**Head of Research and Programmes**

**WELCOME LETTER**

Imagine being told that you, or someone you love, is losing their sight.

In that moment, two profound questions demand urgent answers:

* Can this be stopped?
* How will I live my life?

At Fight for Sight / Vision Foundation, we pursue positive answers to both questions. We do this by funding the brilliant minds and bright ideas that put change in sight.

Our researchers are at the forefront of eye research, making breakthroughs and discoveries that will prevent and treat eye disease. The partnerships we build and initiatives we support are changing life for blind and vision impaired people: from tackling loneliness to supporting people who have survived domestic abuse.

We have a clear ambition, led by our CEO, Keith Valentine, who has valuable lived experience of vision loss. We’ve secured well-respected and highly engaged ambassadors and patrons, from Sir John Major to Marsha De Cordova MP.

This is an exciting time to join us, as we activate our new brand and five-year strategy.

If you share our mission and have the skills, experience and drive to contribute to our dynamic team, we’d love to hear from you.

**Role Description**

The Head of Research and Programmes is a new role, leading and overseeing the delivery of our grant-making activity across eye research and social change: delivering first class grant programmes that respond to need as our organisation scales up. The role will lead on key strategic projects and relationships that will increase the Impact of our funding and the value we add to the sectors we work in. This role will also develop and own an appropriate impact framework to ensure we're able to amplify the work we fund and demonstrate the value of our approach to funders and supporters.

**Responsible to**

Director of Impact and External Affairs

**Direct reports**

Senior Programme Manager (Research): Programme Manager (Social Change): Impact and Evaluation Manager

**Working hours and contract**

This is a permanent full-time role, 35 hours a week.

**Salary**

Circa. £60k

**Location**

Aldgate E1 and hybrid working. Minimum two days in the office and external meetings and events as required.

**Start date**

As soon as possible

## **Role Responsibilities:**

Overseeing our Grant Programmes

* Driving work in areas where our organisation can add value and meet need, including scoping new potential programmes and partnerships as well as ensuring our current programmes evolve
* Lead on delivering high quality funding programmes that meet regulatory (AMRC) requirements as appropriate and provide an excellent experience for applicants, both successful and unsuccessful
* Be responsible for the financial management of budget associated with our funding programmes, working closely with the Finance Team
* Lead and manage the programme teams to analyse the external environment, identify unmet need and how we can add greater value in the sectors we work in
* Proactively disseminate insights from our funded research and project partners, gather sector knowledge, e.g. through delivering presentations, networking and representing our organisation externally with other grant makers/philanthropic organisations and sector partners.

Impact, evaluation and learning

* Work with the Director of Impact and External Affairs to develop and deliver an appropriate impact framework for our organisation, ensuring that we’re able to amplify the work we fund and demonstrate value to our funders and supporters
* Work closely with the Head of Communications and External Affairs to ensure that the narrative around our impact is powerful and consistent
* Initiate and facilitate new partnership opportunities, e.g. for co-funding grants, or for co-creating innovative project ideas for consideration through our funding programmes.

**Strategic projects and relationships:**

* Act as the primary point of contact for scientific advisors and subject matter experts, supporting the programme managers by providing senior stakeholder and relationship management support, e.g. with funded researchers, institutions, sector partners and potential future partners
* Commission relevant evidence gathering, project or development work to support the evolution of our funding programmes, specifically our focus during 2024/25 on the North East of England .
* Work with fundraising colleagues to provide support and information to develop cases for support, including pitching alongside the fundraising team when required.
* Work closely with colleagues in communications to ensure that the scope and impact of our work is widely understood and communicated
* Lead on specific initiatives to support our research strategy and to enhance our social change funding programme, e.g. developing a network for early career researchers and involvement of experts by experience across our work.

**Leadership and Management**

* Lead the team to deliver high quality funding programmes, ensuring that impact is embedded and widely shared
* Provide leadership to the team to support Its ongoing and future development, including creating ways to build skills and expertise within the team
* Work alongside other senior managers in the organisation to provide leadership that ensures our organisation is able to make the most of opportunities, increase its profile and credibility.
* Deliver strong and effective grant-making through our decision-making and governance structures
* Deputise for the Director of Impact and External Affairs as appropriate.

**Person specification:**

**Skills, knowledge & experience**

**Essential**

* A postgraduate degree in a biomedical sciences, health or social sciences subject or equivalent work experience
* Experience of working in a funder organisation, ideally supporting research or social change programme delivery including patient and public involvement and/or other co-production methods.
* Enthusiastic about vision research with strong analytical skills and the ability to interpret, analyse and summarise evidence, including from technical scientific papers, for a variety of audiences.
* Experience of monitoring, evaluation and learning within a grant making environment, including facilitating opportunities for grantees to come together, either through structured development programmes or sharing best practice
* Proficient in the use of standard IT packages including Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint and ideally familiar with Grant Management Systems or able to learn how to use these quickly.

**Desirable**

* An advanced research degree (PhD) in biomedical sciences, health or social sciences subject or equivalent work experience
* Experience of working directly in or supporting vision and sight loss research or funding programmes.
* Understanding of the wider research and programme funding landscape and initiatives for responsible funding activities

### Personal characteristics and behaviours:

* A confident and clear communicator, both orally and in writing, with an ability to articulate our impact with internal and external stakeholders
* A collaborative approach, able to problem solve and work with colleagues to generate ideas or overcome barriers
* A focus on quality, attention to detail and accuracy in content and presentation
* A strong project manager with the ability to work independently and within a team to plan and prioritise activities across multiple projects.
* Commitment to the research that will prevent, treat and cure eye disease and the change that is needed to improve life for blind and vision impaired people.
* Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

**Flexibility**

### The role description is a general outline of duties and responsibilities and may be amended from time to time.

### The post holder may be required to undertake other duties as may be reasonably required from time to time.

**Application process:**

Please forward a CV and supporting statement of no more than 2 pages outlining how your skills and experience are relevant to the role and your motivations for applying, with the subject ‘Application for Head of Research and Programmes’ to recruitment@fightforsight.org.uk by 9 am, Monday 29 April 2024**.**

This will be a 2-stage interview process taking place at the start of May. Please indicate any dates that you would not be available for interview between the closing date of 29 April and the end of May.

**Accessibility**

Please let us know if you have any accessibility requirements. If you are unfamiliar with MS Teams and would like to do a tech run-through before the interview, we can also coordinate that.

**Equal opportunities, diversity & inclusion**

Don’t meet every single requirement? At Fight for Sight and Vision Foundation we are dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, so if you’re excited about this role but your past experience doesn’t align perfectly with every item in the job description, we encourage you to apply anyway. You may be just the right candidate for this or other roles that we have.

We have an inclusive and accessible recruitment process, including any adjustments required to support people from diverse community groups.

**EDI Monitoring Form:** Fight for Sight is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from people with sight loss. We treat everyone fairly and equitably across the organisation, including providing any additional support and adjustments needed for everyone to thrive. We would appreciate it if you could fill in this Equality and Diversity Monitoring form when applying for our roles. These answers are anonymous and will not affect your application: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VFEqualityDiversity>