

Project Specialist

Centre for Effective Services (CES) - Belfast

Role Profile

December 2025



Title: Project Specialist- Practice Development

Employer: Centre for Effective Services - CES

Location: CES offices in Belfast (Hybrid Working)

Duration: 3 year fixed-term contract

Hours: Full-time (37.5 hours per week) but flexible options will be considered.

About CES

CES aims to improve the lives of people living in Ireland and Northern Ireland, supporting the implementation of excellent public services through evidence informed policy and practice. We work with government departments and service providers to design, develop, implement and evaluate public policies and services.

CES is a not for profit, all island organisation established in 2008. An early focus on children and young people is still important to our work, and we have expanded our work in health, social care, education, justice and housing. Originally funded through philanthropic and state grants, CES is increasingly funded through income generation in providing expert support aligned with our charitable status.

Read our latest organisational strategy 'Partnerships, Profile, People' [here](#).

Our Values

The following values are important to us in how we approach our work:

- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Equity
- Evidence
- Learning

Working at CES

Our team combines expertise relevant to our work, including implementation and change management; research, evaluation and evidence synthesis; policy and practice; knowledge and communications; finance and governance. Our work at CES is made possible by the commitment of our staff. We welcome people with a wide range of skills, from different backgrounds, sectors and disciplines. Staff at CES have the opportunity to work on projects in Ireland, Northern Ireland, or on an all-island basis. We provide our staff with work that is rewarding, challenging and which makes a difference to people living in our communities. We offer flexibility, opportunities to learn, reflect and progress.

Key objectives for this role

CES wishes to recruit an experienced Project Specialist to its staff team. This is a unique opportunity for an experienced practitioner to contribute his or her skills to a policy and practice environment where creative thinking and innovation is required.

The successful candidate will have a track record in one of the following disciplines: community development, sociology, psychology, health, social policy, criminology, education, and programme evaluation.

A strong interest in the development and promotion of evidence-informed policy and services is a requirement for the post, as well as a clear understanding of the challenges for practitioners engaged in delivering such services.

The candidate will be able to apply research in a cross-disciplinary context, making the connection between evidence, implementation and practice. They should have a demonstrated ability to connect practitioners to evidence and support its implementation in real world settings.

They will have skills to engage with leaders and practitioners across sectors, creating an environment in which trust is built, and individuals are able to make connections and share challenges and learning. They will deliver training aimed at equipping participants with knowledge and practical skills to maximise and demonstrate their impact.

The successful candidate will lead the delivery of high quality and timely evidence-informed programmes which will strengthen organisational capacity, practice, evaluations and policy which promote better outcomes for children, families and communities in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Key Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the role will include:

- Facilitating the delivery of training programmes and workshops.
- Leading the delivery of high-quality projects with multidisciplinary teams to support the use of evidence and implementation in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with CES's annual work plan.
- Development of new and innovative ways of working with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Working in a collaborative manner with internal and external stakeholders, to ensure effective working relationships with:
 - Government departments and agencies and professional bodies.
 - Service providers/ practitioners.
 - Academics and expert advisors.
 - Philanthropic foundations.
 - International networks.
- Representing and promoting CES in Northern Ireland, Ireland and internationally, as appropriate.
- Supporting the organisation in applying for new work/funding.
- Maintaining and developing their own area of expertise, while keeping abreast of best practice developments.

- Compliance with all CES policies and standards especially regarding resource management, project management and performance management.

This list is not exhaustive and may vary from time to time.

Person specification

Candidates must demonstrate how they meet these essential skills and experience criteria.

Essential skills and experience

- A postgraduate qualification in a relevant discipline and a minimum of three to five years' work experience in a relevant role.
- Experience of working in, and contributing to, the development of services in one or more of the following areas - health, education, justice, children and young people, community development, social work and social care.
- Experience of leading larger projects, especially supporting the use of evidence and implementation in services and policy.
- Experience of undertaking programme/service evaluations, including qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Capacity to access, analyse and make appropriate use of relevant research and evidence in real world settings.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Experience of writing for a range of audiences including policy makers, service providers and practitioners.
- Track record of collaborative working, networking, and project delivery.
- Ability to work to tight deadlines with a focus on quality results and meeting client and stakeholder needs.
- Highly developed communication skills across a range of audiences.
- Facilitation skills/experience.

Desirable Skills / Competencies

- Ability to work in a busy complex environment.
- Capacity to keep abreast of best practice developments in all relevant sectors, nationally and internationally.
- Project management skills/experience.

Reporting to:

Director or another senior CES staff member.

Location

This position is based in CES's offices in Belfast. CES is operating a hybrid working model. Due to the all-island nature of CES' work, there will be a requirement to travel from time to time including between CES's offices or to other locations in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Contract

3-year fixed term full time contract (37½ hours per week), but flexible options will be considered.

Why apply for this post?

- A competitive salary, commensurate with skills and experience, is offered. The indicative range for this role £32,328 - £46,250 (depending on experience).
- CES makes a matched contribution of up to 5% of annual salary to a designated pension scheme after completion of a probationary period and/or in line with statutory requirements.
- 25 days annual leave.
- Sick pay above statutory minimum.
- Access to a range of flexible working options.
- Excellent training and development opportunities.
- Access to a focused employment wellbeing programme.
- Cycle to Work Scheme supported.
- Tax saver travel ticket scheme supported.
- Opportunity to work on projects in other CES locations.
- Opportunity to work towards meaningful social change in the not-for-profit sector.

How to apply

To apply, please forward your CV with cover letter to recruitment@effectiveservices.org (kindly include **“Application – Project Specialist”** in the subject line). Your cover letter should detail what attracts you to the role and to CES and how your experience meets the essential and desirable criteria.

To be considered for this role, candidates must be legally eligible to work in Northern Ireland.

The closing date for receipt of applications is **12pm on Tuesday, 13th January 2026**

Queries can be addressed in confidence to hr@effectiveservices.org

As a result of this competition a panel may be formed from which future similar vacancies in CES may be filled. This panel will remain active for a maximum period of 12 months.

Equal Opportunities

We are an equal opportunity employer and value diversity at CES. Should you require accommodations or assistance during our recruitment process due to a disability, please contact hr@effectiveservices.org for support.

For more details on our recruitment process, please see CES recruitment policy [here](#).

Data Protection

The personal data that we collect as part of this recruitment competition will be processed, stored and retained in line with data protection legislation and CES’ Data Protection and Privacy Policies. You will find details on how we process your data in our Privacy Statement [here](#). For further queries on data protection, please contact us on dataprotection@effectiveservices.org.