



Candidate pack for Chief Executive

nct
For pregnancy, parents & progress



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chief Executive of NCT, the National Childbirth Trust.

As we celebrate NCT's 70th anniversary year, we are looking ahead with confidence and ambition to what comes next for our charity.

Across generations, women and parents have turned to NCT for information, practical support, reassurance and community. And in a time when perinatal services are under real pressure, that support matters more than ever.

Becoming a parent remains one of life's most significant transitions. It is often joyful, exciting and life changing. It can also be overwhelming, isolating and have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing. Our landmark From Expectation To Reality 2026 report found that nine in ten new parents felt overwhelmed at least some of the time, while nearly six in ten experienced loneliness or isolation after their baby was born.

That's why NCT matters as much today as it ever has.

We believe everyone should be able to shape their own unique journey to becoming a parent. No judgement. No exceptions. Together, we are working towards a future where everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe.

Over recent years, NCT has evolved too. We have refreshed our flagship antenatal education course, developed new services, strengthened our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, expanded ambitious partnerships, refreshed our brand and listened more closely to the experiences of the diverse communities we serve. We are a more inclusive, more representative and more ambitious organisation because of it.

This has been achieved under the thoughtful leadership of Angela McConville, our outgoing Chief Executive, who has guided NCT through six and a half eventful years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of our current strategy, and a renewed commitment to equity and inclusion. We are enormously grateful for everything Angela has achieved, and her successor will be supported by a strong and experienced Senior Leadership Team as they take this work forward.

We have much to be proud of, and we are even more excited about what comes next.

The world pregnant women, birthing people and new parents are navigating today is changing rapidly. Families are more diverse. Expectations of pregnancy and parenthood continue to evolve. Technology is transforming how people seek information, support and community. At the same time, trusted, evidence-based information is increasingly competing with misinformation and unverified content. Birth rates are falling and maternity services remain under significant pressure. As a result, too many women and parents still experience unacceptable inequalities in access, experiences, outcomes and care.

Yet these changes can bring opportunity as well as challenge.

WELCOME

Technology, including AI, is creating new ways to reach and support pregnancy and parenthood. New partnerships help us extend our impact. Evolving education, information and community-building enable us to think differently about how we serve expectant and new parents. At a time when parents need trusted information, meaningful connection and a powerful voice more than ever, the opportunity for NCT is significant.

We are approaching the final phase of our For Every Parent strategy and beginning to shape what comes next. This is an exciting opportunity for a new Chief Executive to work with the Board, our people, our partners and our wider community to define NCT's future direction and build on everything we have achieved so far.

We are looking for a Chief Executive who can combine strategic ambition with real emotional intelligence, commercial judgement with social purpose, and innovation with a deep understanding of people. You may come from a charity, the public sector, health, membership or commercial background. What matters most is your ability to lead a values-led organisation through change, build confidence and trust, and make bold decisions in service of our mission.

You will be as comfortable representing NCT externally as you are engaging with the people who bring our work to life every day. You will recognise the importance of parent voice, the value of community, and the need to ensure that more people can see themselves reflected in the support and services we provide, and in the voices and experiences we highlight in our campaigning.

As we enter our eighth decade, our belief in NCT's mission remains as strong as ever. There is still much to do, but there is also enormous opportunity. Pregnant women and new parents need NCT today just as much as they did 70 years ago, even if what they need from us continues to evolve. I am excited about what the future holds for our charity, and about the opportunity for a new Chief Executive to help shape it.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this pack and that we get to meet if you decide you'd like to progress this further, but for now thanks for your interest.

With very best wishes,

Joëlle Warren

Joëlle Warren
Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees
NCT



ABOUT NCT

NCT is the national charity for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our vision is simple: a society where everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe.

Through our *For Every Parent* strategy, we have been working to make that vision a reality by supporting pregnant women and expectant and new parents with trusted information, practical help, local communities and a stronger voice on the issues that matter.

We believe everyone should be able to shape their own unique journey to becoming a parent. No judgement. No exceptions. That belief runs through everything we do.

Today, parents connect with NCT in many different ways. They may attend an NCT Antenatal course, access trusted information online, call our NCT Infant Feeding Line, meet other parents through an NCT Bumps & Babies group, find support through an NCT Baby Café, join an NCT Walk & Talk group, access emotional wellbeing support through NCT Parents in Mind, or benefit from one of our peer support programmes and local services.

We educate and empower parents with evidence-based information and support. We advocate and act by listening to parents' experiences, raising their voices and campaigning for change.

Our community is one of NCT's greatest strengths. We are a largely remote organisation, bringing together staff, antenatal and perinatal practitioners, breastfeeding counsellors, peer supporters, volunteers and members - working in communities all across the UK. Together, they help new and expectant parents build friendships, find support and feel less alone.

Each year, our volunteers contribute more than 70,000 hours of community service, supporting parents in communities across the UK and helping create the connections that are so important during pregnancy and early parenthood.



ABOUT NCT

Alongside our direct support for parents, we work with government, the NHS, researchers, campaigners, funders, corporate partners and charities to improve experiences and outcomes across pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. We use evidence, insight and parents' lived experiences to influence public policy and practice, improve services and advocate for a fairer, more equitable system for all women and families.

We are committed to tackling inequalities in maternal health and ensuring that more women and parents can access trusted information, support and community. This includes working to address poorer outcomes and experiences of Black and Brown women and those who face the greatest barriers to accessing support and care, and ensuring that more people can see themselves reflected in our services, content, advocacy and campaigning.

Read more about [our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion](#).

OUR STRATEGY

For Every Parent is our current five-year strategy, setting out our ambition to reach more parents, deepen our impact and strengthen our influence, so that the systems surrounding pregnancy, birth and early parenthood become fairer, safer and more equitable.

The strategy reflects a simple but important truth: while every parent's journey is different, too many continue to face barriers to accessing support, information and care. We want every parent to feel confident, connected and safe, regardless of their background, circumstances or experience.

Through *For Every Parent*, we have strengthened our services, invested in trusted information, developed new partnerships and increased our influence on the issues that matter most to women and parents. It has also helped shape NCT into a more inclusive, representative and ambitious organisation.

We are now entering the final phase of the strategy and beginning to think about what comes next.

For our next Chief Executive, this presents a rare opportunity. Working with the Board, our people, our partners and the parents we serve, they will help evaluate the impact of *For Every Parent* and shape NCT's next strategic chapter.



ABOUT NCT

OUR VISION

That everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

OUR VALUES

WELCOMING
COLLABORATIVE
INCLUSIVE
BOLD
TRUSTED



THE OPPORTUNITY

This is a rare opportunity to lead one of the UK's best-loved charities at a pivotal moment in its history. At a time of significant change for pregnant women and birthing people, expectant and new parents, communities and the wider maternity system, NCT's role has never been more important.

Historically, NCT has been best known for its antenatal courses, which have provided the majority of our income and supported generations of expectant parents through pregnancy and early parenthood. However, the environment in which we operate is changing. Birth rates are falling, new digital-first providers have entered the market, parents are increasingly using AI for health information, and the cost-of-living crisis has significantly affected what parents are willing or able to pay for.

We have responded to these challenges by, refreshing our flagship education course, strengthening our brand, launching new products and services, and partnering with local public health commissioners to deliver locally responsive antenatal and postnatal services. We have moved the organisation back towards financial sustainability, but organic growth from parent education alone will not be enough to secure NCT's future.

At the same time, the wider environment is full of opportunity. NCT's heritage, our reach into local communities, our committed people and engaged volunteer community, and our trusted reputation provide a strong platform to build new partnerships, deepen relationships with corporates, develop new services, diversify income and grow our impact.

The next Chief Executive will need to be commercially astute, with a clear strategic view on how NCT diversifies and grows its income, including through fundraising, partnerships and corporate relationships, while understanding that NCT is not, at its heart, a fundraising organisation, and cannot simply import a commercial model. Finding a long-term, sustainable, balanced funding and operating model will be key. And success will depend on bringing people with us and building on the strengths, relationships and values that make NCT distinctive.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Technology is also reshaping the landscape in which NCT operates. Parents are increasingly seeking information and support online, whilst AI and other technologies are changing how people discover, consume and trust information. These developments bring risks, but also significant opportunity.

There is real appetite across the organisation for a Chief Executive who can bring pace and ambition to NCT's digital strategy, helping us harness the opportunity presented by new technology while ensuring that trusted information, meaningful human connection and evidence-based support remain at the heart of everything we do.

NCT is also uniquely positioned to influence change beyond the services we provide directly. Through our work with women and parents, government, the Department for Health, the NHS, researchers, charities, funders and corporate partners, we help ensure that women and parents' experiences shape the future of maternity and perinatal services. The Board is looking for a Chief Executive who is a confident and credible external advocate, able to work with partners and stakeholders to strengthen NCT's influence on the wider maternity system, while remaining a visible and connected presence internally.

We have become a more inclusive, more representative and more ambitious organisation in recent years. We have strengthened our commitment to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, developed important maternity equity partnerships and worked to ensure more people can see themselves reflected in our services, content and campaigning. The Board is proud of that progress but there is still more to do.

Maternal health inequalities remain one of the most significant challenges facing maternity services. We believe NCT has an important role to play in helping drive change and improve experiences and outcomes for Black and Brown women, people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, parents with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ parents, solo parents and those with long and complex fertility journeys.

We are looking for a Chief Executive who can demonstrate a real, evidenced commitment to this agenda, including to reducing inequalities in maternal health and who will continue to build an organisation, and a movement, that reflects the diversity of the women and parents it serves.

NCT is also a distinctive and complex organisation to lead. We operate through around 200 employed staff, some 400 self-employed practitioners and more than 3,000 volunteers and peer supporters. Much of our work depends on the goodwill, expertise and trust of our wider community.

The Chief Executive will need real skill in building a shared sense of purpose and culture across these groups. They will need to be as comfortable building relationships and credibility as they are making decisions, often leading through influence and trust.

THE OPPORTUNITY

KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OVER THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS

- Working with the Board to evaluate the 2023-28 For Every Parent strategy and shape NCT's next strategic cycle from 2027 onwards.
- Increasing NCT's reach and relevance, particularly among pregnant women and new parents facing the greatest barriers to accessing support, care and services..
- Strengthening NCT's financial sustainability, including diversifying and growing income through fundraising, partnerships and corporate relationships.
- Modernising NCT's services and digital capability, and ensuring the organisation responds confidently to the opportunities and risks presented by AI and new technology.
- Deepening NCT's influence with government, the NHS and the wider maternity system; identifying opportunities to deepen partnership and collaboration with others working in this space.
- Building organisational effectiveness, an inclusive and high-performing culture, and a genuine, shared sense of purpose across employed staff, self-employed practitioners, peer supporters and volunteers.
- Strengthening NCT's approach to impact measurement, sustainability and the use of evidence to inform decisions.
- Continuing to build an inclusive, anti-racist charity, with demonstrable progress on maternal health inequalities.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE AFTER THREE YEARS

- Significantly more pregnant women and new parents, including those currently facing the greatest barriers to accessing support, benefitting from information, support and community, with measurably better outcomes as a result.
- A bold, evidence-led strategy for NCT's next chapter, shaped with parents and partners, and already reshaping how the wider system serves families.
- Greater financial resilience, with a more diversified income base.
- **An NCT that pregnant women, new parents and the communities it serves recognise as more inclusive, more representative and more responsive to their needs**, underpinned by a staff, practitioner, peer supporter and volunteer community united behind that purpose.
- More parents, particularly those facing the greatest barriers, able to access high-quality digital information and support whenever and wherever they need it.
- Measurable improvements in maternity policy and practice, with government, the NHS and sector partners turning to NCT as a leading and credible voice for parents.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Chief Executive

Reports to: Chair of Trustees, on behalf of the Board

Location: Home-based, with frequent travel to stakeholder events and NCT community locations including regular attendance in London and across the UK

KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- The Board of Trustees, NCT President and Chair
- The Directors Group (Executive Team), and Senior Leadership Team, including the Directors of Parent Services, Marketing and Engagement, and Organisational Services.
- Staff, practitioners, volunteers, peer supporters
- NCT members
- Pregnant women, new parents and the wider NCT parent and alumni community
- Government, NHS England, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), the National Taskforce and other statutory and regulatory bodies
- Pregnancy and baby charity partners and peers
- Professional bodies, research institutions, funders, corporate partners, donors and supporters

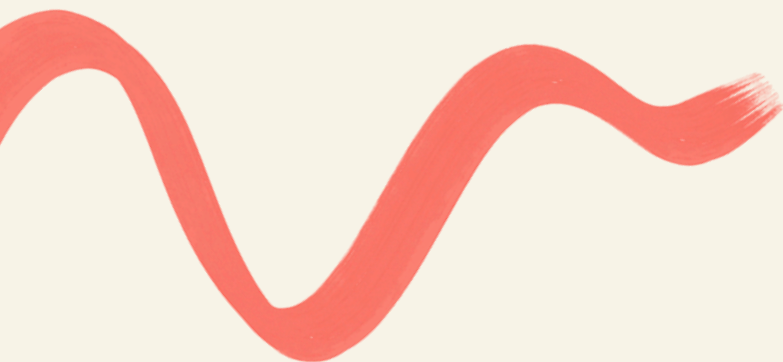
ROLE PURPOSE

Working with the Board of Trustees, Directors Group, staff, practitioners, peer supporters, volunteers and alongside pregnant women and new parents, the Chief Executive is responsible for delivering NCT's vision, purpose and strategy. They will lead organisational performance and financial sustainability, champion parents' voices, expand the charity's reach and influence, and ensure NCT remains a trusted, inclusive and evidence-led organisation that improves outcomes for women, birthing people, expectant and new parents, babies and families.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership

- Lead delivery of the For Every Parent strategy and, working with the Board, lead the evaluation and development of NCT's next strategic cycle.
- Ensure measurable impact and organisational learning.
- Lead transformation and innovation to respond to a changing market and changing parent needs.
- Bring pace and ambition to NCT's strategic thinking, while bringing staff, practitioners, peer supporters and volunteers with the organisation as it changes.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Financial Sustainability and Commercial Leadership

- Lead the diversification and growth of NCT's income, including fundraising, partnerships, corporate relationships and commissioned contracts.
- Ensure long-term financial planning, resilience and a balanced income portfolio.
- Bring strong commercial judgement to decisions on investment, resource allocation and scenario planning.
- Identify, assess and manage emerging financial risks.
- Deliver annual plans and budgets and ensure disciplined financial and operational management.

People, Culture and Workforce

- Lead a high-performing, values-led and inclusive organisation across employed staff, self-employed practitioners, peer supporters and volunteers.
- Build a genuine, shared sense of purpose and culture across these different groups, recognising that much of this leadership is exercised through influence and relationships.
- Inspire and develop leadership capability across the organisation.
- Maintain visibility and connection across the charity, ensuring people feel engaged, communicated with and heard.

Parent Voice and Co-production

- Embed lived experience across strategy, campaigns and services.
- Ensure underrepresented parents influence decision-making.
- Use insight, evidence and data to improve outcomes and relevance.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Be a visible EDI champion and role model, both internally and externally.
- Champion the rights and needs of every pregnant woman and new parent.
- Reduce barriers to participation and access, both within NCT's services and the wider maternity ecosystem.
- Drive delivery of NCT's EDI commitments, culture and practice, with particular attention to reducing inequalities in maternal health for Black and Brown women alongside those who face the greatest barriers to accessing support.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Digital, Data and Innovation

- Lead digital transformation and accessibility, ensuring high-quality, evidence-based information, support and services for expectant and new parents.
- Bring a clear and considered view on the opportunities and risks AI presents for NCT's services and operations.
- Promote innovation and continuous improvement and use data and insight to improve organisational decision-making and impact.

Influence and Systems Leadership

- Position NCT as a leading voice on pregnancy, birth and early parenthood, nationally and within the wider maternity system.
- Build partnerships with government, the NHS, DHSC, professional bodies, researchers, funders and voluntary and charity sector partners.
- Spot opportunities to deepen collaboration and partnership with others working in this space, in service delivery, policy and campaigning.
- Act as a credible and compelling media spokesperson for NCT, representing the charity in broadcast, print, digital and social media, helping shape informed public debate on pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.
- Lead campaigning and policy influence to create safer and fairer systems for parents.

Governance, Risk, Safety and Safeguarding

- Support excellent charity governance and a close, transparent relationship with the Chair and Board.
- Ensure effective risk management processes and compliance and the responsible stewardship of NCT's resources and environmental commitments.
- Lead a safeguarding culture in which safety and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Brand and Reputation

- Act as principal ambassador and public spokesperson for NCT.
- Protect and strengthen the NCT brand and reputation.

Resources controlled

- Annual organisational budget of approximately £12m.
- Reserves of approximately £3m.
- Around 200 employees.
- Approximately 400 self-employed practitioners.
- More than 3,000 volunteers and peer supporters.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

- Deep commitment to NCT's vision, purpose and values, and a demonstrable, evidenced commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, including reducing inequalities in health.
- Successful strategic leadership of an organisation of comparable scale and complexity, including experience of leading transformation.
- Strong financial and commercial leadership, with experience of diversifying income, including fundraising, and of managing financial risk.
- Experience of leading an executive team and working effectively with Boards and senior stakeholders.
- Track record of building influential partnerships and relationships at a national or system level, including with government and/or the NHS.
- Experience of leading through complexity and ambiguity, including working with, or leading, organisations with volunteer, membership or self-employed workforces.
- Experience of using evidence, insight and data to shape strategy and decisions.
- Experience overseeing digital transformation, innovation or service modernisation.
- Confidence and credibility as a public ambassador and media spokesperson.
- Strong governance, risk and safeguarding experience.

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

- Experience in charity, health, public sector or membership environments.
- Understanding of maternity, neonatal, infant feeding, early years, health visiting or the wider public health agenda.
- Experience of campaigning, public affairs or systems change.
- Experience of working with volunteers and community networks.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- High EQ with the ability to build relationships across diverse groups and work effectively with people from different backgrounds and perspectives; takes account of shifting priorities and dynamics across stakeholder groups to inform how they engage.
- Bold and courageous, with a genuine appetite for transformation, balanced with the judgement to know when to push and when to hold steady.
- Resilient and comfortable with sustained internal and external scrutiny.
- Authentic and visible, able to build trust quickly and to demonstrate a real understanding of, and respect for, NCT's mission and heritage.
- Able to balance heritage and modernity, respecting NCT's history while bringing pace and ambition to its future.
- Confident in prioritising and setting clear boundaries, making informed choices about where to focus resources for the greatest impact.
- Politically astute and comfortable operating in complex, and at times divided, stakeholder environments.
- A demonstrable commitment to advancing women's health and rights, and to the reproductive rights and maternal health agenda.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

SALARY

Circa £125,000 per annum

LOCATION

NCT operates on a remote-first basis, with regular travel to London and across the UK for Board, Directors Group and team meetings as well as stakeholder events and meetings with funders and partners. NCT is exploring more permanent office space in London to support greater in-person connection.

PENSION

NCT operates a Group Personal Pension Scheme into which staff are auto-enrolled after three months' service, with NCT matching employee contributions up to 5%. Salary sacrifice arrangements are available.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Holiday entitlement is 30 days per year plus bank holidays.

BENEFITS

NCT offers a range of benefits designed to support staff wellbeing and flexibility, including NCT membership (allowing free attendance at NCT antenatal courses), family-friendly policies covering maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave, an Employee Assistance Programme, life assurance, and a range of wellbeing pledges including meeting-free Fridays and protected time for reflection and development.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Search closes	Monday 12 October 2026
First stage meetings for longlisted candidates with Starfish	w/c Monday 26 October and w/c Monday 2 November 2026
One-to-one with the Chair and wider stakeholder engagement for shortlisted candidates	w/c Monday 16 November 2026
Final Panel interviews with NCT	w/c Monday 23 November 2026

HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. To apply, please click [here](#) with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) describing your motivations for applying and the experience you would bring to the appointment.

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

NCT is committed to social justice, equity and being an anti-racist organisation. We believe that being there for every parent requires bold action to challenge inequalities and remove barriers to support.

We know that diversity strengthens organisations and helps us better reflect and serve the pregnant women, expectant and new parents, and communities we work alongside. We particularly welcome applications from people from underrepresented groups, including Black and Brown people, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities.

If you require any adjustment during the recruitment process, please let us know. We are committed to making the process as accessible and supportive as possible.

