



Creating impact
Reducing inequalities
Transforming systems

Application pack for

Project Coordinator and Researcher





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Our mission

To grow and scale the boldest and best innovations that deliver long term impact for people, address persistent inequalities and transform the systems around them.



About us

Innovation Unit is a not for profit social enterprise with a mission to grow and scale the boldest and best innovations that deliver long-term impact for people, address persistent inequalities, and transform the systems that surround them.

We have 20 years of experience doing this work with ambitious partners in local and central government, schools and hospitals, voluntary and community sector organisations, trusts and foundations.

We hold a bold vision: we want to see a world in which all people belong and contribute to thriving societies.

To achieve this vision, we must challenge and change the systems that people who experience disadvantage rely on most.



What it's like to work at
Innovation Unit?



Our team come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and life experiences. Researchers, service designers and programme managers work alongside colleagues with grassroots, community experience, as well as occupational therapists, social workers, and central and local government professionals. We work together to design new solutions and take them to scale.

People who work at Innovation Unit share a core set of beliefs about enabling change that is owned and driven by the people it affects. We all work with the tools and methods from our tried and tested formula for innovation and impact.

Our 2025 areas of impact are:

1

Mental Health
Innovation

2

Tackling
Health
Inequalities

3

Justice and
Reducing
Violence

4

Children
and Families

5

Place based
transformation



Explore our recent work



Our approach

We grow and scale the boldest and best innovations that deliver long-term impact for people, address persistent inequalities, and transform the systems that surround them.

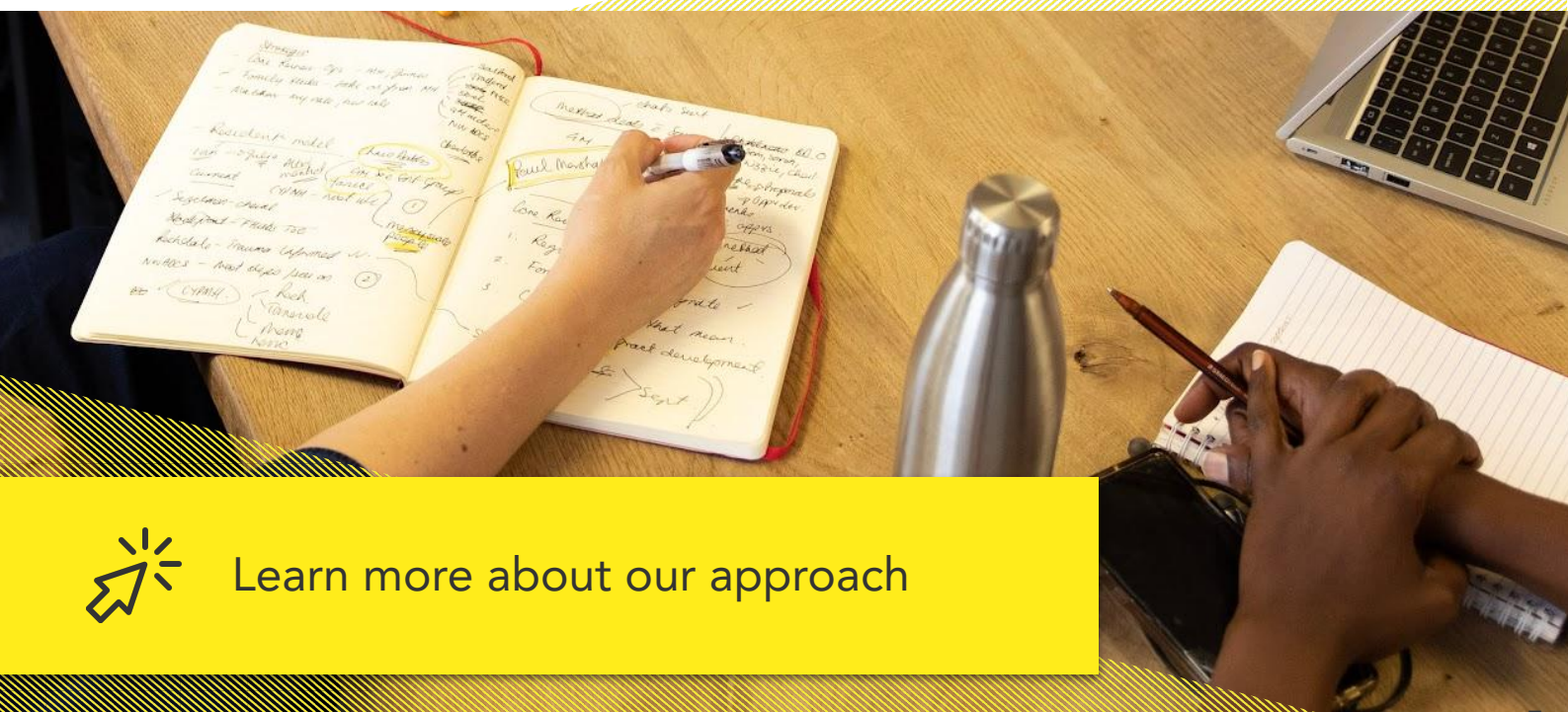
We do this by coaching leaders and their teams as they introduce difficult changes. And we help build local capability to ensure that new ways of working will be maintained long after our work is complete.

We centre the perspectives and priorities of those with deep understanding of what it means to wage a sustained daily battle against entrenched inequalities as we know that this benefits the work.

Together, we dig deep to find root causes of problems, challenge assumptions, design and test new ways of working and help implement change.

We help organisations collaborate with one another and build strong partnerships that can transform a system or a place.

The impact is better outcomes and experiences for people struggling against inequalities and better outcomes for the wider system.



Learn more about our approach



Mental Health Innovation

Living Well UK



Living Well mental health systems are designed to help people recover and stay well as part of their community. They put people's strengths and lived experience at the centre, meeting people where they are and responding with holistic support where and when it is needed.

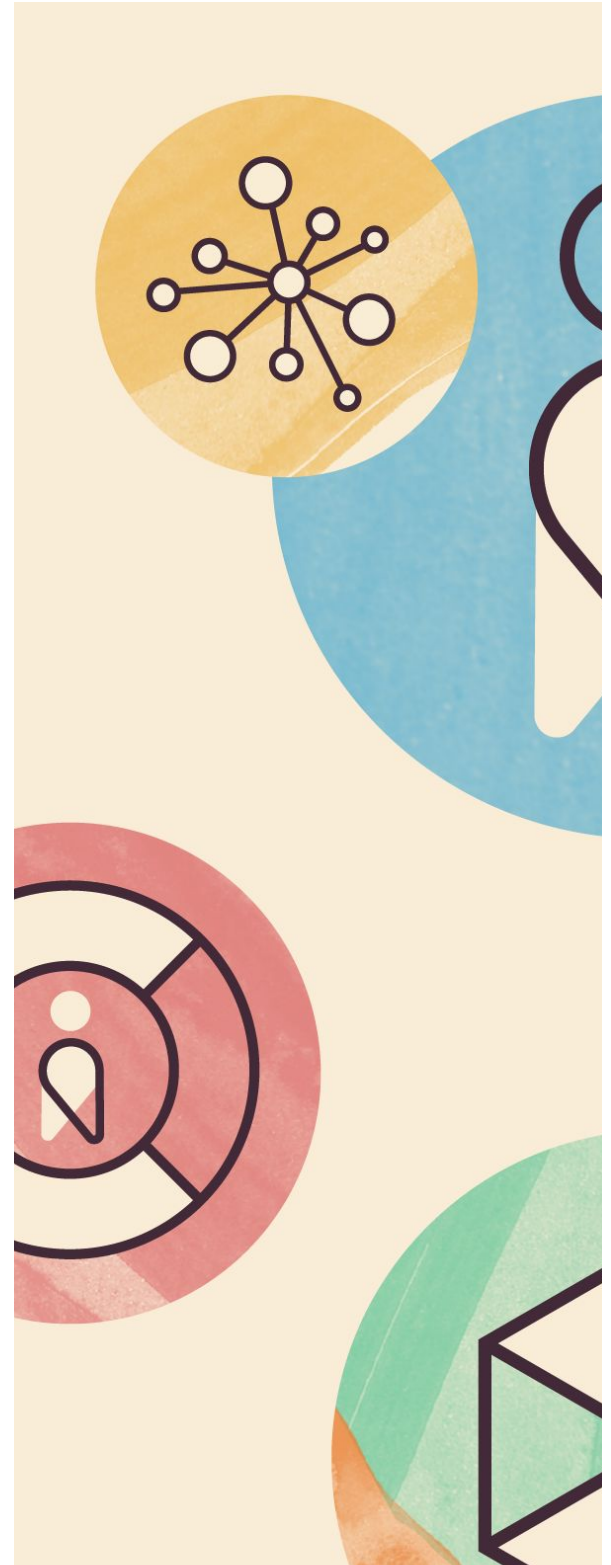
Living Well systems recognise that all aspects of life can affect your mental health. They move away from narrow clinical treatments to understand the wider determinants of a person's wellbeing.

Multi-disciplinary teams, including Peer Workers offer more effective, holistic solutions to individuals and communities.

The National Lottery Community Fund funded Innovation Unit to support four pioneering places in the UK to design and build Living Well systems (2018-22), inspired by Lambeth Living Well, South London.

We helped our sites generate insights about people's lives, through ethnographic research and story-gathering, then used this new knowledge to co-design, prototype and implement new multidisciplinary teams, alongside people with lived experience. Finally, these approaches were scaled across whole places.

Since then, the movement has grown and is now influencing and supporting transformation of adult community mental health across Derby and Derbyshire County, Greater Manchester, Edinburgh and York.



Go to project website



Place based transformation

GoodLives GM

Andy Burnham's vision is for Greater Manchester to be a place where everyone can live a good life. GoodLives GM's (GLGM) mission is to create a culture of prevention and reduce structural inequalities to help bring that vision to life. Together we empower, equip and connect Greater Manchester leaders, practitioners and communities to work together in new ways to make good lives for all possible.

GLGM is facilitated by a strategic partnership between Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Innovation Unit. Our work is steered by VCFSE and public sector colleagues, working closely with the 10 GM localities.

GLGM is currently working on Live Well, which aims to reduce health inequalities by growing wellbeing support that is shaped and led by communities. The GLGM team is supporting five GM localities to anticipate the system barriers they will encounter and design experiments to overcome them, putting communities at the heart of leading change.

We are also working with four trailblazer localities in Early Family Help, to reduce inequalities through co-designed and inclusive community-led support that helps families to flourish.

All of this work is underpinned by a new kind of collaborative leadership programme. Leaders from diverse backgrounds and professions are supported through 1:1 and group coaching, and a programme of learning opportunities, whilst conducting system shifting experiments to change structures and cultures in support of better outcomes for people.



[Go to project website](#)



Equity, diversity and inclusion

We are actively seeking to recruit a diverse pool of talent for the available roles.

Our recruitment process will test your ability, skills and knowledge and we encourage you to apply even if you only have some experience for the role.

Our work focuses on tackling inequalities in mental health, health, children's social care, and criminal justice. We know that staff members with lived or professional experience of these systems strengthen the work and this leads to innovations that can have greater impact for the communities directly affected. We also know that innovation thrives on new perspectives and we recognise the added value that colleagues with diverse perspectives on structural inequalities bring to our work.

We are committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation, and strongly encourage people of colour to apply. We welcome applications by candidates from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, those with disabilities as well as those who identify with other underrepresented groups.

OUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS

At Innovation Unit we use Applied for our recruitment. The Applied platform has been designed to reduce bias in recruitment. Instead of using your CV alone, we'll be asking you to answer questions to test skills needed for the role. The responses are then reviewed in a random order by members of our team.

The Applied platform also asks some demographic questions before you start your application. We at Innovation Unit never see the responses to these demographic questions with your application. We only see summary statistics to help us check if our candidate pool is balanced and if everyone has an equal chance to get hired irrespective of their background.

USING AI

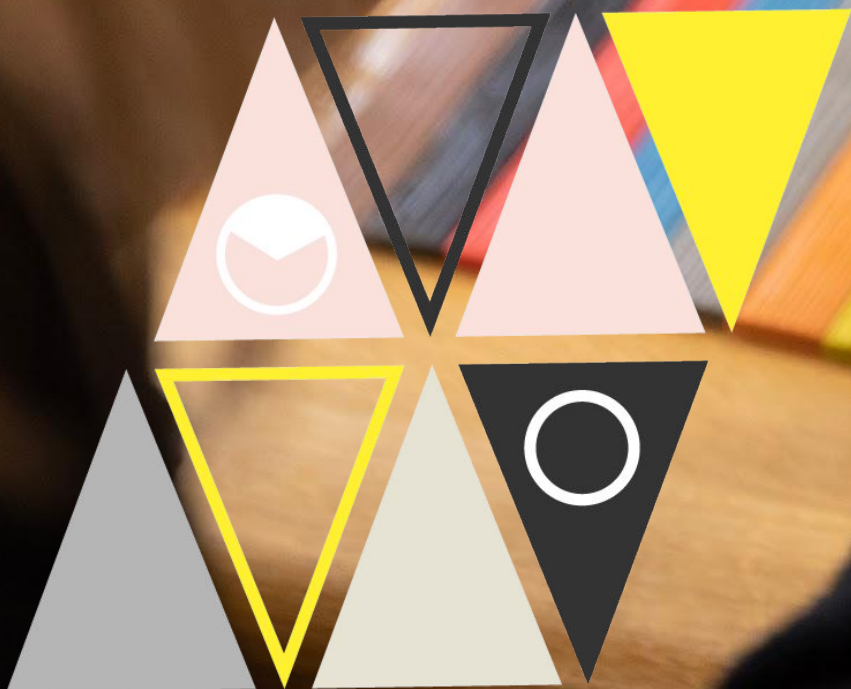
Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly embedded in our lives. Tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Claude are changing the way people work by saving them time and improving accessibility. We understand that applicants will be keen to find ways to use these tools in their own work. Our position on the use of AI tools is:

You can use AI tools to help write your job application. We will not reject an application just because AI was used.

Use AI with caution: AI can provide a useful starting point but often what it produces for you is not as strong as it might appear. AI supported applications do not tell your unique story. Being too generic in content may disadvantage your application.



Project Coordinator and Researcher





The detail

Successful candidates will support a range of client-facing innovation projects as well as internal projects such as team learning events and business development, primarily playing a role of coordination. Successful candidates will be offered a range of development opportunities including attendance at the Innovation Unit Academy, one-to-one coaching and chances to learn from and share ideas with team members across a range of sectors.

You will be working on a range of different projects, tasks may include but are not limited to:

Project Coordination and Delivery

- Support Project Leads to plan and coordinate projects including tasks such as: drafting delivery updates for clients; recording minutes; scheduling meetings; and understanding/raising any risks.
- Support the delivery of client-facing projects through tasks such as: leading on event logistics (online and in person) and at times co-designing and co-facilitating workshops; analysing complex information; drafting and designing event documents; and, developing communication materials such as slides and web content.
- Collaborate with your project team to share learning with the wider organisation.

Research and Service Design

- Make sense of complex information, analyse data and generate learning.
- Undertake or coordinate specific pieces of primary and secondary research and writing
- Support data collection, including but not limited to: interviews with service-users and professionals, surveys, and structured workshop interaction.
- Look at and learn from work happening beyond the organisation, including new innovations and policy developments.

Communications and Business Development

- Develop a wide range of communication materials, including but not limited to newsletters, flyers, blogs, social media content, and web content.
- Support staff across the IU team to pursue business development opportunities and develop proposals.



Personal attributes

- You will be a confident self-starter, happy working independently across a number of projects and managing your workload effectively.
- We would welcome someone bringing fresh energy and insight to Innovation Unit, challenging the organisation to work ever-more effectively in pursuit of our mission.
- We need people who can work flexibly and creatively. This work is never dull, often demanding and sometimes challenging. You will be happy in front of an audience, at the flipchart, and working with diverse groups of people, comfortable with ambiguity, offering up your analytical, strategic, creative and interpersonal skills.
- We are actively seeking diversity of lived and professional experience as we know that this enriches our work.
- You will be comfortable with your place of work varying, at times you may be working from home or hot desking, or visiting clients all over the UK. You will be at ease on the telephone, on conference calls and webinars, at events, and working across Google Drive, as well as face-to-face with clients, partners and colleagues.
- You will be committed to your own learning and development, setting development objectives and investing time in acquiring new skills and knowledge.
- You will be comfortable contributing to the development and learning of our team as well as supporting whole organisational processes including such as recruitment or office management.



Experience, knowledge and skills

We don't expect applicants to have experience in all of the following areas and we understand that you might bring other related experiences that are not listed in the person specification. In your response to our questions on the Applied System, please tell us about any of the areas below that you have experience of, and feel free to include other relevant experience in your response.

Experience of:

- Coordinating projects, including minute taking, diary management and report writing
- Organising complex information into digestible, usable and engaging outputs.
- Conducting primary (e.g.interviews) or secondary (desk-based) research and analysis on contemporary social issues.
- Business support or office administration.
- Supporting the designing and facilitation of events (online or in person) with multiple stakeholders and learning activities such as workshops.
- Deep understanding of the impact of inequality
- Building professional client relationships.
- Working with vulnerable people e.g. children's social care, youth work.
- Working on innovation projects and/or change management, including knowledge of innovation methodologies.
- Very strong interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and written).
- Ability to produce attractive and professional looking outputs, such as Google Slide decks - confidence to use platforms such as Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Canva are desirable, but not necessary.
- Strong IT skills, including knowledge of Google Suite and Zoom.
- Concern for contemporary social issues and an understanding of Innovation Unit's mission.



Contract details

Location

We are seeking to recruit colleagues to our offices in Manchester and central London.

We only accept applications from people with the right to work in the UK and are UK based.

Hybrid working

Our team splits their time between home, on client sites and office, with moments to come to the office for project work, away days and socials. Schedules vary depending on client projects and the requirements of your role.

There is also an expectation to deliver project work around the UK when required (expenses covered).

Salary

£28,000-£30,000 p.a.

Type

Permanent contract

Hours

37.5 per week

Holiday

27 days holiday plus bank holidays. In addition, we close the office for three days between Christmas and New Year.

Who will I report to?

Head of Practice / Associate Director

Benefits

4% pension contribution

Pension salary exchange scheme

Life cover

Childcare voucher scheme

Flexible working

SmartHelp access

Please get in touch with any questions about the role or the contract at:



contact@innovationunit.org



How to apply



Please click [Here](#) to apply for this role through Applied

DEADLINE

The deadline for receipt of applications is 09:00 Tuesday 22nd April 2025

INTERVIEWS

First round interviews will take place between 6th - 9th May 2025 over video call. The second round will be a test and an in-person interview 14th and 15th May 2025 in either Manchester or London. Final screening interviews with the CEO will be on Monday 19th May 2025 online.

All candidates will receive an email confirming that their application has been received. After this, we will only contact the applicants that have been selected for interview. Feedback on your application will be given through the Applied system.

Due to the nature of our work with children and vulnerable adults, Innovation Unit operates a Safer Recruitment policy. All offers of employment will be made on the condition of a DBS check being carried out and we will ask for two references.