



**FOUNDATION
OF LIGHT**

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

Foundation of Light Recruitment Pack

Role	Head of Thrive North East
Location:	Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham
Salary:	£34,000 - £44,500
Contract:	Full Time

Welcome from Foundation of Light



Thank you for your interest in joining the Foundation of Light. Set up in 2001 by Sir Bob Murray, the Foundation is the official registered charity of Sunderland Football Club. We are entering an exciting and pivotal period for our organisation and our region.

Through our 2025–2030 strategy, we are scaling our impact to help more people build skills, improve wellbeing and feel connected to their communities.

While the North East is experiencing significant investment and opportunity, many people still face barriers including poverty, poor health, loneliness and limited access to education or employment.

Our mission is to ensure everyone has the chance to succeed.

Every role at Foundation of Light contributes to creating lasting change. If you want your work to truly matter, the Foundation of Light is for you.

About us



Foundation of Light uses the power of football and sport to inspire, educate and support communities across Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham. We work with partners across education, health, local government and industry to deliver programmes that improve:

- Skills and employability
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Community cohesion
- Confidence and aspiration

Our Beacon of Light facility acts as a central hub for learning, innovation and connection, a safe and inclusive space where people access life-changing opportunities.

Our vision

Better opportunities
Better lives

Our purpose

We use football and the power of SAFC to support and invest in our communities, helping improve the skills, confidence, health and happiness of people, no matter who they are.

Our Values

Excellence

We are professional and accountable for our actions, and contribute to a high-performing team.

Passionate

We are proud of what we do and are committed to making a difference.

Integrity

We are honest, respectful, and inclusive. We care about our colleagues and our community.

Agile

We adapt to all situations with flexibility and positivity. We are resilient in times of challenge.

Innovative

We are creative in solving problems and bold in trying out new ideas.

Collaborative

We work together, encourage diversity, and build strong relationships.

Why this role exists



Our strategy focuses on helping people:

Be Skilled

Supporting progression into education, employment and future careers through mentoring, qualifications, and digital inclusion. We will increase attendance in schools and college. Reduce those not in education, employment or training and help more people into work.

Be Connected

Creating belonging, reducing loneliness, and building inclusive communities. We will reduce loneliness, improve health, happiness and life satisfaction and foster friendships and relationships.

Be Well, Play Well

Harnessing sport and physical activity to be well and play well. We will increase participation, improve physical activity and strengthen mental wellbeing. Every member of staff contributes to one or more of these outcomes.

Our Ambition (2025–2030)

We are committed to:

Being Bold

Continuously improving through growth, innovation, learning and ambition.



Being Collaborative

Strengthening impact through creative collaboration with our club and other key partners.



Being There

A constant, trusted and inclusive presence across our communities in-person and virtually.



We are recruiting people who want to help deliver this ambition.

Why work with us



Working at Foundation of Light means:

- Making a real difference every day
- Working with passionate, purpose-driven colleagues
- Being part of a trusted community organisation
- Opportunities to innovate and grow professionally
- Helping shape the future of the region

Our people reflect the communities we serve and building trusted relationships is at the heart of everything we do

The Role

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Thrive North East
Job Holder	TBC
Responsible to:	TBC
Responsible for:	TBC
Hours:	35
Salary Band:	£34,000 - £44,500

Role Purpose: Provide strategic leadership for Thrive North East, a place-based, cross-sector initiative aligned with North East Mayoral Strategic Authority priorities.

The role will lead the development of a scalable model that improves how young people access and sustain engagement with services, addressing fragmentation across youth, health, skills and employability systems

Main Duties:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lead the Project2. Translate strategy to operational delivery.3. Manage budgets and outcomes.4. Ensure compliance.
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1. Lead the Project

Provide strategic leadership for Thrive North East, driving a collaborative, place-based approach to improving outcomes for young people and communities.

Key Responsibilities include:

- Lead the development and delivery of Thrive North East as a system-wide, place-based model aligned with regional priorities with a pilot commencing in Biddick Hall, South Tyneside.
- Translate NECA priorities into a clear, scalable delivery framework.
- Build and lead a high-performing, cross collaboration service delivering integrated support programmes.
- Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with NEMSA, local authorities, education, health, policing and voluntary sector organisations.
- Act as a senior ambassador for Thrive North East, influencing stakeholders and securing buy-in for a shared vision of coordinated services, with support of the steering group..
- Champion co-design with young people, communities and service providers to shape delivery models.
- Position Thrive North East as a replicable, evidence-based model for regional and national adoption.
- Promote equity, inclusion and safeguarding as core principles in addressing systemic barriers to access.
- Embed a culture of collaboration, breaking down silos between services and sectors.

2. Translate Strategy to Operational Delivery

Convert system-level strategy into integrated, person-centred programmes that improve access, engagement and sustained outcomes.

Key Responsibilities include:

- Lead the design and delivery of place-based pilots (e.g. Biddick Hall), testing new ways of connecting young people to services.
- Develop programmes that create trusted, accessible spaces where young people feel safe to engage.

- Ensure delivery reflects the needs of underserved groups, particularly those outside mainstream pathways.
- Embed coordinated service delivery, working across partners to reduce fragmentation and duplication.
- Oversee the development of shared pathways into education, wellbeing, and employment support.
- Ensure all programmes are person-centred, trauma-informed and responsive to lived experience.
- Lead to deliver consistent, high-quality provision aligned with Thrive principles (“do well, be well, play well”).
- Capture insight from delivery to continuously refine and improve the model.

3. Manage Budgets and Outcomes

Ensure Thrive North East delivers measurable public value, strong outcomes, and a sustainable model for future investment.

Key Responsibilities include:

- Lead development of a shared outcomes framework aligned with NECA priorities (education, wellbeing, employment, reduced ASB).
- Oversee implementation of shared data systems across partners to track engagement, progression and impact.
- Use data and insight to understand “what works” and inform system-wide improvement.
- Manage departmental and programme budgets, ensuring efficient and transparent use of resources.
- Manage funding including grant applications, commissioning opportunities and partnership investment.
- Demonstrate public value, including cost-effectiveness and long-term impact.
- Develop robust business cases to support scaling and replication of the model.
- Produce high-quality reporting and impact narratives for stakeholders, funders and regional partners.

4. Ensure Compliance

Ensure Thrive North East operates to the highest standards of safeguarding, governance and data integrity across a multi-partner system.

Key Responsibilities include:

- Lead safeguarding and risk management across all Thrive North East activity and partnerships.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR, data sharing agreements and multi-agency governance requirements.
- Oversee development of shared data protocols and agreements across partner organisations.
- Implement consistent quality assurance processes across delivery partners.
- Ensure accurate, timely reporting to funders, commissioners and NEMSA stakeholders.
- Support audits, inspections and evaluations, ensuring learning is embedded into system improvement.
- Maintain robust monitoring systems to track outcomes, engagement and service effectiveness.

Other duties:

You will be required to undertake other duties from time to time as required. Any potential permanent changes to your role will be discussed, and agreement reached prior to being undertaken. You will be notified of any permanent change in writing. In addition to your normal duties, you may be required to undertake additional or other duties as necessary to meet the needs of the Foundation of Light.

Staff are required to work with volunteers in a way of mutual respect and commitment to organisational goals and objectives. This includes staff who do not directly supervise volunteers but may engage with them within the organisation.

Behaviour and professional expectations:

- Contribute actively as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, supporting cross-organisational collaboration and cultural leadership
- Keep up to date with relevant and changes in government policies and strategies
- Maintain working practices in line with Foundation of Light Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies; self-awareness of own responsibility in these areas
- Embed EDI and safeguarding in all aspects of work
- Assist in data collection and analysis providing accurate management information systems for data led decisions
- Ensure regulatory and legislative requirements are met at all times
- Conduct should reflect the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct); uphold Foundation core values (as shown below) at all times
- Maintain the highest level of professionalism and confidentiality.
- Attend working groups and CPD session as required
- Build strong internal relationships and work in collaboration with colleagues to achieve the end goal
- Ensure positive organisational messages and culture are maintained
- Contribute to good housekeeping across all Foundation sites and equipment
- Follow the laid down policies and procedures at all times
- Work within the established administrative and financial systems to ensure smooth running and quality of projects

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

All individuals will be treated equally and fairly in the application of this procedure. All reasonable requests to accommodate requirements in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation will be made.

Safeguarding Statement

We expect all staff, volunteers and partners to share our commitment to maintaining a culture of vigilance, and believe that all staff, volunteers and partners have a responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of any child, young person or adult at risk.

Foundation of Light Values:

Innovative, Passionate, Excellence, Collaborative, Integrity, Agile.

Who we're looking for

We want people who:

- Build meaningful relationships
- Are motivated by social impact
- Work collaboratively
- Adapt positively to change
- Use insight to improve outcomes
- Champion equality and inclusion
- Promote a safe and friendly atmosphere



Skills and Experience

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

Requirement	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	How Assessed (CV, Interview, Observation)
Skills and Abilities:		
Proven ability to lead and inspire multi-disciplinary teams within complex, partnership-based environments	E	CV/APPLICATION
Excellent communication and influencing skills, with the ability to engage senior stakeholders across sectors (e.g. public, voluntary, education, health).	E	CV/APPLICATION
Strong ability to design, implement and scale place-based and system-wide interventions	E	CV/APPLICATION
Demonstrated experience in co-design approaches, working with young people and communities to shape services	E	CV/APPLICATION
Advanced skills in performance management, monitoring and evaluation, and outcomes frameworks.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Ability to use data and insight to drive decision-making and continuous improvement.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Proven ability to secure funding and develop strategic partnerships.	E	CV/APPLICATION
High-level problem-solving skills, with the ability to navigate complexity and ambiguity.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Personal Attributes:		
Strong commitment to improving outcomes for young people and reducing inequality	E	INTERVIEW
Collaborative and inclusive leadership style, with the ability to build trust across systems.	E	INTERVIEW
Resilient, adaptable and able to lead through change and uncertainty.	E	INTERVIEW
Values-driven, with a strong commitment to equity, dignity and empowerment.	E	INTERVIEW
Strategic thinker with a clear focus on impact and long-term sustainability.	E	INTERVIEW
Knowledge and Understanding:		
Understanding of the barriers faced by young people, particularly those outside mainstream pathways	E	INTERVIEW
Knowledge of safeguarding frameworks and multi-agency working.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Understanding of systems change, place-based working and public value approaches.	D	CV/APPLICATION
Knowledge of regional and national policy relating to youth, skills, health and inclusion (including commissioning environments)	E	CV/APPLICATION
Understanding of data sharing, information governance and impact measurement across partnerships.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Experience:		

Significant leadership experience within youth, education, community or related sectors	E	CV/APPLICATION
Experience of leading multi-agency partnerships or cross-sector collaborations.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Proven track record of designing and delivering high-impact programmes for young people or vulnerable groups.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Experience of securing and managing funding, including meeting contractual outcomes.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Experience of working within or alongside public sector systems (e.g. local authorities, commissioning bodies, combined authorities).	E	CV/APPLICATION
Experience of implementing data-driven approaches and shared outcome frameworks.	E	CV/APPLICATION
Qualifications (or recognised equivalent):		
Relevant degree (or equivalent experience) in youth work, education, community development, project management or related field	E	CV/APPLICATION

Our Culture

We are Powered by People, Driven by Purpose

We encourage curiosity, innovation and collaboration. Staff are trusted to bring ideas, shape programmes and continuously improve how we serve communities.

We believe in:

- Psychological safety
- Continuous learning
- Inclusive leadership
- Community-first thinking

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Wearing the Sunderland badge every day isn't just part of the job - it's a privilege. Being part of an organisation that helps support the local community, with the club at its heart, feels like the perfect way to give back to the place that has given me so much.

Anth Parkinson
Foundation of Light staff

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across our strategy and delivery. We actively encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, particularly those under-represented within our sector.

Safeguarding Commitment

Foundation of Light is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All roles are subject to appropriate safeguarding checks including DBS clearance where required.



Staff Benefits



- Yearly eye tests
- Holiday purchase scheme
- Staff Pension
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Flexible Working
- Better Health at Work
- Star Player
- Death in Service Policy
- Staff SAFC kit
- Christmas Shopping Day
- Access to Health Assured Health Care Service
- 10% Discount at Siblings Nursery
- Employee Shopping Discount Portal
- Access to HR Consultants Oculus Mental Health Wellbeing
- x2 SAFC Tickets and 20% shop discount
- Staff away days
- Access to Chaplain
- Funded Training
- Christmas Party
- Priority Access to SAFC tickets and events

How to apply



Please submit:

- CV
- Supporting statement outlining how you meet the role criteria and our values

Finally

Everyone has a part to play in helping our communities thrive.

Join us, and help turn potential into reality.

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Best place in the world to work.

Jack Gray
Foundation of Light staff

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     **FoundationofLight**