



## RECRUITMENT PACK

# DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND STRATEGY

The  
Difference



# WELCOME

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Dear Candidate,

Thank you so much for your interest in the role of Director of Operations and Strategy. I hope that the information contained within the candidate pack provides you with a clear idea of the values, ambition, and purpose of The Difference. Since our launch in 2019 we have grown at pace and managed this growth through the pandemic when many schools were closed. Prior to Covid and the lockdown, we knew that the country's most vulnerable children have overwhelmingly poor educational and life outcomes and many of these children are excluded from school. The lockdowns and phased re-opening of schools' post pandemic has made the situation worse for many vulnerable children and unfortunately exclusions from school are increasing. Therefore, it is vital that we continue to build our programmes of training, research, and partnerships to understand what works for vulnerable children and to share this best practice across the networks we have and across the educational sector.

Since 2019, we have created a programme for specialist senior school leaders who have the expertise to lead their schools and multi-agency approaches to ensure that the learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding needs of all children are met, and most importantly those children with high levels of need and vulnerability.

As Chief Executive I am delighted to work with a really dedicated team of people at The Difference. As a start-up organisation we are maturing fast, and we need a Director of Operations and Strategy to lead the consolidation and strengthening of our processes and structure. Your strength will be in operationalising our many ideas and ensuring we have the right people, processes, and products in place to meet our aims and manage calculated risks to grow and build a sustainable future. You may have come from a business development background and will be at ease representing the organisation with potential investors, establishing plans for growth, managing risk, and ensuring the governance of decisions is robust. You will work closely with the finance team and our Chief of Staff to ensure that we are financially secure and that we are developing our talent in the right way to support our growth.

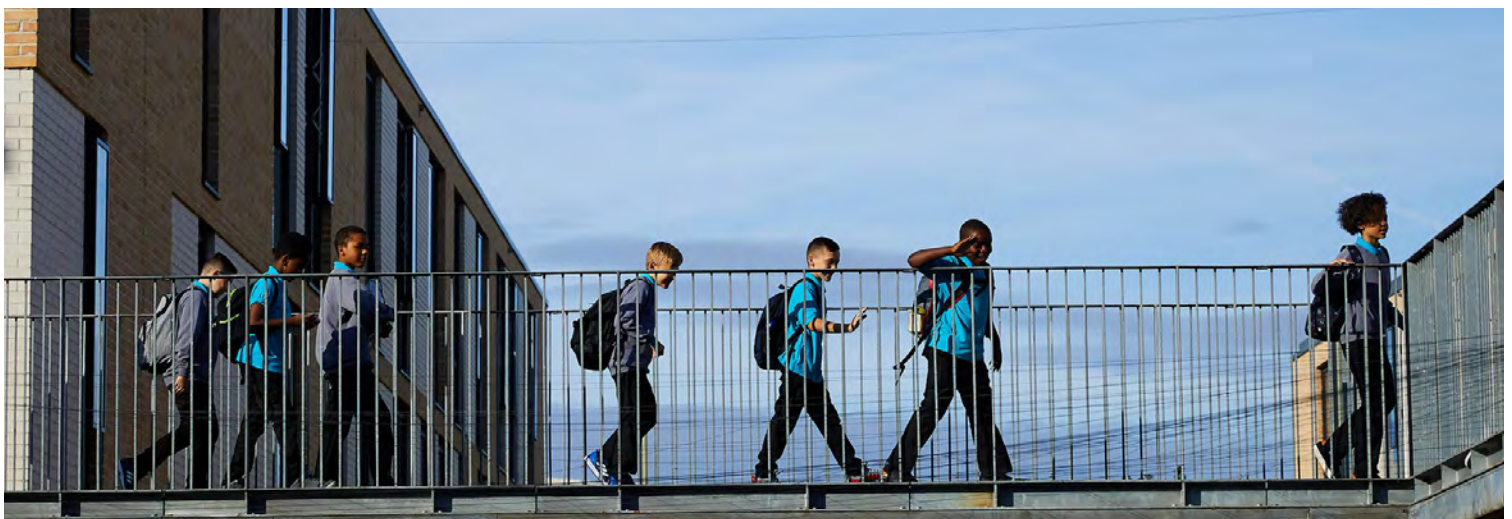
This new role encompasses a wide brief and you will lead a range of functions with full responsibility reporting to the board. Although you don't need a finance qualification, or an HR qualification, you will be financially literate and experienced in organisational development. Working closely alongside me, our Director of Programmes and our Director of Research, Impact and Influence, we are looking to you to provide leadership across The Difference to complement our existing skills and to embed a culture of continuous improvement, and one which places the individuals we support at the heart of everything we do.

We are looking for an ambitious and aspirational leader with deep integrity and a strong sense of purpose. You will be strategic and thoughtful with a clear vision and a collegiate and collaborative approach. Comfortable with challenge and complexity you will thrive in organisations which work at pace, with high levels of energy and creativity and you will continually push for improvement. You do not need to be proven at this level already if you can demonstrate that you share our values and bring the leadership qualities and skills to enable our organisation and the people who live and work here to flourish.

If this vision excites you and sounds like something you would like to be part of, we would love to hear from you.

With my best wishes,

**Kiran Gill**  
**Chief Executive**



# MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

## BREAKING THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION - OUR STORY

Founder and CEO, Kiran Gill began her career teaching in inner-city London Schools. In April 2016, Kiran had left the classroom and was Head of Policy at the Social Mobility Commission when she had the idea for The Difference.

By January 2017, Kiran had raised enough capital to fund a research paper with think tank IPPR, to understand rising school exclusion and look for solutions to this growing problem.

In October 2017, the report clarified that systemic failure in social mobility is at its most obvious in the growth of school exclusions in England. The cost to society of failing young people who are excluded from schools is staggeringly high. Excluded children are the most vulnerable and the education system is ill equipped to break the cycle of disadvantage for these young people.

The report called for a new programme to be established, which develops expertise in the teaching profession, connects exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children and creates a community of leaders to drive increasing inclusion through our education system. The vision was that leaders graduating from this programme – The Difference – would be the catalyst for change throughout the school system, working to break the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.

The [research](#) which underpins our organisation.

The Difference gained support from teachers, schools, and businesses. The idea won the Teach First Innovation Award, and the concept was tested with advisers and specialists from a range of public service charities and organisations (see our supporters). By the time of the report launch, five of the biggest multi-academy trusts in the Alternative Provision and mainstream schools had announced their intention to participate in the Difference Leaders programme.

The Difference launched in 2019 and it exists to improve the life outcomes of the most vulnerable children by raising the status and expertise of those who educate them. We create specialist senior school leaders with the expertise to lead whole-school and multi-agency approaches to meeting the learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding needs of all children, and most crucially those with high levels of need and vulnerability.

Through its programmes, research and partnerships, The Difference learns what works to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and shares this best practice across its network and the sector.



## OUR IMPACT

The Difference exists to change the story on school exclusions. School exclusions are a social justice issue and the founding report in 2017 showed that England's most vulnerable children are disproportionately affected by school exclusions.

Excluded children are

- 20 times more likely to have contact with Social Services
- 4 times more likely to live in poverty
- 7 times more likely to have special needs
- 10 times more likely to have a mental health issue

Black Caribbean and children from other minority groups are disproportionately more likely to be excluded.

Challenging inequality is central to the work of The Difference. Children with certain marginalised identities are disproportionately likely to be excluded. Teachers from minoritized ethnic groups and female teachers are significantly less likely to become senior leaders or headteachers. We are actively recruiting a diverse cohort of school leaders. Diverse leadership can improve cultural sensitivity in schools, disrupt harmful stereotyping and lead to a more equitable education system overall.

The Difference is still a young charity, established in 2019 and we are growing fast. Our portfolio of products and services is developing, and we hold an annual conference, IncludED which brings together the network of teachers, school leaders and wider practitioners to access best practice, share learning and seek out support that grows inclusive schools and improves outcomes for all students. <https://www.the-difference.com/included23info>

Our main goal is to reduce school exclusions by 2030.

Our latest **Impact Report**, sharing our work across the 2021-22 academic year.

## THE ROLE TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS SHOULD PLAY TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The Difference believes that schools can be powerful conveners of services and champions of pupils. Currently there is no training for teachers in how other services work or how to access them. We believe that by providing this training, we will help create leaders with a 'wide lens' on the need of the whole child and a system view of what is needed to support them. We are inspired by current mainstream leaders who push the boundaries of a school's traditional role in their local community and are creative in finding solutions where local services aren't working as they should.



# JOB DESCRIPTION

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**Job title:** Director of Operations and Strategy

**Reports to:** Kiran Gill, Chief Executive

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

### STRATEGY & CHARITY LEADERSHIP

#### Responsible for:

- Business development - setting financial growth strategy; working closely with the Programme team on opportunities for further growth; managing stakeholders including philanthropic investors, civil servants contracting our work, and multi-academy trusts.
- The charity's risk register, shared with the Board of Trustees and owned across the organisation.
- Decision-making and governance at the charity, to embed our values through our work. This includes liaising with Charity Commission and Companies House, working with the Chief of Staff on improvements to "Business as usual" governance and working with the DICE staff group to improve diversity and youth representation on our board in the coming years.
- Representing The Difference internally and externally, including covering for other members of the senior leadership team and the CEO as necessary.

### PEOPLE & CULTURE

#### Responsible for:

- Talent development including working with the Chief of Staff to ensure that we have the right people in the right roles to achieve our strategy.
- Cross-organisational culture and strategic HR to achieve our charitable aims, including staff
- development and residential, meetings, line-management, HR policies and processes, Diversity Equality Asset-based approach, working with Head of People (0.2) to embed our values throughout our work.
- Cross-organisational process for translating our strategy into key performance indicators and continuous improvement, in collaboration with our Director of Research, Impact & Influence.
- Dispute resolution and the charity's complaints process, liaising with pro bono partners with HR specialism.
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### OPERATIONS & FINANCE

#### Responsible for:

- The charity's finances, reporting to the Board of Trustees.
- The Operations & Finance team: Head of Operations & Finance, Fundraising Manager (0.5) and Finance & Operations Officer.
- Modelling growth of the organisation to meet our strategy, identifying opportunities and risks in business planning, cost-management and financial forecasting.
- Sharing leadership of income generation including through fundraising with the CEO and Head of Fundraising; and traded work with Director of Programme and Director of Research, Impact & Influence.
- Overseeing spend management across the organisation through setting and delegating budgets.
- Overseeing facilities, ways of working, premises and IT to reflect our values and underpin impact.
- Contracts and legal compliance, overseeing relationship with pro bono partners to ensure we are protected from risk.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- A cultural fit, with career experience which evidences The Difference's values, and a credibility in representing our work internally and externally.
- Experienced in operations / finance, including line-managing or building Operations, Finance, HR or Legal functions in an organisation.
- Insight through work or life into school experiences of over-excluded young people, including young people with experience of the care system, of mental ill health, of special educational needs, of racism.
- Experience at senior leadership within an organisation, including line managing senior leaders and specialists.
- Experience working in the public sector including with/in schools and multi-academy trusts.

## SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Completely aligned with and committed to The Difference's vision, focus and values.
- A skilled people-developer, with experience developing talent and growing group cultures for effectiveness and distributed leadership.
- A strategic thinker, able to grasp detail and assess strategic significance, able to rapidly learn about new topics and develop credible insights.

## STYLES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Financially minded, able to share responsibility for our financial sustainability and fundraising, and to model our growth.
- A details-orientated designer of processes, with track-record of translating ideas into strategies and strategies into deliverable outcomes.
- Ambitious to shape a young charity into adulthood; and grow alongside in your own leadership.



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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## SALARY

Starting at £65-75k per annum

## START DATE

ASAP

## LOCATION

London / Remote with weekly travel to London

## CONTRACT

Permanent / Full or 0.8 hours, with options for flexible working

## PENSION

+6% employer pension contribution

## ANNUAL LEAVE

Sector-leading parental leave policy shared with all applicants

# HOW TO APPLY

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We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact [hilary.clifford@starfishsearch.com](mailto:hilary.clifford@starfishsearch.com) and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/thedifference-dir-ops-strat/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

**Closing date:** Sunday 29th January 2023

**Preliminary interviews:** w/c 6th February 2023

**Final Panel interviews:** w/c Monday 27th February 2023