



Dear Candidate

We're delighted that you are interested in the role of Programme Director at Think Ahead.

At Think Ahead, we want to see a society where everyone with mental health problems can flourish. We know that won't happen unless people can improve their social circumstances – because issues like relationships, living arrangements, and employment have profound effects on mental wellbeing. This is why we created the Think Ahead programme: a new route into mental health social work for talented graduates and career-changers.

Through the programme and our wider work, we attract talented people into mental health services, strengthen training, and spread social approaches to mental health across society.

Over the last four years, Think Ahead has become one of the country's most competitive graduate schemes, with high-profile support across the political spectrum, extensive media coverage, and over 23 applications for each place on the programme. The Think Ahead programme is a two-year master's level social work qualifying programme, approved by the social work regulator, blending excellent academic tuition from our university partner with intensive on-the-job training provided by our partner NHS Mental Health Trusts and Local Authorities across England.

We are delighted to see how our programme is already transforming the contribution of social work to mental health services. We have put mental health social work on the map as a sought-after graduate career option, reaching tens of thousands of students and graduates each year (including 30% of the UK's most employable university-leavers) and we are the only Times Top 100 Graduate Employer for frontline adult social care (placed 36th ahead of household names such as Apple, Bloomberg and the Bank of England).

We give our recruits – 95% of whom do not apply for any other route into the profession – innovative, accelerated training. Our social work curriculum, developed with our academic partners, is the first to bring together evidence-based interventions at the individual, family, and community levels, with a special focus on mental health and transferable leadership skills.

We have partnered with half of England's NHS Mental Health Trusts and 30% of Local Authorities to expand the number of mental health placements, and our partners report very high levels of satisfaction and strongly recommend the programme.

Building on this strong foundation we want to take Think Ahead to the next phase, where we grow the programme in size and geography, nurturing our relationships with partners; build our movement of participants and alumni committed to transforming services; and use the expertise we have generated through the hundreds of people on the programme to do more to improve service design and delivery in community mental health services.

As we embark on the next phase of Think Ahead's work, we are looking to recruit an exceptional Programme Director, on a 12 month fixed term contract, to be at the heart of these developments. The role provides you with an exciting opportunity to make tangible differences to the lives of people who use mental health services across England. To support you in this role, you will be leading a team including senior social workers which accounts for almost 80% of our charity's budget.

If you think you are the outstanding individual who has the unique skills, experience and values to work with us to take our organisation, and our core training programme, to the next level by expanding our impact and widening our reach, we look forward to hearing from you.



As set out in the application pack below, **please do send us your application by 9am on Monday 18 November 2019.**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the role, please either call Rachel Slade on 020 3146 7181 or email her at applications@thinkahead.org.

Very best wishes

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, on the left, is 'N. Acton' and the second, on the right, is 'E. Joseph'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Natalie Acton and Ella Joseph
Co-Chief Executives, Think Ahead



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR (MATERNITY COVER)

Reports to: Chief Executive
Start date: Early 2020
Location: Central London (currently Kings Cross)
Salary: Highly competitive

JOB DESCRIPTION

We're looking for an exceptional and highly experienced professional to cover the maternity leave of our Programme Director, on a 12 month fixed term contract. If you've got what it takes, you'll join a high-performing, ambitious charity with a dynamic and friendly atmosphere where your leadership will make a real and lasting difference to people with mental health problems.

The Programme Director is a member of Think Ahead's senior management team and works closely with the two Co-Chief Executives and the other three directors to lead the organisation, expand our impact and widen our reach.

Managing almost half of the organisation's staff and 80% of the budget, the Programme Director plays a central role in Think Ahead. As Think Ahead is a relatively young charity, the role is likely to vary over time. However, the core areas of strategy and delivery you will lead include:

An outstanding training programme

- **Programme design and delivery** - You will be responsible for the entire Think Ahead training programme, working with our academic partner to ensure that our social work curriculum is innovative and effective, and working with host organisations to refine the placement offer. You will also oversee the leadership training programme, designing a leadership journey for participants which delivers on our aims as an organisation. Leading a team, including social work-qualified "practice specialists", you will quality assure the programme so that participants complete our programme as experienced, enthusiastic and high quality mental health social workers. More broadly, you will lead Think Ahead's work across our NHS and local government partners to influence their design and delivery of community mental health services, putting social approaches at the heart of their work.
- **Participant engagement and retention** - Our participants (the name we give to our Think Ahead programme trainees) are our most direct route to impact, and you will be responsible for ensuring high quality engagement with them at every step of their journey on the Think Ahead programme. Mental health social work is a rewarding but extremely challenging role, and you will be accountable for ensuring that your team builds and retains excellent relationships with all participants, encouraging them in their role and their future career.

Growing and nurturing our relationships with partners

- **Stakeholder management** - You will need to build and maintain a large network of contacts and friends across the social work and mental health sectors, drawing on these relationships for the day-to-day running of the programme as well as for our future developments as an organisation.



- **Host recruitment and partnership** - NHS Mental Health Trusts and Local Authorities act as hosts to our participants, providing them with a fantastic placement experience and introduction to their new career. You will be responsible for recruiting these organisations into our partnership, refreshing and updating the offer to ensure their continued support and continually expanding our reach. You will also oversee growth in the programme, working with colleagues across the organisation to ensure that any increase in participant numbers is successfully absorbed into services.

Develop and lead a culture of excellence

- **Leadership and management** – you will manage the Programme Team, delivering on your core objectives while ensuring that Think Ahead remains a great place to work and that the team provides social work and mental health expertise across the organisation. You will also play a key role on the senior management team of the organisation, contributing to the strategic direction of the charity.
- **Financial management** – as the Director with the largest budget, you will be responsible for managing your team's finances efficiently and effectively with tight budget controls, as well as continually ensuring that we deliver and can demonstrate value for money for our funders.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

We welcome applications both from senior social work leaders and from leaders in other fields. Most of all, we are looking to fill this role with a senior leader who has an energetic, creative and can-do personality as well as significant programme delivery experience and a passion for mental health and social work. We know how important it is to reflect the communities that we serve around the country, so we particularly welcome applications from people who can bolster these important perspectives on our work.

Characteristics and values

We are looking for a Programme Director who is:

- A **dynamic, creative** individual with a personal drive to make a positive impact on the mental health challenge.
- A **people person** with a proven ability to “win friends and influence people” through personal impact.
- A **structured thinker and planner**, with an ability to bring order and inject necessary process to complex streams of work.
- Committed to working **in line with Think Ahead’s values** (as set out below) and ways of working.

Knowledge and experience

- Experienced **leader** in social work, mental health or another field, with knowledge of the health and social care sectors. (Applicants without a social work qualification will need to otherwise demonstrate credibility to lead within this field.)
- Significant **programme leadership** experience with proven expertise in running large programmes of work involving multiple stakeholders, partners and customers/users.
- Proven experience of designing, implementing, project managing and quality assuring a complex, **national (or wide-ranging) programme** of work with clear emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and service improvement, including the effective use of **data collection** systems to identify programme improvement.
- Track record in **building and sustaining partnerships** with national organisations and with networks of local / regional organisations.
- Proven ability to take a **strategic overview** of situations, continually horizon-scanning for opportunities.
- Experience of **managing and controlling expenditure** (budget holding experience of at least £1m) and contract management.
- Experience of successfully recruiting staff, managing performance, developing colleagues and delegating to and structuring **teams you are responsible for managing**, including staff working remotely.

Skills and approach

- Ability to **represent and advocate** for the organisation in a manner that is authoritative, confident and credible to a wide range of stakeholders, both on public platforms and in private.
- Well considered **judgement** and an ability to reach clear decisions for the organisation, including an aptitude for clearly communicating the rationale for your decisions.
- Adept at adjusting your **leadership style** to the circumstance.



- Willingness to have **difficult conversations**, such as managing conflict and providing feedback that will help improve performance.
- **Exceptional written and verbal communication** skills.
- Exceptional **relationship-building** skills, including an ability to relate well to colleagues, partners, and service users.
- Ability to **work at pace**, whilst balancing multiple priorities and competing deadlines, and create a calm, organised and creative environment for staff to work in.
- Ability to identify and **manage risks** and hold accountability especially when under pressure.
- Curious, thoughtful and **interested in new thinking** and able to hold competing ideas at the same time.



THINK AHEAD'S VISION

We want to see a society where everyone with mental health problems can flourish.

THINK AHEAD'S MISSION

To give talented individuals the inspiration, training, and support to empower people with mental health problems.

THINK AHEAD'S VALUES

In pursuing our vision, we each aim to be:

- **Inspirational.** We set ambitious goals, and we attract and lead others to achieve our vision.
- **Inclusive.** We respect everyone, build networks, and act in partnership.
- **Genuine.** We are honest with others, we seek feedback, and we reflect on ourselves.
- **Determined.** We stay on course, we set the right pace, and we don't give up.
- **Effective.** We use evidence and innovation to find what works and get things done.

THINK AHEAD'S BENEFITS

Think Ahead is committed to the professional development and wellbeing of staff. We offer a number of core benefits to employees, including the following:

- **Flexible working.** There is a "core hours" policy requiring staff to be in the office between 10am and 4pm, with flexibility on hours around this.
- **Pension.** There is a competitive stakeholder personal pension plan offered through Aviva.
- **Annual leave.** Initially 28 days per year (in addition to bank holidays) plus three additional days between Christmas and New Year.
- **Season ticket loan.** Interest free loan for season ticket.
- **Easy commute.** Less than 5 minute walk from Kings Cross.



APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the role you will need to send the following documents by email to applications@thinkahead.org or by post to The Think Ahead Organisation, 344-354 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP:

- Short covering letter including your current (or last) salary.
- Completed application form (having also completed the link to the equal opportunities mentoring form).
- Detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) - no more than 2 sides long.

Application Timetable

- Application closing date – 18 November 2019.
- First interviews – 26 or 27 November 2019.
- Second interviews – 2 December 2019.

Recruitment Process

- **Safe recruitment procedure.** Think Ahead is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults. In order to meet this responsibility, Think Ahead follows a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.
- **Disclosure.** This post has access to vulnerable adults and any appointment is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Applicants are required, before appointment, to disclose any convictions that would be deemed as being unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975, or cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are over five years old, unless they are exempt from the Act. Non-disclosure may lead to the termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar individuals from employment – this will depend on the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred.
- **Shortlisting, interviews and reference checking.** Only the candidates best meeting the criteria will be taken forward to interview. We regret that we cannot respond individually to all unsuccessful candidates so if you have not heard from us within 4 weeks of the closing date please assume that your application has not been successful. All unsuccessful candidates who have attended an interview will be contacted by telephone and will be offered constructive feedback. References from the previous and current employer may be taken up for shortlisted candidates, and where necessary employers may be contacted to gain further information. Please let us know on the Application Form if we will be unable to take up references prior to interview.
- **Personal details.** All personal details and equal opportunities monitoring data will be removed when the application is assessed. The recruiting panel will see only your CV, education, career history and personal statement.
- **Questions and further information.** If you have any questions or require any additional information please contact applications@thinkahead.org. If you want further information on the programme please visit our website at www.thinkahead.org.



Interview Detail

All shortlisted candidates will be contacted by either telephone or email to offer an interview and this will be confirmed by letter or email. **You will be informed of the time, location, and contact for the interview, as well as notice of any presentation, test or exercise you may be asked to do at the interview.**

The recruitment and selection panel will be comprised of a minimum of two people, and will normally include the relevant line manager of the post. We will always try to ensure gender balance in the composition of the recruiting panel.

Applicants will be asked questions relating to the job description, person specification and application, and the panel will take notes during the course of the interview. This is part of the procedure to ensure that all applicants are treated equally, and to help us to make the right decision.

In preparation for the interview, take the opportunity to read through the job description, application form, and any other literature sent as part of the information pack, and be prepared to talk about your experience, giving examples that illustrate your ability to do particular parts of the job.

If you have any special requirements that would allow you to participate more fully in the interview, let Human Resources know when you are invited to interview.