please send a CV and covering letter stating your interest in the position and highlighting relevant experience to Jo Wells, Director at jo.wells@blagravetrust.org. Should you wish to discuss the position before applying, then you are welcome to drop Jo a line requesting a telephone conversation.

Closing date Friday 30th June: Interviews likely 10th July tbc with a view to starting in early September or thereabouts.