

Position Profile

Royal Blind

Head of Learning



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1. Welcome Note

Thank you for your interest in our Head of Learning role. This is a new strategic position within our charity to lead and develop our education provision for blind and partially sighted children and young people across Scotland.

This is an exciting time to join Royal Blind as we roll out our new strategy to reach significantly more people with visual impairment across Scotland. We have a rich history that goes back more than 225 years and over the next ten years and beyond we want to build on the great successes of our specialist services, by nurturing them and thinking creatively about how we can reach out further across the whole of Scotland to many more people and their communities.

We will work together to help people with visual impairment get the support they need in care and learning, through social enterprise and research and development.

As we have evolved as a charity over time, so too have the needs of the children and young people we support. Over the past few years, as well as caring for and educating pupils at the Royal Blind School, we have worked with schools and local authorities across Scotland to support pupils with visual impairment in mainstream settings. Our aim is to expand this offering and the Head of Learning is key to leading our ambitions in this area.

If you are an ambitious and visionary education leader who would relish the opportunity to take on this challenge and help us shape the future of our organisation we would love to hear from you.



Mark O'Donnell
Chief Executive



Hawys Kilday
Director of Services

2. The Organisation

Royal Blind is one of Scotland's oldest charities having recently celebrated its 225th anniversary. The charity is also the world's oldest national institution for blind people of all ages. With a vision for a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those with other disabilities, are fully included and leading fulfilling lives, they have a diverse portfolio of services that include:

- Scotland's only residential school for visually impaired children and young people
- Education visual impairment outreach services in East Lothian, Orkney and Midlothian
- An after school and holiday club for children with and without disabilities as well as a playgroup for pre-school children with visual impairment
- 24-hour residential care and short breaks for respite for young adults with visual impairment, as well as other disabilities,
- Scotland's only specialist care homes for older people with sight loss, providing quality individual care in a homely, supportive environment
- Transcription services into braille, large print and audio for businesses and individuals.

Enriching education and care provision in all education sectors in Scotland and beyond, enabling the fullest possible inclusion of visually impaired learners Royal Blind, as an organisation, strives to be:

- Approachable
- Forward thinking
- Professional
- Positive
- Empowering
- Sector leading

More information can be found at: www.royalblind.org

3. The Opportunity

Royal Blind is committed to promoting and encouraging children and young people with visual impairment to realise their full potential and wishes to extend its provision of learning and education in Scotland.

Focused on working with the strategic leadership team to develop and realise this key pillar of the organisation's ten year strategic plan, the new Head of Learning will be responsible for the strategic development and ongoing operational success of Royal Blind's current suite of learning and educational service provision as well as

developing new opportunities for partnerships with schools, local authorities and the further and higher education sector.

Encompassing both the Royal Blind School, based in Edinburgh, and the expanding outreach service provision, through commissioning or contractual arrangements, the key priorities of the role include:

- Establishing Royal Blind as the specialist organisation that supports the learning and education of children and young people with visual impairment in Scotland through the development, implementation and delivery of a vision associated with evolving Royal Blind's suite of learning and education provision
- Developing new and creative approaches to the delivery of learning and teaching both within the school, on an outreach basis and through other initiatives including split placements with local authority or independent schools and other models
- Ensuring all planning and delivery is child-centred and that learning and education resources and staffing are applied consistently and cohesively as a key but equal professional partner within an integrated multi-disciplinary environment (e.g. care, nursing and allied health professions, social work etc.)
- Promoting, encouraging and developing positive strategic partnerships with local authorities, schools both within and out-with the GASS sector, Scottish Government, Education Scotland and other third sector organisations ensuring blind and partially sighted people are fully included and lead fulfilling lives
- Working with Royal Blind's Strategic Leadership Team and Executive Team to support the development and implementation of strategic plans, specifically by developing culture, processes and outcomes relating to learning and education
- Building evidence and quantifying the positive impact of current / future services, utilising lived experience examples where appropriate. Working closely with colleagues to ensure effective external messaging and communication including both policy and fundraising activities
- Directly support the wider culture change programme across the organisation encouraging and introducing new ways of thinking and working
- Working with Royal Blind's Strategic Leadership Team and Executive Team to support the development and implementation of key strategies, aimed at achieving and maintaining financial sustainability, specifically by developing culture, processes and outcomes relating to learning and education

Duties and responsibilities:

- Lead, develop and manage the Learning and Education Teams, facilitating and demonstrating a culture where desired behaviours, attitudes and integrity are communicated to and reflected in the corresponding everyday work, actions and attitudes of the team

- Acting as a role model for staff and stakeholders, showing energetic, determined, flexible and positive leadership that will support Royal Blind's aims of being relevant, vibrant, agile and sustainable
- Ensure Royal Blind's vision, strategy and values are articulated, shared and understood at all levels and translated into agreed objectives and plans across both the Learning and Education teams
- Provide professional advice to the Executive Team and the policy team to support the prioritisation, evidencing, development and implementation of organisational policy and influencing objectives in relation to children and young people with visual impairment in Scotland
- Continually monitor, develop and present an accurate and coherent account of performance and improvement to a range of audiences, both internal and external
- Identify, plan, and implement new teaching strategies and technologies which will benefit children and young people and which complement the charity's strategic plans
- Work closely with senior management and executive colleagues to increase collaboration and effectiveness in relation to inter-dependencies across the organisation and play a critical role in ensuring the ongoing and sustainable growth of Royal Blind
- Provide strategic leadership and directly support the development of the Royal Blind School's two Depute Head Teachers, who oversee all day to day operational activities, encouraging both creativity and innovation and flexible approaches to providing support and services to children and young people with sight loss
- Ensure that strategic and operational planning takes account of the complex needs of children and young people as well as the changing national funding models, ensuring the high quality of teaching and support through the implementation of an effective assessment framework
- Work closely with the Head of Care to develop a positive culture across the school where learning and care staff work together in true partnership to meet the needs of children and young people
- Overall responsibility for monitoring health and safety and ensuring compliance with regulations and legislation of all governing bodies and the discharge of all relevant statutory responsibilities
- Support the School Management Team and wider Learning team to develop and deliver a wider service offering e.g. including family support services or a blending approach to supporting children with visual impairment
- Embed both a proactive and reactive approach to service delivery, anticipating the future and changing demand within sight loss and the needs of service users
- Lead all engagement with appropriate Directors of Education and Strategic Commissioners within local authorities, proactively demonstrating the benefits and positive impact of relevant services and initiatives

- Maintain and develop effective professional networks that will further the interests of Royal Blind so that it is viewed as a pioneering leader within sight loss and an influential and reliable partner

4. Candidate Background

A strategic 'educationalist' you will be an inspiring, solutions focused and forward-thinking leader with relevant experience in delivering high quality learner-centred services. The Head of Learning will be an accomplished communicator able to build and maintain strong working relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders.

Qualifications:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Current and full GTCS (or equivalent) Registration
- Possess or be prepared to achieve Into Headship qualification

Skills and Experience

- Extensive leadership and management experience at a senior level coupled with a strong track record in developing and delivering strategy
- Relevant teaching experience, ideally including working with children and young people with significant and complex additional needs
- The ability to take a creative approach in respect to packages of learning and education
- Strong approach to performance management with the ability to define and measure outcomes of success
- Demonstrable experience on using robust processes of school improvement including self-evaluation
- Evidence of successful strategic and operational resource management in an appropriately complex setting
- Proven ability to establish and maintain relationships with key internal and external stakeholders at a senior and strategic level
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills (presentations, briefings etc.) with the ability to effectively represent the organisation
- Financial acumen in relation to managing and monitoring budgets
- The ability to deliver stretching objectives through effective prioritisation, and efficient use of resources
- Strong problem solving and strategic planning capability with creative skills and the ability to meet deadlines
- Proven skills in influencing, communication and working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders including external agencies, partners and parents

- The ability to drive and deliver change using range of influencing, negotiation, facilitation and process skills
- Sound working knowledge and understanding of current legislation and responsibilities in Education, Care and Health and its impact on the delivery of education for pupils in special schools
- Strong understanding of, and commitment to the key principles of safeguarding at an organisational and practice level

Personal Attributes

- Highly self-motivated with effective leadership style and a self-managing “can do” attitude
 - Solutions orientated with strong influencing skills
 - Determination and willingness to take on new challenges and responsibilities
 - Self-directed, results driven and able to multi-task
 - Strong attention to detail
 - A commitment to diversity and inclusion
 - Willingness to challenge stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and bias
 - Resilience and adaptability
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5. Remuneration

Salary: £Competitive

Pension: Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme* or Defined contribution scheme* where employer will contribute double the employee contribution up to 12%

*If you are not an active member of the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme you will be enrolled onto the Defined contribution pension scheme

Holidays: 37 Days inclusive of public holidays

6. The Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is being handled by our retained advisors, Livingston James. Douglas Adam at Livingston James will conduct first stage interviews prior to discussing candidates with the Royal Blind at the shortlist meeting.

Interested candidates should provide a tailored CV and covering letter to Douglas Adam at douglasadam@livingstonjames.com

Recruitment timetable:

Shortlist meeting (Livingston James & Royal Blind): Week commencing 10th August

Panel Interview: Week commencing 17th August
