

Role Profile

Lead Practitioner (Young people and Self-directed Support) – Thistle YP

Lead Practitioners work in a small team to support young disabled people, and their families, to discover and progress what matters to them as they move into adult life after school. They do this both through direct work alongside young people and their families, and through work with partner organisations and community resources. The team is self-organised and works to a set of key principles and a common operational framework. When supporting people, families and delivery partners, the team's work is underpinned by a common set of person centred behaviours collectively described as the Thistle Approach. The team is supported by a Thistle Coach and the Thistle Hub, and is accountable to the Directorate team via the 4 key principles and operational framework on page 2 of this profile.

Team Member Responsibilities (held by individual team members and the team)

- Person centred, strength-based work with young disabled people and their families to take greater control and move into the adult life that makes sense to them
- Collaborating with project partners to deliver a range of approaches to enable young disabled people to envisage their future direction and take greater control of their life
- Providing informal advocacy to support young people and families to navigate social care and education systems, ensuring their voice is central to decisions made
- Brokerage - supporting young people and families to identify, understand and access options, resources and supports (including financial) in line with their aspirations and hopes
- Continually gather quality evaluative material and stories, and use learning both in reporting and to influence change around inclusion and opportunities for young disabled people
- Holding an overview of all Thistle YP activities and ensuring these are planned and delivered
- Working to the key principles and operational framework set out below
- Planning and scheduling holidays, training and development, team/coaching meetings and reflective practice
- Completing and updating appropriate records in recording systems
- Monitoring and reviewing individual and team performance and deciding on and implementing actions for continuous improvement
- Recording and reporting any concerns in relation to any child or adult that may be at risk of harm

Team Member Roles

Core Roles (performed by all team members)

- **SDS Development Worker:** providing person-centred, strength-based support in accordance with the Thistle Approach, drawing on life and professional experience, and qualifications.
- **Team Player:** Sharing responsibility for the success of the team, supporting and challenging collectively and individually if necessary.

Rotational Tasks (distributed across team members and rotated regularly)

- **Quality** – coordinate continual gathering of quality information and systems for recording. Coordinate bi-annual reports to funder. Provide a communication link with funder.
- **Financial sustainability** – monitor project budget and spending, liaise with finance to report on a bi-annual basis. Identify ongoing funding opportunities to sustain and develop work.
- **Team development** – identify training needs and plan training, organise and facilitate reflective practice, maintain contact with coach and organise team coaching meetings.
- **Wellbeing** – emotional support for team, social events, support around sickness absence and other required external support such as counselling.

- **Communications** – coordinate visibility of Thistle YP through gathering and disseminating stories and learning via social media and other channels. Maintain social media community.
- **Education** – manage and support partnerships with theatre company and schools across Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian. Develop relationships and work with senior and front line education partners.
- **Big Plan** – liaise with schools, young people and families to recruit teams for Big Plan, coordinate and link with families throughout. Recruit and support Group Supporter volunteers. Coordinate facilities needed for plan and liaise with facilitation partners.
- **Changemaker** – coordinate and develop opportunities for young people and families to contribute their lived experience to influence change for others. Identify and work with interested individuals and groups, supporting their learning to develop confidence and ability to influence change.
- **Traineeships** – coordinate with traineeship partners to provide interested young people with work opportunities on an ongoing rotational basis. Set up initial visits, link past and current participants, link with employers' quality systems and provide ongoing additional support to participants to reflect on learning and link to their hopes for the future.
- **Families** – coordinate and co-facilitate family forum and bi-annual Support your Way sessions with partners, supporting families to access peer support and understand funding choices
- **Strategy** – raise the profile of the work and influence change at local and national level. Represent the work at relevant fora, and maintain active links with local authority and third sector partners.

Key Principles

The following four key principles describe what the team will achieve in practice:

- Delivery of person centred, strength-based support that focuses on what matters to people
- Achievement of financial sustainability
- Facilitation of wellbeing and fun
- Engagement of people we support, families & volunteers

Thistle YP Operational Framework

These are the non-negotiable elements of work within which the team must operate:

1. Team must develop and continually review records of young people's direction and outcomes (what matters to them), and support their steps towards this.
2. Team must plan, coordinate and ensure ongoing quality of work delivered with partners
3. Team is responsible for working to the Thistle Approach. They must engage in regular learning to keep their skills & knowledge relevant and updated.
4. Team must manage their time collectively to be responsive to the needs of young people and families e.g. covering evening meetings and events, school transition planning meetings
5. Approximately 50% of the team member's time is spent working outwith the office with young people, families, partners and community resources, and approximately 50% on other tasks e.g. research, planning, meetings, training etc.
6. Team must engage in collective decision making using action-orientated decision making
7. Team must engage with their Thistle Coach
8. All tasks & responsibilities must be covered all of the time, distributed across team members and rotated regularly
9. Team must plan, organise & attend team meetings, coaching meetings & reflective practice meetings regularly
10. Team must ensure vacant team roles are filled, and new members fully inducted
11. Team must use quality monitoring and evaluation processes in line with funding stipulations
12. Team members must provide each other with constructive feedback via regular peer supervision based on the Thistle Approach & using the tools provided.