

RESEARCHER

APPOINTMENT BRIEF Summer 2020

CEO LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in joining the Dartington Service Design Lab. We passionately believe in the practical application of science and evidence to improve services for children, families and their communities. This has been our focus for over 50 years.

Founded in 1963 by Cambridge academic Royston Lambert, at the invitation of philanthropist Dorothy Elmhurst, the centre soon moved from the University to Dartington. The charity has operated out of Devon ever since – working nationally and internationally, and recently, with the team working across England and Scotland.

As public sector cuts go deeper and charities pull their belts in further, we believe the need for good quality research and evidence is greater than ever. Despite much reference to ‘evidence-based policy making’ and ‘outcome-led services’, we think there is still a long way to go.

In 2017 we successfully took the charity through a major programme of change; one that has resulted in a more efficient, focused and, we think, exciting organisation. Building on the remarkable legacy of its predecessors, we have created the Dartington Service Design Lab: a 21st century organisation ready to challenge and inspire radical reform of systems and services to improve the lives of children, families and communities. This transformation is already reaping benefits.

To help us achieve this mission, we are looking to bolster our exceptional team. We ask that all applicants are passionate about the value of science and evidence, and committed to improving services for the most vulnerable. We are particularly interested in people with expertise in at least one of the following areas: children’s services, and child development research.

In the following pages you will find information about the charity, our values, plans and how to apply.

Thank you for your interest in our charity. I hope you are seriously tempted to join us to shape the next chapter of this wonderful organisation.

Dr Tim Hobbs

① Mapping out structure & process of systems
- stock & flow maps

② Understanding system challenges & opportunities
- CLOs & Ref. modes (GMR)

③ Understanding dynamic behaviour
- Simulation models (GMR)

④ Designing & implementing strategies for system change
- TOC, tools, dashboards, fund mapping
↓
Practice tools

ABOUT US

The Warren House Group at Dartington (WHG) is a registered charity in England and Wales, as well as in Scotland, and a registered Company Limited by Guarantee since 2002. We build upon the legacy of the WHG previous trading organisations.

The objectives stated in the memorandum and articles are:

- the advancement of education;
- the promotion of the care, upbringing and establishment in life of children and young persons in need;
- the relief of poverty; and
- the promotion of public health;
- for the public benefit, in particular, but without limitation, through activities associated with children and young persons and their families.

DARTINGTON SERVICE DESIGN LAB

Our purpose as an organisation is to challenge and inspire radical reform of systems and services to improve the lives of children, families and communities.

We do this by:

- Working with organisations and public systems that are willing to try new things
- Collaborating with leading scientists and researchers
- Fusing science-based and user-centred design approaches applied to public systems and services
- Experimenting and sharing our methods, failures and successes along the way

Our work focuses on three broad areas: system reform, service design and information design. Each are briefly introduced below:

1. System reform

We explore and simulate how complex health and social care systems may be redesigned to improve outcomes within limited resources. We focus on public systems such as child protection, children in care, early years or mental health. We apply range of tools, including system dynamic modelling. Features of this work include: (i) unpacking the complexity of the system; (ii) involving system leaders, practitioners and users in redesign efforts; (iii) synthesising robust data; and (iv) building dynamic computer simulation models.

2. Service design

We design, test and improve services using rapid-cycle innovation methods. This involves supporting users and practitioners to engage with data and evidence to design services that people not only want to engage with, but that are also effective in improving outcomes. Features of this work include: (i) user-centred design principles; (ii) drawing on the best available evidence; (iii) rapid-cycle design and testing; and (iv) quality improvement approaches.

3. Information design

We innovate to communicate complex information in accessible and engaging ways to inform decision-making. Our in-house design specialists create data visualisations, dashboards and other interactive web-based tools to inform our service design and system reform work. Features of the work include: (i) clarity about functions of data; (ii) clean design; (iii) interactivity; and (iv) designs to inform decision-making.

The Dartington Service Design Lab enters into collaboration with innovative organisations and public systems with a genuine commitment to improving the lives of children, families and communities. The Lab works in partnership to test out new ideas and methods applied to complex challenges. We are committed to helping staff in organisations or systems we partner with to acquire skills in all aspects of the work, building capacity in the organisation or system after we leave. We value learning as much as outputs, and as a charity seek to widely disseminate both so many can benefit.

We place great importance on our values, which are:

Creative

- We are curious and questioning;
- We approach things from different a different perspective;
- We aim to develop elegant responses to complex challenges.

Rigorous

- We are methodical, consistent and impartial when appraising a challenge; We take an analytical approach to design solutions;
- We exercise our best judgement, carefully weighing up the available information.

Collaborative

- We actively listen to others and understand their perspectives;
- We balance our strengths and weaknesses with purposeful partnerships to achieve more than we could alone;
- We think the users of services and systems, coupled with good science, hold the key to effective practice.

Bold

- We are confident about the potential we have to affect change;
- We are comfortable saying things that others may find uncomfortable;
- We are open to challenge and are willing to challenge others.

The Lab builds on many of the strengths of its predecessors, such as deep respect for good quality research, science and data; an understanding of public systems; and a sharp focus on improving outcomes for children and young people. But it is different in several ways. It is more focussed – having a narrower span of interest with the aspiration to become highly reputable in the areas of system reform, and innovation in service design. All the Lab's work combines science-based design with a greater focus on user- centred design.

As a charity that has seen many incarnations in its 50-plus year history and has always sought to break new ground, this is in many ways a natural evolution. In that spirit, the Lab has also embraced all the opportunities afforded by modern technology to become more agile and virtual, allowing the team to be based anywhere in the UK, thereby attracting the best people. A side effect of this change is no need for large offices. The charity has retained a modest office space in the grounds of the beautiful Buckfast Abbey estate, south Devon close to its roots.

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY

The Centre for Social Policy (CSP) provides a forum for those who are recently retired or mid/late in their career to continue an engagement in academic life and to stay up to date with current issues. The membership of the CSP is deliberately multi-disciplinary covering law, medicine, social policy, child welfare, youth justice and psychiatry. There are currently 60 fellows. The CSP hosts a programme of seminars for members throughout the year. In addition, members help the Lab by providing an ethics committee to scrutinise research proposals, review articles and papers prepared by the research team and advise younger researchers, for example, PhD students.

The CSP is supported by the charity's operations team. Its income is derived from fellow subscription fees and donations.

FINANCIALS

After nearly three years of investment from reserves to support the charity's restructure, the Lab is now commencing a period of stability, consolidation, reputation building and concentrating its efforts on new and exciting ideas. The Lab has already done extremely well to secure several large and long-term contracts, as well as developing enduring relationships with both new and existing partners.

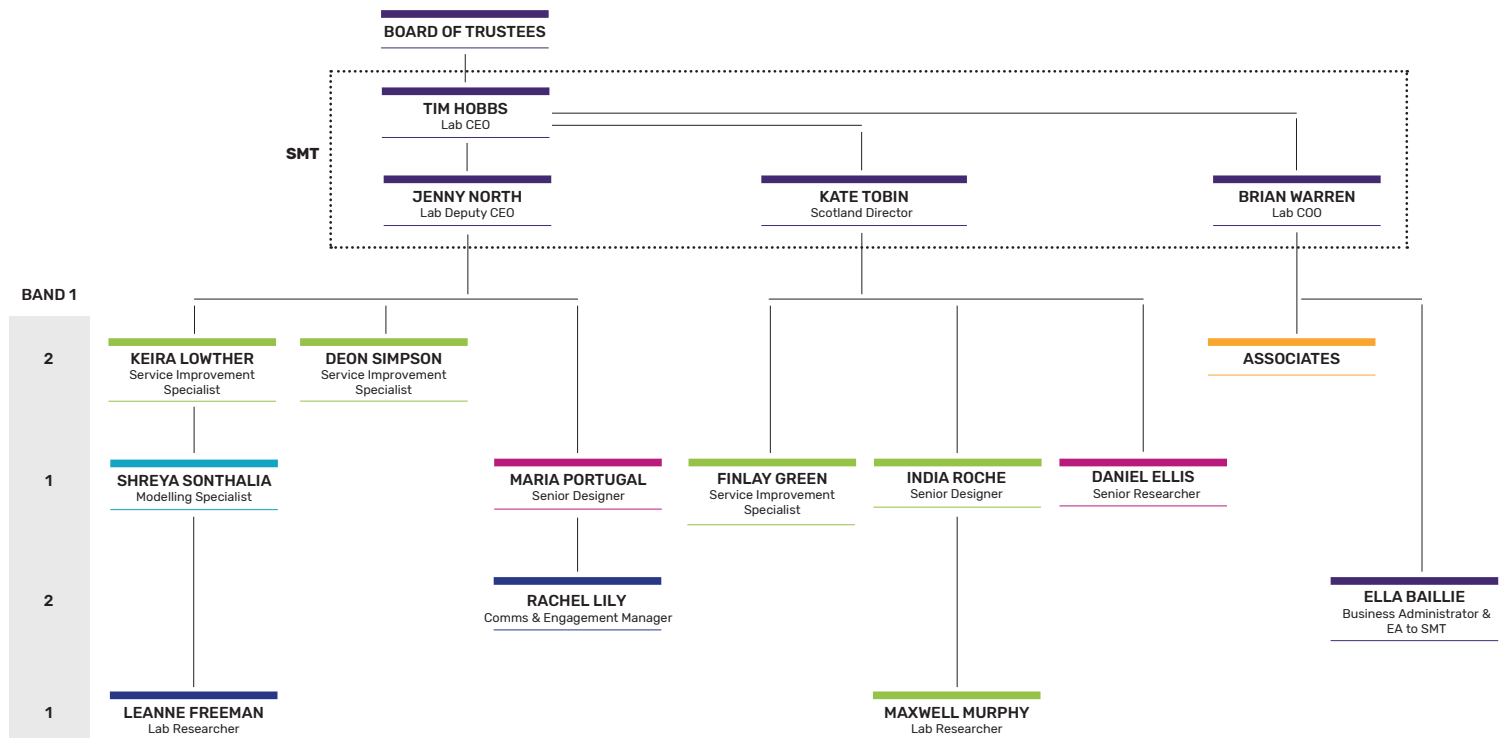
In 2019/20 c£1.5 million was expended in pursuit of the charity's objects including the delivery of 36 projects as well as a major commitment from reserves to support the transformation of the charity and the creation of the Dartington Service Design Lab. At the year 19/20 end the charity c£0.8m in unrestricted reserves.

The 19/20 accounts are yet to be audited but the early analysis indicates that the Lab had a good year of consolidation and generated a modest surplus last year.

STAFF STRUCTURE AND BOARD MEMBERS

The Dartington Service Design Lab is led by the Chief Executive - Dr Tim Hobbs. The team comprises 15 other members of staff and a growing team of flexible associates. The team are based across the UK working flexibly and remotely. The team come together routinely in south Devon quarterly and enjoy less formal gatherings utilising readily accessible co-working space when not working from home.

Staff structure July 2020



HOW TO APPLY

To apply in confidence to become a Researcher of Dartington Service Design Lab (The Warren House Group at Dartington is the charity's registered name and company name) please apply on line as well as submit a copy of your CV (max 2 pages of A4) with a supporting covering letter(no more than two sides of A4) to ***recruiting@dartington.org.uk***

Please also provide the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of two referees. References will only be taken once your permission has been granted.

Please let us know if you have any special provision or access requirements should you be invited for interview.

Kindly note - we are committed to safer recruitment practice and pre-selection checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed. The role is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure.

Lastly, please ensure that you have include mobile and home telephone numbers as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with the indicative timetable.



If you have any questions on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information or wish to have an informal exploratory discussion, please contact

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RESEARCHERS

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