

# Data and Evaluation Manager

**Reports to:** Head of Impact

**Start date:** As soon as possible

**Location:** Hybrid with 50% office presence in London

**Contract:** Permanent; 0.8 FTE

**Salary:** £35,000 - 45,000 depending on experience (+6% employer pension contribution), pro-rata (£28,000 - £36,000)

**Closing date for applications:** 12am (midnight) Monday 25th August

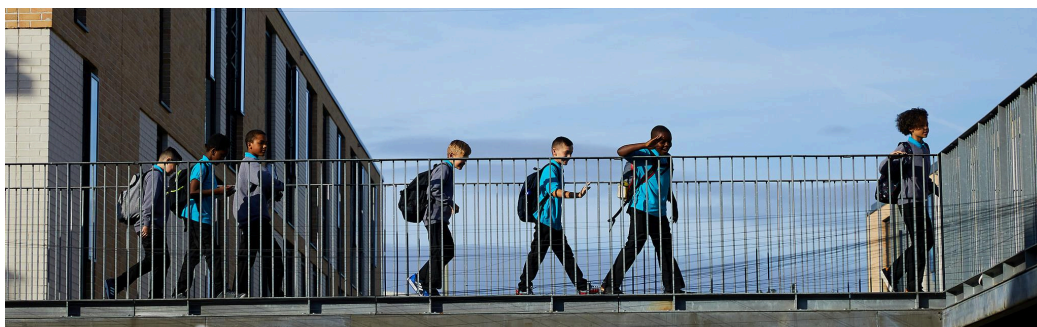
## Our Organisation

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 September 2024, we published a follow-up report: [Who is Losing Learning?](#) This report broadened our definition of 'exclusions' to include lost learning from absence, as well as suspensions and permanent exclusions.

**Our Vision is to see lost learning falling nationally by 2030.**

The Difference is now a 22-strong team delivering multiple school leadership programmes, alongside a growing research and policy arm. This work is needed more than ever. When The Difference began in 2017, 30 children a day were being told to leave their schools and never come back. Today that number has doubled. And for every one of those children leaving schools in accountable and visible ways, there are ten moving invisibly, 80 sent home for days, 170 skipping school and unknown numbers sitting in isolation. 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 ability to lower exclusions across England.



# The Challenge Ahead: Data and Evaluation Manager

As a key member of the Policy, Impact, Research and Communications (PIRC) Directorate, you will play a leading role in generating insights that strengthen our programme delivery and help us understand and communicate our impact across the sector, including to our funders and policy-makers. With support from the Head of Impact, you will lead on evaluation design, primary research and analysis, and insight generation across the organisation, ensuring our work is informed by evidence and continuously improving.

You will hold primary responsibility for analysing evaluation data for our two programmatic interventions as well as our policy and practice work. This will include managing business as usual evaluation and ad-hoc analysis to support data requests from other teams, such as fundraising.

This is an exciting opportunity for an early-career researcher or evaluator looking to apply and grow their skills in mixed-method research, evaluation design, and sharing findings that drive action. You'll have the chance to deliver and develop our evaluation projects, help build an evidence-base for inclusion and school improvement, and help shape how we use this learning to inform our own practice and influence the wider educational system. You will:

- Design and manage the evaluation of our core programmes, including the logistics of collecting and analysing data, and sharing findings across teams and stakeholders, this includes supporting programme colleagues to improve return rates
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of published research on school performance, attendance, exclusions, inclusion, to strengthen our evidence base and inform our programme design and policy-influencing
- Work collaboratively across teams to embed learning from research and evaluation into future activities and strategic planning

The Difference is still a small and growing charity. The PIRC Directorate is a team of 6 professionals with experience spanning, research, evaluation, policy and influencing as well as communications. This means that our work is fast-paced, our roles are broad, and there is a culture of being highly autonomous, reactive and flexible, as the needs of the organisation evolve. If this sounds exciting rather than daunting, then this could be the role and team for you!

## Areas of Responsibility

### Manage research and evaluation activities

- **Evaluation project design** - support the Head of Impact to develop tailored, proportionate methodological approaches, aligned with best practices in ethics and data protection, and designed in consultation with the Programme team, to assess the impact of The Difference's programmes for school leaders.
- **Data collection** - design and conduct primary research, including a mix of qualitative (e.g. interviews, case studies) and quantitative (staff surveys, school data tracking) approaches.

- **Data analysis** - collate, clean and validate data for analysis; analyse and interpret both primary data from evaluations (quantitative and qualitative) and secondary datasets (such as publicly available data from the Department for Education on school characteristics, exclusions or suspensions); and communicate findings clearly for non-technical audiences

## Collaborate on building and applying evidence

- **Embed learning** - Work closely with colleagues to interpret and understand evaluation findings to inform programme development, fundraising bids, practice reports and policy work.
- **Sector awareness** - keep up to date with developments in education, inclusion, attendance and exclusions, as well as research and evaluation methods relevant to our work
- **Internal collaboration** - support teams with ad hoc data queries, whether related to our own programmes or data from external sources, such as schools,

## Communicating insights

- **Insight reporting** - Support internal teams who use data regularly, such as fundraising and policy teams to support engagement with funders and policymakers. Author and contribute to research and evaluation outputs, including internal and external reports, case studies and presentations.
- **Knowledge sharing** - present findings through internal learning sessions and external events to share what we're learning with schools, partners and the wider education sector
- **External representation** - represent The Difference at sector events, research collaborations and with stakeholders

## Person Specification

**Essential – We are looking for someone with the following knowledge, experience and skills, though you may be stronger in some areas than others:**

- Track record of using **research and evaluation methods**, including collecting, cleaning, and analysing **quantitative** (e.g. descriptive statistics, significance testing) **and qualitative data** (e.g. thematic analysis)
- Confidence using tools such as Excel or similar to **analyse and present data** clearly, including through charts, pivot tables and summary statistics
- Expertise in leading the planning and delivery of research or evaluation projects, with strong organisational and **project management skills**
- **Ability to report and communicate findings** in a visually accessible and engaging way for non-expert audiences, such as funders
- Knowledge of the **ethical and legal aspects** of social research and the ability to adhere to appropriate research ethics and data protection protocol

- Proven ability to **work independently and take initiative**, while also collaborating effectively across teams and contributing to shared learning
- Strong **interpersonal and communication skills**, with experience working well in teams
- Strong **time management skills** and the ability to manage multiple priorities, including adapting to shifting priorities in a fast-paced, start-up environment
- Passion for **The Difference's mission** and commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable young people

**Desired – You are more likely to be successful in your application if you have one or more of the following:**

- Familiarity with the **education sector and/or school data systems**, for example school management information systems
- Ability to conduct **desk research** and literature reviews, identifying relevant evidence, assessing quality and summarising key findings
- **Lived experience or insight into the school experiences of marginalised young people** (e.g. those with experience of the care system, mental ill health, special educational needs, exclusion, and racism).

We know that some people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, may hesitate to apply unless they meet every listed requirement. If this role excites you and you believe you could make a strong contribution, we warmly encourage you to apply.

We actively welcome applications from people whose backgrounds are under-represented in the charity sector, including but not limited to: 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.

## Why Work for The Difference?

Schooling isn't working for the children who need it most. Every week in England 109 children – equivalent to three full classrooms – are permanently excluded. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Since the pandemic, school suspensions have risen significantly, as has persistent absenteeism. 1 in 5 children are missing more than 10% of their time in school. Children who are excluded or persistently absent are much more likely to already be experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. They are more likely to live in poverty, have additional learning needs, suffer mental health challenges, or experience a lack of safety outside school. Certain ethnicities are also disproportionately affected, notably Gypsy Roma Traveller and black Caribbean children.

Exclusion and high rates of absence can have a dramatic effect on life chances. These young people are more likely to drop out of education or employment, become vulnerable to long-term mental ill health, or be at risk of criminal exploitation. The Difference believes that children and young people deserve better and that the education system has to change.



## Our Values

- **Relationships underpin success** - Strong relationships and the safety they bring are the foundation of achievement - for children, for school staff, in our workplace and in our collaborations. They enable higher trust, challenging feedback, bolder work and stronger impact.
- **We build stronger from assets** - Every child, family, school and community has strengths and successes. We avoid deficit-labels about teachers, children and families, and instead focus on building from what's strong.
- **Systems shape opportunities** - Actions always take place within systems. These can help or hinder individuals. We recognise the role of policy and structural inequalities and address them directly in our work.
- **Agency makes the difference** - Bold leadership by individuals can create significant and lasting change. We are proactive in addressing problems and seeking out opportunities.

# How To Apply

Please click this [Link](#) to access the application form.

**Applications close at 12.00am (midnight) on Monday 25th of August.**

First round interviews (including a task to be completed the same day) will likely take place online in the **week beginning Monday 1st of September** and second round interviews will take place in the **week beginning Monday 8th of September**, at our office in Business in the Community, 137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ.

**Please indicate in your application if you would not be available to attend an interview during this timeframe.**

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role prior to application, please reach out to Jess Di Simone at [jdisimone@the-difference.com](mailto:jdisimone@the-difference.com) (Head of Impact).

Please note that we are not able to provide working visas and therefore cannot hire anyone that does not have the right to work in the UK.



## Recommended Reading

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

- **Our founding theory of change & research** - [Making The Difference](#) (2017) - the IPPR report which started The Difference.
- **Our newest research on the scale of the problem** [Who is Losing Learning?](#) (Sept 2024) and our recommendations, [Finding Solutions to the School Engagement Crisis](#) (March 2025)
- [🎧 The Spark - Kiran Gill and Excluded Pupils](#) (2020) - **our founder explores the genesis and mission of The Difference** in conversation with Helen Lewis, BBC Radio 4
- **Our latest [Impact Report](#)**, sharing our work in 2023
- **Details of our most recent work** and issues in the sector, from our [content hub](#)