



CANDIDATE PACK
CHIEF NETWORK OFFICER



WELCOME

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this new role of Chief Network Officer at a crucial time for older people and our Age UK network across the country.



The last few years have put pressure on millions of older people – Covid still casts a long shadow, the cost-of-living crisis has left many older people with impossible choices, and the growing challenges facing the NHS and the social care system have a huge impact on older people. Longer term, issues such as an ageing population, ageism, and meeting the needs of a diverse population all demand attention.

Our role at Age UK is to ensure that every older person gets the support and respect they deserve so they can thrive in later life. We are finalising a new strategy that aims to fundamentally change the conversation about later life, as well as build and develop our long-standing reputation as the voice of older people.

At the heart of Age UK is our local network of over 120 partners across all four countries of the UK, who, together with our national services, support around a million older people every year. The network is one of the largest charity federations – it's a powerful combination of truly local organisations responding to local need, and a truly national network which provides support to local partners and has responsibility for influencing and broadening the public conversation.

But we know there is so much more we can do as a network so older people can thrive in their, and our, later life. That's why this role is so crucial-as a senior leader in the organisation, you will support the Age UK network as we evolve into a new phase. At present, a new Shared Strategy and partnership agreement is in development, with a strong desire to work collaboratively across partners, enable organisations to develop and grow, and make the most of the skills and capabilities of the network and its people.

We are seeking a dynamic and motivational leader with a successful track record in managing diverse and complex relationships with a range of independent organisations. Ideally you will have worked within a federated or franchised environment and will certainly have deep experience of directing, developing, and evaluating the contribution of organisations working within a shared purpose network. As an established senior leader, you will have led on strategy development, change programmes and initiatives with successful outcomes.

You will have achieved a significant change in an area of work which you will be proud of- we are at an incredibly important stage in our journey, and we have a lot to do, with the needs of older people being more diverse and complex than ever before. I do hope you will be inspired by these ambitious plans to improve the lives of older people and if you have the skills, experience and qualities we are looking for, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Paul Farmer
Chief Executive Officer



ABOUT US

Age UK works closely with local and national partners and together we are the Age UK network. We exist as a community of partners to make life better for older people. We are available for older people to turn to, in their homes, in their communities, on the phone and online. Every day, millions of older people face an unrelenting struggle. Some live in poverty, with little to call their own. Many are in poor health, often coping with multiple conditions. An alarming number are not getting the care they need and rely on the help of families and friends. Others just don't have the luxury of a support network, going for days, weeks or even months without connecting with other people.

We are passionate about celebrating older people's vital but often under-valued contribution as active contributors to society – as citizens, as volunteers, as grandparents, as carers, as workers and as employers. For many, Age UK is an extension of their voice, speaking out on the issues that matter in parliament, in the press and to businesses. On our own, and by harnessing our convening power as one of the largest charities, we have successfully influenced policy makers and parliamentarians on major policy agendas throughout successive governments. We have a high media profile and, over many years, have earned our reputation as a fierce yet collaborative campaigner for system-wide social care reforms.

The Age UK network comprises over 120 organisations, including three national partners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and local partners across England and Wales. They are individual charities operating within a partnership agreement, and between us, we support over one million people every year.

We are together creating a new strategy for Age UK, and alongside that a shared strategy with the Age UK network. Our recognition is that we are stronger together, and the increasing challenges that older people face demand that we work effectively and collaboratively to support more people.

WE CAMPAIGN AND RESEARCH

It is vital that the voices of older people are heard by those who have the power to make decisions that affect them. Our public policy and research expertise, what we hear from older people and our thousands of campaigners, coupled with insights from our Local and National Age UK Partners, enable us to spearhead powerful campaigns on the issues that matter most to older people.

12.5 million people will benefit from the UK Government listening to our calls to protect the pension triple lock.



WE PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Providing independent, impartial, and expert information and advice is what Age UK and the Age UK Network is best known for and what people expect us to provide. It sounds simple, but when it is done right, it can be life changing.

The Age UK Advice Line, based in Lancashire and Devon, provides this service 7 days a week, 365 days a year, with local partners providing huge amounts of support on a face to face basis. By speaking to older people, day-in day-out, both nationally and locally, the Age UK Network is constantly learning about the challenges older people face, which helps to shape our campaigns, programmes, and services.

WE IMPROVE HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES

Millions of older people are waiting for care right now. Hundreds of thousands are stuck on waiting lists for support, or even just waiting to have their needs assessed.

We campaign for change nationally, but also think it is vital that we work to improve how local health and care services are delivered and commissioned. This is especially so given the crucial role our Local and National Network Partners play as providers of services to hundreds of thousands of older people. However, we know that our Local and National Network Partners face huge levels of demand while having to compete fiercely for ever-diminishing funding.

WE DELIVER WELLBEING SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

Our research tells us how feeling well can make a real difference to the lives of older people.

We work in partnership with our Local Age UK Network Partners to develop, deliver and test new services which can address obstacles to wellness that many older people face, whether that is through loneliness or isolation or a lack of opportunities on offer in their communities.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

WE ARE LOCAL

We work as part of the Age UK Network - a partnership of independent charities which includes Age UK; our National Partners: Age NI, Age Scotland (and one local Age Scotland Partner), and Age Cymru (and five local Age Cymru's); over 120 local Age UKs in England.

WE ARE NATIONAL

In the UK we help millions of people every year, providing support, companionship and advice to the older people who need our help the most. We are a strong voice, campaigning with and for older people to champion their rights, needs and wishes.

WE ARE INTERNATIONAL

We work with our subsidiary charity, Age International, to fund programmes in over 30 low and middle-income countries. Age International is a member of the HelpAge global network and the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

ACHIEVING MORE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Acting together with like-minded charities and other organisations enables us to achieve far more for older people. In the UK we do this largely in partnership with our Local and National Network Partners and, internationally, we work through Age International's membership of the HelpAge global network. We work together with our Partners in a range of ways and grant funding is an important part of this. For example, we co-design and deliver charitable programmes, which Age UK receives funding for and makes grants available for suitable Partners to deliver. In 2022/23, we distributed £30.9 million in total in grants to other organisations, including £5m to support local partners with the cost of living crisis.

READ MORE

You can find out more about who we are and what we do at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

OUR EMERGING STRATEGY

With Age UK's CEO, Paul Farmer, now in post for almost a year, we have been working hard to develop our strategy this year. We are currently shaping our vision and mission with our various audiences and stakeholders, including, and most importantly, older people themselves. We have held focus groups with both older people and with our own staff across the country, and our brand research team helped us reach out to 40 diverse audiences this year – who have all helped us to shape our future for older people.

We know that we are entering into a period of change for Age UK, with our ten key change programmes now well underway, supported by our newly formed Project Management Office and aligning to our new and emerging strategy. Our ambitions for older people are big and so too are our plans for growth, in order that we can meet the everchanging and ever-increasing needs of older people today.

In developing our strategy, we considered that Covid had a profound impact on older people, as well as the current economic climate which continues to be uncertain. We also continue to see crises within the NHS and in the provision of public services for older people, such as social care.

To name a few of our emerging priorities, we aim to reach more older people within deprived areas of the country, breaking down barriers for those that may have difficulty in accessing our services and support. We have also set ourselves an ambition to end pensioner poverty and we are significantly scaling up our friendship service in order that we reach more isolated and lonely older people with our services locally and nationally.

Going hand in hand with these challenges we have set ourselves, we must ensure we are set up for success and that we inspire staff, volunteers, donors, and our partners to join us nationally, locally, and internationally, in our ambitions. We want to fight for social justice whilst also providing outstanding services for older people and those who help them. We want to transform public attitudes and influence key decision makers.

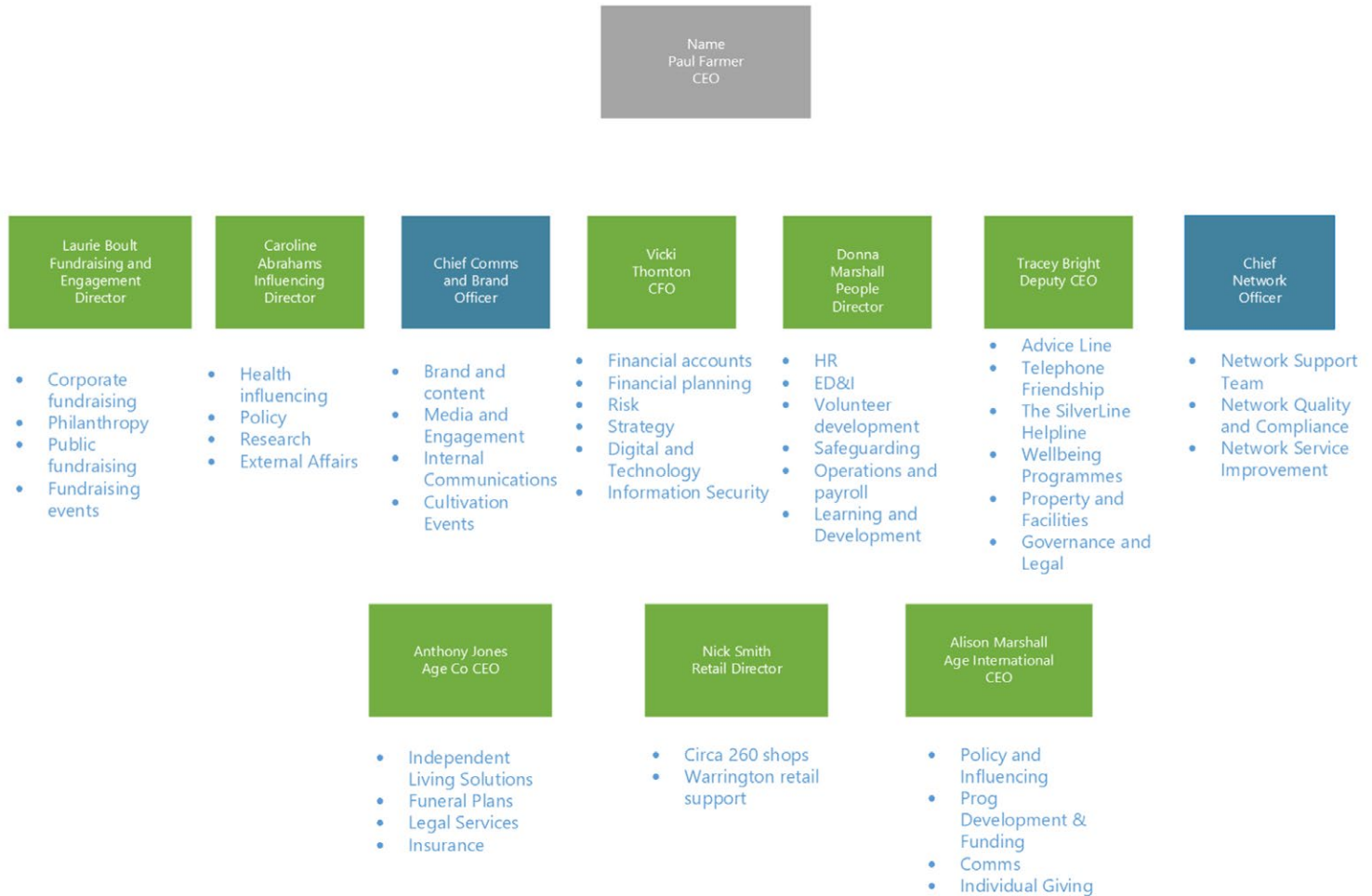
For us to do all of this, we need to ensure we create the right charity that is fit for the challenge ahead. It's important, and part of our plans, that we embark on a full target operating model review of the charity.

Our senior team are key in leading on the delivery of our strategy and ambitions for older people!



HOW WE'RE STRUCTURED

We want Age UK to be a great place to work and volunteer for our over 1,600 employees and over 120,000 volunteers and campaigners. We believe that, if we engage our employees and volunteers well, make them feel heard, valued, empowered, safe, and connected to our cause, together we will be able to do so much more for the older people we are here to support.



ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job title	Chief Network Officer
Reports to	Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports	Network Support team; Network Quality & Compliance; Network Service Improvement

ROLE PURPOSE

Age UK is one of the best-known charities in the UK and our network continues to do vital work supporting around one million older people every year, but there are huge challenges and pressures facing older people in the short, medium, and long term.

Age UK's new strategy has a bold ambition to change the way we think about older people and ageing; to develop and increase its visibility with, and within the network, creating robust and effective relationships that change the wider conversation across society about ageing and increase everyone's support for older people.

The Age UK network, which consists of over 120 local organisations, and three national partners, is central to our new plans. The network supports at least 800,000 older people every year, and we are transforming the way we work together to improve the lives of older people.

This Executive role has been created to help us deliver a new shared strategy which is currently in development, to work with the network to generate a culture of togetherness that works to build a better world for older people locally and in the nations of the UK.

As our first postholder, you will develop and maintain effective, realistic, and accountable, support for the Age UK Network understanding what is effective at 'local' level and what is best provided nationally, thereby proactively and reactively, empowering the Network to continue improving the lives of older people.

As a member of Age UK leadership team, you will actively:

- Share knowledge, experience and understanding alongside contributing to the development and delivery of Age UK's strategy and core priorities.
- Provide strategic leadership for all areas of the Network support division, including the delivery of the Network Shared Strategy through a large division with varied necessary workstreams.
- Bring wider teams together, measure impact and outcomes and enhance efficiency and accountability.
- Be responsible for delivering difficult information as necessary, alongside reporting and managing necessary reputational and crisis communications with due effectiveness and confidentiality.
- Be innovative, encourage and embolden innovative thinking in teams at all levels, to improve the lives of people over 50, alongside effectively managing expectation of the possible.



MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POST

- Work with network partners and fundraising colleagues, to develop and deliver programmes and services across the network that bring new income into Age UK for the delivery of effective and sustainable support of older people across the UK.
- Work across Age UK and with Network Partners to ensure the right relationships are in place, alongside a clear understanding of processes and resources, that will deliver and evolve Our Shared Strategy effectively and create a platform to expand our Network into the hard-to-reach areas.
- Maintain, develop, and explore existing and future programmes for fundraising and restricted income programmes alongside an emboldened and effective delivery of wellbeing for all.
- Ensure the work of the Division provides valuable, effective, and strategic support to Senior Managers and Trustees across Age UK and the wider Network and Nations.
- Maintain and develop effectively existing Quality oversight of the network and support excellent governance by regularly reporting to and attending the Trustee Boards and sub committees as necessary.
- Build trusting and effective relationships with the Age UK Network and Nations, including managing key relationships and proactively engage with our Network's representative bodies, Age England Association and Age UK Nations.
- Provide oversight of the Shared Strategy and Network Agreement, ensuring it is a living document with accountability maintained for the delivery of the commitments made by all parties.
- Oversee budgets and spending aligned to Age UK financial policies and procedures.
- Ensure all teams have the appropriate resources, people and digital tools required to deliver the Divisional and organisational strategic objectives.
- Ensure oversight, identification and understanding of divisional, organisational and Network risks, including incident and near miss reporting alongside a robust understanding of safeguarding challenges.
- Actively engage with our ED&I agenda defining a roadmap of core priorities for your areas of work at Age UK and being accountable for their impact.
- Lead vigorously all output of the division in line with ED&I policies, ensuring proactive and updated understanding of the ED&I strategic appetite of the organisation both internally and across the network and nations.
- Be the voice that considers the impact of the divisional and network output in line with climate change and environmental impact.
- Provide exemplary leadership, modelling best practice and leading by example expecting the same from your senior managers to consider as a priority all aspects of staff and volunteer wellbeing and engagement, across our network.
- Build and develop strong and trusting relationships with Executive Director colleagues, maintain a shared narrative, and acknowledge and utilise their areas of expertise as required, to further the strategic objectives of the organisation and influence our wider network.
- Provide representation and a voice for our Network as a member of the Executive Team, promoting closer working with our Network across all Divisions and engagement in delivery of the Shared Strategy.
- Through your work as part of the wider executive team, ensure that all that we do promotes a supportive, empowering culture of mutual respect, making Age UK a great place to work where people fulfil their potential and flourish.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

In your written application, please reference Part One of the Person Specification. (Parts Two and Three will be tested at interview stage for selected candidates.)

PART ONE

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Established senior management level experience of managing and leading on organisational motivational and change programmes and initiatives.
- Significant experience of managing diverse and complex relationships with a range of independent organisations. Direct insight or experience of working in or with complex federated charities, or similar organisations in another sector, would be an asset (although not strictly essential).
- Strong experience of leading and managing change to improve relationships between organisations, and of taking stakeholders with you on the change journey.
- Significant experience of directing, developing, and evaluating the strategic output of a large network of organisations, ideally within a federated environment.
- Outstanding track record of delivering and contributing to cross-organisational output aligned to organisational strategies and policies.

PART TWO

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Outstanding alliance-building, interpersonal and influencing skills.
- Ability to work proactively and efficiently within a knowledge and data driven organisation, using insights and data to demonstrate evidence for change, or the lack of it alongside a vision to retrieving more from the network where possible and making better use of that data, and all data with full analysis that informs future priorities and plans.
- Ability to communicate effectively, speaking to many audiences, for different purposes, with a clear and engaging narrative.
- Ability to identify competing priorities and perspectives.

PART THREE

PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- Demonstrable commitment to effecting change for disadvantaged groups across the UK and beyond, valuing diversity and treating all people with respect.
- Trusted presence with an engaging, motivational and inclusive leadership style.
- Diplomatic approach.
- Willing to travel around the UK regularly to attend meetings as required, with occasional overnight stays.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

SALARY

The salary for this role is circa £120,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis. More may be available for an exceptional candidate. Starting salary is dependent on experience.

LOCATION

London and Hybrid, with travel across the UK and occasional overnight stays.

PENSION

Up to 8% contribution by Age UK.

ANNUAL LEAVE

26 days plus Bank Holidays.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Life assurance up to 4 times annual salary.
- Workplace savings scheme with a range of different ISA options.
- Season ticket loans and Cycle to Work scheme.
- Healthcare cash back plan.
- Bluelight card discounts.
- Tech scheme – loans for new tech.

HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application for this appointment. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/age-uk-cno/> 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 responds directly to Part One of the Person Specification.

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 for applications is **Monday 2nd October 2023**

RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE

Closing date	Monday 2nd October 2023
Preliminary interviews for selected candidates	w/c 9th October 2023
Notification of the shortlist decision	By 20th October 2023
Final Panel interviews for shortlisted candidates	10th November 2023