

Could you be the next Chief Executive Officer of WorldSkills UK?



Welcome



Thank you
for your interest in
WorldSkills UK and the
opportunity to join us as
Chief Executive Officer.

Introduction from the Chair

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next CEO of WorldSkills UK; a role I believe represents a truly exciting, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In a time of significant change and uncertainty – politically, economically, technologically, and across the employment landscape in the UK and globally - our impact as a world-class skills network has never been more important. By working in partnership across the UK and internationally, we play a vital role in inspiring and motivating learners, empowering young people, and supporting employers to develop the skills needed for the future.

Our contribution to driving excellence in world-class skills is widely recognised across all UK governments, within business communities, and throughout the education and skills sector. On the global stage, our approach is acknowledged as innovative, impactful, and inspiring.

Our new CEO will build on this strong foundation, strengthening our position as a respected and credible part of the UK skills system. A key priority will be to attract more diverse investment into our work to support economic growth and prosperity across the UK.

We are seeking an inspirational leader with strong strategic capability and a deep understanding of the UK skills landscape. As a visible and forward-thinking figure, the successful candidate will demonstrate sound judgment, exceptional partnership-building skills, and the ability to engage diverse audiences both nationally and internationally. Energy, presence, and strong commercial acumen are essential, alongside an entrepreneurial mindset to identify and pursue new opportunities, supported by a rigorous, evidence-based approach to diversifying income.

Crucially, our new CEO will share our values and be committed to building on our culture of collaboration, high performance, inclusivity and ambition. They will inspire, support, and lead an exceptionally talented and dedicated team, while working closely with our engaged and supportive Board of Trustees.

We firmly believe that when young people succeed, we all succeed. If you are motivated by the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the future of the UK, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes

Marion Plant OBE, FCGI
Chair of the Board



About us

WorldSkills UK: driving excellence in skills

WorldSkills UK transforms technical skills to ensure young people are ready and confident to enter the world of work and to give employers the pipeline of talent that will drive growth.

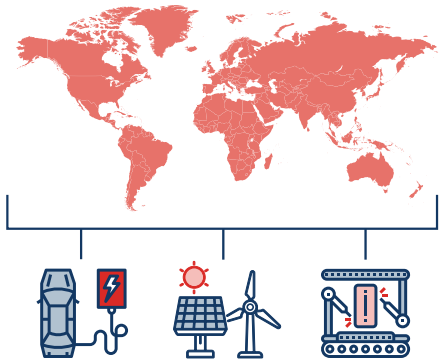
WorldSkills UK is a four-nation partnership bringing together education, industry and the governments of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It is a world-class skills network – working as a catalyst in three key areas:

- **Raising standards** – through world-class teacher training and professional development and international benchmarking.
- **Championing future skills** – through strong employer partnerships and international skills competition involvement; and
- **Empowering young people, from all backgrounds** – through local and national skills competitions focused on work-readiness.

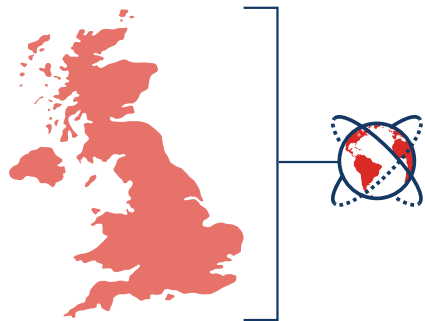


These three priorities draw on our unique role in the international WorldSkills movement, and the expert knowledge built over several decades of pioneering skills competitions to offer solutions to some of the most critical social and economic challenges the UK faces today, such as increasing numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and skills gaps in key sectors.

Working with our partners across the UK and internationally our aim is to make technical and professional education a source of UK pride and an asset for future economic success.



Links established across the globe



We represent the UK's skills systems on the global stage

WorldSkills UK formally represents the UK Government in WorldSkills, an 89-country coalition that champions global industry standards in apprenticeships and technical education.

The WorldSkills movement connects two-thirds of the world's population, aiming to inspire and support 100 million young people to get ahead through skills development by 2030.

We therefore have a unique perspective on how other countries' skills systems work to support economic growth and create jobs for talented young people and we use these unique insights to inform our programmes and to help inform skills policy across the UK.

For example, we are increasingly focused on using our programmes to help boost the international competitiveness of the UK's workforce – boosting standards to world-class levels – and focusing more of our programmes on future skills at higher levels in areas such as industry 4.0, cyber security, industrial robotics, additive manufacturing and renewable energy.

Through partnerships with WorldSkills organisations in countries including Taiwan, France, the Netherlands, Australia, Korea, India, Finland, Kenya and Japan, we gather global insights and effective practice to inform UK skills policy and practice through our national skills competitions and workforce development programmes.



Our core programmes prepare young people for the world of work

Our partnerships nationally and internationally help us embed global standards in training and widen opportunity for young people from all backgrounds.

By working together, we help ensure every young person can access the skills they need to succeed in the world of work.

We are committed to raising skills quality and widening opportunities through a more inclusive approach to our skills development programmes, reaching every region of the UK and all four nations – so more young people can succeed, whatever their background or protected characteristic.

Skills competitions

WorldSkills UK is best known for running skills competitions. Every year we support hundreds of local competitions run within and between colleges all over the country. We also operate an annual national competition cycle from entry stage in April, which involves around 4,000 learners, through regional qualifiers to our National Finals in November, which brings together 400 of the best young technicians from across the UK. Our national

medallists then have an opportunity to train with our international skills experts to compete internationally at biennial EuroSkills and WorldSkills events as part of Team UK.

These skills competitions give learners an opportunity to test and demonstrate the range of skills that are critical for success in the workplace – technical skills, employability skills such as problem solving and communication, and mindset skills – having the resilience to see tasks through. By taking part in our competitions learners are gaining confidence and improving their readiness for work.

Independent research by Frontier Economics has shown that young people who have taken part in our competition-based training earn up to 60% more than their peers who have not been involved in our work.

Skills competitions also develop teachers and trainers to deliver to high-quality standards – and government inspectors, like Ofsted, have recognised the value of competition-based training in their education inspection framework, citing their impact in demonstrating outstanding behaviours and attitudes.



World-class teacher training

Our Centre of Excellence programme is a world-class teacher training offer, developed in partnership with specialist awarding organisation NCFE. It was founded in

2020 based on research undertaken by the University of Oxford which spotted an opportunity to mainstream WorldSkills UK's methodology for developing skills excellence across the UK's skills systems. It now has a membership of 150 institutions across all four UK nations with over 18,000 educators having engaged in our training, 280,000 students and apprentices benefitting.

Educators are trained in modules ranging from 'Competence to excellence' to 'Assessing for excellence' which help them apply competition-based learning in their study programmes. Feedback shows that this approach is helping to inspire teachers and learners alike, giving them opportunities to continuously improve and gain confidence ready for employment.

On-demand teaching and assessment resources

The WorldSkills UK Learning Lab is an online platform aimed to help raise standards, by offering digital resources for educators and

learners. The resources are developed by our international skills experts and include skill-specific modules on teaching and learning excellence plus shorter tools for initial assessments, progress checks and end-point preparation. Teachers can use the platform to assess and benchmark learners' skills, knowledge and behaviours using a unique tracker to identify progress and pinpoint areas for development.

We adapt and innovate to stay relevant

WorldSkills UK has built a growing external profile across all four nations, with increasing Government recognition, strong employer and skills-sector partnerships and media coverage in recent years.

While we are an independent charity, we align our programmes with each nation's policy priorities, working in partnership with our four government funding partners across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

In the last twelve months our programmes to develop skills excellence have been recognised in the post-16 skills white paper in England and in the Department for Education's flagship Technical Excellence College policy. We have also developed strong support from the



governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with all four nations' skills ministers engaged in celebrating the success of their national competitors and Skills Minister for England, the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern attending our national and international competitions in support of our work.

We have cultivated a growing number of long-term strategic partnerships with skills organisations such as NCFE and Pearson and employers such as BAE Systems and Amazon, who invest in our programmes and share our mission to promote skills excellence.

We also work hard to build our national profile in the mainstream media to increase understanding of our impact and the benefit of involvement in our programmes with recent coverage on BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, BBC Breakfast, SKY News, The Sun and The Times.

We provide good value for money

In 2024 an independent study, using the Treasury's green book appraisal method and conducted by Frontier Economics, showed that WorldSkills UK's activities deliver a return on investment of £3.50 for every pound invested by UK Government, demonstrating that we provide good value for money in the programmes we run.

We report on our impact and reach annually and our Annual Review 2024-25 sets out our most recent achievements, including:

- Over 200,000 young people benefited from our programmes to promote and develop excellence in skills.
- We provided more than 8,400 educators with professional development, 96% of whom saw a positive impact on the quality of delivery, training and assessment.
- Over 70% of FE colleges benchmarked the skills of their learners against our national or international standards.

The UK was placed tenth in the WorldSkills international competitions in Lyon in 2024.

Equity, diversity and inclusion is embedded in our programmes and culture

A culture which is inclusive and supports diversity is essential to WorldSkills UK's long-term success and better enables

us to respond to our beneficiaries, partners and wider stakeholder needs. This is reflected in our equity, diversity and inclusion strategy and policy, which applies to the Board, its sub-committees and the organisation as a whole.



The current Chair also chairs our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group – bringing together employer and skills-sector representatives and former competitors – to advise on how we deliver our strategy effectively and to strengthen the link between Board oversight and practical action. Current initiatives include a widening participation pilot to encourage greater involvement of under-represented communities in our 2026 competitions.

We succeed through a motivated team

Our impact depends on the strength of our people and culture. WorldSkills UK has a dedicated staff team of around 40 and we are an inclusive, Disability Confident employer. Our workforce is diverse (based on self-reported data/where disclosed): 60% female, 27% ethnic minority, 22% disabled, 9% LGBTQ+ and 38% reporting a faith.

Our latest staff pulse survey indicates a positive and inclusive working environment, with strong support for wellbeing and flexible working. More than 85% of colleagues say they trust the senior leadership team and over 95% say their line manager makes the effort to listen. Almost 90% feel their contribution is valued, and more than 95% understand our future direction and

are motivated by it – providing a solid platform for delivery and change.

In the last year we have engaged the whole organisation in developing a new set of values, which guide how we work with each other and with partners – and the behaviours we expect from leaders and Board members.

Driven by excellence

We set high standards, take pride in quality and reputation, and support each other to deliver world-class outcomes for young people.

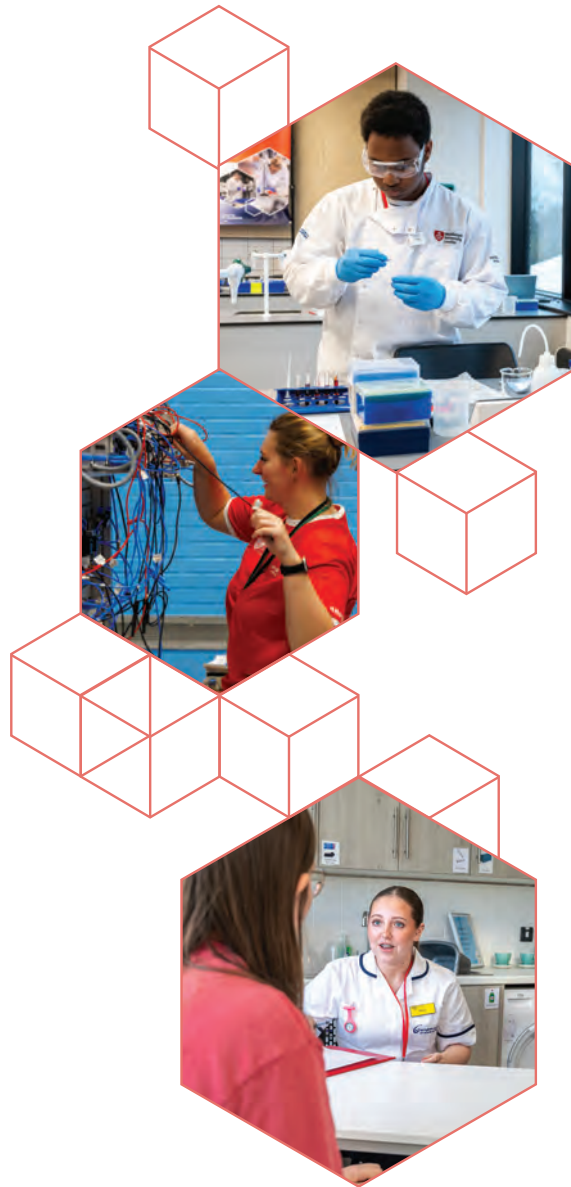
Innovate with purpose

We listen, learn and improve continuously – using insight and collaboration to innovate in ways that strengthen impact and raise standards.

People-centred and professional

We build trusted relationships through kindness, respect and clear communication, acting with integrity and professionalism in everything we do.

As CEO, you will champion these values and help ensure they are reflected in our governance, culture and external relationships.



Please join us – we are ambitious for the future

WorldSkills UK is at a critical point in its development, with a strong reputation for delivering programmes that transform lives, opportunities to scale up delivery both in the UK and abroad, coupled with the financial challenges that come with a tight fiscal environment. We are optimistic for a future in which we can grow our impact, underpinned by our core beliefs:

With the right combination of technical and employability skills young people from all

backgrounds can thrive in the world of work and play a productive role in the growth of the UK economy.

- In an uncertain global context, it is vital to understand how other leading economies are developing skills and use those insights to make sure the UK's skills base remains internationally competitive.
- We are strongest and most impactful when we work in partnership with UK governments, skills providers and employers.



Job description

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Reports to: Chair/Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Director of Operations, Director of Standards, Director of External Affairs, Chief of Staff and Company Secretary, Director of Finance

Overall purpose

To provide strategic, values-led leadership to WorldSkills UK, working with the Board of Trustees to advance the organisation's mission, strengthen its national and international influence, and ensure it continues to raise standards in technical and professional education and skills for the benefit of young people, educators and employers across the UK.

The CEO will lead the effective day-to-day delivery of WorldSkills UK's core objectives while shaping its future evolution – ensuring the organisation remains financially sustainable, strategically focused and able to grow the income, partnerships and commercial opportunities needed to support its charitable mission.

Key responsibilities

Strategy and governance

Work with the Board of Trustees to develop, review and deliver WorldSkills UK's strategy, providing clear options, advice and recommendations to support effective decision-making.

Ensure the Board receives timely, accurate and relevant information to fulfil its responsibilities, and support effective governance through constructive engagement with the Chair, Trustees and Committee Chairs.

Programme impact and quality

Provide strategic oversight of WorldSkills UK's charitable activities, ensuring alignment to mission, strategy and available resources.

Oversee work to raise standards through teacher-focused CPD, international benchmarking and quality improvement.

Champion future skills through employer engagement, research and thought leadership, and ensure WorldSkills UK continues to empower young people through inclusive competition-based learning, careers advocacy and skills development.



Income diversification, commercial development and financial stewardship

Lead the organisation's approach to financial sustainability, resource planning, income diversification and commercial development.

Oversee public funding relationships and major bids; develop appropriate sponsorship, partnership and commercial opportunities in line with WorldSkills UK's charitable objectives.

Build and maintain senior relationships with funders, sponsors, employers and strategic partners, and ensure robust financial management, risk oversight, contract management and compliance across the organisation.

Government, stakeholder and external relations

Lead WorldSkills UK's government relations and public affairs activity across the UK, building and sustaining high-quality relationships with funders, governments, employers, education and skills partners and wider stakeholders.

Represent WorldSkills UK nationally and internationally – including within the WorldSkills movement – and act as a prominent public advocate for its mission, impact and priorities.

People, culture and organisational leadership

Lead the Senior Leadership Team and wider organisation with clarity, integrity and accountability.

Foster an inclusive, collaborative and high-performing culture, and drive innovation in ways of working – including the responsible use of digital tools and AI to improve efficiency and support staff to focus on higher-value activity.

Ensure the organisation has the capability, capacity and culture required to deliver its strategy.

Risk, compliance and assurance

Ensure WorldSkills UK has effective systems for managing strategic, operational, financial, reputational, safeguarding, regulatory and contractual risks.

Ensure compliance with relevant legal, regulatory, charity, company and funder requirements, and give appropriate priority to the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults across all relevant activities.



Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Senior leadership experience, with evidence of operating successfully in an organisation of comparable complexity.
- Experience of working in, or with, the education, skills, employability, economic development, charity, public policy or related sectors, or the ability to develop credibility in this context quickly.
- Experience of developing and delivering organisational strategy in a changing policy, funding or stakeholder environment.
- Significant experience of leading income diversification, commercial development, sponsorship, partnership development or sustainable funding growth, with evidence of turning opportunities into deliverable and mission-aligned activity.
- Experience of leading high-performing senior teams and supporting organisational development, culture, performance and change.
- Experience of building and maintaining effective relationships with government, funders, employers, partners and/or senior sector stakeholders.
- Experience of representing an organisation externally, including with senior stakeholders and on public platforms.

- Experience of working effectively with a Board, Chair or equivalent non-executive governance structure, with a clear understanding of the respective roles of governance and executive leadership.

Knowledge and skills

- Strong understanding of the UK skills, further education, technical and professional education landscape, or the ability to develop credibility in this area quickly.
- Strong strategic thinking and judgement, with the ability to turn vision and ambition into clear priorities, plans and delivery.
- Strong financial literacy, with the ability to oversee budgets, financial sustainability, risk and organisational performance.
- Ability to identify and develop appropriate income, partnership and commercial opportunities in line with charitable purpose.
- Excellent stakeholder management skills, including the ability to work effectively across government, education, employer, funder and partner networks.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills, including the ability to advocate confidently for WorldSkills UK's mission nationally and internationally.



- Ability to lead, motivate and develop a senior team and wider organisation, creating clarity, confidence and accountability.
- Ability to understand and manage organisational risk, including operational, financial, reputational, safeguarding, regulatory and contractual risks.
- Ability to lead innovation and improvement in organisational ways of working, including the responsible use of digital tools and artificial intelligence to improve efficiency, reduce duplication and strengthen insight.
- Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, with the ability to embed inclusive practice in organisational culture and programme delivery.

Personal qualities and attributes

- Values-led, credible and authentic leadership style, with the ability to command confidence internally and externally.
- Collaborative and inclusive, with the ability to build trust across a wide range of stakeholders.
- Ambitious for WorldSkills UK's mission and impact, while demonstrating sound judgement about organisational capacity and resources.
- Resilient and calm under pressure, with the ability to lead through complexity, ambiguity and change.

- Entrepreneurial and outward-looking, with the judgement to pursue opportunities that are strategically aligned and financially sustainable.
- Politically astute, diplomatic and able to operate effectively in a complex UK-wide and international stakeholder environment.
- Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.

Special circumstances

- Prepared occasionally to work outside normal hours, including attendance at Board, Committee, stakeholder and external events.
- Prepared to travel within the United Kingdom.
- Able to spend time away from home, including for UK and international events where required.
- Prepared to represent WorldSkills UK nationally and internationally.



Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is £130,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

The normal place of work is
Third Floor,
52-54 St John Street,
London EC1M 4HF.

This role is office based, with flexible hybrid working. The postholder will be expected to maintain a regular presence in the London office, normally at least weekly, and to attend in person as required for staff, Board, stakeholder and external meetings.

Pension

WorldSkills UK offers a maximum employer pension contribution of 6% of basic salary, on the condition that the employee makes a pension contribution of at least 3%. The postholder may choose to contribute a higher percentage of salary to their pension, subject to statutory limits.

Annual leave

- 25 days' annual leave, increasing by one additional day for each completed year of service up to a maximum of 30 days, plus public and bank holidays.
- Additional leave: three days' additional leave during the office closure between Christmas and New Year.

Additional benefits

- Group Death in Service life insurance: three times annual salary.
- Health Care Cash Plan: our Bupa plan covers optical, dental, consultations, therapies, health assessments, prescriptions and mental health support.
- Employee Assistance Programme: employees have access to an independent support line provided through Aviva. This telephone-based service offers guidance and onward referral to other services where appropriate. The counselling service is free of charge, confidential and can be accessed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- Travel season ticket loans, interest free.



How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to [this link](#) 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.

Closing date:

Sunday 6 September 2026

Preliminary interviews:

14–25 September (online via Teams)

Final Panel interviews:

Thursday 15 and Friday 16 October 2026
(in person, London)

Thank you.

