

Social Research Associate Role description

April 2022

Introduction

Thank you for considering this role at Fair4All Finance. As we continue our exciting growth plans in 2022, we are looking to deliver on our ambitious goals and refreshed strategy to support low- and lower-income households access the financial products and services to improve their quality of life and standard of living. We're now looking for a dynamic, innovative, and evidence-led Social Research Associate to join our Systems Change and Impact workstream.

You will be joining a talented and passionate team overseen by a committed and impressive board. Our high calibre team is drawn from a range of backgrounds spanning CEO, Partner and Director roles within Financial Services institutions through to leaders in impact investing and social purpose organisations. The reach and influence of our team makes this an exciting place to work and enables us to engage important stakeholders at the highest levels.

We have put together this job pack to give you some insight about us and what it is like to work here, as well as some understanding about the roles we have on offer and the skills and experience we are looking for.

About Fair4All Finance

Fair4All Finance has been founded to increase the financial wellbeing of people in vulnerable circumstances by increasing access to fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services.

Fair4All Finance was established in 2019, in response to the UK government's commitment to allocate dormant assets money to financial inclusion initiatives.

Our vision is of a society where the long-term financial wellbeing of all people is supported by a fair and accessible financial sector.

Our mission is to increase the financial resilience of people in vulnerable circumstances by providing access to fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services.

Our first focus area is improving access to affordable credit. Our aim is to build capacity in the affordable credit sector with a combination of financial support, capability development and ecosystem development programmes. We are committed to pursuing other innovations that meet the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances and will in the future be launching programmes on insurance and savings.

You can find further information on our latest activities and strategy in our most recent [newsletter](#).

Our values

Fair

We're impartial, open and rigorous in making sure our work has the right impact. We share a strong sense of fairness and we're determined to make the system work better for everyone.

Inclusive

We value diversity and difference. We also recognise the financial system has a disproportionate impact on those excluded, so we'll work doubly hard to ensure their voices and insights are reflected in our team and inform our work.

Bold

The problems we're tackling require bold solutions and we won't shy away from being radical. We're prepared to take considered risks in order to make a difference.

Compassionate

We believe in treating everyone with dignity and respect, and we work with empathy to consider the needs of everyone we interact with. We take care in communicating the hard choices we'll inevitably have to make.

Collaborative

We know we can't change the system on our own and we don't have all the answers. So we work in partnership with inspiring organisations as together we're stronger.

Our Benefits

We know that thoughtful and progressive treatment of people in their work creates mutually positive benefits. To deliver on our ground-breaking work we need to have a team that can deliver outstanding work and our benefits strategy supports this goal.

We created a benefits package that enables a culture where people thrive and to:

- enable people to manage their time to maintain a healthy balance with a focus on outcomes rather than hours
- provide support for people to sustain their financial, physical, and mental health
- enable people at different life stages to support those they care for and give back to their communities

Financial security

We believe that our financial benefits offering should enhance people’s financial wellbeing and resilience. We want to encourage a savings habit, provide income resilience to cover life shocks or life events such as family or caring responsibilities and retirement.

Benefit	Details
Pension	A competitive contributory pension, with employer contribution matching 2:1 (up to 12% employer contribution, up to the tax limit)
Insurance policies	Life assurance, critical illness, and income protection to give you reassurance for any unforeseen ill health problems and to look after your family’s financial future
Loan	Payroll savings and interest free cost spreading loans to smooth any lump payments and give financial reassurance
Family leave	Enhanced and equalised maternity, shared parental and adoption leave and enhanced paternity leave

Health and wellbeing

We want to ensure that our team can easily access everyday healthcare for mental and physical health and at a low personal cost. We encourage and support our people to proactively manage their health. Our health cash plan also covers your dependents and an option to add other members.

Benefit	Details
Health care cash plan	Reimbursement for everyday health costs such as eye care, dental and physiotherapy in addition to a range of alternative treatments such as acupuncture and access to X-Rays and consultations
Fitness and exercise	Access to discounted gym membership, health assessments and NHS approved app to support mental and physical health
Health and legal advice	24-hour confidential telephone help line for financial, health or legal advice
GP and prescriptions	24-hour access to a GP with a prescription service
Counselling	8 face to face counselling sessions

Holidays

Taking appropriate time off to recuperate and balance is a key part of our health and wellbeing strategy. Everyone is entitled to the same amount of enhanced company holiday regardless of their role or length of service.

Benefit	Details
Holiday allowance	27 days holiday plus bank holidays (pro rata)
Additional holiday	Buy up to 10 days additional holiday (pro rata)

Agile working

We recognise the importance of having a great balance between home and work responsibilities, so we do everything we can to support flexible working. Flexible working arrangements are something that we discuss collaboratively before any arrangements are agreed by your manager.

Benefit	Detail
Flexible arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible or hybrid remote/home and office working • Compressed or part time hours including 4-day week and 9-day fortnight • Informal flexible arrangement around core hours of 10.00am – 4.00pm
Moments that matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time off to care for dependants • IVF and family planning

Reflection, learning and development

We are invested in your learning and development, and we expect you to be too. Our approach reflects what we know to be most effective, and we've adopted a 70:20:10 approach. 10% of our learning will be formal learning, 20% through coaching and independent learning and 70% through application in our roles.

We also set aside 2 days a month as a team, to create space for reading and reflection.

Social Research Associate

Location Flexible, the role-holder will be expected to join regular meetings in our London office, and at client meetings nation-wide; with flexibility on working from home at other times

Accountable to Markets and Consumer Insights Manager

Terms full-time, open to and supportive of flexible working
Salary: £38,000 - £42,000
All applicants must have an existing Right to Work in the UK

Role purpose

The Social Research Associate will lead on key workstreams of customer research, and data gathering and sharing for Fair4All Finance to ensure that all our work is driven by the requirements of customers in vulnerable circumstances. Reporting directly to the Markets and Consumer Insights Manager and ultimately the Director of Strategy and Policy, the postholder will work closely with the other members of the System Change and Impact Team. The Social Research Associate is a key role in developing customer insights which aim to transform the financial services market to be fairer and more affordable for all customers.

The role will be responsible for overseeing strategic research priorities at Fair4All Finance, in particular identifying where the gaps in understanding of the way that customers in vulnerable circumstances currently use products are, and setting out how, through owning the research work, or through

partnerships, these gaps can be filled.

The role holder will demonstrate the impact on customers of using various financial products and services. This will both be on the side of positive experiences with products that are considered fair and affordable, and negative experiences with products which cause harm or are illegal. This will contribute to the wider policy agenda of ensuring that stakeholders understand the importance of fair and affordable financial products and services in a robust, evidence-based way.

The role holder will also provide oversight on a range of datapoints and indicators that impact on the affordable credit market, for example statistical data covering cost of living issues, including statistical reports and data feeds from ONS, Bank of England, FCA and others that will assist in the analysis of market trends and gaps. These might include universal credit figures, petrol, food and utility prices, the disproportionate spend profiles of different household types which impact the poverty premium and the correlation of these to commercial and community lenders demographic profiles.

Several key research projects are already underway which the postholder will be expected to have a role in managing, co-managing or being aware of. These include pieces on:

- the lack of access to financial products and services facing the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic population,
- the current scale and trajectory of illegal moneylending in the UK
- the social impact delivered by a cohort of credit unions across Merseyside
- international models which inform UK practice on financial inclusion, among others.

Your responsibilities

In this role your focus will likely be split across some key areas of work:

Customer Research

Responsible for ensuring that Fair4All Finance's work is steeped in customer insights, based on both regular customer monitoring and larger exploration of research questions.

- Identification and prioritisation of the research areas which will contribute to the development of fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services, including gaps in customer insight and understanding
- Delivery of research priorities through the Fair4All Finance team or external partners, resulting in a more complete customer insight picture
- Evaluation of primary data to draw customer insights
- Designing or inputting into the design of research projects including some involvement in

aspects of contract management including IP and data sharing

- Research report writing
- Regular updates to the team to inform strategy and programme design, based on core customer data sources
- Building strong relationships with key stakeholders in the customer space to draw their insights into Fair4All Finance
- Dissemination of research among financial inclusion stakeholders and the wider financial services industry

Systems Change and Impact

- Contribute to the development of a robust impact framework for the provision of fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services
- Collaboration with researchers and academics in the affordable credit sector to develop a framework that builds on existing data
- Working closely with credit unions and CDFIs organisations to advise on the implementation of the research framework
- Dissemination of the framework among the mainstream financial services industry
- Advising on Fair4All Finance's internal impact measurement

Project Management

- Commission and manage external partners to deliver research priorities
- Identify where additional research or resources need to be sourced to deliver on outcomes, setting out a work plan with clear timelines, responsibilities, and performance milestones

Person specification

Essential experience and capabilities

To be successful you will need:

- Professional experience in social or customer research
- To have managed or held primary responsibility for consulting or research projects
- Knowledge of different research methods and the ability to apply these to varied settings
- The ability to analyse and interpret both quantitative and qualitative primary customer data
- Experience of using analysis to recommend solutions which improve customer wellbeing

- To be able to present complex information to key stakeholders and team members in a clear and helpful way
- Experience working with partners to collectively work towards systems change
- A degree in a social research, social policy or a related field with a strong research element, or a minimum of five years of experience in research

Desirable experience and capabilities

It would be great if you also had:

- A strong understanding of customer needs in the financial wellbeing and financial inclusion spaces
- Experience in research and designing solutions for specific black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups
- Understanding of communities of place and interest in those that face disadvantage, particularly in relation to financial products and services
- Knowledge of and experience working with ONS, FCA, and other public databases
- Good understanding of statistical tools such as SPSS, Stata, and/or R, and Excel.
- Worked on procuring research and managing the outcomes
- Knowledge of developing a research agenda and aligning this with an organisation's strategic priorities
- Experience in the social sector, either designing or delivering solutions for customers in vulnerable circumstances

Personal characteristics

You will:

- Have strong and demonstrable empathy for the experiences of people in vulnerable circumstances
- Be able to deal with complexity and uncertainty and work under your own initiative
- Be able to adopt innovative and creative approaches to problem solving with multiple stakeholders
- Seek continued learning and development
- Be a team player – takes the initiative to support colleagues and suggest solutions

- Enjoy innovative and experimental ways of team working
- Thrive working in a small team, occasionally working alone, but never in isolation.

Terms of employment

All applicants must have an existing Right to Work in the UK.

Fair4All Finance is committed to being a diverse organisation that is truly representative of the people and communities we serve. We are an equal opportunities employer with an inclusive environment where different experiences, expertise and perspectives are valued, where everyone is encouraged to grow and develop, and all team members can contribute to their fullest potential.

Applications are welcome from people of any age, sex, gender identity, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation, transgender status or social economic background. We are determined to ensure that all team members and applicants receive fair and equitable treatment or are not disadvantaged by any inappropriate conditions or requirements being placed on them.

When we are recruiting, we actively seek to reach a diverse pool of candidates. We are happy to consider any reasonable adjustments that potential team member may need to be successful. We recognise the importance of a good balance between work and home life, so we do everything we reasonably can to accommodate flexible working.

Applications

- Please apply through **BeApplied** by 17 May.
- Interviews will be held on 24 and 25 May.
- If you want to have an informal conversation about the role, please contact Niall Alexander, Markets and Consumer Insights Manager on niall@fair4allfinance.org.uk

After the job advert closes, your answers will go through a sift process: randomising and anonymising answers to take out individual information that could add biases into hiring decisions. This enables application reviewers to review each answer objectively. People scoring the applications will not have seen your CV at this stage of the process so please try your best to answer questions with specific examples and without simply rephrasing your CV, which they will review later in the recruitment process.