



# Head of People

June 2026

## Dear applicant,

**Thank you for your interest in joining our growing team at Starfish Search.**

Starfish Search is an executive search business that was created to change the world through human talent and we know that the right change must be driven by the right people. So, in close collaboration with each of our clients, we bring expertise, dedication and fierce commitment to authentic diversity as we search together for tomorrow's leaders. With offices across the UK, we offer a broader regional overview of our sectors and richer, more inclusive connections to the strongest global leaders within the UK and beyond. Whether it's senior leadership talent, non-executive directors or interim managers that are needed, Starfish helps our clients to find the right leaders for today's changing world.

We have made over 1,500 appointments since we started trading in 2019 and have recently celebrated our seventh birthday. With a team of 35 colleagues committed to recruiting to organisations with social purpose and a great story to tell, we feel quite unique in a crowded recruitment market. We work across different sectors, including influential trade bodies, regulators, local authorities, the NHS and charity household brands. With strong advisory credentials, our work is firmly grounded in quality of professional advice, insight and partnership.

As a fast-growing executive search and interim management firm, we are a strong and close-knit team united in our aspiration to make a positive difference to society. We know the value of inclusive organisations and our approach to our work is grounded in the economic and social value of respect. Our real specialism is securing influential senior people with the skills to lead and thrive in an unpredictable age: our collective network of modern leaders is second to none. As part of this, we work hard to help client organisations retain a balance of different skills and perspectives within their senior teams. This is underpinned by a clear business case for diversity.

### The role

At present we are looking for a senior HR professional with substantial experience of HR business partnering, who can work closely with our fast-paced leadership team. Our ideal candidate will be commercially astute, a natural problem-solver and personally flexible in supporting an evolving business, with a strong understanding of how great people practice enables commercial success.

If you believe you have the skills, experiences and qualities outlined in the Role Profile below, we look forward to hearing from you.

**This is a permanent role, subject to passing a 4 months' probation.**

**Working Part-time – We're open to candidates looking for a three or four day week and will consider other flexible working arrangements (e.g. School hours) as appropriate**

**This position is based in Leeds, working 2 days per week in the Leeds Office ( Tuesday and Thursdays) and the remaining days are work from home days.**

## Role purpose

The postholder will work closely with Partners and senior colleagues to ensure our people strategy supports and enables the continued growth of the business.

### HR Business Partnering

- Act as a trusted advisor to the leadership team on all people matters, providing strategic and practical HR guidance that supports business performance.
- Work closely with Partners and senior colleagues to understand business priorities and translate these into people strategies and plans.
- Horizon-scan on workforce, culture and people risks, bringing proactive recommendations to the leadership team.
- Contribute to business planning processes from a people perspective, ensuring the organisational structure and people capability are in place to support growth.
- Lead on employee relations matters, working with Starfish's external HR advisers (currently Croner) as required and acting as liaison with line managers across the business.

### People and Performance Management

- Provide leadership and direct line management of our growing team of Assistant Consultants and Executive Assistants based in the Leeds office, ensuring a collaborative, forward-looking and enjoyable environment in which to work.
- Be the professional lead for the Assistant Consultant and Executive Assistant team, monitoring and managing workloads, quality assuring work and facilitating training and professional development.
- Maintain and update the HR database including personal information, annual leave and other paid leave.
- Ensure colleague probation periods are managed and signed off at the correct time, and personally lead on the annual target setting, review and appraisal process for all Assistant Consultants and Executive Assistants.
- Ensure other line managers across the business follow the annual Starfish performance cycle with a timely and consistent approach.

- Manage the relationship with Starfish's external associates who support the recruitment assignments.
- Lead on induction programmes for all new joiners and manage the preparation and issuing of contracts and leaver paperwork.

### Talent Management and Employee Wellbeing

- Working with the Board, develop an organisational structure to support the growth of the business over the next one to five years.
- Maintain the Starfish internal talent database, tracking competitors and potential internal hires for the business.
- Support Starfish's line managers with all aspects of internal recruitment including advertising, interviewing and employment offers.
- Develop a graduate training programme with clear parameters on future career progression for new colleagues.
- Review training and development requirements across the business to ensure all colleagues are supported to achieve their potential.
- Ensure the culture of our offices is supportive, inclusive and welcoming, making recommendations for change and improvement to the Board.
- Work closely with the Finance Director on our employee benefits package, including regular benchmarking reviews to ensure our offer remains competitive.
- Organise the company's social events calendar and activities, including corporate events and awaydays.

### Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- Ensure that our commitment to EDI and belonging is embedded across every aspect of our internal recruitment, retention and development of colleagues and ways of working.
- Ensure all Starfish colleagues are briefed on new policies and legislation, and lead on the procurement of EDI training for new and existing team members.

## Person Specification

We are looking for a senior HR professional who combines strategic business partnering capability with strong operational HR expertise. The following knowledge, skills and experience are required:

- Substantial experience of HR business partnering at a senior level, with a track record of advising and influencing leadership teams on people strategy and organisational development.
- Commercially astute, with a strong understanding of how people strategy drives business performance and comfortable contributing to business planning and working alongside a fast-paced leadership team.
- Proven experience of leading a high-quality HR function, including employee relations, learning and development, and performance management.
- Experience of operating in an entrepreneurial or fast-growing business environment, with the personal flexibility to balance strategic and operational demands.
- Outstanding management skills, including a strong focus on performance and collaboration to ensure a busy team remains motivated and supported.
- Experience of supporting internal recruitment and/or developing a talent pipeline.
- A strong commitment to equalities, diversity and inclusion, with experience of supporting a business to progress its approach to EDI both internally and externally.
- Strong budget management skills and a commercial approach to achieving excellent value from suppliers.
- A people-focused style with a desire to instil a sense of community and enjoyment across the business.
- Positive and practical approach; flexible and adaptable personal style with strong problem-solving ability.
- Ideally a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (desirable, not essential).

## Starfish benefits

**Salary:** £65,000 per annum full time

**Annual Leave Days:** 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays.

**Privilege Days:** Your employment with Starfish includes a number of privilege days:

- 1 additional day's annual leave per year for your loyalty to the company at 2 year, 4 year and 6 year milestones

And either:

- 1 volunteer day – if you want to commit to the charity of your choice, the company will celebrate and promote your contribution;
- 1 wellness day per year – where you can rest, relax and recharge your batteries: perhaps celebrate your birthday!

**Quarterly Early Finishes:** Once a quarter colleagues can enjoy finishing their working day two hours early.

**Holiday Buy Back Scheme** (Salary sacrifice scheme): We offer a salary sacrifice scheme to purchase additional holidays.

**Development Opportunities:** Retaining our talent is our number one priority and that means we are committed to your personal and professional development. We will always consider reasonable requests for time off to study and will support training for excellence in our professional disciplines.

**Colleague Recognition Awards:** As part of our inclusive social calendar we celebrate colleague achievement with a voucher scheme.

**Cycle to Work Scheme:** We encourage colleagues to stay fit and healthy and one of the ways to do this is cycling to work where that is practical. Once you pass your probation you are eligible to participate in our cycle to work scheme.

**Gym membership:** Starfish will contribute up to £20 per month for gym membership.

## Starfish benefits

**Met Life cover:** All colleagues can benefit from 24/7 access to a GP over the phone or video call. This is in addition to Financial Wellbeing Support and Mental Wellbeing Support. We also offer access to the MetLife Will Preparation, Bereavement and Probate Services.

**Health Assured:** Starfish colleagues can benefit from the Employee Assistance Programme offered by Health Assured. We provide emotional and practical support to colleagues, including access to counselling as well as legal advice on matters such as housing and tenancy, property and partnership rights and a range of legal matters.

**Private Medical Cover:** On completion of your probation, you can access individual private medical cover, including cashback on dental and optical treatment, outpatient diagnostic tests, treatment by therapists and mental health counselling as well as other benefits.

**Pension:** Starfish will make a 5% employer contribution towards your pension on commencing employment.

**Enhanced Maternity, Paternity and Partner Pay:** All our colleagues are entitled to enhanced maternity, paternity and partner pay after a qualifying length of service.

## How to apply

To make an application, please email your CV and covering Letter to [recruitment@starfishsearch.com](mailto:recruitment@starfishsearch.com) .

The closing date for applications is **23:59 on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026**.

Interviews are provisionally looking to be held in week commencing **6<sup>th</sup> July 2026**.

At Starfish we are committed to diversity and inclusion and we will continue to enhance our knowledge, skills and confidence required to attract, recruit, retain and develop colleagues from all backgrounds within our workplace.

We want to ensure that disabled colleagues have opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. In line with this, we encourage applicants to share information about any disabilities they have, and we are happy to put in place reasonable adjustments to support applications and interviews. If you would like any reasonable adjustments putting in place during the interview process in relation to a disability or if there is any specific information in regard to a disability that you would like the interviewers to be aware of, please let us know by including this information in your Covering Letter.

Being a Disability Confident Committed employer, we are very happy to provide copies of this Recruitment Pack in a larger font size and should you wish to apply to this role in an alternative manner to that noted above, we would welcome this and encourage you to let us know what alternatives may be helpful to you.

