

Overview

Surrey Youth Focus is recruiting. Are you good at unpicking complex problems and seeking to achieve change with a variety of stakeholders? Are you passionate about improving children's and young people's lives? Do you love working as part of a team? Are you willing to lead on some initiatives and follow on others?

We are an unusual organisation - part membership organisation, part strategic change consultancy, part critical friend to the public sector.

We see ourselves as "systems leaders" and "systems stewards", promoting collaboration between charities, Surrey County Council, Districts and Boroughs, health, police, education and wider communities to help them nurture, inspire, safeguard, protect and educate our young people, especially those who have significant challenges such as mental ill-health, domestic abuse, neglect, special educational needs, etc.

We passionately believe that many of the solutions to helping our children and young people to thrive lie within communities and the third sector and that more of a focus needs to be put on achieving this.

Our approach is currently being looked upon favourably by funders and we hope to be able to recruit new team members in the next few months. As well as a couple of new permanent members of the team, we are looking to build up a bank of Associates who are available to work on a project by project basis.

We are interested in a range of backgrounds – charity, council, health, police, education, etc. It would be an advantage if you already have good connections in Surrey. If you have ideas about what you would like to help change for children and young people, even better.

We are not being prescriptive about your past experience because that might cause us to miss somebody who could be a great addition to the team. We strongly believe in diversity of thought processes, no group think here please.

If this sounds of interest please read on...

The Change We Want to Help Achieve

The five systemic factors that SYF wants to help change to ensure that Children and Young People in Surrey have the best possible life chances:

- **WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO OUTCOMES** – enabling the best possible outcomes by starting with the premise that outcomes are products of numerous factors in the wider world, not individual services or organisations; and promoting collaboration between the public, third and private sectors to achieve good outcomes.
- **COLLECTIVE LEARNING** – ensuring we adopt the very best in learning approaches, not fearing to learn from failure.
- **STRONG, VISIBLE, COHESIVE THIRD SECTOR** – encouraging deeper collaboration and developing a coherent voice.

- **THIRD SECTOR IS HIGHLY VALUED** – ensuring that the third sector is an equal, trusted, respected partner of the public sector, especially in strategic conversations about system change and resource allocation.
- **CHILDREN ARE VALUED CONTRIBUTORS** - children and young people are listened to and are empowered to make a difference to themselves and their peers.

Surrey Youth Focus's role in these is as "Systems Leaders" and "Systems Stewards," which includes the following:

- Being a thought leader across the Surrey children's sector, bringing in new ideas and encouraging innovation in the youth sector.
- Being a "go to" organisation for advice/partnering on systems change and systems leadership in Surrey – "the customer friend".
- Playing a leading role in putting Children and Young People at the heart of the system and services.
- Deepening and widening our engagement with the third sector and communities.
- Being at the heart of the development and implementation of a new operating model and culture for the children's and youth third sector, providing the public sector with a coherent voice and the possibility of large scale outsourcing to a consortium of charities.
- Being a conduit to new sources of funds for third sector organisations serving children and young people.

We are offering, or aspiring to offer, system stewardship on a range of areas: Emotional Wellbeing, Serious Youth Violence, Early Help, Domestic Abuse, Family Resilience and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

A Bit More About Us...

We are a friendly, hardworking team of seven people (six of whom are part-time), and so flexibility/multi-tasking is essential. Our impact and reputation is very impressive for our size, and we want to keep it that way. We are very fortunate in having an expert Board with diverse experience and distinguished Patrons and Vice Presidents to support us.

We have cloud based computing, giving staff access to emails and files remotely - by desktop/tablet/laptop/phone.

We are based at Astolat, Burpham, Guildford but with flexibility to work from home, subject to operational needs.

We are happy to have full or part-time team members, but team members typically need flexibility to vary the times and days that you work to enable delivery with other agencies. Mostly this is daytime and weekday, but with occasional evening and weekend work.

We have a "Family friendly" working policy.

Team members will typically be tasked with some of the following:

- Proactively spot problems and create opportunities for system improvement, whether it be by investigating problems, making introductions, getting people talking, developing solutions.
- Ensure that there is a shared understanding of the problem that is being solved BEFORE diving into solutions. Too often, when in a hurry to achieve change, groups of people coming up with solutions that don't actually address the detail of the real problem.
- Attend boards and ad-hoc meetings with a wide range of partners, with a view to helping move the agenda forward and furthering other initiatives.
- Take a Surrey wide view on a specific issue (e.g. how to mentor/nurture vulnerable children in primary school, providing support to parents) and to build consensus on how to provide Surrey wide coverage, most likely building "bottom up" from existing initiatives already in place by charities and other organisations.
- Building collaboration of youth organisations to address an issue and lead on funding bids to help our members (and ourselves) e.g. from National Lottery.
- To network widely to get to know people, organisations and the system as much as possible.
- To ensure that Children, Young People and Families are put at the heart of the systems and services.
- To carry out projects that may involve:
 - Seeking funding
 - Organising and facilitating meetings
 - Carrying out research
 - Writing reports
 - Presenting findings
- To share in administrative tasks with the rest of the team, such as answering phones and unpacking the dishwasher when it is our turn on the rota.

What type of people are we looking for?

As we said above, we are not being prescriptive about past experience because that might cause us to miss somebody who could be a great addition to the team. However, we are looking for the following characteristics:

- "People" people – good at interacting with people of all ages, educational backgrounds and attitudes.
- Comfortable with complexity and uncertainty.
- Good at understanding a range of different perspectives and viewpoints on issues and working to bring different organisations together to a shared view.
- Interest in gathering ideas from lots of different places and applying them to different settings.

- A team player who will lead when appropriate and also follow others when appropriate; the willingness and enthusiasm to work in a flexible way in a small team.
- Good organisational and presentational skills.
- Ability to manage priorities across quite a wide brief and competing deadlines.
- Ability to travel to different locations to work, mostly in Surrey, but some travel to learning events, especially in London.
- The usual IT skills – email, word, powerpoint, excel, etc.

Furthermore, having some of the following skills/knowledge would be helpful:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Health organisations and health
- Ethnographic style research/voice work
- Good networks across the children's system in Surrey
- Talented at turning 1000 words into a succinct diagram
- Experience of organizing successful events
- Knowledge of evaluation of projects and events

Sound Interesting?

If you are intrigued by this advert, you have two possible choices:

- Have a chat with Cate Newnes-Smith, our CEO, about the role – please email Rebecca.Kenyon@surreyyouthfocus.org.uk to arrange a time.
- Send in a CV and covering letter to info@surreyyouthfocus.org.uk which includes:
 - What past experience you would bring to this role.
 - Why this opportunity is of interest to you.

We will be considering how to proceed in early August, so we would prefer to receive your CV and covering letter in by Friday 31st July.