

contact

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Contact as our next Chief Operating Officer.

Contact exists to make life easier for families with disabled children. We provide trusted information, advice and support to parent carers navigating complex health, education, social care and welfare systems, while working to influence the policies and practices that affect their lives. Our purpose is clear, and the need for our support is greater than ever.

We have an ambitious strategy to end the battle that families experience everyday. We have a strong foundation from which to deliver that strategy, already delivering impactful campaigns and highly rated services that change lives. We now need to become more focused, more effective and more confident, to reach more families. That means looking honestly at how we work, modernising our systems and processes, making the best use of our resources and ensuring that our people are equipped to deliver lasting impact for families.

The Chief Operating Officer will be central to achieving these strategic goals. This is a broad leadership role, with the opportunity to work in close partnership with me and alongside our Executive Leadership Team and Board. I am looking for someone who combines strong financial expertise and sound judgement with the curiosity, commercial awareness and leadership skills to see beyond the numbers. Someone who can bring clarity and pace to complex challenges, ask the difficult questions when needed, and help us make decisions that enable us to move forward.

Just as importantly, this is a role about people. Change needs to be purposeful and well led, with colleagues understanding not only what needs to change, but why. We want to build on the strengths of our organisation and our supportive, inclusive culture, while being prepared to challenge established ways of working where they are no longer serving us well. The successful candidate will help us create the conditions for our people to do their best work and for Contact to make an even greater difference.

There is real opportunity here. We have a committed team, a supportive, ambitious Board and a clear sense of where we want to go. We are investing in our future and preparing for the next stage of Contact's development, including a new chapter for our identity as an organisation. The COO will have the scope to shape how we operate, strengthen our sustainability and help us realise the full potential of our strategy.

I hope this opportunity will appeal to an experienced strategic finance leader ready to broaden their contribution, as well as an established operational leader who brings the financial credibility and strategic perspective we need. Above all, I am looking for someone who shares our commitment to families, enjoys working collaboratively and has the confidence to turn good intentions into meaningful progress.

If you are excited by the prospect of helping Contact become an even stronger, more sustainable and more influential organisation, I would be delighted for you to consider joining us.

Thank you again for your interest. I look forward to the possibility of working together.

Anna Bird

Chief Executive



About us

Contact was founded in the 1970s by families of disabled children who recognised that, although their children's conditions might be different, they shared common experiences and challenges. They understood the importance of connecting with and supporting one another, and that principle remains at the heart of our work today.

Much has changed since then, but far too much remains the same. Across the UK, the two million disabled children and their families continue to face significant gaps in services and support. Navigating complex systems, managing additional financial costs and dealing with the practical and emotional pressures of family life can place an enormous strain on parents and carers, leaving many feeling isolated and alone.

We are here for all families with disabled children: providing trusted information and advice, bringing families together and helping them take action to improve the support available to others. Our vision is for families with disabled children to feel valued, and to be strong, confident and able to make the decisions that are right for them.

As the UK charity for parent carers of disabled children, we help families navigate complex health, social care, education and welfare systems. We also campaign for changes to policy and practice, challenging the barriers that make it so difficult for families to access the support they need. Everything we do is driven by our ambition for families with disabled children to live fulfilling and joyful lives together. Find out more about us [here](#).

Our next chapter

We have established strong foundations for our new strategy and are now entering an important phase of change. Our ambition is clear; the opportunity now is to strengthen how we work, modernise our systems and processes, and ensure we make the best possible use of our resources to deliver our strategy and secure Contact's long-term sustainability.

This is an exciting time to join Contact. Families need strong, trusted support and a powerful national voice more than ever. The Chief Operating Officer will play a central role in shaping our next chapter, working in close partnership with the Chief Executive and leadership team to turn our ambitions into action, improve organisational effectiveness and increase our impact for families across the UK.

Alongside this, the COO will help us build on the positive and supportive culture that makes Contact a great place to work. We value flexibility and inclusion and are proud of our track record as a two-star Best Companies employer. We want to preserve these strengths while ensuring our people, systems and ways of working are equipped for the future.



Job description



Job title: Chief Operating Officer
Reports to: Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports: Finance, and Resources, People, Governance,

Role purpose:

The COO will be a key member of Contact's Executive Leadership Team, maintaining our collective focus on future sustainability and growing our impact for families. Working closely with the CEO, Board of Trustees and senior colleagues, the postholder will lead our programme of operational, financial and cultural change. The role will provide strategic oversight of key enabling functions, including outsourced finance operations and IT support, as well as our in-house finance, people, governance and digital teams.

We are looking for a leader with experience of complex organisational change, likely to include cultural and structural change and financial turnaround. This is a role for a strategic, commercially astute and values-led leader who combines a recognised professional accountancy qualification and significant financial leadership experience with the ability to lead people through change. The postholder will bring clarity, pace and grip while championing Contact's values, protecting our positive working culture and recognising that our people are our most precious resource.

Main responsibilities:

Strategic leadership and organisational transformation

- Build and lead the strategic change programme and drive delivery of our strategic objective to secure our future sustainability, impact and resilience.
- Lead the change: build trust, clarity and engagement with staff, trustees, and other stakeholders.
- Identify and address structural barriers to effective delivery, including complexity, duplication, unclear accountabilities and inefficient ways of working.
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team to translate Contact's strategy into clear priorities, delivery plans and budgets, performance measures and resource decisions.

Financial sustainability and stewardship

- Develop a robust multi-year financial strategy that supports Contact's mission, strategic priorities and long-term sustainability.
- Ensure strong financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, reporting and control. Make sure that everyone, from individual budget-holders to the Chair of Trustees, has the clear insights they need to do their jobs well and manage risk effectively.
- Lead efforts to reduce fixed costs, improve efficiency and ensure Contact's operating model is affordable and fit for the future.
- Work closely with colleagues across Contact to ensure financial planning is at the service of our organisational priorities, always focusing on the ultimate impact we can make for families.
- Provide expert financial and accountancy leadership, ensuring Contact benefits from high-quality professional judgement, technical expertise and strong stewardship of charitable resources.
- Provide effective oversight of outsourced finance operations, ensuring strong service performance, clear controls, timely reporting, value for money and appropriate assurance.

People, culture and change

- Establish the vision of a future workplace that enables people to do their best work, adapt to change and contribute fully to Contact's mission.
- Lead change in a way that is transparent, inclusive and sensitive to the impact on employees, while maintaining focus on the decisions needed to secure Contact's future sustainability and impact for families.
- Work with people and culture colleagues to deliver tangible change across organisational design, terms and conditions, policies and processes, staff engagement and internal communications.
- Build strong relationships across teams, helping to reduce silos, clarify decision-making and empower colleagues to work effectively.
- Model Contact's values and contribute to an inclusive, collaborative, high support high challenge working culture.
- Build on our strong track record as a 2-star Best Companies employer to drive excellence in flexible and inclusive working practices at Contact.
- Drive progress against Contact's race equity strategy and champion equity and inclusion across the organisation, embedding these commitments in our culture, policies and ways of working.

Governance, risk and compliance

- Work closely with the CEO and Head of Governance to maintain and continually improve governance, assurance and risk management processes, to support good decision-making and regulatory compliance.
- Provide clear, timely and well-evidenced advice to the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Leadership Team and Board on operational, financial and strategic risks.
- Promote a culture of transparency, accountability and learning across the organisation.
- Act as Company Secretary, supported by the Head of Governance to comply with all relevant regulatory requirements.

Digital, data and systems transformation

- Undertake a review of core digital systems and processes, identifying ways that Contact can work more efficiently, make better use of digital tools, and improve the experience of families, staff, volunteers and supporters.
- Ensure digital and data developments are aligned with strategic priorities, affordability, information governance and organisational capacity.
- Champion the use of accurate, timely and accessible management information to support planning, impact measurement, fundraising, service improvement and organisational learning.
- Oversee outsourced IT support arrangements, ensuring they meet organisational needs, provide reliable and responsive support, and enable secure, effective and flexible working.



Person specification

Experience

- Significant senior leadership experience in a charity, not-for-profit, or similarly governed organisation.
- Proven experience of leading complex organisational change, including operating model redesign, cultural change, financial turnaround and improvements to systems, processes and ways of working.
- Recognised professional accountancy qualification, with significant post-qualification experience in senior finance or accountancy roles.
- Substantial experience of financial leadership, business planning, budgeting, forecasting, performance management and risk oversight.
- Experience of working closely with a Chief Executive Officer, Executive Leadership Team and Board or trustee body, providing high-quality advice, challenge and assurance.
- Experience of leading multi-disciplinary teams and creating a customer-focused culture to support wider organisational priorities.
- Experience of improving operating models, systems, processes or support services to increase efficiency, clarity and organisational effectiveness.
- Experience of managing outsourced service providers or strategic supplier relationships, with the ability to hold partners to account for quality, performance, risk and value for money.

Knowledge and skills

- Strategic thinker with the ability to turn ambition into practical, deliverable plans.
- Strong commercial and financial judgement, with the ability to balance mission, risk, affordability and impact.
- Strong technical accountancy knowledge, with the ability to ensure robust financial control, compliance, reporting and assurance in a charity context.
- Excellent change leadership skills, including the ability to bring people with you through uncertainty while maintaining pace and focus.
- Strong analytical skills, with confidence using data, insight and evidence to support decisions and track progress.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills, including the ability to explain complex financial, operational and strategic issues clearly to different audiences.
- Sound understanding of charity governance, risk, compliance and regulatory expectations.
- Strong programme and project management discipline, with the ability to oversee multiple priorities, dependencies and stakeholders.
- Strong supplier management and contract oversight skills, including the ability to manage outsourced finance, IT or operational support arrangements effectively.

Personal qualities

- Purpose-driven and deeply committed to improving the lives of families with disabled children.
- Calm, credible and resilient under pressure, with the confidence to make difficult recommendations and decisions.
- Collaborative and emotionally intelligent, with the ability to build trust across staff, trustees, partners and external stakeholders.
- Ambitious for inclusion and strongly values-driven.
- Committed to protecting and strengthening a positive organisational culture, recognising that engaged, supported and trusted colleagues are central to Contact's impact.
- Pragmatic, focused and delivery-oriented, with strong attention to detail and follow-through.
- Curious and improvement-minded, with the ability to learn, adapt and lead in a changing environment.

Equal Opportunities

Contact is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, including people with lived experience of disability and caring responsibilities. We are committed to making our recruitment processes accessible and inclusive.

Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is c£85,000 per annum. The role is envisaged on a full-time basis, although Contact is open to exploring flexible working arrangements, including a four-day week, to support the appointment of the strongest candidate.

Location

Hybrid, with regular attendance at Contact's London office (minimum expectation - 2 days a week)

Pension

Auto-enrolment pension scheme: matched contribution rate for employee and employer of up to 5%.

Annual leave

25 days pro rata per annum, plus one extra day for each completed year of service up to a maximum of 30 days after five years' service. Discretionary leave: three days a year for the period of office closure between Christmas and New Year.

Additional benefits

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/contact-chief-operating-officer/> 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	Friday 27 November 2026
First stage meetings	w/c 14 December 2026
Contact Stakeholder meeting	w/c Monday 4 January 2027
Contact Final Panel meeting	w/c Monday 11 January 2027

