



RESEARCHER

JOB SPECIFICATION

Post Title – Researcher

Base – Home based, with occasional in-person attendance at meetings and events in Scotland

Responsible To – Partnership & Learning Manager

Responsible For - n/a

Starting Salary – £30,000 pro rata

Pension Contribution – Employer contribution of 6% of salary

Contract Period – Fixed term for 22 months

Contract Hours – 0.6 FTE / 21 hours per week. Flexible home working.

About South of Scotland Community Housing

South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) is an award-winning charity that supports community organisations to provide permanently affordable, community-owned homes which meet local needs. We operate in rural areas and towns across southern Scotland, from the Central Belt to the border with England, and currently support around 50 community partners.

As a Community Led Housing (CLH) enabler, we focus on project delivery and ensuring that outcomes are targeted towards those most in need. We help our community partners to assess local housing needs and deliver solutions that promote long-term community sustainability and resilience. For us, CLH is embedded in a wider culture of community development and empowerment, community wealth building and the community ownership of land and assets.

We also work with partners at the regional and national levels to promote CLH and build an ecosystem of practical, financial and policy support which enables local organisations to provide the homes their communities need. As part of this, we undertake applied research.

Through our applied research programme, we are improving the evidence base relating to CLH, developing new opportunities for CLH to address priority housing and social needs, securing broader and deeper public sector support for CLH, and fostering the development of partnerships for SOSCH and the communities we serve.

Our current work includes research projects on the housing needs of key workers, bringing empty homes back into use, and partnerships between community organisations and Registered Social Landlords. We are also developing a programme of Social Impact Assessment, which will evidence the social value of CLH delivery in southern Scotland.



Job Purpose

This is an exciting opportunity to join our small and enthusiastic team, work in a values-led and delivery-focused organisation, and make a positive difference for communities across Scotland.

The purpose of the 0.6 FTE Researcher role is to support the delivery of *Key Worker Housing Needs & Empty Homes*, a two-year research project funded by the Scottish Government which SOSCH is undertaking in partnership with the [Scottish Empty Homes Partnership](#) and [Scottish Futures Trust](#). The role will be entirely dedicated to this particular project within our Applied Research Programme.

Building on our previous partnership research on [Key Worker Homes in the South of Scotland](#), the KWH Needs & Empty Homes project will equip all Local Authorities in Scotland with tried-and-tested tools for (i) assessing and mapping local key worker housing needs and (ii) identifying and progressing solutions, including bringing empty homes back into use for this purpose.

Through the project, we will refine the methods we used successfully in our previous work and apply them in two new geographical areas – South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire – in collaboration with the Local Authorities there. Using these two regions as testbeds, we will develop and pilot tools for identifying key worker housing needs and solutions, including bringing more empty homes into use. We will then actively support the uptake of these tools by Local Authorities across Scotland.

Core Duties

Under the direction of SOSCH's Partnership & Learning Manager, you will:

- lead on the specification and implementation of delegated research tasks, which may include:
 - literature reviews;
 - online surveys;
 - qualitative research, especially interviews and focus groups;
 - case study research, and;
 - collating and working with quantitative data;
- help to plan, organise and deliver in-person and online meetings, workshops and events;
- contribute to written research outputs, oral presentations and the public communication of SOSCH's research;
- support the planning, management and monitoring of SOSCH's research;
- help to build and maintain SOSCH's relationships with external partners, funders and stakeholders;
- help to ensure that SOSCH's research is of a high quality, rigorous, robust and ethically sound;
- carry out other tasks as reasonably instructed by the Partnership & Learning Manager.

You will also:

- prioritise and manage delegated tasks;
- ensure that SOSCH's *Equal Opportunities Policy* is followed through in practice in the work of the post holder;
- attend and participate in appropriate internal meetings of SOSCH;
- work as part of a team, cooperating with other staff members and SOSCH's partners;
- comply with SOSCH's monitoring and recording requirements for the purposes of accountability;
- act as an advocate for SOSCH's research and Community Led Housing in Scotland.

The role will largely be home based, and you will be required occasionally to travel and attend in-person meetings and events within Scotland, especially in South Lanarkshire and South Ayrshire (the applied case study areas for the project.) Some out of hours working and overnight stays will be required. SOSCH will cover reasonable travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

The role would suit an early career researcher with qualifications, training and experience in a range of research methods and tasks relevant to the role, values aligned with SOSCH and the principles of community development and empowerment, and a demonstrable capacity for collaboration, flexibility and adaptability.

Education and Qualifications

Essential

- a degree in a relevant discipline or equivalent professional experience;
- formal training in research methods relevant to the role.

Skills and Experience

Essential

- experience in designing and delivering research tasks relevant to the role;
- excellent verbal and written communication skills and experience of communicating research to diverse audiences;
- experience organising meetings, workshops and/or events;
- strong relationship management skills and experience of working effectively with research collaborators, partners and/or stakeholders.

Desirable

- experience working in a small project team;
- experience supporting the planning and management of research projects;
- knowledge and experience of ensuring the quality, rigour and ethical soundness of research;
- experience of representing organisations in a public capacity;
- knowledge of the housing sector and/or Community Led Housing and/or community development and empowerment in Scotland.

Personal Attributes

Essential

- capable of processing and synthesising complex information;
- able to think critically;
- methodical and thorough in approach;
- can relate well to diverse people and organisations;
- able to work as an integral part of a team in a small and busy organisation;
- self-motivated and able to work remotely;
- capable of managing your own time, workload and tasks efficiently and effectively;
- adaptable and able to work flexibly and under pressure.

Desirable

- demonstrable interest in community development and empowerment.