

The Difference

Programme Lead

Reports to: Head of Programme, Shaun Brown

Start date: Sep 2020 **Contract:** FT permanent

Location: London (could consider Yorkshire or North West split-week for the right candidate)

Salary: Depending on experience in salary band £45-60K (+6% employer pension contribution)

You

You are an experienced school leader with a track record of teacher development with an impact on pupil outcomes. You care about what The Difference is trying to achieve, and have your own ideas about how we ought to do this. You are a pragmatic leader, with an understanding of the challenges of working in the education system; yet with the drive and ambition to develop a programme that can change the story for excluded learners, via the leaders who serve them.

The Challenge

Every day 41 of England's most vulnerable children – equivalent to more than a full classroom of pupils – are permanently excluded, with disastrous personal and societal consequences.

These are the country's **most disadvantaged**: 4 times more likely to have grown up in poverty, 7 times more likely to have special needs, 10 times more likely to have mental health problems and 20 times more likely to be interacting with social services due to safeguarding concerns. These children are at serious risk of knife crime.

Once they are excluded, life chances are bleak. **Less than 2%** of excluded pupils finish school with the qualifications they need in maths and English; 50% are immediately not in education, employment or training (NEET) straight after GCSEs. This small group of pupils goes on to make up half of the prison population, and is more likely to reoffend. It is estimated that each excluded child will go on to cost the state £370,000 in extra education, health, welfare and criminal justice spending. For last year's cohort of excluded pupils, that's a total cost of **£2.9bn to the Exchequer**.

Yet **too little is known about how to break this tragic cycle**. While some parts of the school system have seen an evidence-led revolution, there has been insufficient research and teacher training in how to measure or move outcomes for these most complex and vulnerable pupils. This impacts teacher satisfaction. Increasing numbers are leaving the profession, disillusioned and disempowered by this lack of expertise. Meanwhile, the numbers of young people whose lives are written off through school exclusion continues to rise, year on year.



Our Vision

The past does not have to determine the future. **The Difference** is a new education charity, founded to improve the life outcomes of the most vulnerable children by raising the status and expertise of those who teach them. By 2030 we want a new story on school exclusion:

1. **People - The best teachers working with the children who need them most**

A third of the 350 schools for excluded pupils in the country have a *Difference Leader* leading improved practice and outcomes for excluded children in their setting.

2. **Practice - An evidence base of what works with the most vulnerable**

Specialist training from The Difference has shaped the strategic approach that over 1,000 of the 3,500 secondary schools nationally take to Inclusion, leading to lower incidence of school exclusion and supporting the safety, wellbeing and learning of *all* pupils. Life outcomes beyond exam results are becoming better measured and valued, as is the multi-agency and relationship-informed work in schools which underpins them.

3. **Perception - A movement of inclusive leadership influencing the school system**

A cadre of Difference alumni, partners and advocates are shifting the national culture in schools. Their work is shared and amplified by The Difference. Incentives and opportunities for schools to meet the wellbeing, safeguarding and learning needs of all children are improving, through local and national policy.

Our Journey

The Difference is embarking on the ten-year journey to such a future. Over the first three of these years, a pilot of the *Difference Leaders* will: work in 10% of schools for excluded pupils; develop the evidence base of which interventions are best-replicated to impact vulnerable pupils; train mainstream senior leaders in inclusive practice; and continue to convene the conversation on inclusive practice in England's schools. We will grow from a start-up team, to a bigger organisation, with impact across the country.

Our Story So Far

The Difference began in 2016, as an idea of former inner-city teacher, Kiran Gill. At this time, school exclusion was not perceived as a social mobility issue, but Kiran was certain that the problem of the most vulnerable pupils falling out of education was a significant and growing one. A year later, Kiran had published a paper with think tank IPPR which launched the charity and raised national awareness of the challenge of school exclusion.

Over the following two years, The Difference recruited a team of staff and supporters to translate idea into reality. Meanwhile, The Difference presented its research to the Education Select Committee and was appointed to advise The Timpson Review.

By September 2019, rising school exclusions was firmly recognised as a challenge in England's school system. Meanwhile The Difference began facilitating their solution: a pioneering leadership pathway for teachers, and a network of practice-sharing leaders raising the status and expertise of educating the most vulnerable children.

In November 2019, The Difference's national conferences brought together 400 practitioners, and our regular bulletin rose to a readership of 2,500 colleagues, whilst our pioneer cohort began their leadership journey in pupil referral units and AP academies across 9 local authorities; and our training extended to 12 mainstream schools, including leaders from 3 multi-academy trusts.

From September 2020, The Difference will grow to reach 20 new local authority PRUs and AP academies; and 60 mainstream school leaders, including across 10 multi-academy trusts. As our community grows, so does our potential to impact learners across the country.



The screenshot shows the top of a Guardian article. The header includes the Guardian logo, a 'Support The Guardian' banner, and navigation links for News, Opinion, Sport, Culture, and Lifestyle. The article title is 'Ending exclusion: specialist teachers trained to support most vulnerable' in red. Below the title is a sub-headline: 'As concern mounts about 'zero-tolerance' in schools, teachers are lining up to learn a different approach'. The main image shows four people (three women and one man) standing behind a table in a classroom setting. A caption below the image reads: '▲ Kiran Gill, second left, of The Difference with, from left, teachers Jemima Reilly, David Adam-Yaboah and Astrid Schon. Photograph: Teri Pengilly/The Guardian'.

What is this role?

Programme Lead

This Programme Lead role will work closely with colleagues in the Programme team and report to the Head of Programme, Shaun Brown, in achieving the below:

The Difference Leaders Programme:

- Progress the skills and careers of the 10 **Difference Leaders** in Cohort 1; and the 15-20 Difference Leaders in Cohort 2 via training, development opportunities and appraisal of their assignments.
- Improve quality of provision in **partner AP schools** via coaching of the Difference Leaders to achieve impact in their leadership roles, and by building relationships with new partner AP schools.
- **Build a best practice base** for schools and teachers beyond the Difference Leaders Programme, via writing up and sharing learning from the work of Difference Leaders across the 20-30 pupil referral units and AP schools in the pilot programme.

This will include:

- Developing, delivering and evaluating the full **Difference Leaders Programme curriculum** (with Summer Training, observations, coaching, professional development delivery, twilight seminars, assignments and alumni support).

The Difference runs its intensive training model in 9 local authorities in 19/20, and will work in up to 30 local authorities through 20/21.

The role affords significant influence over the selection, knowledge, impact and career progression of the exceptional teachers who become Difference Leaders.

This includes:

- Significant programme design work for Year 2 of the Difference Leaders Programme – supporting Difference Leaders to grow in their roles within AP, and gain the expertise they need to progress into senior leadership roles in mainstream schools.
- Delivery of training sessions and in-school coaching visits for both cohorts on the Difference Leaders Programme.
- Work with Difference Leaders beyond the two-year programme, in their Alumni year - supporting Difference Leaders' impact leading Inclusion in mainstream schools across the country.
- Growing The Difference's **national network of pupil referral units and AP academies**.

The Difference charity has one of the largest networks of schools serving excluded pupils. This role will involve deepening those relationships for Difference Leader placements, and forging new relationships. This will give

the post-holder insight into the breadth of support for vulnerable learners across the country; and the opportunity to build partnerships which will lead to systemic school improvement in these schools over the coming years. (This will include seasonal travel to Yorkshire & the Humber, North West, West Midlands and North East).

- Building our **mainstream Inclusive Leadership Training course** to allow many more school leaders to benefit from the community of practice we are building.

The Difference has a growing network of mainstream school leaders, headteachers, and “middle tier” MAT leaders whose practice we are shaping via our year-long training programme. In extending delivery of our training from Difference Leaders to mainstream leaders, the programme team gain insight into the challenges and opportunities for mainstream schools across the country, as we support those leaders in strategic school improvement of outcomes for vulnerable learners. Across 2020/21, the post-holder will work with the programme team to treble our training offer to these schools.

The Difference work beyond Programme Delivery

The Programme Lead will work closely and flexibly with the rest of the team to:

- Support the delivery of The Difference’s annual IncludEd conferences
- Represent The Difference at teacher-facing events, to attract the next generation of Difference Leaders
- Staff the selection process for Difference Leaders, including assessing written applications, and at selection centres
- Represent The Difference and our partner schools at policy-facing events
- Evaluate the implementation of our delivery; and identify elements of replicable practice which could be scaled beyond the Difference Leaders Programme



Person Specification

Essential knowledge, experience and skills

- A career which evidences commitment to improving life outcomes of vulnerable people and shared valued with The Difference (see below)
- Minimum 5 years' school leadership experience
- Proven impact as school leader
- Proven impact as designer and deliverer of professional development
- Ability to work flexibly in a small team
- Ability to build relationships and influence a range of stakeholders
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced and sometimes ambiguous start-up environment

The Difference Values

The successful candidate will share our six core values:

- **Purpose:** Our work is guided and galvanised by our values and beliefs. We are problem solvers, and do not wait to act. We are inspired by our purpose to improve life outcomes for the most vulnerable young people, and to develop the people, practice and public perception required to achieve this.
- **Collaboration:** We build relationships into our work, give to others readily and use others' strengths alongside your own, to have greater impact in our work. We are inspirers and facilitators of others; able to influence and to advocate. We see the big picture and strive for better collaboration across services.
- **Bravery:** We are independent thinkers, willing to speak out, to challenge others and the status quo, where it is inconsistent with our shared aims and values. We are able to take decisions despite ambiguity, and are resilient and persistent in the face of challenge.
- **Excellence:** We expect the best from people and ourselves, and do not prejudge. We value quality work, tangible results, and feedback to inform continuous improvement.
- **Pragmatism:** We are able to recognise current limitations and strive for improvements within and beyond them. We are flexible in our thinking, willing to be proved wrong, and able to plan for strategic change, prioritised over shorter-term, shallow goals.
- **Humility:** We are able to be challenged and to learn from experiences and interactions. We are aware and respectful of others' dignity, insight, knowledge and agency.

To apply

To apply for the role please email jobs@the-difference.com the following no later than **Sunday 19th April** at **midnight**, including the job title in the subject line and confirmation of where you saw the job role in the body of the email:

1. A supporting letter (**no more than 2 sides**) outlining how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the requirements of the role;
2. Your CV including references (**maximum 2 sides**); and
3. Confirmation in the body of your email of your current salary and notice period, whether you have the right to work in the UK, and whether you have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a valid criminal check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Interviews will be held on the **23rd and 29th April**. Please indicate if your availability will be limited during this time, in the body of your email.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role prior to application, please contact Kiran@The-Difference.com and cc: Danny@The-Difference.com

Recommended reading

To understand more about The Difference and what we are trying to achieve, we recommend browsing the following:

- The summary of the [research](#) which underpins our organisation,
- Our [story so far](#) and details of our founder's story as told in [Schools Week](#) and [TES](#)
- The way we currently describe our programme to teachers in our [short film](#), and the recruitment pages of our site (note: our recruitment process will need analysing and editing before our next round of recruitment)
- The storytelling we have done previously including [Shaun's story](#) and [Will's story](#)
- Details of our first [IncludEd conference](#), the second of which will run again in October 2019
- The impact we have had and are having on the policy debate in England's school system, as told through our fortnightly [Exclusions Bulletin](#)

Case Study: Meet a Difference Leader



Ada's Story

When Ada Gokay applied for the Difference Leaders programme, she knew she might want to be a headteacher one day. But Ada also knew that she would want to run her school differently from the ones she had worked in herself. Ada came into teaching inspired by the cause of social justice, but felt disheartened seeing her most vulnerable students slip out of the system.

Ada originally trained to be a maths teacher through Teach First. Having spent six years teaching in London schools, Ada was working in Bangladesh, training teachers as part of Teach First's international umbrella organisation, Teach for All, when she first heard about The Difference. It was her expertise in teaching, and her skill in leading teacher development with other teachers which made her successful in selection, beating the 8 other candidates who were competing for her one place on the Difference Leaders programme.

Ada's Difference placement, Wac Arts College, is an Alternative Provision school (AP), which serves pupils aged 14-18 who have often been functionally excluded from other schools. It, like all The Difference placement schools, bucks the trend in schools for excluded pupils: helping the majority of its young people go on to further education or employment (compared to only 1 in 2 excluded pupils nationally). Over the next two years, Ada will learn from her school's innovative best practice, and share it with the other 9 Difference Leaders. In Wac's case, this includes a specialist performing arts and creative media production curriculum designed to reengage disengaged learners, tailored to employment; and strong

relationships with employers outside the school. This is expertise lacking in mainstream schools, and a factor in the exclusion of Ada's pupils back in mainstream, who sometimes struggled with a curriculum geared heavily towards university, and who didn't always see a clear purpose to their learning through a path to employment.

In her school, Ada has day-to-day teaching responsibilities. She spends 2-4 hours a day teaching young people who have not previously succeeded in maths, and helps them gain the "Level 2" (GCSE or equivalent) qualifications they'll need for further study or to access most entry-level jobs and apprenticeships. Nationally, less than 4% of pupils will achieve this qualification, if they've been excluded (compared to 60% of pupils in mainstream schools).

But Ada's role in the school is also a leadership role. On top of her teaching timetable, Ada is responsible for improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Nationally, excluded pupils are twice as likely to have unqualified teachers, and this is the case in Ada's school – although staff have been drawn from industry and improve pupils' knowledge of sectors they might work in, many teaching staff hold no formal teaching qualifications. Over the next two years, Ada's role on the school's senior leadership team should see her share best practice in teaching and learning with colleagues, as well as designing new systems to help the school baseline, monitor and improve students' progress.



Ada and colleagues at the Difference Leaders Summer Training

Ada is supported in this leadership role by The Difference. Ada has a dedicated tutor who visits her six times a year to coach her on implementing the school improvement work her head has asked her to do; a psychologist who carries out fortnightly “supervision” with her on the most emotionally draining parts of her job with traumatised pupils; and a regular Twilight session for her to share learning with her 9 counterparts in the Difference Leaders programme. By the end of the programme, Ada will have a National Professional Qualification in Senior Leadership and will be helped by The Difference to return to a mainstream school, as a senior school leader who can lead a whole-school strategy to improve support for vulnerable children and reduce the need for exclusion.

In two years’ time, The Difference will be supporting Ada to return to mainstream, helping her find an Assistant Head or Deputy Headship. Already, Ada spends a full day every six weeks in lectures with The Difference programme team, learning alongside mainstream Assistant and Deputy Heads. Ada is learning in these sessions about national best practice in safeguarding pupils from exploitation; supporting their mental health and relationships with their parents; improving students’ learning outcomes and progression to employment; and how to strategically lead improvement across a school. She is building networks with the schools and multi-academy trusts who might employ her in two years’ time; and she is constantly reflecting on how what she is learning in her school for excluded pupils could inform practice in a large mainstream setting.



An away-day of training with Difference Leaders and mainstream Inclusion Leaders this September