



# CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# WELCOME

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Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chief Executive of Future First.

Future First has just celebrated its 15th birthday and you will be joining us at a pivotal time.

The UK continues to face one of the poorest rates of social mobility in high income countries. This means that people born into low-income families, regardless of their talent, or their hard work, do not have the same access to opportunities as those born into more privileged circumstances. We are determined to change that.

We are a small but ambitious social mobility charity with 15 years of experience working with UK state schools and colleges to build thriving and supportive communities of alumni and employee volunteers. We believe that relatable role models can show young people first-hand what they can become, and what 'someone like me' can achieve. Each day, our alumni and employee volunteers are making a tangible difference to young people's aspirations and futures. This valuable work is supported by our funders and employer partners who share our vision.

Our departing CEO has done excellent work in strengthening our mission and sharpening our plans for the future. We have a strong Senior Leadership Team and a committed delivery team, supported by an engaged and dedicated Board of Trustees. Together, we have a strong platform to grow our reach and deepen our impact.

But we know the challenges ahead are real. School budgets are under increasing pressure, which means we must find innovative ways to fund memberships and expand our programmes. This will require new partnerships with employers, funders and supporters who share our belief that a young person's future should not be limited by their start in life.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape the next phase of Future First's journey. We are looking for a hands-on, strategic and visionary leader who shares our commitment to social mobility and who can inspire and empower our people, drive our quest for funding, champion our mission, and take Future First into its next chapter with passion, purpose and ambition. If you share our belief in the power of role models and the potential of every young person, we would be delighted to hear from you.



**Nick Buckland OBE**  
Chair

## ABOUT US

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No young person's future should be limited by their start in life.

Future First is the only UK social mobility charity with 15 years of experience helping state schools and colleges build thriving networks of alumni and employee volunteers who inspire young people to aim higher and achieve more.

We believe relatable role models are key to unlocking potential. Having walked similar paths, these role models show young people what they can become and help them access opportunities that might otherwise feel out of reach.

Our digital platform – the Future First Hub – enables schools to build and manage these volunteer communities, supporting in-person, virtual and online engagement that connects students with the world of work.

Looking ahead, our roadmap sets out an ambitious goal: **by 2034, every state school and college in the UK will be supported by a thriving alumni and employee volunteer network so that all young people 'can see what they can be.'**

To achieve this, we will foster collaboration between schools, employers, government and civil society – breaking down barriers to opportunity, sharing best practice and making better use of existing resources.

We are here because every student, from every walk of life, deserves to thrive and together, we can make that a reality.



# JOB DESCRIPTION

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**Job title:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

**Reports to:** Chair of the Board of Trustees

**Direct reports:** Chief Operating Officer; Communications Lead; Head of Membership

## ROLE PURPOSE

The Chief Executive Officer provides overall leadership, management and direction for Future First, ensuring oversight of both strategic and operational requirements. A central responsibility is to drive the organisation's funding and income generation efforts, securing sustainable partnerships and resources to support long-term growth. The CEO will ensure that strategy is translated into action, that priorities are delivered, risks are managed, and impact is maximised, while safeguarding and promoting the culture, performance and reputation of the organisation, recognising this is very much a hands-on role.

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

### Leadership

- Provide visible leadership and strategic direction for Future First, in partnership with the Chair and Board.
- Lead the development and implementation of the strategic plan, ensuring delivery of priorities.
- Work closely with the Chief Operating Officer to ensure effective operational running of the charity.
- Inspire, motivate and appraise the senior team and staff, fostering an inclusive, collaborative and high-performing culture.
- Champion equity, diversity and wellbeing across the organisation.

### Funding, Resources and Impact

- Take overall responsibility for financial health, ensuring strong income and expenditure management.
- Personally drive the fundraising and income generation strategy, securing funding from statutory funders, trusts and foundations, individuals and corporates, working with the external Fundraising Lead.
- Develop and embed a sustainable and resilient funding model that supports growth and innovation.
- Pursue new business opportunities and partnerships to extend reach and impact.
- Ensure systems and processes are efficient, effective and fit for purpose.
- Lead the development of a robust approach to impact measurement and evaluation.

### Influence and Representation

- Act as the primary ambassador for Future First, representing the organisation nationally.
- Advocate the mission and influence the national conversation on social mobility.
- Build relationships with policymakers, government, business and the wider social sector.
- Lead collaborations and partnerships with other organisations.

### Governance

- Advise and support the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- Report regularly on progress against strategy and performance.
- Support the Chair in engaging and developing Trustees.
- Ensure compliance with all constitutional, legal and regulatory obligations.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

### Essential

- Proven experience as both a strategic and operational leader in the not-for-profit, education, social or private sectors.
- Strong track record of securing funding and income growth.
- Experience of building successful fundraising strategies and partnerships.
- Experience of developing and delivering organisational strategy and change.
- Outstanding communication skills and ambassadorial experience.
- Skilled at partnership building, stakeholder engagement and evidence-based influencing.

### Desirable

- Understanding of the education sector and education policy.

## SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Strong leadership skills with the ability to inspire and motivate a small team.
- Ability to create a culture of collaboration, inclusion and high performance.
- Excellent financial and commercial acumen.
- Skilled at balancing strategic ambition with operational and financial disciplines.
- Ability to build partnerships and influence at senior levels across sectors.

## STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- Credible, confident and able to build trust quickly with diverse stakeholders.
- Entrepreneurial, tenacious and creative in identifying and pursuing opportunities.
- Personally resilient, energetic and enthusiastic with a low-ego, high-impact style, interested in being both 'hands-on' and strategic.
- Passionate about social mobility and committed to Future First's mission and values.
- Courageous, imaginative and confident in making bold decisions and embracing change.
- Collaborative and supportive, able to enrich and nurture organisational culture.



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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## **SALARY**

The salary for this role is c.£90,000 per annum on a full-time, permanent basis.

## **LOCATION**

Home-based, with travel throughout the UK.

## **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Future First offers a generous annual holiday entitlement of 28 days, in addition to the usual bank and public holidays, plus an additional day's holiday for each full year of work (added the following year after a complete year of service) up to a maximum of five additional days.

## **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

- Access to a wide variety of training and development opportunities, both organisationally and specific to your role.
- Following successful completion of the probation period, you can request a day of paid leave to carry out volunteering work.
- A birthday lie-in, where you can start an hour later on your birthday [or the next working day if your birthday falls on a non-working day or weekend].
- Enhanced Sick Pay.
- Flexible working.



## HOW TO APPLY

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 Erin Fuller at [erin.fuller@starfishsearch.com](mailto:erin.fuller@starfishsearch.com) and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/future-first-ceo> 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 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.

<b>Closing date:</b>	Friday 31st October 2025
<b>Preliminary interviews:</b>	w/c Monday 17th November 2025 (online)
<b>Stakeholder sessions:</b>	w/c Monday 1st December 2025 (online)
<b>Final Panel interviews:</b>	w/c Monday 1st December 2025 (in person, in London)

