

# HC Homeless Connect



## Practice and Participation Manager

Recruitment Pack

Closing date: Monday 31 March 2025 at noon

**We're on a journey to end homelessness**

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# Introduction

Thank you for expressing your interest in the role of Practice and Participation Manager at Homeless Connect.

Homeless Connect (previously Council for the Homeless NI) has been working to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Northern Ireland for over forty years. You would be joining a dynamic, hardworking team of people who are fully committed to ending homelessness.

Not only are we developing and expanding as an organisation, but the Policy Team will be recruiting for several new positions over the next few months due to the demand for their services across the sector. There is a real appetite within the sector to create new policy and legislation whilst building on the great work the team has completed to date.

I joined the organisation just over a year ago and have found it an amazing place to work. The team made me feel so welcome from the outset. It's clear to see the passion and commitment the staff have towards their work and the belief they have in the work that Homeless Connect does. If you feel you have the relevant skills and experience, shared values and are motivated for this role we would very much welcome your application.

## **Paula Maskey**

Head of Business Solutions

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# Who we are

**We believe that having a safe place to call home is a fundamental human right.**

Homeless Connect was founded in 1983 to represent organisations working with people experiencing homelessness. Today our services are needed now more than ever. The coronavirus pandemic and soaring cost of living have exacerbated the situation. Poverty in Northern Ireland has grown significantly, and homelessness is now at crisis point which cannot be ignored.

We support the sector by helping to shape government policy, providing quality training, and taking on the preventable causes of homelessness.

Today we still do that and much more. We work collaboratively to create a community of support, by being the voice of the sector and by delivering direct assistance to those in need through our projects. We support frontline staff in a range of ways including training, practical workshops, networking, and shared learning opportunities.

We work closely with service users and people with lived experience – because we believe in a co-design approach to homelessness services and the development of policy and strategy.

Working together we seek to shape government policy and public opinion to enable resources that ensure preventative and responsive services.

# What we do

## We seek to influence policy to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Northern Ireland

Through our policy work, we represent the views of our members who provide a range of homelessness services and support them to strategically engage with the political process. We work collectively with Executive Departments, statutory bodies, elected representatives, and civil society to develop policy and legislation that makes a difference to the lives of individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. We operate a policy forum where members can share their views and help shape our engagement with government. We respond to public consultations and represent the sector on a range of policy working groups.

## All-Party Group (APG) on Homelessness at the Assembly

Our work sees us tracking political developments at the Northern Ireland Assembly and keeping our members informed on policy changes that can directly help and support those they work with.

We provide the Secretariat for the All-Party Group (APG) on Homelessness at the Assembly, which is an invaluable link between the homelessness sector and a cross-party group of MLAs who want to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce homelessness.



## We tackle food poverty by redistributing nutritious surplus food

We are the delivery partner for FareShare in Northern Ireland, a surplus food redistribution project established in 2010 to address food poverty and food waste here. In 2024-25 we distributed 597 tonnes of food to 169



community partners generating 1,421,000 meals for people experiencing poverty. Staff are supported by a team of over 50 volunteers. Last year we achieved our Investing in Volunteers Award.

## We help to sustain tenancies



Our Home Starter Pack service is designed to help make the transition from homelessness to more settled accommodation easier. Recognising that after a period of homelessness, people have lost many if not all their material possessions, we run a scheme that provides essential household items to help people to settle in and start making a home. In 2024-25 almost 2,000 households

were in receipt of these goods, with over 93% remaining in their homes after a year. We also delivered 386 Starter Packs to Housing Associations. Home Starter Packs are essential in helping to ensure a good start, or restart, after some time without a permanent home. By providing these packs, we help people to keep their tenancy going. This helps reduce the likelihood of future homelessness.

## We support frontline staff in homelessness and related services.

Homeless Connect facilitates the Frontline Network Northern Ireland which was launched in 2021. This is a regional network, led by frontline workers and designed around their needs. The Network supports staff



from the public, statutory and voluntary sectors working on the frontline with those experiencing homelessness. It works in partnership with the UK wide Frontline Network so that frontline workers can come together with others to share their experiences.

**We believe in co-design, and work to involve service users in informing policy change through their lived experience of homelessness.**

## We work with people who have lived experience.

Homeless Connect has many years of experience working with service users including through the Regional Service User Network for people who use substances. We strongly believe in involving people with lived experience in the development of policy and practice.



Over the last year we formally started working with people who have lived experience of homelessness by employing a dedicated Lived Experience Coordinator. The Lived Experience Groups met nine times and had over 20 participants attending in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. This group has been working with the Northern

Ireland Housing Executive by providing views and experiences to help inform the NI Homelessness Strategy Action plan. This is an important and emerging area of work for Homeless Connect and we see this further developing in the coming months and years.

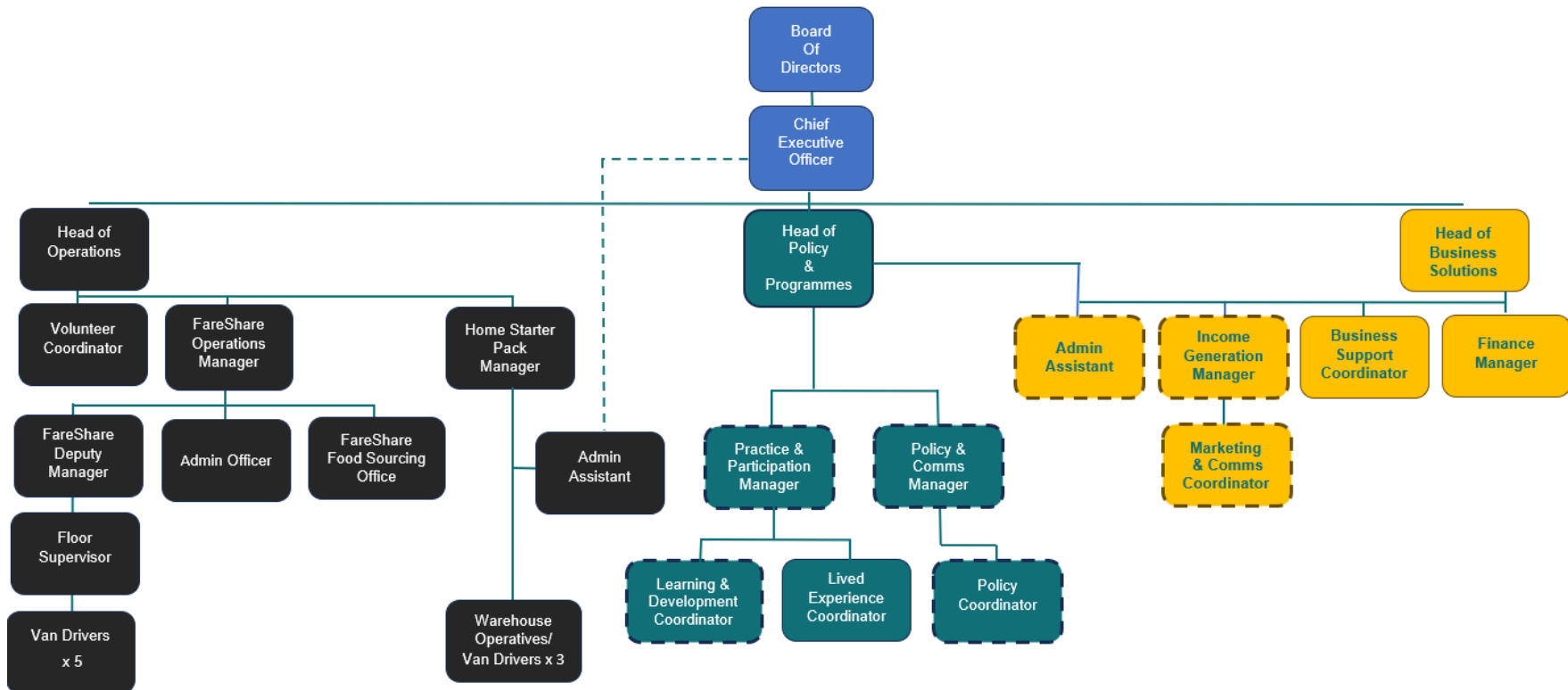


# How we're organised

Homeless Connect relies on the dedication and commitment of staff and volunteers to achieve our vision. We exist as one, not for profit organisation with functions that enable each other to deliver on our charitable purposes.

With growing demand for our services, we have recently undertaken a review of our internal structures, through an external consultant, and are embarking on a re-organisation of our structure to better meet strategic, operational and funder led needs.

## HOME LESS CONNECT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2025





# Strategy

## Our purpose and mission

Homeless Connect's vision is to see an end to homelessness in Northern Ireland.

We exist to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Northern Ireland.

We do this by working collaboratively to create a community of support, by being the voice of the sector and by delivering direct assistance through our projects.



## Our Values

<b>Collaboration</b>	Working together for a common goal.
<b>Fairness</b>	Treating people impartially.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Valuing and involving people.
<b>Integrity</b>	Acting with honesty, transparency, and accountability.
<b>Respect</b>	Treating people with dignity.
<b>Supportive</b>	Helping people to achieve their potential.

# The Policy and Programmes Team

The role of Practice and Participation Manager falls within the remit of the Policy and Programmes team at Homeless Connect. This team is responsible for advocacy on behalf of the homelessness sector and the people the sector works so hard to support as well as developing and running programmes which will benefit staff working for our member organisations.

The programmes element- which the Practice and Participation Manager will play a central role in delivering- includes the following:

- Membership support services through the provision of training, events and good practice initiatives
- Lived experience groups
- NI Frontline Network
- Homelessness Awareness Week

The current head of the team is Mark Baillie. You can read more about Mark below.

## **Mark Baillie** **Head of Policy and Programmes**

Mark joined us in 2021. He studied Law with Politics at Queens University Belfast before going on to work for a social policy charity in Belfast.

Mark leads on our policy and public affairs work. He provides the secretariat for the All Party Group on Homelessness at the Northern Ireland Assembly and regularly engages with policymakers and elected representatives across the political spectrum on issues related to homelessness.

# Working at Homeless Connect

## Comments from our 2024 staff survey

*"I really do enjoy the work I do, and I believe I have made a difference. I consider it a privilege to work for Homeless Connect and with the staff I have met through the organisation. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had, and I very much support the direction our senior leadership team and board are taking us in."*

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*"There is a real sense of team, it's brilliant!"*

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*"Compared to my other jobs, I certainly feel valued at Homeless Connect. There have been several concrete ways in which this has been shown in small and big ways in my time with the organisation."*

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*"Very satisfying to work in a job that makes a positive impact on peoples' lives."*

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*"I feel part of a great team and I have had very positive experiences working alongside my colleagues."*

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*"I believe we have good leadership and clear direction in both our individual job roles and working as part of a team."*

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*"I think Homeless Connect is a brilliant organisation. I would not hesitate for even a moment to recommend it to anyone who asked. No organisation is perfect, but I think we have a good ethos coupled with passionate and committed staff."*

## Accreditation

- **Living Wage Employer**
- **Investing in Volunteers**



# Job Description

<b>Post:</b>	<b>Practice &amp; Participation Manager</b>
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Head of Policy and Programmes
<b>Location:</b>	Belfast/Mallusk and hybrid working
<b>Hours:</b>	35 hours per week
<b>Duration:</b>	Permanent (subject to funding)
<b>Salary:</b>	Equivalent to NJC Scale S02 commencing £36,124

## Benefits:

- Flexible/ hybrid working available
- 5% contributory pension scheme
- Access to Westfield Health Care
- Wide range of discounts available through Blue Light Card
- 26 days annual leave in addition to recognising 12 public/bank holidays.
- Training/ CPD opportunities Available

## Job Purpose

Support Homeless Connect's member organisations to develop and deliver excellent services to help prevent and alleviate homelessness. Collate/ share best practice and interventions that meet the needs of staff working in the sector.

Actively encourage engagement, collaborative working and participation of member organisations.

Ensure people with lived experience are actively involved in the design and development of services and solutions.

## **Key tasks and responsibilities**

### **1.0 Membership support and development**

- 1.1 Responsible for the management of Homeless Connect's membership services, including fostering strong relationships with current members whilst actively growing the membership.
- 1.2 Facilitate and chair meetings, events and member stakeholder forums.
- 1.3 Manage Homeless Connect training services, including learning and networking events for homelessness service providers and their delivery partners.
- 1.4 Identify and disseminate emerging good practice to support members in the delivery of their services helping to end homelessness in Northern Ireland.
- 1.5 Co-ordinate and/or commission the production of resources for use by practitioners working in homelessness and related services.
- 1.6 Create engaging content on practice matters through reports, blogs/articles, online content to ensure members are informed, involved and motivated.

### **2.0 Advocacy and engagement**

- 2.1 Lead on the design and delivery of impactful campaigns for the lived experience programme that ensures that the needs and perspectives of people experiencing homelessness are listened to and acted upon.
- 2.2 Engage with policy colleagues, ensuring that people with lived experience of homelessness are involved in influencing decision making at government level on homelessness policy and practice matters, and related issues.
- 2.3 Manage the Frontline Network project, for staff working in homelessness and related services.
- 2.4 Build positive and collaborative relationships with statutory and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) service providers.
- 2.5 Design and deliver presentations for events, seminars and conferences.
- 2.6 Act as media spokesperson

### **3.0 Leadership and Management**

- 3.1 Contribute to the development, monitoring and implementation of business plans in conjunction with Line Manager.

- 3.2 Contribute to the budget setting process and assist with budget monitoring in conjunction with Line Manager and Head of Business Solutions.
- 3.3 Lead and support a staff team including line management, supervision and training & development. Assist and contribute to recruitment and selection of staff

#### **4.0 General**

- 4.1 Ensure that all health & safety and security procedures are followed by your staff team and people with lived experience while working with Homeless Connect.
- 4.2 Contribute to a positive, supportive, and effective team working environment and carry out duties in line with the organisation's policy on equality and diversity.
- 4.3 Actively participate in supervision, appraisals, work planning and training as required.
- 4.4 Adhere to all compliance and confidentiality policies, ensuring all legislative requirements are met.
- 4.5 Undertake any other relevant duties as identified by the Chief Executive.

The duties of the post will be subject to review in accordance with the needs of the organisation.

# Person Specification

## Essential Experience

1. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the support needs, barriers and current service provision faced by people experiencing homelessness, or other forms of social inequality.
2. At least 2 years' operational and/or strategic experience relating to the delivery of services for people experiencing homelessness or other forms of disadvantage.
3. At least 1 years' experience in project management, including successful planning and management of multiple priorities and whilst managing and monitoring budgets.
4. A proven track record in the development and management of training and events programmes for learning and development purposes.
5. Experience of providing best practice guidance and/or supervision support to people working in homelessness services.
6. Experience in organising meetings and/or events, planning agendas ensuring accurate recording and monitoring of agreed actions and funder requirements.
7. At least 1 years' experience of staff management including managing staff performance and development.

## Essential Skills

8. Networking, influencing and negotiation skills with experience of building effective, credible relationships internally and externally with people at all levels.
9. Effective critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills, with a creative approach to generating ideas and developing innovative ways of working.
10. Excellent communication skills, including writing with impact for a range of audiences e.g., blogs, resources, reports and web content.
11. Preparation and delivering presentations, workshops, training, or other public speaking and/or facilitation.
12. Using IT systems, including MS Office, on a day-to-day basis.

## Desirable

1. Understanding of the interaction between policy, practice and research and how this relates to service design and delivery.
2. Experience of co-ordinating training programmes for people with lived experience.
3. Driving culture change.
4. Co-ordinating research.
5. Facilitation of reflective practice or learning spaces for others.

# How to apply

Please forward your completed application form available from [www.homelessconnect.org](http://www.homelessconnect.org) as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with from the recruitment timetable. You will also be asked to submit a separate equality form.

The deadline is **noon Monday 31 March 2025** Applications should be made by email to: **[diane.johnston@homelessconnect.org](mailto:diane.johnston@homelessconnect.org)**

Contact Diane Johnston @07552056372 if you have any queries about the role or the application process.

## Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the application form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form in a separate document. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

## Disability

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act a person is disabled if they have, or have had, “a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact Diane Johnston so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

## Equal Opportunities

Homeless Connect is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

## Why Join Homeless Connect

- This is an exciting new role being created within Homeless Connect, which you can foster and customise.
- Contribute to a dynamic team that is working to alleviate Homelessness.
- Avail of competitive benefit package and career development opportunities.



# Timeline

Application and Equality Monitoring forms to be submitted

Noon, 31 March 2025

Shortlisting

2nd April 2025

Interviews (may include a seen or unseen task) 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025

- Homeless Connect aims to create an equal and inclusive working environment that supports both personal and professional growth.

## Interview Panel

Nicola McCrudden, Chief Executive Officer

Mark Baillie, Head of Policy and Programmes

Brenda Parker, Board Member



