

Head of Criminal Justice and Community Services

Location: London (Hackney Head Office and community sites across London)

Salary: c. £45-48,000 (depending on experience)

Hours: Full-time (37.5 hours per week)

Reports to: Head of Operations

About Support When It Matters (SWIM)

SWIM is a London-based social enterprise delivering culturally competent programmes that support individuals facing multiple disadvantage, including mental health challenges, substance misuse, offending histories and housing instability.

SWIM operates across at least 11 London boroughs, delivering integrated criminal justice and community services. On the criminal justice side, SWIM runs in-reach programmes in at least three London prisons, maintains close working relationships with probation services and operates through the full criminal justice pathway: engaging clients in prison, supporting their transition through the gate, and ensuring continuity of care as they reintegrate into the community.

SWIM also delivers community services through public health commissions, working alongside substance misuse teams, housing teams and mental health services across multiple boroughs. These programmes support people who are homeless, experiencing substance misuse issues or facing mental health challenges, whether or not they have a criminal justice history. Together, SWIM's criminal justice and community services form a connected offer that reaches people at every stage of their journey towards recovery and independence.

Our work focuses particularly on African, Caribbean, Asian and other minoritised communities who experience systemic barriers to services. Through housing, mentoring and behaviour-change programmes we help people stabilise their lives, rebuild confidence and move towards independence.

Role Overview

The Head of Criminal Justice and Community Services (HoCCS) will lead the strategic development, operational delivery and regulatory compliance of SWIM's community and criminal justice provision across London.

The role will manage and support a team of community and criminal justice staff, overseeing SWIM's full programme portfolio: PACT in-reach and pre-release groups delivered in prison, through-the-gate transition support, community PACT programmes operating across 11 London boroughs for people on probation, one-to-one keywork and intensive support, and public health-commissioned community outreach addressing substance misuse, homelessness and mental health. The postholder will work closely with the Head of Housing, operational teams, commissioners and partner organisations to ensure safe and effective community and criminal justice provision.

The HoCCS will play a central role in ensuring that SWIM's community and criminal justice services promote recovery, independence and long-term stability for clients, while maintaining compliance with legislation and regulatory standards.

Key Responsibilities

The HoCCS will provide strategic oversight and operational leadership across SWIM's community and criminal justice services. The role ensures that provision is safe, compliant, sustainable and

JOB DESCRIPTION: HoCCS

responsive to the needs of clients while supporting the organisation's wider mission to promote stability, recovery and independence.

The HoCCS will lead community and criminal justice operations, manage staff, oversee compliance and work closely with local authorities, commissioners and partner agencies to strengthen pathways across London.

Strategic Leadership

The HoCCS will provide strategic direction for SWIM's community and criminal justice services, ensuring provision continues to grow sustainably while maintaining strong governance and high service standards. Along with the community and criminal justice team, the HoCCS will also:

- Provide strategic leadership for SWIM's community and criminal justice services across London.
- Lead the expansion of SWIM's community and criminal justice portfolio as new contracts are mobilised.
- Work closely with the Head of Operations, Head of Housing and senior colleagues to align community and criminal justice services with organisational strategy.
- Ensure SWIM's provision reflects best practice and psychologically informed environments.
- Support the organisation in developing new community and criminal justice pathways in conjunction with housing and accommodation partnerships.

Community and Criminal Justice Management and Service Delivery

This role will oversee the day-to-day management and delivery of community and criminal justice services, ensuring clients receive effective and structured support that enables them to progress towards independent living. The HoCCS will also:

- Lead and supervise the community and criminal justice management team to deliver effective, person-centred services.
- Oversee processes including referrals, assessments, placements and move-on pathways.
- Manage SWIM's community and criminal justice services and support the expansion of provision as new contracts are secured.
- Ensure clients receive appropriate support and clear progression pathways.
- Oversee the management of programmes, ensuring a safe and therapeutic environment for vulnerable adults.

Compliance and Governance

The HoCCS will ensure all community and criminal justice services meet statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements, maintaining safe, compliant services and strong governance processes across SWIM's provision. The HoCCS will also:

- Ensure all community and criminal justice provision complies with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Maintain compliance with relevant legislation, safeguarding requirements and health and safety regulations.
- Lead service audits and quality assurance processes across the community and criminal justice portfolio.

JOB DESCRIPTION: HoCCS

SWIM's Programmes

SWIM's PACT (Prepare, Adjust, Contribute and Thrive) framework underpins delivery across all service lines, whether in criminal justice or community settings. Every contract SWIM holds — across prisons, probation, public health and community services — is structured around PACT group programmes combined with one-to-one support, ensuring clients are connected to the right services and supported to move towards recovery and independence.

Criminal Justice Programmes

SWIM's criminal justice programmes span the full pathway from custody to community:

- In-prison PACT groups: ten-week pre-release programmes delivered in at least three London prisons, engaging men who are preparing to leave custody within six months. Sessions focus on continuity of care, referral planning, addressing previous trauma and ensuring support is in place prior to release.
- Through-the-gate and community PACT: SWIM's Meet at the Gate service connects clients on the day of release and links them into community PACT programmes delivered across 11 London boroughs. Staff are positioned at probation offices across London to receive referrals and deliver structured group programmes for men on probation.
- One-to-one support: intensive individual support is provided throughout the pathway, including in prison, in approved premises and as clients transition between services.

Community Programmes

SWIM delivers community outreach and support through public health commissions in multiple London boroughs. These programmes support people who are homeless, experiencing substance misuse issues or facing mental health challenges, whether or not they have a criminal justice history. Community programme activity includes:

- Structured outreach and PACT group work in the community, connecting clients to recovery services.
- Joint working with substance misuse teams, hospitals, housing teams and mental health services.
- Attendance at hotspot meetings, complex case meetings and prison discharge meetings to ensure coordinated planning and referral.
- Referral pathways from community services into SWIM's PACT programmes and wider support network.

Partnership Working and External Engagement

The role requires strong collaboration with partner agencies, commissioners and public sector organisations to strengthen SWIM's community and criminal justice pathways and ensure coordinated support for clients. The HoCCS will:

- Build strong relationships with local authorities, prisons, probation services, commissioners, partner agencies and support providers.
- Work with local authorities, providers and partner organisations to maintain strong operational partnerships.
- Work effectively with local and regional bodies within the sector, including drug and alcohol providers, enforcement and police teams, probation services, mental health teams, hospital discharge teams, housing officers, homeless outreach teams and community organisations.
- Collaborate with prisons, probation services, health partners and community organisations to ensure integrated support pathways.
- Represent SWIM in partnership meetings, community forums and strategic networks.

JOB DESCRIPTION: HoCCS

Operational Oversight

The HoCCS will provide oversight of operational performance across community and criminal justice services, ensuring referrals, placements and support pathways operate effectively and meet contractual requirements. The HoCCS will:

- Oversee the referral, assessment and admissions process to community and criminal justice services.
- Monitor service performance and outcomes against organisational and contract objectives.
- Produce performance reports and updates for senior management.
- Ensure community and criminal justice services operate efficiently and deliver positive outcomes for clients.
- Oversee criminal justice and community safeguarding compliance and all safeguarding issues/incidents, ensuring operational compliance and effective risk management.
- Work closely with the Head of Housing to oversee effective risk and incident management.

Team Leadership and Workforce Development

The HoCCS will support and develop the community and criminal justice team to ensure staff are confident, capable and supported to deliver high-quality services. The HoCCS will:

- Manage and support community and criminal justice team leaders and frontline staff.
- Provide supervision, guidance and professional development opportunities.
- Recruit and develop staff to maintain high service standards.
- Promote a culture of accountability, safeguarding awareness and continuous improvement.

About the Candidate

Qualifications and Professional Experience

The Head of Criminal Justice and Community Services role requires significant health and social care sector experience combined with strong leadership capability and knowledge of delivering effective community and criminal justice services.

Essential

- Educated to degree level in health and social care, social policy, management or a related field, or able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience.
- Minimum five years' experience working within community and criminal justice services, or a closely related sector.
- At least three years' experience in a management or senior supervisory role within community and criminal justice services.
- Demonstrable experience of leading community and criminal justice services, ensuring regulatory compliance, managing risk and delivering service improvements.
- Strong knowledge of health and social care services, including substance misuse, complex needs, homelessness, mental health challenges, offending histories and housing instability.
- Experience and understanding of working with local and regional bodies.

Desirable

- Management or leadership qualification.
- Experience working with housing, criminal justice or rehabilitation services.

Why Join SWIM

SWIM is a mission-driven organisation committed to improving the lives of individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. Our work focuses on supporting people to rebuild stability through culturally competent services that address housing, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Joining SWIM offers the opportunity to shape and expand community and criminal justice provision across London, working alongside a committed team delivering services that make a genuine difference to communities who often face barriers to accessing support.

The Head of Criminal Justice and Community Services will play a key role in strengthening SWIM's provision and ensuring that clients receive the effective, person-centred support they need to move forward with confidence and independence.

Personal Attributes

This role requires a hands-on, proactive and values-driven individual who can operate confidently in complex environments while maintaining SWIM's commitment to inclusion, safeguarding and community impact, including:

- The ability to build robust and professional relationships with partners and stakeholders.
- Strong problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- The ability to work across multiple operational sites across London.
- A proactive and solution-focused approach to community and criminal justice challenges.
- Openness, diplomacy, assertiveness, empathy, responsive and ability to prioritise.
- Team player
- Personal values that align with company values.

Other Requirements

The role requires flexibility and the ability to work across SWIM sites as community and housing provision expands.

- Ability to travel across London and work from multiple SWIM locations.
- Flexibility to respond to operational requirements where needed.
- An Enhanced DBS clearance is essential for this post.
- The ability to pass HMPPS security clearance will be required for this post.