

Strategic Lead for Research & Evaluation

Location - Home based with national travel.

Hours – 24 hours per week (0.6 FTE)

Salary - £35k - £45k FTE. 18-month contract

Introduction

Founded in 2020 with a clear mission to ensure African, Caribbean, and Asian communities have equitable access to vital water safety education, drowning prevention and the benefits of aquatics, the Black Swimming Association (BSA) is spearheading a transformative movement within the aquatic sector, providing an invaluable bridge into communities that have been historically excluded, disenfranchised and invisible in the context of aquatics and water safety.

In the UK, swimming and water-based activities have long been cherished for their physical and mental health benefits. However, the unfortunate reality is that not everyone has equitable access to these opportunities. Historical, social, and economic inequalities, coupled with institutional bias, have resulted in some communities being significantly underrepresented across all aspects of aquatic engagement.

By amplifying the voices and experiences of ethnically diverse and other marginalised communities, we aim to challenge the status quo and dismantle the barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in and benefiting from aquatics. Importantly, the BSA's work extends beyond swimming pools, encompassing all water-based activities that rely on swimming skills and water safety knowledge. By broadening our scope through the formation of Inclusive Aquatics C.I.C., we seek to create a comprehensive and inclusive approach to aquatics that ensures everyone, regardless of their background, can safely and confidently enjoy the benefits of water-based activities.

The BSA group consists of the Black Swimming Association (charity) and Inclusive Aquatics (C.I.C) and the Strategic Lead for Research & Evaluation role will contribute to the work of both the charity and the C.I.C.

Overview

The BSA group believe that gathering evidence-based research and insights to inform effective interventions will help achieve the organisation's vision of a future where everyone, especially people of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage, has equitable access to aquatics, is welcomed and included across the aquatic sector and has a safe and engaging experience in, on and around water.

The BSA group are committed to ensuring that all relevant research demonstrates measurable and impactful progress towards achieving the charity's vision and its strategic objectives.

Purpose of the role

The BSA group's Head of Research & Evaluation will help remove the barriers that prevent people from ethnically diverse communities engaging with aquatics and increase the likelihood that people can and will engage with aquatics, by the provision and application of high quality, robust research and evaluation targeted at the design and implementation of effective interventions.

The Head of Research & Evaluation will commission and carry out research and will identify and source relevant external research, in order to direct findings and insights into the design and implementation of effective interventions that remove barriers and increase access to aquatics. Research will likely cover socio economic, cultural, political, emotional, attitudinal, behavioral, and institutional investigations.

The post-holder will also manage the impact evaluation of the organisation's own interventions, ensuring the continuous improvement and strengthening of its programmes to derive maximum positive impact, enabling programmes to replicate and scale up.

Main responsibilities

To help achieve the BSA group's objectives, the Head of Research & Evaluation will:

1. Create a research strategy for the BSA group and design and develop the organisation's own research programme.
2. Explore, initiate and manage appropriate partnership / stakeholder research projects.
3. Apply innovative research methodologies that prioritise the lived experience of those affected by the inequalities in aquatics.
4. Find ways to disseminate insights to promote positive change in aquatics.
5. Ensure that relevant insights inform the BSA group's own programmes and interventions.
6. Design and implement internal and external monitoring and evaluation of the BSA group's programmes.
7. Define and manage a research budget, identifying and supporting opportunities to generate fundraising income for the BSA group's research initiatives.

As a member of IA and the BSA's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the role will include:

1. Working closely with SLT members to review, update and implement the organisation's strategy and business plan.
2. Ensuring that the organisation's research function is well-aligned with and complements the charity's other programmes and initiatives.
3. Attending regular meetings with the SLT to track the organisation's progress, measure its impact and makes demonstrable progress towards its objectives.
4. Deputise for the Chair, at appropriate meetings and events as required.

Management responsibilities

The role line manages the BSA group's Research & Insights Executive and as needed, will manage any additional staff or volunteers engaged with the BSA's research and evaluation work.

Additional Duties

The BSA group's work in a fast paced and interchangeable environment, which means tasks and responsibilities for all staff can be varied and occasionally unpredictable. The post holder is expected to respond in a flexible way when such occasions arise and undertake tasks not specifically covered in this Job Description, but which are coherent within the role of Strategic Lead Research & Evaluation.

Accountability and relationships

The role will be accountable to the Chair of the BSA group and the Board of Trustees. The postholder will manage key relationships with external research partners.

Person specification

Essential knowledge, understanding, skills and experience.

Research & Insight	5 years' experience in a research role with a focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of innovative and effective research projects.• Design and implementation of a research strategy• Application of research to interventions / programmes which engage a community.• Impact monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects	Essential
Aquatics & Water safety	Knowledge of and a passion for aquatics and water safety	Essential
Diversity & Inclusion	Knowledge of current inequalities in sport / aquatic participation and a passion for diversity and inclusion through education, advocacy, support, and research.	Essential

Sectors	Knowledge and understanding of the charity, community interest and not for profit sectors.	Essential
	Knowledge and understanding of the sports sector and the landscape for community sport including Uniting the Movement (Sport England) and Get Active (DCMS).	Essential

Organisational Performance	2 years' experience of senior leadership with a focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an organisational vision, culture, and values • Manage complex relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders. • Sets a clear agenda, consults, and gains support from key stakeholders. • Able to commission and / or undertake research, and critically analyse and integrate complex information. • Support the development of organisational strategy and plans. 	Essential
	Understand the impact of knowledge management / development, data governance / management and services management. Be able to initiate and lead change in the organisation through to identifying opportunities through insight management e.g. -competitive analysis, macro trends and customer/user understanding.	Essential
	Knowledge of ethics and values based on leadership and the ability to influence, negotiate and use advocacy skills to build reputation and effective collaborations.	Desirable
	Know how to evaluate financial and non-financial information and manage budgets, controlling expenditure and production of financial reports.	Desirable

Interpersonal Excellence	Understand the importance of organisational culture, diverse nature, values and behaviours, and the benefits of developing these within an organisation.	Essential
	Demonstrate the ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals and accountabilities at organisational and individual levels of responsibility. • Delegate to others, provide clear guidance and monitor progress. • Develop interpersonal and team working skills and manage and chair meetings and clearly present actions and outcomes. 	Essential
	Demonstrate ways to articulate vision into operational strategies, demonstrating clarity in thinking and using inspirational communication.	Desirable
	Foster an inclusive culture, encouraging diversity and difference.	Desirable

Delivering Long Term Purpose for Innovation	Understanding of project management across planning, design, development, deployment, and evaluation. Including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management models and reporting, risk benefit analysis and Health and Safety implications. • Plan, organise and manage resources to achieve organisational goals. • Identify key outcomes, develop, and implement plans and monitor progress, and provide reports as required • Proactively identify risk and create plans for their mitigation. 	Essential
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	Use qualitative and quantitative analysis of information and data and benchmarking against others to implement service/organisational improvements and opportunities for innovation and growth.	Desirable
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Personal Effectiveness	Understand the importance of self-awareness and recognise different working and learning styles within organisational settings.	Essential
	Know and exemplify how to use emotional and social intelligence, and active listening and open questioning to work effectively with others.	Essential
	Reflects on own performance, demonstrates professional standards in relation to behaviour and ongoing development. Sets an example, and is ethical, fair consistent and impartial.	Essential
	Advocates the use of good practice within and outside the organisation.	Essential
	Can manage stress and personal well-being, and confident in knowing core values and drivers.	Essential
	Know how to undertake research, data analysis, problem solving and decision-making techniques.	Essential

IT	IT literate with experience of Microsoft Office package	Essential
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Qualifications

Research	Academic qualifications in research / methodologies and membership of a recognised body	Essential
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How to apply

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following:

- A detailed CV (maximum two sides) setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements. Within your CV, please provide details of two professional referees. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- A covering letter (maximum two sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter, is an important part of your application and will be assessed against the specified qualifications, knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience so we request that you reference all parts listed. Please include your salary expectations.

The BSA group encourages and welcomes applications from all people, regardless of background, ability, and circumstances. Upon submitting your application, we will send you an equality monitoring form for you to complete.

If you have any questions about the role, please contact Dan Newton (dan.newton@inclusiveaquatics.com), you will receive a response to your request the next working day.

To complete your application, please email your CV and cover letter Dan Newton (dan.newton@inclusiveaquatics.com) by 1200 on Friday 12 January 2024.

The BSA group will review all applications and shortlist candidates for interview between Friday 12 January and Thursday 18 January. Interviews will take place on Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 January 2024.