

Food, Brain and Mental Health Innovation and Partner Engagement Manager

Lead the development and delivery of YPMH's new three-year Food, Brain and Mental Health programme

Salary	£50,000–£55,000, depending on experience	Pension	10% employer contribution
Location	ideaSpace West, Cambridge, with hybrid working	Contract	Three-year fixed-term employment contract from the agreed start date, reflecting the current duration of funding for the programme
Working pattern	Ideally full-time; part-time or flexible working considered	Closing date	5.00 pm, Monday 24 August 2026

The opportunity

The William Templeton Foundation for Young People's Mental Health (YPMH) is seeking an Innovation and Partner Engagement Manager to lead the day-to-day development and delivery of a new three-year Food, Brain and Mental Health (FBMH) programme.

The role will bring together evidence, innovation, implementation and partnership-building to identify where food and nutrition could make the greatest difference to brain and mental health, and to progress the most promising opportunities towards practical, equitable and scalable action.

About the Food, Brain and Mental Health (FBMH) programme

YPMH has secured a three-year grant to develop a Food, Brain and Mental Health (FBMH) programme. The purpose of the programme is to:

- 1. Build on YPMH's work to date to develop an integrated understanding of how food and nutrition influence brain development and mental health across the life course**, bringing together the available evidence to identify the pathways through which food and nutrition may influence brain development and mental health, priority needs and the most promising points for intervention.
- 2. Identify, develop and prioritise evidence-based innovation, intervention and policy opportunities** that could help prevent or mitigate brain and mental health problems influenced by food and nutrition, particularly among children, young people and communities experiencing disadvantage.
- 3. Accelerate the translation of evidence into practical, equitable and scalable action**, working with partners across research, policy, health and social care, education, communities and the food sector to design, test, implement and communicate effective approaches.

Purpose of the role

The postholder will lead programme delivery and work with researchers, innovators, practitioners, policymakers, people with lived experience and other partners to translate evidence relating to food, nutrition, brain development and mental health into practical action.

The postholder will be responsible for applying YPMH's Understand : Innovate : Implement methodology to progress the programme from evidence and opportunity identification towards practical implementation, while building the partnerships and organisational capability required for longer-term impact.

How the role spans Understand : Innovate : Implement

The role will apply YPMH's **Understand : Innovate : Implement** methodology across the following activities:

Lead programme delivery and contribute to future partnerships, funding and opportunities to scale		
Understand	Innovate	Implement
1. Turn evidence into usable understanding.	3. Define unmet needs and prioritise opportunities for innovation, intervention and policy.	5. Support implementation design, development, piloting and, potentially, scaling across a range of settings.
2. Identify where intervention could make the greatest difference.	4. Support intervention development, including design for implementation.	Identify and codify evidence and learning and help update YPMH's U:I:I methodology.
Build partnerships, facilitate collaboration and capture learning across the current programme and beyond		

Principal responsibilities

The principal responsibilities are to:

- Develop and manage the programme plan, budget, milestones, risks, governance arrangements and reporting.
- Coordinate contributions from YPMH colleagues, researchers, advisers, delivery partners and people with lived experience.
- Translate complex research and stakeholder knowledge into clear priorities, decisions and actionable opportunities.
- Design and facilitate workshops, consultations and structured processes for problem definition, opportunity identification, prioritisation and intervention development.
- Support the design, development, acceptability testing, piloting and implementation of selected opportunities.
- Build partnerships needed to develop, test, fund, implement and scale promising interventions and approaches.
- Capture and codify evidence and learning, and contribute to the further development of YPMH's Understand : Innovate : Implement methodology.
- Represent the programme externally and contribute to future partnership, funding and scale-up opportunities.

What success will look like

Key programme outputs and outcomes will include:

- **An integrated and accessible evidence base** on how food and nutrition may influence brain development and mental health, including the most important evidence gaps and uncertainties.
- **Clear intervention priorities** identifying the needs, pathways and intervention opportunities where action could have the greatest impact.
- **A prioritised portfolio** of evidence-based innovations, interventions and policies, developed and validated with relevant stakeholders and potential users.
- **Selected opportunities progressed towards real-world implementation** through co-design, partnership development, acceptability testing, pilot delivery and practical implementation guidance.
- **Strong and sustainable partnerships** that support the programme's current delivery and create opportunities for future funding, implementation and scale.

About YPMH

YPMH is a charity focused on enabling innovations that help prevent and mitigate depression and other mental health conditions in young people.

Over the last seven years, YPMH has developed its Understand : Innovate : Implement methodology to accelerate the translation of social, psychological and biological research into impactful interventions that can be applied at scale. The methodology brings together evidence, structured innovation methods and implementation support to help identify and progress the most promising opportunities.

The Innovate element has been developed with the University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing and its knowledge transfer company, IfM Engage. The overall methodology has been applied in a range of settings focused on depression in young people and has provided an important foundation for the design of the Wellcome Mental Health Catalyst for depressed mood.

YPMH's experience in food, nutrition and mental health

- **Convening cross-sector collaboration:** bringing together stakeholders from research, education, employment and custodial settings to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- **Supporting practical intervention development and testing:** helping to design and deliver a food and nutrition intervention acceptability trial and supporting a family cookbook combining affordable recipes, cooking skills and accessible information on food, brain health and mental wellbeing.
- **Securing a substantial three-year programme:** obtaining funding for the FBMH programme to translate evidence into prioritised innovations, interventions, policy opportunities and implementation guidance.

Expertise and experience sought

We are looking for someone with an unusual combination of analytical thinking, programme delivery, innovation and relationship-building capability. You will not necessarily have worked in every part of the role before. Strong candidates may bring substantial experience in several core areas, together with the intellectual capacity, curiosity and motivation to develop in others.

Essential experience and capabilities

- A degree or postgraduate qualification, or equivalent relevant professional experience.
- Substantial experience of leading complex projects, programmes or workstreams involving multiple organisations, activities and stakeholders.
- Experience of translating complex evidence, knowledge or analysis into practical decisions, priorities, innovations or action.
- Experience of building productive relationships across organisations, disciplines or sectors and influencing without formal authority.
- Experience of designing and facilitating workshops, consultations or other collaborative processes.
- Experience of applying structured approaches to problem definition, opportunity identification, prioritisation, innovation or implementation.
- Excellent written and verbal communication, including the ability to synthesise and present complex material clearly for different audiences.
- Strong planning, organisation and judgement, with the ability to work independently, manage ambiguity and maintain attention to detail.
- A demonstrable interest in the relationships between food, nutrition, brain development and mental health, together with the capacity to understand and work with relevant scientific and practice-based evidence.
- A commitment to equity, meaningful engagement and improving outcomes for children, young people and communities experiencing disadvantage.

Desirable experience

- Experience relating to food, nutrition, public health, neuroscience or mental health.
- Experience of intervention design, testing, evaluation, implementation or scale-up.
- Experience of policy engagement, grant-funded programme delivery or fundraising and proposal development.
- Experience of working with young people, families, people with lived experience or community organisations.

Characteristics

We do not expect one person to be a specialist across nutrition science, physiology, neuroscience, evidence synthesis, innovation, implementation, policy and communications.

You will bring strong evidence-translation, innovation, partner-engagement and programme-delivery capability. You will be able to work effectively with YPMH colleagues and external specialists, including researchers and innovators, and with potential partners across health and social care, education, community and charitable organisations, the food sector and policymaking.

A key part of the role will be knowing what you need to understand yourself, and when and how to bring in expertise from others.

What the role offers

- Lead the day-to-day development and delivery of a new three-year programme at the intersection of food, brain and mental health.
- Work across evidence, innovation and implementation rather than within a single disciplinary or organisational boundary.
- Collaborate with leading researchers and a diverse range of innovation and implementation partners.
- Help identify where action could make the greatest difference.
- Support promising opportunities from initial understanding to real-world implementation.
- Contribute to practical improvements in brain and mental health from the earliest stages of life through to young adulthood.
- Help shape YPMH's longer-term capability, partnerships and future programmes.

Practicalities

- **Location:** ideaSpace West, Cambridge, with hybrid working available. Regular attendance in Cambridge will be expected, with the precise pattern agreed with the successful candidate.
- **Working pattern:** ideally full-time, although part-time or flexible working may be considered.
- **Contract:** Three-year fixed-term employment contract from the agreed start date, reflecting the current duration of funding for the programme.
- **Salary:** £50,000–£55,000 per annum, depending on experience, plus a 10% employer pension contribution. Salary and benefits will be pro rata for part-time working.
- **Right to work:** applicants must have the right to work in the UK.
- **Travel:** some UK travel and occasional overnight stays may be required.
- **Expected start:** October 2026, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

How to apply

Please send your CV and a covering letter to Charlotte Catignani, Innovation and Partner Engagement Lead, YPMH, charlotte.catignani@ypmh.org by 5.00 pm on Monday 24 August 2026.

Your covering letter should explain why you are interested in the role and provide concise examples of:

- leading a complex programme or workstream;
- translating evidence or analysis into practical action; and
- building collaboration across organisations, disciplines or sectors.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview. First interviews will be conducted online, with second interviews held in person.

YPMH welcomes applications from candidates with diverse professional, disciplinary and personal backgrounds.