



thrive at five

Scotland Director
Appointment Brief
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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted that you are thinking about joining the Thrive at Five journey.

In the years leading up to me taking on the role as Thrive at Five's CEO I was responsible for the Princess of Wales's early years portfolio at The Royal Foundation. I was inspired by what I learned.

Through that work, and as a Trustee of Family Action, it was clear just how much we can improve children's' futures by giving them the best start in life. The science tells us just how crucial the early years are for later outcomes, yet so many children and their parents do not get the right support.

When we fail to get it right in the early years it is not through a failure on the part of those who devote their lives to providing support at this time in children's lives. Across the private, voluntary and private sectors there are passionate and highly motivated professionals and practitioners. Their expertise spans the fields of health, social care and education.

It is the complexity of this system around parents and carers, and their children, that hinders progress. Too often the problem is that efforts are not joined up, and children, parents and their communities are left at the periphery with their voices seldom heard. Parents and children should be at the heart of our efforts and they are central to the vision and mission of Thrive at Five.

We want to provide the capacity and expertise to enable collective action. The ambition of Thrive at Five is to change the way we all work together, in local areas and nationally, all to improve outcomes in the early years for the long term.

We are at an exciting moment in our evolution as an organisation as we improve and embed our work in our first pathfinder in Stoke-on-Trent, start co-designing and implementing solutions in our second pathfinder in Redcar & Cleveland, and start to scale up further into our third and fourth site. We have enthusiastic, informed and unswerving support from our co-founders (Grant Gordon and Larissa Joy), Trustees and backers. Now we need to expand our brilliant team to make our ambition a reality and I hope you will come on the journey with us.

Aida Cable
Chief Executive
Thrive at Five



WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

Thrive at Five's vision is a society where every child can thrive and achieve their potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is to help children in their early years develop strong foundations for life and learning. We build capacity in communities by supporting parents and carers and we enable collaboration across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Problem

The deepening tragedy of child poverty in Britain has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and increased cost of living, leaving the most vulnerable children and their families facing ever more hardship. The need is most pressing for young children from low-income families, who do worse on many important measures than their better-off peers and this gap is highly evident by the age of five. In 2022/23 17% of children recorded a developmental concern at their 4 – 5 year health review, with persistent inequalities between the most and least deprived areas with concerns being recorded more than twice as likely for the most deprived communities.

Children with developmental concerns by age five are often unable to catch up as they grow, and this can have lifelong consequences for their educational outcomes, health and happiness. In too many cases a poor start to life leads to a child entering the care system, being excluded from school, youth offending or unable to access education, employment, or training.

It is also widely acknowledged that the early years sector is fragmented. In all nations of the UK, responsibility for children's development in the critical years, from conception to five, is spread across several different Government agencies and different Ministers and numerous local agencies. This is before taking voluntary and community services into account.

There is a pressing need for strategic collaboration between all the services concerned with the early years to provide effective, preventative support from pregnancy through to school. Yet, the system faces multiple barriers to working in this way.

This frequently makes it difficult for families and children in the early years to get the effective help they need when they need it, and parents describe a system where they are 'done to' rather than supported. This problem has been long acknowledged but acting to address the problem is challenging.





The Solution

Thrive at Five works on the ground in places where children are most at risk of not developing strong foundations for life and learning by the end of their first year at school. We achieve sustainable change by unlocking the power of parents and carers, and by enabling collaborative action to strengthen early years support.

Parents and carers are the first and most important influence on babies and children's development, and for them to thrive, parents and carers themselves need to be supported by their communities and the early years system. Effective support for parents requires a system of joined up services, shaped by parent's voices, evidence and data. It requires a strong workforce with the knowledge, skills and resources to support families, and stronger links between services, parents and carers and the community.

We start by using data to understand what babies, children and families need and to identify what is working locally. Hearing the voices of parents and carers is essential. [Working collaboratively with the whole community we use the data and evidence to co-design solutions which can be delivered by our partners that will improve the provision of support in the early years, from pregnancy to age five.](#) We involve parents and carers in all our work, from joining our local backbone teams as paid parent champions to working with them to ensure their views inform new activities to reach and support them. Together with our partners we also find ways to strengthen the system and upskill the early years workforce. In Stoke-on-Trent, our first site, we have built relationships with a network of local partners – from leaders at the Local Authority and Integrated Care Board to front line practitioners in health, education and social care to local charities and community groups. Working together, we are implementing projects co-designed to improve children's outcomes.

Our parent champions are providing peer support and creating better connections between parents and carers and the rest of the early years system. [Ultimately, we want our impact to lead to more children developing strong foundations for life and learning by age five.](#)

Thrive at Five is now further strengthening our work in Stoke-on-Trent, co-designing and implementing solutions in Redcar & Cleveland, and working to scale into our third and fourth sites. Our ambition is to design a replicable model, informed by the collective impact approach, that can be rolled out in England and Scotland and is capable of delivering [long-term and sustainable change.](#)

THE THRIVE AT FIVE APPROACH

Our work delivered in Stoke-on-Trent since 2021, has helped us to develop and refine the Thrive at Five model.

We collaborate with everybody in a place, and we start by partnering with Local Authorities. We support each local place in the following ways:

A minimum seven year commitment to properly see through and embed a thorough change process—because we know making sustainable positive changes to early years outcomes takes time.

A local backbone team; we provide capacity for collaborative action through ‘backbone’ teams of talented and passionate local people. They work in partnership with the whole community, supporting a more joined up system across the public, private and voluntary sectors, alongside supporting parents to be at the heart of driving change to services and positive outcomes for their children.

Access to expertise: Our backbone teams are supported by a core team which includes expertise in the delivery of early childhood programmes and research and evaluation. The core team is supported by Thrive at Five’s Board and Advisory Council to ensure decision-making takes account of the best available evidence.

Additional resource: We support the implementation of new activities by channeling additional capacity, technical expertise and funding to support local practitioners, organisations and parents to implement solutions where gaps are identified.





Thrive at Five does not deliver local activities itself but works with partners through a three-stage process of Discover; Co-Design and Implement; Improve and Embed. Our local teams engage the community through a governance structure that creates opportunities for all voices to be heard and for everybody to be involved in co-development of new solutions. Find out more by watching our Thriving in the Early Years video [here](#).

DISCOVER

Mapping the gaps in support for babies, children and families, and identifying the assets in the community.

CO-DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

Using the data from Discovery and evidence to co-design strategies. Supporting implementation with additional capacity, including expertise and funding.

IMPROVE AND EMBED

Partnering with an internal and external evaluation team to test, learn and refine. Discovering sustainable ways to embed things that work.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success for Thrive at Five will be measured by assessing the progress of children towards expected levels of development at five.

Thrive at Five focuses its work on five intermediate outcomes with a causal, evidence-based link to the ultimate outcome of fostering good development by age five:

1. **Good parental wellbeing**
2. **Strong Parent Infant Relationships**
3. **Rich Home Learning Environments**
4. **Improved Early Communication and Language Development**
5. **Quality of Early Education and Childcare**

Our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is assessed independently by the Centre for Evidence and Implementation, working with our internal evaluation team. The issues we are trying to address are long-standing and complex and we will need to identify the right methods to track the change that Thrive at Five enables through our partners for parents, carers and children, as well as evaluating how our work contributes to strengthening practice and improving the system. We want to evaluate how changes in ways of working and behaviour contribute to better outcomes. Building knowledge over time about our impact across the intermediate and ultimate outcomes is vital to informing the development of the Thrive at Five model and to measure its long-term impact.



LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Thrive at Five is developing its model to ensure it is proven to be effective, sustainable and can be replicated and adapted in different community contexts.

Our first pathfinder area has been fully operational for three years and we are co-designing and implementing solutions in Redcar & Cleveland. In total we intend to roll out the Thrive at Five model in 4 pathfinder areas; a further site in England and one in Scotland.

Each of our pathfinders feeds into the other, using lessons and best practice to hone and strengthen our work in a 'test, learn and refine' approach. To capture this and enable us to apply and roll out our model and approach in England and Scotland, we are creating our playbook; a document detailing what has worked well in different contexts and situations, ways to do things more quickly and efficiently and how to avoid pitfalls and problems. It's an ever evolving and rich resource, including practical tools, case studies and reflections that will enable Thrive at Five teams to make an impact more quickly in future pathfinders.

We believe that building strength in communities is the best way to achieve long term sustainability.

Our plans are ambitious and will see us increase our efforts to continually improve and increase our impact. In doing this will hone our expertise, expand our work and, we hope, contribute to a tipping point of improvement in the early years system. Most importantly, we want to see many more children achieving better early years outcomes so they can go on to thrive.

Our values

Listening

We listen to understand every perspective, especially from people whose voices are rarely heard, before we plan and act together

Collaboration

To succeed we take time to build meaningful relationships founded on trust and collaboration with parents, communities and partners.

Kindness

Through kindness we make friends, see the best in each other and dispel hostility and get more done together.

Endurance

Lasting change takes endurance to test and find out what works and be sustained in communities everywhere. We are in it for the long haul.

FINANCES

Thrive at Five is fortunate to have secured major gifts as well as donations from foundations that ensure we have a strong pipeline of funding.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Thrive at Five is an independent registered charity.

The national board of the charity is co-chaired by Thrive at Five co-founders, Grant Gordon OBE (Chair, Childhood Trust) and Larissa Joy OBE (Chair Foundling Museum and Social Business Trust). Independent trustees representing a range of relevant skills and with diverse backgrounds support the Co-Chairs to ensure good governance and oversight of the initiative.

Thrive at Five also has an Advisory Council bringing together a diverse range of experts who we can call upon to help with specific areas e.g. early language and communication, collaborative impact, and international experience.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Scotland Director

Location: The Director may support Thrive at Five in settling a partnership with a suitable Local Authority for a first pathfinder in Scotland. Once the place is identified this role will involve in person work in the Local Authority area and occasional meetings in London and elsewhere in the UK

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer of Thrive at Five

Responsible for: Thrive at Five Team Scotland

Term: Permanent

Salary: £75k–£85k

Annual leave: 25 days, excluding bank holidays.

JOB PURPOSE – SUMMARY

This is an exciting opportunity for a highly experienced leader, with a passion for giving children the best possible start and with a strong belief in the power of communities. The right individual will be a self-starter who is excited by a new venture and a team player who drives collaboration.

The Director for Scotland will manage Thrive at Five's pathfinder in Scotland and a talented, committed and high performing team (approx. 8/10 staff) that will support the delivery of the Thrive at Five local early years strategy. Work on the ground will focus on a number of key areas in our target Local Authority.

Thrive at Five will work with local stakeholders, from across the public, voluntary and private sector, enabling them to collectively support parents and children to improve outcomes in the early years by age five. Engaging with, and empowering local parents will be key to the successful delivery of the initiative.

The Director will work hand in hand with the national team, to strengthen workstreams and ensure we make a positive difference for local children and families. They will also build strong relationships with relevant key national stakeholders, including across Scottish Government, to share the lessons and impact of our work and with potential future Local Authorities where we might expand our work.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Scotland Director is to foster, build and maintain relationships with all who have an interest locally in the early years; to facilitate collaboration between all the key stakeholders in the delivery of co- designed and evidence- informed workstream; to ensure that data and information is gathered so the initiative can be robustly evaluated; to share learnings to inform Thrive at Five's core operations; and to help build a strategy for long-term sustainability, looking at ways to integrate the Thrive at Five model into local systems.

Local parents – and the views and lived experience of local parents – are an integral part of designing, implementing, and sustaining Thrive at Five in our pathfinders, both in terms of key decision- making and in being a key part of joining up local services, programmes and initiatives for local parents and early years children services. The Director will be responsible for ensuring that the voice of parents and involvement of parents is embedded in the local system and will provide opportunities for parents to be recruited (and if necessary) trained to work with and for the local programme office. As we conduct our deep discovery in a new Scottish

pathfinder and move to co- production of workstreams the local team will use, test and refine learning from our other sites. The Thrive at Five playbook will provide a blueprint for how our model can be deployed in the new pathfinder, building on what we have learned works and providing an opportunity to test this in a different context, whilst identifying the ways in which it needs to be adapted to work in a new Local Authority area.

The Director will report to a local Senior Leaders Group (including senior representatives from the Local Authority, health and social care) and manage the local stakeholder groups. They will serve as a local and national spokesperson for Thrive at Five and will be responsible for developing and delivering a communications strategy, with support from our core Communications team, helping to engage a wide group of stakeholders including the local community; local delivery and potential delivery partners; and local funders.

The Director will work closely with local partners, other pathfinder Leads and the core team to ensure that information and learnings are captured and fed into strategic thinking around sustainability, replicability, and scaling.



ROLE DESCRIPTION

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Building relationships

Maintain positive, sustainable partnerships, by effectively bringing together all external stakeholders that form part of this initiative to work towards developing a collective vision

Team Leadership

Provide strong leadership and inspire and support the team to uphold the values of the charity, to meet targets and to understand how their contribution is vital to achieving wider strategic aims

Lead your team to work collaboratively with the core team and colleagues in other pathfinders, ensuring we co-operate in the development of a replicable, sustainable national model

Ensure there are clear lines of accountability and responsibility across the team, which foster and maintain effective working relationships for the organisation

Lead by example in terms of work ethic, commitment to the delivery of results and to demonstrating the values of the organisation

Identify needs and strengthen the skills of the team to ensure we can deliver best in class facilitation and lead collaborative projects with a diverse group of stakeholders.

Project Management and Impact

Lead the delivery of a portfolio of complementary workstreams, continuously refining and strengthening the work so that we make the greatest possible positive difference to local children and families.

Work with the Learning and Impact team and Centre for Evidence and Implementation to ensure there are clear measurement frameworks in place

Work with all partners to ensure there is an effective system for data collection and impact measurement

Work with Thrive at Five core team to maximise insight, impact and prospective opportunities for future learning and development of Thrive at Five across our other pathfinder projects

Systems and processes

Ensure that grants and contracts with all partners are robust, setting clear expectations about deliverables and the way the initiative is represented publicly

Work with the core team and in particular the Director of Design and Planning to ensure that highly efficient processes and procedures are in place for managing all activities and partnerships effectively

Ensure that highly efficient processes and procedures are in place for managing the local Thrive at Five budget

Work with partners to ensure sustainability of systems change and programmes that deliver positive outcomes

Funding

Work to identify partnerships that could open the door to further funding for the charity's work in this Project

Communications and national collaboration

Represent the programme externally, including engaging with local and national commissioners

Deliver reports for the Senior Leadership Group, the national Thrive at Five Board, funders and any other stakeholders as necessary

Through your work, establish Thrive at Five as a leading, collaborative innovator within the place-based change and the health and education fields

Act as an ambassador for Thrive at Five, networking widely to build new and existing strategic relationships to the benefit of the programme and organisation more broadly

Proactively support and facilitate cross programme collaboration and learning

Provide key insights to Thrive at Five core team to support strategic development of the scalable model for long term sustainability and replicability.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE (essential)

Leading and developing a diverse team

Implementing concurrent and complex workstreams effectively.

Managing stakeholders strategically in the context of improving early years outcomes.

Building and maintaining networks of good relationships with a wide range of stakeholders from local communities to CEOs and senior level management from the public, voluntary or private sectors

Facilitating and enabling effective collaboration between a diverse group of stakeholders

Working at a senior level with public sector and voluntary organisations involved in delivery of services and support to families with children, including families with children aged 5 and under.

Managing and developing a multi-disciplinary team

Project management, including financial management and budget development

Project evaluation and managing processes for data collection for impact measurement

Representing and acting as a trusted senior spokesperson for an organisation

EXPERIENCE (desirable)

Working in Scotland and working with communities (families)

KNOWLEDGE (essential)

Understanding of public and voluntary sector services and the policies and systems that support pregnant mothers and families with children under five, and of the pre-school education system

Knowledge of early years development and the evidence base for programmes/interventions to support healthy development and good outcomes

KNOWLEDGE (desirable)

Models for place-based change, collective impact and community engagement

Knowledge of policies in Scotland to support families from pregnancy to age 5 and how they are implemented

SKILLS

Strong relationships building skills

A team player with experience of matrix or other similar management structures

Driven, flexible and adaptable, being able to work well in a start-up environment, taking initiative and making quick clear decisions

Proven leadership skills and leads, motivates, and empowers others whilst taking responsibility for actions, projects, and people

Proven management skills, providing staff with development opportunities and coaching

Energy, resilience and credibility, providing others with a clear direction

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Thrive at Five on this appointment. Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **CARAWB**

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 10th January 2025**

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



A large, stylized white smiley face is centered on the page. It consists of two small white circles for eyes and a wide, thick white curved line for a mouth. The text 'thrive at five' is positioned between the two eye circles, with a small white arc connecting the 'i' in 'thrive' to the 'e' in 'five'.

thrive at five

Saxton Bampfylde