

JOB DESCRIPTION

Grief Encounter was set up in December 2003 to ensure that bereaved children and their families receive the best possible support following the death of a parent, sibling and someone close. We deliver both local and national bereavement services. Please see our website for further information:
www.griefencounter.org.uk

JOB TITLE: Development Director – Children & Families

SALARY: £65,000 - £70,000 per annum

LOCATION: Mill Hill, London NW7 4ST

CONTRACTED HOURS: 40 hours a week (inclusive of one hour paid meal break daily), 5 days a week.

RESPONSIBLE TO: CEO

Our Vision: A world where no child grieves alone.

Our Mission: To provide grieving children and families with the help they need.

Our Values: are very important to us and as a member of the Grief Encounter team, you will be expected to hold these in your day to day work:



Compassion We lead with empathy and kindness, putting people first



Excellence We deliver the highest quality and make a meaningful difference



Integrity We act honestly, ethically, and with courage and dignity

JOB SUMMARY:

This is a pivotal strategic leadership role for an accomplished and influential leader passionate about improving outcomes for children, young people and families following bereavement.

The Development Director – Children & Families will help shape and deliver a focused programme of partnership development, sector influence, participation and service improvement. Working closely with clinical, operational and fundraising colleagues, they will strengthen Grief Encounter's national profile and build practical opportunities for growth across health, education, social care, government, academia, the voluntary sector and philanthropy.

The successful candidate will be a compelling advocate for bereaved children and families, championing strengths-based and non-pathologising approaches to grief while ensuring that children's lived experiences inform policy, practice and service development.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Development Director will contribute to organisational strategy, culture and sustainable growth, helping to turn ambition and innovation into clear, deliverable priorities over the life of the contract.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Strategic Leadership:

- Contribute to the overall strategic leadership and development of Grief Encounter.
- Help develop and deliver focused priorities that increase the charity's reach, impact, influence and sustainability.
- Identify opportunities for growth, innovation and collaboration that align with the charity's mission and values.
- Champion a forward-looking approach to growth, ambition and innovation, translating selected ideas into realistic improvements for children, young people and families.
- Work closely with the CEO, Board and Senior Leadership Team to deliver organisational objectives.
- Agree priorities with the CEO and Senior Leadership Team, phasing delivery in line with organisational capacity
- Promote a culture of learning, collaboration, inclusion and continuous improvement.
- Contribute to organisational governance, risk management and strategic planning.

Sector Leadership, Influence and Participation

The Development Director will strengthen Grief Encounter's position as a respected national voice in childhood bereavement, family resilience and compassionate responses to grief.

They will bring together practice experience, research, policy and lived experience to influence public understanding and improve the support available to bereaved children and families.

Responsibilities:

- Position Grief Encounter as a trusted and influential contributor to national discussions relating to childhood bereavement, children's wellbeing and family support.
- Build productive relationships with senior leaders and decision-makers across health, education, social care, government, academia and the voluntary sector.
- Identify opportunities to influence policy, commissioning, service development and professional practice.
- Represent Grief Encounter selectively at conferences, advisory groups, professional forums and stakeholder networks where this will advance agreed priorities.
- Contribute to consultations, policy discussions and research initiatives affecting bereaved children and families.
- Develop strategic alliances, coalitions and partnerships that amplify Grief Encounter's impact and influence.
- Work with communications colleagues to produce thought leadership, articles, publications and presentations that strengthen the charity's profile.
- Act as a visible, credible and respected ambassador for the organisation.
- Champion Grief Encounter's belief that grief is not inherently pathological and advocate for approaches that strengthen resilience, relationships and family wellbeing.
- Promote wider understanding of the diverse ways children and young people experience, express and adapt to grief.

Participation and Lived Experience

A central aspect of this role is ensuring that the voices of bereaved children, young people and families are heard, valued and reflected throughout Grief Encounter's work and influencing activity.

Responsibilities

- Develop a practical participation approach that places lived experience at the heart of service development and organisational decision-making.
- Ensure children, young people and families have opportunities to shape services, campaigns, research, training and advocacy initiatives.
- Promote co-production approaches that recognise children and families as experts in their own experiences.
- Ensure participation informs organisational priorities, policy positions and partnership activity.
- Create opportunities for children and families to contribute safely and meaningfully to external influencing work where appropriate.
- Champion inclusive participation, ensuring diverse voices and experiences are represented and heard.

Strategic Partnerships

- Develop and maintain a focused set of high-value partnerships across the children's, family, health, education and voluntary sectors.
- Build collaborative relationships with NHS bodies, schools, local authorities, family support organisations, professional associations, trusts and foundations.
- Establish partnerships that improve access to services and increase Grief Encounter's reach and impact.
- Identify opportunities for joint initiatives, innovation and shared learning.
- Develop relationships that support service quality, sustainability and growth.

Funding and Supporter Engagement

- Work closely with fundraising colleagues to build and maintain strong relationships with major donors, foundations, philanthropists and strategic supporters.
- Support the development of compelling cases for investment and partnership.
- Engage with prospective and existing supporters as an organisational ambassador.
- Help identify opportunities for strategic income growth and long-term sustainability.
- Represent Grief Encounter at supporter events, stakeholder meetings and engagement opportunities.
- Contribute to opportunities for significant investment in the charity's mission and future development.

Service Development and Quality

- Support the continued development of high-quality, evidence-informed services for bereaved children and families.
- Ensure services remain responsive to emerging needs and changing landscapes.
- Keep abreast of developments in research, policy and best practice.
- Embed learning, evaluation and impact measurement within service development.
- Promote innovative approaches that strengthen outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Explore appropriate opportunities to use AI, digital tools and emerging technologies to improve access, insight, efficiency and reach, while continuing to value and protect in-person help, human connection and compassionate support.

Leadership and Management

- Lead, inspire and develop high-performing teams.
- Provide effective management, coaching and support to direct reports.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, accountability and professional growth.
- Model values-led, inclusive and compassionate leadership.
- Support organisational change and development initiatives.
- Build strong relationships across teams and functions, encouraging collegiate working at all levels.
- Work closely and constructively with the Director of Clinical Operations to align strategic priorities, service development, operational delivery and quality standards, recognising shared accountability across the senior team.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Experience: Significant senior leadership experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Children's services
- Family support
- Health services
- Social care
- Education
- Youth services
- Psychology or therapeutic services
- Public health
- Charity leadership
- Community-based services

Also:

- Proven success in building strategic partnerships and influencing senior stakeholders.
- Experience of working with funders, commissioners, major donors or strategic supporters.
- Experience of supporting teams through growth, change or development.
- Experience of contributing to organisational strategy and delivering measurable organisational impact.
- Experience of representing an organisation externally at a senior level.

Essential Knowledge and Understanding

- Strong understanding of issues affecting children, young people and families.
- Understanding of bereavement, loss, resilience and child development.
- Appreciation of strengths-based and non-pathologising approaches to supporting grieving children and families.
- Understanding of participation, co-production and lived experience approaches.
- Knowledge of policy and practice environments affecting children and family services.

Essential Skills and Attributes

- Outstanding communication, advocacy and influencing skills.
- Ability to establish credibility quickly with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Strong strategic thinking and partnership development capabilities.
- Skilled and inspiring leader with excellent people management experience.
- High levels of emotional intelligence, judgement and integrity.
- Excellent relationship-building and networking skills.
- Ability to translate vision into action and measurable outcomes.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and collaboration.
- Passion for Grief Encounter's mission and values.

Personal qualities

- Able to work from home and work from the office in Mill Hill.
- Willing to attend events and external meetings with people from a variety of backgrounds and of all ages.
- Willing and able to travel to different parts of central and greater London and the ability to work some evenings and weekends (TOIL will be provided as appropriate)
- Able to work effectively within a team and be self-motivating.

- Able to actively listen, seek information, and ask questions to ensure the understanding of underlying concerns of others.
- Respectful, non-judgemental and empathic manner.
- A sense of responsibility and commitment to organisational excellence with integrity, honesty and professionalism.
- Demonstrates respect for confidentiality and boundaries.
- Resilient when dealing with sensitive and at times difficult situations.
- Flexible, pro-active and open attitude to work.

We are keen to attract candidates from a diverse range of professional backgrounds including children's services, health, education, social work, youth work, psychology, public health, commissioning, family support, charity leadership, community development and related professions.

Above all, we are seeking an ambitious and pragmatic leader who can combine strategic vision, external influence, partnership development and compassionate leadership to help build momentum and strengthen outcomes for bereaved children and families during this important phase.

This job description will be reviewed as necessary to meet the needs of the charity on no less than an annual basis in consultation with the post holder.

This post is subject to pre-employment checks including an enhanced DBS check.