

worldwide
cancer
research

**Executive Director of
Strategic Partnerships
and Philanthropy**



CEO Welcome

We're at the edge of our potential – can you help us go further?

What if we could do more than fund the next cancer breakthrough? What if we could connect the people, ideas and resources to make breakthroughs reach patients faster? What if we could accelerate the journey from idea to impact – so more people live longer, better lives, or never develop cancer at all?

That's the opportunity ahead of us at Worldwide Cancer Research – and I'm looking for an Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy to help us get there.

We're developing our new 10-year strategy, rethinking our role in the global cancer research ecosystem and what we can achieve together. Every year, we invest around £6m in pioneering discovery research, backing bold ideas from scientists worldwide – into any cancer, anywhere in the world.

But I believe we're only at the edge of our potential.

Cancer research is inherently risky, yet funding systems often favour certainty, leaving bold, unconventional ideas overlooked. We exist to challenge that – giving researchers the freedom to explore ideas that could transform cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Our Theory of Change takes that ambition further: championing discovery research, connecting researchers across borders and helping promising discoveries secure the partnerships, funding and opportunities they need to progress.

It's time to move beyond simply funding great science and embrace our potential as a catalyst for impact.

That's where you come in.

The opportunity is significant: to build a step-change in our partnerships, philanthropy and external influence, unlocking new sources of sustainable income and bringing major funders, businesses, researchers and institutions closer to the potential of discovery cancer research.

The challenge is equally substantial.

This is about more than fundraising. Success will require you to create opportunities that do not yet exist, strengthen organisational capability, make disciplined investment choices and lead change. It's about building relationships that unlock networks, influence and impact.

I'm looking for someone creative, curious and commercially minded. Someone who sees opportunity where others see complexity, builds relationships and turns ambitious ideas into lasting partnerships.

We need a leader who develops other leaders, inspires and empowers their team and builds the capability we need for the future. Someone who thinks beyond their own directorate, who stands alongside SLT colleagues, challenges constructively and makes the best decisions for the whole of Worldwide Cancer Research.

You'll join passionate Team Worldwiders, a collaborative Board of Trustees and a global network of researchers. We've built strong foundations, but we're not standing still. We're ready to challenge our thinking, embrace new ideas and take informed risks.

Above all, I want someone excited by what we could achieve together.

If we have the courage to think bigger about what we fund, how we partner and how we lead, we can take leaps – not steps – towards a future where more people live longer, better lives.

Let's get started.

Laura Brady

Chief Executive, Worldwide Cancer Research



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Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy



About us

At Worldwide Cancer Research, we start new cures. Cancer is still one of the leading causes of death worldwide, but cutting-edge science can give us hope. Discovery research seeks to uncover new knowledge that could change the way we think about cancer. It reveals new ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer that can save lives.

We actively seek unconventional and imaginative ideas from scientists at all stages of their career, across the globe. In some cases, we are the only organisation that will fund a scientist's idea. We take an unbiased approach to research funding by focusing on supporting only the best ideas for new cures. By having a diverse research portfolio, we increase our chances of finding breakthroughs.

Our vision is of a day when no life is cut short by cancer, and we believe we can achieve this by starting the life-saving advances of the future by sowing the seeds of discoveries. Anyone that helps bring forward breakthroughs – including our staff, our supporters, and the researchers we fund – is a Curestarter.

As a charity, we are committed to opportunity without barriers, and we are striving to seek, value and learn from different perspectives and experiences. We want Worldwide Cancer Research to be an inclusive organisation – where everyone can be themselves and feel valued – as diverse as the scientific community we fund and the families whose lives we impact.

We are committed to ensuring that we provide equal opportunities to every applicant regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We aim to ensure that our recruitment process is unbiased and that everyone is treated equitably because our team members are at the heart of everything we do to start new cancer cures around the world.

To help start new cancer cures and save lives, we are looking for an Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy to join the busy Partnerships and Philanthropy team at Worldwide Cancer Research, to help the charity run its multi-million-pound funding programme for discovery cancer research.



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Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy



Job description

Job title: Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy

Reports to: Chief Executive

Direct reports: Partnerships and Philanthropy Directorate

Other Key Relationships: Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Board of Trustees, all Team Worldwide; major donors and philanthropists; senior corporate executives; trusts and foundations; professional advisers and intermediaries, research and scientific partners and other influential stakeholders.

Role purpose

Lead Worldwide Cancer Research's partnerships and philanthropy strategy, securing income and building relationships that advance discovery cancer research. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), contribute to the charity's overall strategy, performance and culture.

The role combines strategic leadership with direct involvement in major relationships and negotiations. It is responsible for developing the team, systems and pipeline needed for sustained growth.

Main responsibilities

Strategic leadership and planning

- Develop and deliver a multi-year partnerships and philanthropy strategy aligned with the charity's priorities, with clear income targets, investment plans and measures of success.
- Contribute to organisational strategy and decision-making as a member of the SLT, bringing insight into the external funding and partnership landscape.
- Lead planning, budgeting, forecasting and performance reporting for the Partnerships and Philanthropy Directorate.
- Advise the CEO and Trustees on partnership opportunities, progress, investment and risk, and act as executive lead for relevant Board committees as agreed.



- Build an inclusive, high-performing team with clear objectives, effective support and opportunities to develop.
- Work with the Governance and Risk Lead and other colleagues to ensure partnership and fundraising activity meets relevant legal, regulatory and ethical standards.

Philanthropy and strategic partnerships

- Lead the development of a strong pipeline of major donors, trusts and foundations, corporate partners and other prospective funders.
- Secure and steward significant, long-term relationships that generate sustainable net income and, where appropriate, wider value through expertise, networks or influence.
- Lead the charity's most significant funding opportunities and partnership negotiations, agreeing clear objectives, responsibilities and measures of success.
- Work with colleagues across the charity to develop compelling, evidence-based propositions and cases for support.
- Establish effective systems for identifying, prioritising, managing and reporting on opportunities and relationships.
- Identify new forms of partnership that could advance the charity's research ambitions, assessing their potential value and risks with the relevant teams.

Research and external relationships

- Work closely with the Director of Research and Research Directorate to communicate research priorities and the potential impact of funding discovery cancer research. The Research Directorate retains authority for scientific decisions, feasibility, integrity and delivery.
- Develop appropriate relationships with research institutions, funders and other organisations that could support the charity's ambitions through funding, expertise or collaboration.
- Work with the CEO, Trustees and SLT to build senior relationships and make effective use of their networks.
- Represent Worldwide Cancer Research externally and strengthen its reputation as a credible partner in discovery cancer research.

People leadership

- Set direction for direct reports, agree objectives, provide coaching and feedback, and manage performance in line with the charity's policies.
- Recruit and develop an inclusive team, encouraging collaboration across directorates and ensuring colleagues understand their roles in developing and stewarding partnerships.
- Model the charity's values and support its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.



Person specification

Person Specification

You will be an ambitious and outward-looking leader who sees partnerships as a route to impact, not simply income. Commercially astute and naturally collaborative, you will be able to spot possibilities others may miss and turn them into credible, mutually valuable relationships. You will be equally comfortable engaging a philanthropist, corporate leader, foundation or research partner, and able to connect their ambitions with the transformational potential of discovery cancer research.

Experience and knowledge

- Senior leadership experience, including setting strategy, leading and developing people, and managing budgets and performance.
- A strong record of growing and diversifying income streams successfully.
- Personal track record of securing significant income from at least two of these sources - major donors, trusts and foundations or corporate partners.
- Experience developing and delivering partnership or fundraising strategies that support organisational goals.
- A record of building lasting mutually-beneficial relationships with senior supporters and partners, that deliver strategic value beyond the income.
- Ability to turn organisational priorities into compelling propositions, working closely with research and other specialist colleagues.
- Knowledge of the UK philanthropic and fundraising landscape, including donor stewardship, due diligence and ethical fundraising.
- Experience using data and CRM systems to manage opportunities, forecast income and assess performance.

Skills and approach

- Credibility and sound judgement when representing the charity with senior external audiences.
- Clear, persuasive communication, including the ability to explain complex ideas to different audiences.
- Strategic and commercial judgement, creativity, and the ability to identify new partnership opportunities.
- Strong leadership, financial management, decision-making and delegation skills.
- Integrity, discretion, and a commitment to inclusion and Worldwide Cancer Research's values.
- Ability to adapt to change and work effectively across teams.



Terms of appointment

Salary

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

Location

Central Edinburgh/hybrid (requirement to be in Edinburgh at least four times a month)

Pension

10% employer pension contribution

Annual Leave:

31 days' paid holiday/year plus four paid winter public holidays

Additional Benefits

- Private medical insurance;
- Employee assistance programme and counselling service;
- Enhanced maternity/paternity/adoption pay
- Enhanced sick pay
- 2-weeks' fully remote working/year
- Three days' paid carer leave/year
- Death in service benefit
- Cycle to work and travel season ticket schemes.

To support the team's work-life balance, we work a nine-day fortnight where the charity is closed every second Friday. See all our benefits on the careers page of the website.

Worldwide Cancer Research is a team of around 50 and we run an annual Employee Engagement Survey; in 2025 we achieved a 100% response to 'I would recommend Worldwide Cancer Research as a good place to work' and were awarded a 5-Star award from WorkBuzz.



How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application.

To do so, please [click here](#), 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 8th November 2026
Preliminary interviews: w/c 16th November 2026
Final Panel interviews: w/c 23rd and w/c 30th November

