

Job Purpose & Person Specification

1. Job Details

Job Title	Lead Practitioner (Young people and Self-directed Support)	Line Manager	Self-organised team supported by Thistle Coach
		Salary	£29,206 FTE
Department	Thistle YP		
Location	Thistle Foundation, 13 Queens Walk, Edinburgh.		
Hours	31 hours	FTE	39 hours
Permanent or Fixed Term		Fixed term to March 2021 – ongoing employment dependent on funding	

2. Job Purpose

Do you want to create a more equal society, and enable young disabled people to have fulfilling, valued lives, walking shoulder to shoulder with everyone else? Thistle YP puts young people at the centre of decisions made about their lives, working alongside them to discover and progress what matters to them. We work with young disabled people so that:

- They recognise their strengths and gifts, and how they might use them
- They feel confident and excited about what their future holds
- They control the shape their future takes
- They, and their families, are able to have their voice heard and advocate for what matters to them
- They have broader experiences: take risks, learn and make mistakes
- They influence change for themselves and for others
- The system can see them differently

Thistle YP uses a unique combination of creative approaches such as Person Centred Planning (Big Plan), drama, traineeships, individual support and peer groups, to support young people and their families to plan and move into meaningful lives in their own communities. In our quest to support people into a good life after school, we reach young people, families, schools, statutory services, external organisations and local communities. Our work is expanding to reach Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian. Watch our film to see some areas of our work: [InterAct 2015 film](#)

You'll play a crucial role in helping young people and their families to find their direction and stay on course for a life that makes sense to them. As part of Thistle's new self-organised young people's team you'll get involved in every aspect of our work with young people. You'll have a core role, and will rotate the lead for a variety of tasks as part of the team. You might be alongside individual young people and families as an informal advocate as they navigate the system, whilst helping them to broker imaginative solutions for the future using both paid and non-paid resources. You might also be coordinating drama sessions within schools, setting up work traineeships, developing young people as 'changemakers' to influence change for others, or coordinating large group planning or peer support for families. You'll have access to support to develop your skills; the team is supported by a Thistle Coach and the Thistle Hub (learning, HR, finance etc). As a team you'll be collectively responsible for delivering on the outcomes of the project and overseeing the fit with local and national policies and funding criteria.

3. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Education, qualifications and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree-level qualification or equivalent in relevant area <i>OR</i> Training linked to extensive experience of collaborative, strength-based approaches with people e.g. Person Centred Planning, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Community building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Education / Community Development / social work / youth work qualification Continuing professional development in relation to leadership, youth work, community development, or care
Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good understanding of personalisation, and Self-directed Support principles and challenges Clear understanding of issues around transition from school for young disabled people and their families Practical knowledge of person centred, asset based and outcome focused approaches to working with people Understanding of support brokerage approach Ability to advocate alongside people Ability to help young people and families think broadly and creatively about the choices open to them Ability to form trusting and effective relationships with a range of stakeholders and partners Good written and verbal communication skills Good interpersonal skills Experience of prioritising workload Ability to successfully multi task and meet agreed deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to tell persuasive stories Knowledge of local opportunities (Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian) Project management skills Coaching skills
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with people in ways that are person centred, asset based and outcome focused Negotiating multiple perspectives i.e. young people / families / social work / careers staff Working with people to access community resources and look beyond traditional service solutions Understanding and negotiating health & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging traditional approaches Facilitating Person Centred Planning / Big Plan Supported employment Supervising staff & volunteers Initiating and leading projects Experience of developing and delivering services that are self-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social care systems and processes • Successful collaborative working with statutory bodies, community organisations and other external agencies • Experience of delivering support for people who experience disability and/or long-term conditions • Ability to coach and develop others, including volunteers and peer workers (young disabled people & family members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> directed • Working with young disabled people across a variety of projects / initiatives • Support brokerage • Locating and securing alternative sources of funding • Managing project budgets • Facilitating groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of monitoring and reporting on service quality 	
<p>Personal qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourceful - think outside the box • Proactive and able to work on own initiative • Imaginative & creative • Passion for inclusion - driven to affect change and address inequality • Tenacious & driven – able to demonstrate resilience and perseverance in the face of opposition or barriers • Empathic – ability to walk in others shoes and understand where they are • A connector – sees, creates and capitalises on opportunities and connections • Deep listener – pick up on signals, cues & feelings as well as words • Organised & conscientious • Flexible & adaptable • Able to inspire and build trust • Self starter – able to work autonomously • Team player • Reflective practitioner 	
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving licence • Car owner 	

4. Thistle Approach – Core required competencies

Competency	Description
Understanding Self	In order to work well with people we need to develop a good understanding of ourselves and the impact we have on other people. Being genuine, respectful and listening with empathy to other people’s perspectives lies at the heart of all our interactions. We believe this practice is nurtured by the ability to continually reflect on ourselves and the impact we have on others.
Building person centred relationships	In order to be genuinely person centred we need to be able to develop supportive, collaborative and enabling relationships. We also believe that people are the experts in their lives, that they are doing their best and that by working alongside people we are more likely to succeed. We reflect on the extent to which we create trust in all our relationships and how well we work within teams.
Making a difference using person centred approaches	We believe that using person centred approaches can be critical to whether people make the changes they want in their lives or not. We do this by focusing on what matters to each person and what they want specifically to achieve including taking life enhancing risks. We always encourage feedback in order to learn and improve on what we do.
Focusing on Strengths, resilience and contribution	We believe that people have strengths, skills, knowledge and resilience and the ability to contribute to their own and others’ lives. We need to be flexible and innovative to enable people to share these attributes and make the most of all contributions in order to find creative solutions. We celebrate the success this brings and build our resilience by learning from setbacks.
Promoting wellbeing, citizenship and community	We believe that everyone is a citizen with rights, responsibilities and a contribution to make to their community. This is only meaningfully possible when you have genuine wellbeing and are fully included in your community. This belief drives the work we do at Thistle so we know we must try to influence the unequal and discriminatory aspects of our society in order to change how things currently are. This requires us to share the ‘Thistle Approach’ more widely and in turn, learn from the world around us. To do this well we must continually reflect on what this means for us as individuals and as an organisation.

5. Decision Making

- The post holder will carry authority to make collaborative decisions using decision-making processes.
- The post holder will effectively manage timely completion of activities
- The post holder will support all colleagues with information, advice and direction as appropriate for any problems that arise.

6. Key Contacts and Relationships

- Thistle Coach, Thistle Manager and Thistle YP team members
- External stakeholders such as partner organisations, local authority representatives and schools
- Young people and their families.

7. Dimensions

- The post holder has no direct reports at present, but may have in the future, as agreed.
- The post holder's work is based at Thistle Foundation head office (Queen's Walk, Edinburgh EH16 4EA), although regular travel across the Lothians and occasional travel to events across Scotland will be required.
- Ability to work flexibly (i.e. evenings) as required
- This is a fixed term post until March 2021, with extension dependent on funding.

8. Job context and other related information

- The post holder is expected to commit to continually developing a personal understanding of diversity and inclusion in line with the vision, mission and manifesto and strategic aspirations of Thistle Foundation.
- This post is subject to a PVG Disclosure.

9. Job Description Creation and Revision

Created	April 2019
For review	April 2020