



Programme Innovations Director (North and Midlands)

Candidate information pack

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in working for Future First.

You could not have chosen a more interesting, or challenging time to join us. The impact of the global pandemic is wreaking havoc across education, with a second national lockdown and the cancellation of GCSE and A-Levels bringing yet more uncertainty into the lives of young people. Our work has never been more necessary yet, at the same time, it has never been more difficult to engage with schools, compete for funds, or win support from hard-pressed businesses.

Future First is in a good position, with a decade of experience, solid finances and strong partnerships. As a newly appointed CEO – I took over last September – I have been well supported by a talented Trustee Board and a loyal team of committed staff, determined to make a difference to children's life chances. Our work builds confidence, motivation to study and resilience, and strengthens the communities around schools by harnessing past pupils as an under-developed resource.

We have around 400 school and college members and 266,000 alumni volunteers, who supported over 70,000 young people in state schools across the UK last year. We know that what we do every day really makes a difference to young people's lives. By giving today's pupils connections to past students, their alumni, we show them a bright future and give them the chance to hear real life stories about how people have overcome challenges to be successful. We show young people a world of opportunities - work, training, further or higher education, or volunteering, and we give them the tools, knowledge and information they need to make good choices and find their pathway.

We have embarked on a new three-year strategy that reflects our ambition to reach even more state schools and young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Your support will be key in helping us to achieve this.

We are committed to social justice and the value of role models. We are therefore keen to build a workforce that reflects the young people and schools we support. We are always interested in hearing from candidates from diverse backgrounds. At this time, we would particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic candidates, and those who attended state school and were in receipt of free school meals and/or were the first in their family to go to university.

If you share our passion for changing lives, care deeply about disadvantaged young people and believe that you have what it takes to effectively support a small but ambitious charity, please read on. I look forward to hearing from you.

With all good wishes,

Lorraine Langham, CEO

About Future First

Future First is a small education charity with a vision for a world where a young person's start in life does not limit their future.

Past pupils, known as alumni, are powerful, relatable role models. They show students that 'people like me' can succeed. Future First is passionate about connecting every state school pupil with their alumni to inspire them and give them the information, tools and connections they need to see and build a future beyond their current horizons. We know that putting alumni networks around state schools gives pupils access to a strong community of connections, with pathways to jobs and careers, internships and apprenticeships, support in making choices at transition, help with choosing courses and universities, and much more. Hearing from relatable role models can be transformative, building students' confidence, resilience and motivation to study. If you believe a child's start in life should not determine their future, this role can make a difference.

Programme Innovations Director (North & Midlands)

About the role

There are two Director roles in Delivery, accountable to the CEO for the delivery, development, and growth of our nationwide school and college programmes. Each Director has national responsibilities and leads on strategic priorities, as a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This role also leads Delivery in the North and Midlands.

The Programme Innovations Director creates opportunities, spots education trends, forges alliances and gets our work into more schools in the North and Midlands. The Director is responsible for programme development, including the design of impactful interventions in schools. They will oversee the delivery of our alumni programme, predominantly via our nationwide intervention, ConnectEd. The role focuses on extending the impact of our work and trialling new interventions that tackle entrenched issues in the education system, seeking funding as necessary, from corporates, partners, Trusts and Foundations. The Director is the innovator of new ways to deliver support to schools using alumni, honing our interventions to use what we know works and creating new approaches, including digital and virtual offers. They hear what school leaders really want and shape the annual product development cycle, gathering and using research, data and evidence to drive improvements. They keep an eye on what others are doing, hungry for new ideas to support schools and students, using relatable role model volunteers.

The Director manages a small (currently, home-based) team of Alumni Programme Managers and a Regional Programme Manager, responsible for all delivery in the North and Midlands. They are accountable for quality assurance and performance management, ensuring resources are used in the best interest of the charity, optimizing use of skills and expertise. This includes predicting demand and ensuring capacity for growth, sharing resources well, planning and growing specialisms across the team and leading project work. The Programme Innovations Director leads regional stakeholder relations, e.g. with schools, MATS, local authorities, place-based partnerships, and regional employers, working with SLT to build synergies and deliver our goals and financial targets. It's a broad role that provides variety and interest.

All directors are expected to collaborate, share knowledge and resources, and create success for others and the charity as a whole. This Director must be a natural alliance builder and someone who is passionate about making a real difference.

Duties and responsibilities

Innovation and programme development

- Innovate to deliver improvements in our work, as part of the annual product development cycle and day-to-day operations
- Ensure all work is supported by strong materials, lesson plans, training and guidance so they are delivered to a high standard
- Use a wide range of data and evidence to design and deliver impactful interventions – including virtual/digital
- Innovate to help schools sustain alumni interest and engagement in the longer term
- Develop and trial targeted interventions to tackle longstanding problems in schools, securing external funding as necessary
- Ensure all work is properly costed, commercially viable and deliverable

Programme delivery

- Lead programme delivery in the North and Midlands; responsible for quality assurance, communications, performance management, customer satisfaction, high renewals and sales
- Accurately plan capacity and specialisms to meet demand
- Maximise alumni sign up and active engagement to deliver impact
- Deliver regional/national performance targets and budgets, including renewals/satisfaction targets
- Lead and manage a small school or college caseload
- Work collaboratively to deliver high quality resources

Team leadership and management

- Lead the management and development of the regional delivery team
- Work with SLT to ensure regions are joined up and collaborate effectively
- Promote individual ownership, team working (charity-wide) and high performance
- Make an outstanding contribution to the charity and work effectively as a team player

Business growth

- Increase the number of schools and colleges building alumni networks and engaging with Future First
- Share learning about how to deliver impact and reach, working to support colleagues and accelerate improvements
- Grow our employer programmes in the region, to add value for schools and raise income
- Work with our partners to drive business growth

External relationship management

- Cultivate and maintain positive relationships with schools and groups, including Multi-Academy Trusts and improvement partnerships
- Cultivate relationships with regional employers to deliver our programme; work effectively with others to deliver synergies
- Ensure existing funders and stakeholders are effectively managed, with no surprises
- Identify Trusts and Foundations to support our work, cultivate purposeful relationships, win support and funding, and steward these with skill and care to deliver our goals
- Contribute to the production of articles, virtual and online content, and printed materials to further our mission
- Promote Future First and the value of alumni at events, conferences and in the media, as appropriate

Building a national alumni movement

- Support the development and delivery of a national alumni movement
- Help to build the strength of the Future First brand through all contacts

Additional senior responsibilities

- Ensure equalities considerations are built into all our plans and practices and champion equalities in the workplace
- Contribute positively to the Senior Leadership Team and work with senior leaders to deliver organisational goals
- Contribute effectively to financial management and business planning
- Support Trustee board meetings, as required
- Act as a leader, role model, and motivator through living the values
- Actively support colleagues to fulfil organisational responsibilities
- Work flexibly and carry out additional duties as required

Person specification

Specialist experience and knowledge

- Strong knowledge of schools and the UK state education system
- Track record of successful innovation
- Knowledge of how to develop impactful learning interventions
- Track record of using data and evidence to drive improvement in outcomes
- Strategic thinker, able to question and improve upon the status quo
- Degree-level qualified or significant relevant work experience

Communication and partnership skills

- Outstanding interpersonal skills; high emotional intelligence and empathy
- Energetic and entrepreneurial, turns ideas into action
- High degree of resilience; works well under pressure
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills
- Passion for the charity's purpose; able to inspire others

Planning and organising

- Experience of managing competing priorities and producing high quality outputs
- Experience of effective project management, with multiple stakeholders, to time/budget
- Able to make effective use of technology to monitor progress and deliver outcomes
- Able to link plans and priorities to deliver higher level organisational objectives

Line management

- Significant experience of leadership and performance management
- Ability to support and develop a young, passionate team
- Ability to motivate and inspire; creates success for others

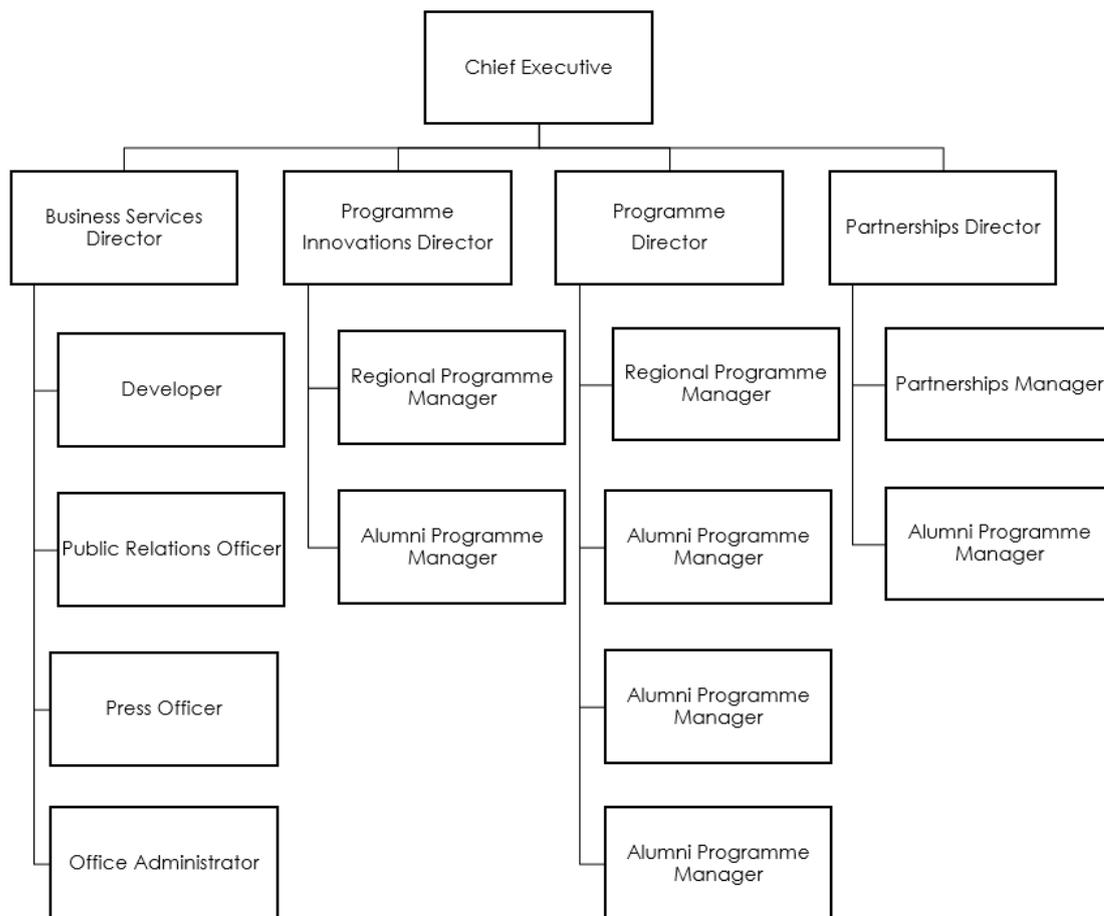
Professionalism

- Embeds equalities in work
- Consistently shares expertise and learning
- Keeps up-to-date with developments
- Credible
- Takes responsibility for own CPD
- Solution focused
- Holds self and others accountable for achieving high standards

Desirable

- Commercial understanding; can contribute to sales, fundraising, and marketing
- Understands costing/pricing; can contribute practically and strategically to business growth
- Experience of successfully promoting and selling services (ideally within education).

Organisation Structure



Our Values

Social justice

We do all we can to achieve our mission so that a young person's background does not limit their future.

Role modelling

We believe everyone can be a good role model and we lead by example in all we say and do.

Collaboration

We know we have greater impact through building relationships, and by working and learning with others.

Innovation

We are open to fresh ideas and are constantly seeking new ways to make change happen faster.

Terms and Conditions

Job title	Programme Innovations Director
Reports to	Chief Executive
Salary	Between £40,800 and £56,100 dependent on experience
Annual leave	28 days per year, increasing by one day for each year of service up to a maximum of 33 days
Benefits	Employee pension scheme, comprehensive learning and development plan, cycle to work scheme, travel card loan, flexible working, volunteer days
Contract type	Full-time / permanent
Location	We are looking for someone based in the North or Midlands. The role is home based for the immediate future (all staff are home working until at least April 2021). Once restrictions ease, the post holder will need to spend time in our Manchester office each week, and regular travel to schools and partners across the country will be necessary.

Future First is committed to safeguarding. A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check will be required for the successful candidate.

How to Apply

To apply, please [click here](#) to upload a CV and cover letter that demonstrates how you meet the person specification for the role. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Application deadline

9.00am, Monday 1 February 2021

Applications submitted after this time may not be considered.

Interviews

First round interviews 3 and 4 February 2021.

Second round interviews 10 and 11 February 2021.

Interviews will be conducted via video call. Applicants shortlisted for the second round will be asked to undertake an assessment.

Any questions?

If you are considering applying, we would be delighted to have an informal conversation about this role.

Please email laura.grigg@futurefirst.org.uk to arrange a time to speak with our Chief Executive, Lorraine Langham.