



## Researcher

Job application pack

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### Get in touch

For an informal discussion please contact Allyson Davies at  
[IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com](mailto:IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com) or call 020 7828 3855 or 07968 556 164.

**We value diversity, equality and inclusivity. Applications are actively encouraged from underrepresented backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and religion.**

## Letter from the Director

Thank you for your interest in our work and in joining our team, helping us to strengthen the UK voluntary sector through research, education and training.

IVAR has been using action research to strengthen UK VCSE<sup>1</sup> organisations since 2000. Working with funders and practitioners across sectors, we seek to understand and champion people and organisations committed to fairness, equity and justice. As we approach our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we find ourselves at a time of great unpredictability and uncertainty, when it is even more important that we work carefully and collaboratively to support a healthy civil society.

We are looking for a Researcher and a Communications Officer to join IVAR's small staff team.

In March 2020, we began a programme of support for VCSE organisations and their funders responding to Covid-19. This started with running peer support webinars for VCSE leaders, and developing briefings for funders on the challenges these leaders were facing, with recommendations on how they could respond. This work has accelerated our strategy to:

- Respond to the most pressing needs facing civil society through helping to understand and develop solutions to live challenges
- Connect people and ideas, and ensure that a variety of voices are heard through our work
- Develop a more confident voice for influencing funder practice
- Reach more VCSE organisations with useful, usable insights through providing a platform for inspiring stories and developing our networks

We want to go further. Through this recruitment, we are looking for driven individuals who can support us to deliver these objectives through generating and sharing relevant research. It is essential that you bring an understanding of what IVAR cares most about – people and organisations striving for social change.

Having a team that reflects the diversity of the communities that we seek to serve is really important to us – so we are particularly encouraging people from a range of backgrounds and experiences to apply.

If you feel you offer some of the qualities and have some of the direct experiences that we are asking for in the job descriptions, then we would love to hear from you. Take a look at the pack to find out more about IVAR and, if you are interested, simply send your CV and a covering letter (max two sides A4) to [IVAR@](mailto:IVAR@) explaining why you are applying, how you meet the person specification, and what in particular you would bring to IVAR.

Many thanks,



Ben Cairns  
IVAR Director



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<sup>1</sup> Voluntary, community and social enterprise

## About IVAR

**Our mission:** To strengthen the UK voluntary sector through research, education and training.

### Our values:

- **Curious:** We listen and learn with an open mind, are problem-focused (not driven by solutions) and we put weight on hearing from a variety of sources.
- **Grounded:** Our work stems from real problems and can be easily understood and applied. Our research is rigorous, grounded in 20 years' experience and a wider evidence base.
- **Human:** We bring ourselves to the work – offering encouragement, humour and empathy. We know it's not always easy, and we'll be frank about challenges.
- **Hopeful:** We create spaces for difficult conversations and use our voice and networks to inspire conversations that drive change.

### What we do

We are an independent research charity that works closely with people and organisations that are striving for social change. From very small, grassroots organisations that directly support the most vulnerable in their local communities, to those that work nationally – across the voluntary, public and funding sectors.

We use research to support and strengthen practice – developing practical responses to challenges and providing the evidence and insights needed to adapt to change and make informed and confident decisions.

Since 2000, we have carried out over 300 research, evaluation and advisory projects at a national, regional and local level across the UK, making us one of the most established and respected research charities in the sector. Alongside this, we have built an ever-growing network of partners at a local, regional and national level.

Our research is firmly rooted in practice and never sits on the shelf. We make sure that everything we produce is useful and usable, and we create opportunities to share our learning far and wide through events and online resources.

### What does this look like in practice?

1. **Research:** We carry out a broad range of research projects on topics that are relevant to the VCSE sector. View live projects [here](#). All of our work is underpinned by [action research principles](#).



**The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust:** *Collaborative, credible and catalytic?*  
[Read more.](#)

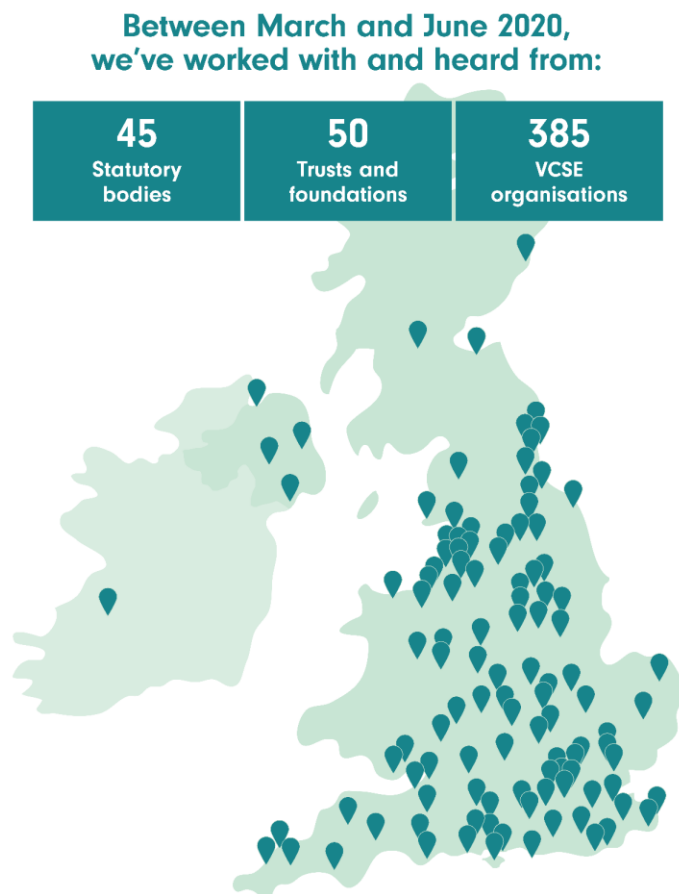


**Small charities and social change**  
[Read more.](#)



**The Future for Communities**  
[Read more.](#)

2. **Direct support:** We work in close collaboration with organisations to support and strengthen their own practice, e.g. strategic review, evaluation, complex problem solving, [online offer](#).



Squeaky duck: Squeeze if someone uses an acronym you haven't heard.



Support for charities and other community organisations is available on our website.

3. **Workshops and events:** We facilitate a range of events to share and build on our research findings, spark conversation and nudge practice forward. Currently all remote/online due to Covid-19.



Running a workshop for small charities considering merger, with Bates Wells and Community First Yorkshire.



Setting up a community event in North Cumbria.

4. **Resources:** We use our research to inform useful and usable resources that are housed on our website and shared via our ever-growing network. Over the past four years, we have invested significantly in developing and enhancing our communications function which is now aligned closely with our research, enabling us to play a more active role in supporting VCSE organisations and using our own voice for influence with funders and decision-makers.

For a more detailed understanding of the kind of work that we do, visit [ivar.org.uk](http://ivar.org.uk).

## Our strategic priorities

Our focus over the next five years will be to evolve and adapt to maximise our relevance and usefulness. To do this we need to maintain a relentless focus on 'being the best IVAR that we can be'. That will require four things:

1. **An organisation that has the culture, skills and resources to be responsive, relevant and useful.** Our judgement is that we are most useful when our time is focused on issues that really matter to our beneficiaries, in a way that is most helpful to them. Financially, we are lucky to have a strong and secure base of *unrestricted core funding* and a good flow of project funding (through commissioned, initiated and tendered work) to allow us to be flexible, generous and agile in how we use our time. It also means ensuring that we have more robust arrangements in place to ensure that we are listening and responding to our primary audiences.
2. **A commitment to using our platform and our voice,** in two ways. First, by providing a more engaging and accessible platform for stories of what is possible and achievable by smaller charities. Second, where we can add value, using our own voice – for leverage and influence – confident that it has legitimacy and credibility by always being grounded and informed. A more visible and influential IVAR can contribute to shaping a better operating environment for smaller charities.
3. **Connecting people and ideas.** We need to build on the relationships that we have with local organisations, funders and public agencies across the UK to establish a *partners network* for the generation of project ideas, the distribution of learning and, above all, to enable us to remain relevant and accountable.
4. **Using our network to reach more small funders and charities.** To support the development of our voice and influence, provide a platform and help our role as a connector, we need to take a more strategic, focused approach. We will be developing campaign-style communications messages to help our audiences connect with our body of research in a more straightforward way. We hope this will enhance our ability to operate as a responsive research institute, connecting funders and charities.

## Our people

Our research approach is made possible by our team of eleven core staff, seven trustees and a flexible network of 15 highly experienced associates and advisors, [all of whom](#) have worked in and around the VCSE sector as volunteers, paid staff, leaders, trustees, teachers and researchers. Our team understands and cares about the distinctiveness and independence of VCSE sector organisations.

## Job description: Researcher

### Main purpose of job

- Carry out a range of research activities to support delivery of projects in the voluntary, public and funding sectors
- Support the development and expansion of all aspects of IVAR's activities and ways of working

### Main functions

The post-holder will be expected to concentrate their efforts on the main areas set out below. However, IVAR is also committed to a degree of flexibility for all salaried posts to allow both the organisation and the individuals concerned to develop a better understanding of their strengths and development needs, in order to make best and most appropriate use of their contribution.

- Participate in research project teams on all aspects of research: fieldwork design and delivery; organisation of associates and staff; analysis and report writing; communication and dissemination
- Initiate and generate content for communication purposes
- Undertake and write-up desk-based reviews of literature and/or datasets
- Undertake fieldwork using both qualitative and quantitative methods
- Draft reports and other outputs according to IVAR house style
- Support the IVAR team in initiating and developing new work
- Contribute to the dissemination of learning within the voluntary sector, funding and public sector, including attending and presenting at events, and producing materials aimed at a practitioner audience
- Contribute to discussions about IVAR's own research practice and strategic development

### General responsibilities

- Work closely and liaise with members of IVAR and external partners as required
- Participate in IVAR meetings, events and undertaking training as necessary
- Adhere to, and actively promote, IVAR's code of practice and Equal Opportunities policy
- Operate all procedures and practices agreed by the Board
- Be administratively self-servicing
- Attend and contribute to regular supervision and annual appraisal
- Be responsible for own health and safety and that of colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and relevant EU directives
- Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected

## Person specification

### Essential

- Understanding and experience of qualitative research methods, including interviewing, focus groups and facilitation
- Experience of contributing to all stages of the research process (for example, research design; fieldwork; data analysis; dissemination)
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to communicate research findings in an accessible and engaging manner to different audiences using a range of methods
- A commitment to IVAR's mission and ways of working
- An understanding of the context and challenges facing the UK voluntary sector – and specifically for small to medium voluntary organisations
- An understanding of research ethics and data protection
- A good team player, but also able to work alone, take initiative and manage and prioritise a diverse workload

### Desirable

- Experience of using participatory methods and facilitation
- Understanding and experience of quantitative research methods, i.e. design and analysis of small-scale surveys; analysing data-sets
- Masters or post-graduate training in a relevant social sciences topic
- A commitment to continuous learning

## Key Details

<b>Responsible to:</b>	Eliza Buckley (Head of Research & Development)
<b>Works closely with:</b>	All staff and research associates
<b>Location:</b>	The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR
<b>Salary:</b>	£30,000 – £35,000 (dependent upon experience)
<b>Contract:</b>	12 month fixed-term contract
<b>Hours:</b>	Full time (37.5 hours per week)
<b>Leave:</b>	30 days
<b>Pension:</b>	Workplace Pension scheme operated by the Pensions Trust; employee contribution matched by employer up to 5%

## Application process

<b>Closing date:</b>	12 noon, Friday 16 October 2020
<b>Screening interviews:</b>	29 October – 4 November 2020, via zoom
<b>Panel interviews:</b>	10 or 12 November 2020

Thank you for your interest in joining IVAR.

If you would like an initial, informal conversation about joining the team at IVAR, please contact Allyson Davies, who is working with us on this appointment, at [IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com](mailto:IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com) or call 020 7828 3855 or 07968 556 164.

If you would like to apply for this role, please send your CV and a covering letter (as an attachment, max two sides A4) explaining why you are applying, how you meet the person specification, and what in particular you would bring to IVAR. The covering letter should be addressed to Ben Cairns, IVAR's Director. Please also complete the Equal Opportunities Form downloaded from <http://www.allysondavies-consultant.com/job-board/>. Please send your application form, EO form and CV, **by 12 noon on Friday 16 October**, to [IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com](mailto:IVAR@allysondavies-consultant.com)

**We value diversity, equality and inclusivity. Applications are actively encouraged from underrepresented backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and religion.**

## Data Protection Note

Any personal data you provide (e.g. addresses, telephone numbers, employment history) will be used for recruitment purposes only, and only shared with individuals involved in the recruitment.

Data will be stored securely: electronically (on IVAR's cloud-based IT system) and in hard copy.

Data related to unsuccessful applicants will be deleted six months after the end of the recruitment period. If your application is successful and you take up the role, the information will be used in the administration of your work with us.

If you have any questions about the processing of your data, then please contact IVAR's Data Protection Lead [diana@ivar.org.uk](mailto:diana@ivar.org.uk)