



West London Zone

LINK WORKERS

Application Pack

May 2018

1. Introduction

West London Zone serves children aged 3-16 with a number of related, unmet needs, who are at risk of negative outcomes in their lives. We provide long-term, preventative support tailored to each child through our partnership of Link Workers, charities, schools, families and community organisations, so that they get on-track to flourish in adulthood.

We are looking for Link Workers to work in primary school settings, and in our Early Years settings.

We are looking for highly motivated individuals with experience in and a passion for providing children and families with the opportunities and relationships to enable them to flourish in life. Applicants will be highly professional, understand the boundaries required for this work, meticulous in their attention to detail and able to recognise the rigour required in reporting and data collection so as to evidence their own and other organisations' work. WLZ Link Workers are individuals who are creative, constantly looking for new situations and solutions to improve the lives of children and families, and who have great energy and enthusiasm for this work.

WLZ Link Worker role

The main purpose of this role is to engage with children, young people and families in the support we offer them through our social sector partners in West London. There are five key components to the Link Worker role. These are:

- Work mostly from the school settings to engage children, young people and families; build a trusted adult relationship that enables understanding, including each child, young person and their family's strengths and needs
- Co-ordinate support for the children, young people and their families, that is delivered by WLZ social sector partners, mostly in the school setting; ensure it complements what is on offer in the school and runs smoothly
- Further widen the network of support for the whole family by linking them to existing organisations and opportunities in the community
- Support the children, young people and families to sustain their efforts with their support so that they progress, according to the terms of WLZ's outcomes contract; rigorously report on their efforts and progress; provide observations on the community
- Think creatively to find solutions to problems and overcome challenges so that the best support possible is available to the children, young people and their families and they stick with it

Key Terms

Job Title	Link Workers in primary schools and Early Years settings, West London Zone
Responsible To	Link Worker Manager, West London Zone
Conditions of Service	Salary range £25,000 to £30,000 FTE (depending on experience) Full time and Part time Working hours 8.30am to 5pm (with flexibility) 25 days annual leave per annum (plus 3 days between Christmas and New Year) and Public Holidays, Allowance increases by a day for each year of service up to a maximum of five additional days
Location	Based in schools/Early Years settings, also at West London Zone, 140-144 Freston Road, London, W10 6TR

2. About Us

Our vision

West London Zone is an organisation that has been co-developed by our local community to deliver early intervention to improve the learning, wellbeing and character of children and young people.

Our mission is that all children in our Zone arrive safe, happy and healthy in adulthood. We aim to achieve this by co-ordinating a range of local and national social sector organisations to provide support early, before problems escalate. We are inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone, the world's first Children's Zone, who pledge to do 'whatever it takes', over the whole period of childhood, to ensure children grow up well.

Our work

WLZ works with local 'Anchors' – schools and nurseries – to identify children who are not well served by existing provision and are risk of negative outcomes without effective early intervention.

We provide each child with a Link Worker who is based in the school, and who gets to know the children and helps them by designing a package of support from our partnership of charities who have a range of specialisms (tutoring, counselling, fitness, nutrition, character and behaviour). The Link Worker provides a consistent trusted adult presence for the child through the two years period, and ensures they consistently turn up to support sessions. The Link Worker also works with the charities to tailor their approach and content to each child, and works with the children's family members to better engage them with their child's education and development. Through the Link Workers and our partnership and data teams, we provide hands-on management of the charities every day so that they offer the best and most tailored support possible for every child - with impact closely monitored and measured.

In order that children arrive in adulthood safe, happy and healthy, we have designed a 'place-based', long-term model which is: 1) Proactive; 2) Preventative; 3) Lasting.

1) Proactive Identification

We proactively identify children 'at risk', using our innovative data- and relationship-driven approach, including data we collect ourselves via 'My Voice': the WLZ survey, designed in partnership with Dartington Service Design Lab. This survey provides an in depth, holistic insight into the wellbeing of local children and young people (we have had over 1,600 responses so far this year, with over 20 risk factors measured, each predictive of negative outcomes later in life).

2) Preventative Action

Our Link Workers approach children/families with a positive engagement framework to encourage participation, and then build highly professional, trusting and enduring relationships. With their Link Worker, each child/family co-designs their own tailored package of support via our partnership of over 20 local and national charities, based around their unique strengths and needs. Over the next two years, the Link Worker ensures each child/family makes the most of their support, tweaking the emphasis as necessary.

3) Lasting Impact

After two years, if the child has made sufficient progress, we continue to monitor their development closely to ensure they stay on track – with the option to support them again in the future if need be.

Our status today

This year, 500 children are participating in West London Zone, across 15 primary schools, secondary schools, and nurseries. With their Link Worker, each of these children has co-designed an individually tailored package of support from our partnership of charities offering specialist services – ensuring they get the right support at the right time, before their problems get worse.

Since 2015, we have shown not only that this innovative model is possible, but that it is capable of delivering significant impact. Ultimately, however, our aim is to empower enough children and young people to improve their lives, so that we create a “tipping point” – where, in the long run, those children change what it means to grow up in this community.

That community – a densely populated 3-square miles around the Harrow Road with very high levels of deprivation – crosses four local authorities and includes a large number of schools and nurseries, many of whom have expressed interest in becoming part of WLZ in order to support children who they feel are not currently receiving the additional support they need.

So, over the next 5 years, we plan to support a further 3,000 children in partnership with a group of new schools and two further local authorities (South Brent and North Westminster; we currently work in North Hammersmith and North Kensington). If we can generate the evidence to prove that this kind of community-level change is possible, there is significant potential for our approach to be replicated in other urban communities around the country.

Our team

We are a small team of highly committed and energised individuals who are totally focused on supporting the children and families we work with to improve their outcomes in life. We have a ‘CLEAR’ set of values that guide us in our work: Collaborative, Local, Evidence-led, Accountable and Relational. We have a huge ambition, but we are grounded in the realities of everyday frontline delivery work and effective partnership. We find that if we always put the child first in our thinking, our actions and our negotiations, we usually achieve progress.

What we are doing is challenging, but we are fiercely determined, highly motivated and completely dedicated to WLZ’s long-term goal. We all have high expectations for ourselves, and everyone we work with. This is an opportunity to join an ambitious and dynamic team, which is focused on driving towards better outcomes for children and young people and evidencing impact.

3. Link Worker: About the Role

Purpose of role

WLZ is in the process of expanding its service to a number of new schools and Early Years settings across Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea.

The main purpose of this role is to engage with children, young people and families in the support we offer them through our social sector partners in West London.

Responsibilities

Identifying and supporting children and families

- Act as a trusted adult and role model in the lives of the children, young people and families
- Provide support to children, young people and families, maintaining professional practice standards as outlined in legislation, guidance and consistent with WLZ policies and procedures
- Ensure that school data is collected, the WLZ wellbeing survey is completed and consent for participation in WLZ support is obtained from all families
- Develop personalised engagement plans in partnership with family members and professionals in the schools, in order to determine the strengths, needs, and goals in the lives of the children and young people, and the necessary support to achieve them
- Encourage participants to sustain their support, constantly developing innovative ideas to achieve this
- Follow WLZ's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding

Co-ordinating support from the social sector and promoting engagement in the schools

- Build relationships across staff in the schools and social sector partners
- Co-ordinate seamless delivery of support by social sector partners both during and after the school day to help WLZ partners to achieve their stated outcomes for the children, young people and families
- Monitor progress throughout regarding strengths, needs, progress and goals and ensure transparent sharing of information between WLZ, schools and partners

Managing data and reporting

- Ensure that measurement data is adequately collected in all social sector partners' pre and post measurement support sessions to provide evidence of services delivered and progress to outcomes
- Convey data transparently when necessary according to confidentiality agreements between social sector partners, schools and WLZ
- Maintain detailed notes, including instances of engagement, and gather relevant data on children, young people and families to evaluate situations and develop responses to complex problems

Wider network building

- Establish links with key workers from local agencies and organisations also working with the families WLZ is supporting, to ensure that WLZ support is aligned with statutory support, particularly family practitioners, social workers and health visitors
- Hold events and represent WLZ at local group meetings to forge positive relationships with other organisations, build the WLZ community and recruit members to the Reference Board (residents' governance board)

Management and administration

- Attend regular WLZ team meetings, Link Worker meetings, supervision meetings and half-termly meetings with the schools and social sector partners to discuss status of provision and the WLZ model
- Take responsibility for developing and improving your own professional knowledge and skills, contribute to the development of WLZ, its policies and procedures, support colleagues through co-working, mentoring or critical appraisal

Responsibilities of all WLZ Staff

- Comply with all relevant WLZ Safeguarding policies
- Maintain an awareness of health and safety and comply with WLZ's Health and Safety Procedures
- Comply with WLZ Diversity and Equality policies and practices
- Maintain and develop competence in the use of IT systems

Any other job related duties as assigned

- A flexible approach to work is essential. All WLZ staff may sometimes be required to adapt their duties to take account of changes in work practices

Person Specification

Essential

- Relevant experience, e.g. family support work, education, social work, youth work, mentoring, counselling or similar
- Experience and interest in supporting children, young people and families to flourish
- Ability to manage relationships across multiple settings with different people
- Excellent communication skills, able to communicate professionally and flexibly with a wide group of stakeholders
- Good understanding of safeguarding in relation to children and young people
- Able to plan work and manage competing priorities in a busy, fast paced environment
- Fluent written and spoken English
- Good undergraduate degree or other equivalent qualification
- IT competence for producing data reports in a variety of formats (at a minimum, experience with Microsoft Office suite including Excel, Word, and Google Apps)

Desirable

- A connection with West London.
- Experience of working in a school

4. How to apply

- Please send a completed application form to recruitment@westlondonzone.org
- Applications received before 11pm on Sunday 17th June will be considered.
- The Assessment Day for shortlisted applicants will be on Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th June– please keep this free. Shortlisted candidates will be notified by 5pm on Monday 18th June.
- Due to expected volume of applications, we regret to say that only shortlisted candidates will receive a direct reply. If you have not been contacted by 5pm on Monday 18th June, you have not been shortlisted

Note to Applicants: Please ensure that the first part of your application form, which requests information on your education and employment history, is fully completed. Your supporting statement in the application form should then provide us with information regarding your fit for the job as summarised in the person specification. Should you be invited to interview with the WLZ team, we will ask questions to determine your fit with the WLZ competencies, values and job responsibilities.

Equal Opportunities

West London Zone is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified persons.