



**CHILD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP**



**Candidate pack for
Chief Executive**



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group.

For six decades, CPAG has built an unrivalled track record of defining the issue of child poverty and providing historic leadership on the analysis of child poverty and social security. We have turned evidence, expertise and the experiences of children and families into action. Through research, policy analysis, advice, campaigning and legal action, we have played a leading role in challenging child poverty, protecting claimants' rights to social security, and influencing the policies and decisions that affect the lives of children and families. Our ambition remains the same: a society free from child poverty.

This is an important moment in CPAG's history. After sixteen years as Chief Executive, Alison Garnham is stepping down, having led CPAG through a period of sustained influence, growth, and significant change, including campaigning for child benefit increases, the adoption of a child poverty strategy, the abolition of the two-child limit, and the expansion of free school meals eligibility. Her departure marks the end of an important chapter and provides an opportunity to build on CPAG's considerable strengths while thinking ambitiously about our future.

Our new Chief Executive will have an important role in shaping our future. Working closely with an engaged board, a committed senior leadership team and expert staff, you will bring together the different parts of CPAG's work and help us turn our distinctive combination of evidence, frontline insight, campaigning and legal expertise into even greater influence and impact for children and families. CPAG has grown over the years, with offices in London and Scotland, and a reputation for robust and timely evidence and analysis.

This is an opportunity to think ambitiously about how CPAG works and what it could achieve: speaking with authority and academic rigour on child poverty and social security support for families, strengthening our organisational and financial resilience, developing our people and culture, deepening our partnerships and alliances, and ensuring our voice remains influential in a changing policy and political environment. We want to build on what makes CPAG distinctive while being open to new ideas, approaches, and opportunities.

We are looking for a strong and inspiring leader who can be both the public face and internal leader of CPAG. You will be an exceptional communicator with the confidence and credibility to speak powerfully about child poverty, build alliances and influence senior stakeholders, funders, policymakers and decision makers. You will understand the power of campaigning and advocacy, and bring the strategic judgement and political understanding to ensure CPAG plays a leading role in shaping the debate on child poverty, influencing government strategy across the UK and holding it to account for delivering on its commitments. You will use CPAG's evidence, expertise, and the experiences of children and families to make a compelling case for support and change and to translate insight into meaningful action.

Alongside this outward-facing leadership, you will be a highly visible and engaged people leader who builds strong, trusting relationships and brings people with you. You will have experience of leading through change, with the judgement, resilience, and emotional intelligence to create a positive culture, develop people and navigate complexity.

Above all, we are looking for someone who shares CPAG's determination to challenge poverty and inequality; who cares deeply about the difference the organisation can make; and who will bring energy, authenticity, and fresh thinking.

We hope you will be excited by the opportunity to join us as our next Chief Executive and by what CPAG can achieve over the years ahead.

Jane Millar

Chair of the Board of Trustees

About us

Official statistics for 2024/25 show that around four million children are growing up in poverty. Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) believes it does not have to be this way.

Established to campaign for increased family allowances, CPAG has grown into one of the UK's leading organisations working to prevent and end child poverty. In November 2025, CPAG marked its 60th anniversary, reflecting on a long history of combining evidence, campaigning and practical expertise to secure change for children and families. Throughout those years, CPAG has helped secure significant changes in policy and legislation, including the introduction of Child Benefit, the development of tax credits and the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Today, CPAG brings together rigorous research and policy expertise with frontline experience, strategic legal action, and the voices of children and families themselves. Most recent policy successes include the introduction of a new child poverty strategy, the abolition of the two-child limit, and the extension of free school meals. In Scotland, CPAG campaigned and supported the introduction of a Child Poverty Act and led the campaign for measures such as the Scottish Child Payment, which has been shown to have reduced Scotland's child poverty rates. We use our understanding of what causes poverty, and the impact it has on children's lives, to challenge decision-makers and develop policies that will prevent and end it.

Our work is grounded in a simple belief: child poverty is neither inevitable nor necessary. It is shaped by the choices governments make, and it can be prevented and reduced through effective policy. Policy solutions should focus on adequate incomes and prioritise prevention rather than relief, and means-testing should be avoided wherever possible.

Our vision

A society free of child poverty, where all children can enjoy a childhood free from financial hardship and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.

Our mission

To promote action to prevent and end poverty among children and families with children in the UK.

Our values

- **Ambitious** – We believe child poverty is not inevitable, and we will not stop until no child grows up in financial hardship.
- **Voice** – We ensure our work is informed by the experiences and voices of children and families.
- **Evidence-based** – We develop and advocate for solutions grounded in evidence, research and frontline experience.
- **Leadership** – We provide leadership on child poverty and the rights of children and families across the UK.
- **Collaboration** – we work with partners and policy makers across all parties to achieve our aims
- **Independent** – We are willing to speak out and challenge decision-makers where the evidence demands it.

What we do

Policy and campaigning

We use evidence and frontline insight to influence government, parliament, the media and public debate. We research the causes and consequences of child poverty and develop practical, ambitious policy solutions. Our Early Warning System gathers real-time evidence from frontline advisers about the impact of changes to social security, ensuring the experiences of families inform our policy and campaigning work. We centre the voices of children and families through our partnership with Changing Realities and our Youth Panel. We also publish Poverty, our journal exploring poverty, its causes and the action needed to tackle it.

Rights and advice

We equip advisers, professionals and families with the knowledge and resources they need to ensure low-income households receive the financial support to which they are entitled. Our Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook, online platform, and dedicated advice line provide essential expertise to frontline organisations. In 2025/26, our advice lines supported around 30,000 people.

Training

We provide comprehensive training for advisers and professionals across England, Wales and Scotland. Through in-person courses, eLearning, conferences and seminars, we support thousands of people each year to understand and navigate the social security system and better support the families they work with.

Strategic litigation

We use the law to establish and protect the rights of children and families. Our strategic test cases have repeatedly influenced the interpretation and development of social security law. In 2022, for example, an Upper Tribunal victory helped secure universal credit for a mother and daughter who had fled domestic abuse while having no recourse to public funds.

Together, these strands of work create a powerful cycle: frontline experience informs our evidence; evidence shapes our policy and campaigning; and legal action and specialist advice help protect and advance families' rights.

Campaigning for change

CPAG leads and supports campaigns at UK and national level to build public and political support for an end to child poverty.

In the lead up to the 2024 general election, our [Imagine](#) campaign invited people to imagine – and help build – a future free from child poverty. We also host [End Child Poverty](#), the UK-wide coalition of charities and campaigners calling for government action, alongside our work through [End Child Poverty in Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Campaign on Rights to Social Security](#).

Our campaigning is underpinned by a determination to turn evidence into lasting policy change. In November 2025, following years of sustained campaigning by CPAG and other organisations, the UK government announced that the two-child limit would be scrapped from April 2026. The change was expected to lift 350,000 children out of poverty and move a further 700,000 out of deeper poverty.

CPAG was also closely involved in the development of the UK government's child poverty strategy, published in December 2025, and was a core participant in the Covid Inquiry's modules examining the treatment of children during the pandemic and the government's economic response.

After 2024/25, CPAG's work also contributed to significant changes across the UK, including a reduction in child poverty in Scotland, the reduction of the maximum rate of Universal Credit deductions from 25% to 15%, the Scottish Government's move to effectively abolish the two-child limit in Scotland from 2026, and the extension of free school meals to all families receiving Universal Credit in England from September 2026.

Our theory of change

Our work is built around a clear theory of change:

- By promoting our values, we build public and political will for a society free from child poverty.
- By developing evidence-based solutions, we encourage policymakers and practitioners to take action to prevent and end poverty.
- By campaigning, we seek the social and political change needed to keep families out of poverty.
- By developing and sharing our expertise in social security and children's rights, we help maximise families' resources while strengthening the evidence base for further change.

[CPAG | We are the trusted voice on child poverty.](#)

Job description

Job title:	Chief Executive
Reports to:	The Chair of the Board of Trustees
Direct reports:	Director of Business; Director of Finance & Resources; Director of Policy, Rights & Advocacy; Director of CPAG in Scotland; EA to CEO/Office Manager



Role purpose:

As CPAG's Chief Executive, you will be the organisation's principal leader, spokesperson and ambassador, accountable to the Board of Trustees for CPAG's strategic direction and for the operational health of an organisation that works across policy and campaigning, rights and advice, training, and strategic litigation to prevent and end child poverty in the UK. You will set CPAG's positions on child poverty and social security, decide where to concentrate influencing effort, and ensure the organisation's UK-wide work and its distinct Scottish operation reinforce each other.

Main responsibilities:

Strategic leadership

- To lead the organisation, and provide leadership across the wider movement, engaging campaigners, influencers and decision-makers to advance CPAG's values and objectives.
- To formulate CPAG's campaigns and policies in line with the overall aim of the eradication of child poverty and to implement a programme of work and activities to achieve these.
- To be responsible for advising the Board of Trustees in terms of CPAG's strategic and operational aims and objectives, and to take responsibility for the development and implementation of a strategic plan.

Financial and resource management

- To be responsible for the financial stability of CPAG, showing sound financial management.
- To develop CPAG's business, fundraising and financial strategy and be responsible for achieving the organisation's objectives in relation to these plans and the achievement of its budgeted income generation activities.
- To develop plans to ensure financial sustainability and investment in the short and medium term.

External relations and advocacy

- To ensure that CPAG is represented externally to maximum effect in line with its policy and campaigning objectives and to extend CPAG's external profile and influence.
- To maintain and develop external alliances with key organisations and individuals.

People and culture

- To provide visible and strong internal leadership to the organisation, supporting and empowering management, staff and volunteers.
- To ensure we operate within the most up to date employment policy with attention both to staff wellbeing and to protecting the financial wellbeing of the organisation.

Governance and compliance

- To manage the internal affairs of the organisation, ensuring adherence to legislative requirements, company and charity accounting requirements.
- To ensure compliance with all CPAG's policies and practices, including HR, safeguarding, health and safety, and staffing decisions, with specific attention to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Significant senior leadership experience within the public or not for profit sectors.
- A strong understanding of child poverty, social security, welfare rights or related social policy issues, together with an appreciation of the wider social, economic and political context in which CPAG operates.
- Experience of working with, influencing or engaging government and other key stakeholders.
- Experience of sound financial and resource management, including income generation, and a strong understanding of accounts and financial planning.
- A strong track record of team leadership and staff management, with the ability to manage tight resources effectively while maintaining a strong and motivated team.
- Substantial experience of successful corporate management, including leading the formulation and delivery of an organisational vision, strategy, policy and objectives, and of leading and managing organisational change.
- Proven track record as a member of an executive leadership team, with significant leadership responsibility and experience of working effectively with a board.
- Confidence and credibility as a public ambassador and spokesperson.

Skills and abilities

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively with a wide range of audiences, including public speaking and the media.
- Strong and effective leadership skills which engage, empower and inspire others, externally and internally, across all levels of the organisation.
- Able to think and act strategically and to develop practical, innovative solutions to complex problems.
- Able to work effectively in a political and politically sensitive environment, identifying and maximising opportunities to advance CPAG's aims.
- Exceptional relationship management skills, including the ability to negotiate and influence effectively.
- High intellectual capacity, with the ability to draw on information from a range of sources to prepare informed and authoritative responses on a range of policies or consultations.

Styles and behaviours

- Demonstrates a strong personal commitment to the aims and objectives of CPAG.
- High level of personal credibility and authority with a personal and professional demeanour which generates the trust and confidence of others.
- Tenacious, determined and resilient, with sound political judgement.
- Highly professional, leads by example and demonstrates a clear commitment to CPAG's equity, diversity and inclusion policies.



Terms of appointment

Contract Permanent, full-time

Probationary Period Six months

Salary

The salary for this role is **circa £100,000** per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

London, with offices based at 30 Micawber Street, London, N1 7TB

The core working week is 35 hours, but the Chief Executive will be required to work outside these hours in order to fulfil the requirements of the role and this will include attendance at evening meetings and occasional weekend meetings although flexible working arrangements may be negotiated.

A requirement for national travel and overnight stays as required in the course of CPAG business, including regular visits to the CPAG Glasgow office. Appropriate expenses will be reimbursed.

Pension

5.64% employer contribution to Group Personal Pension Scheme

Leave and flexible working

- 30 days' annual leave, plus 4 additional paid days during the Christmas office closure and 9 bank holidays
- Generous family leave provisions, including enhanced maternity, paternity and shared parental leave
- Additional paid leave for caring responsibilities, urgent domestic circumstances and public duties
- Up to 10 days' paid study leave, subject to agreement
- The option to take an unpaid career break of up to six months after two years' service
- Flexible working arrangements, including flexitime and time off in lieu

Leave entitlements apply pro rata where appropriate

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to [Starfish](#) 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 to the questions below:
1. Explain what draws you to this role and at this time. How will this enable you to lead Child Poverty Action Group with passion, authenticity and integrity?
 2. Describe a time you built lasting influence with decision-makers or across a wider system, including a period when progress was slow or the political conditions were against you. What choices did you make about when to push, when to build alliances, and when to hold a position for the long term?
 3. Describe a significant change you led within an organisation or team. What was your role in it, what did you learn, and what would you do differently next time?

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equity 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: Friday 30th October 2026

Preliminary interviews: w/c Monday 16th November 2026

Final Panel interviews: w/c Monday 30th or w/c Monday 7th December 2026

