



Candidate Pack
Chief Executive Officer

HELLO!

The Key is a North East charity committed to inspiring young people to believe in themselves, especially those living in deprivation and facing challenging personal circumstances. We want to create a world where all young people are inspired to believe in themselves and are empowered to achieve their full potential.

Our work is built upon four core beliefs that young people should be:

- Empowered to **use their voice** and be heard
- Trusted to lead and deliver **projects and activities** meaningful to them
- Supported to build the **skills and confidence** they need to thrive
- Inspired to become active citizens by exploring **enterprise or tackling social issues** in their community

Our core beliefs are supported by our organisational values of:

- **Collaboration:** We achieve more together than by acting alone
- **Focus:** We keep sight of the goal to achieve our mission
- **Growth:** We constantly strive to be the best we can be



About us

WHAT WE DO

The Key began life over thirty years ago when a determined group of North East young people, youth workers and academics developed a model to engage and support young people to build skills. Over time, the model evolved into a programme to provide young people with an opportunity that empowers them to have voice and agency as they choose and lead their own activities. Today, we call our trusted development programme, the KEY+ Challenge, and its used daily by almost 90 partners throughout the North East.

THE KEY+ CHALLENGE

The KEY+ Challenge, brings young people together in small groups and with the support of a KEY+ Facilitator (trained programme deliverer), they're set the challenge to:

1. **Think** of a project or activity
2. **Plan** what is needed for that project, including a budget
3. **Pitch** their project to a panel of volunteers
4. **Do** their project if given the go ahead by the panel
5. **Review** and reflect on their project, learning, and development.

Young people complete this process up to three times, each time planning more progressively challenging projects with greater personal development. Delivering their first KEY+ project is a great achievement for young people, delivering their second stretches young people further and enhances their skills and at Stage 3, they explore enterprise or social action with their project, providing a way to take action and contribute to their communities.



Our Strategy



OUR CURRENT STRATEGY

Our 2021-2024 strategy describes how The Key aims to tackle the following problem:

'Too many young people do not believe in themselves and are not achieving their potential. Social immobility is one of the most challenging issues facing British society today.'

Our Strategy was organised around five priorities:

1. Achieve the best outcomes / impact with young people

2. Increase the numbers of young people using the KEY+ Challenge, especially those facing challenging circumstances

3. Apply for more funding jointly with Key Partners

4. Increase demand and usage from Key delivery partners

5. Develop, launch and continually refine the KEY+ Challenge

In addition, our strategy highlights six enablers we feel are vital to help achieve our priorities:



Learning organisation



Digital first approach



Youth voice and influence



Marketing and income



Staff and volunteers



Equality, diversity and inclusion



Our Strategy



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF OUR CURRENT STRATEGY

We needed to be clearer and simplify how we talked about The Key's programme. Now we talk about it providing young people with 'four pillars' as described above (voice / activities / skills / community).

After the COVID-19, we needed to rethink our plans for working at scale. We focused on building back to where we were before the pandemic, and first and foremost on the impact we were having in the North East.

We needed to understand that the youth services ecosystem is changing, so we began to rethink how The Key works more effectively with the organisations working directly with young people who need new opportunities the most. We used this learning to focus on four initiatives:

- **Launching the KEY+ Challenge** which is a refreshed version of our programme. KEY+ is simpler, clearer, and streamlined with improvements in several areas.
- **Building a new digital platform** to replace the old one which was no longer fit for purpose. We retrained and transferred all of our delivery partners onto the new system, and it's been live since May 2022. This system is easier to use for our partners and provides us with better analytics to capture impact.
- **Building a new website** to better tell the stories of young people's achievements. We know that those stories are vital alongside our analytics data to help us demonstrate impact and to learn.
- **Securing funding arrangements that also support our delivery partners** with the running costs they need to open their doors and run the KEY+ Challenge with young people.

This work has led to significant new investment for The Key from various sources, including the National Citizen Service and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. We are now positioned to offer KEY+ as an excellent way to play a significant role in the Government's National Youth Guarantee which envisages young people will have access to regular out of school activities, development of skills, and opportunities to volunteer.

KEY+ is an excellent solution to the challenge of how to reach the most diverse range of young people and the most diverse range of organisations working with them, to provide a 'four pillars' learning experience.



KEY+ in Action



KEY+ STORY

2022/23 KEY STATS

886

unique young people were supported to participate in KEY+



They used their ideas and took the lead to think, plan, pitch, do & review

220

of their own projects or activities

Including:

- Food hamper support for struggling families
- Group bonding experiences
- Community fun days
- Youth-led school enterprise fairs



The Lionesses

A group of young women not in education, employment or training joined forces through The KEY+ Challenge. The group wanted a better future and found being NEET was hard with many of them facing additional challenging personal circumstances that had led them to that point including dealing with severe anxiety, living with ADHD & autism and being involved in the justice system.

The young women grouped together and battled nerves and anxiety to deliver three pitches to panel. Their first saw them do a group bonding trip to Flamingo Land and their second sparked their enterprise journey.

Using the proven five step process, they began their own eco-friendly candle making business at Stage 2 learning all about budgeting and how to create candles. They took it further at Stage 3, learning about profit margins, how to sell their items and promoting their own mini candle business.

The Lionesses' KEY+ experience transformed the young women and they are now on positive pathways no longer involved with the police or NEET. Two group members moved into full time employment, one into part-time work placement whilst at college and three back into education.

Young people developed their skills by an average of

24%

leading to increased confidence, resilience and self-esteem - a 'growth mindset'



95%

of young people reported improved confidence thanks to KEY+

100%

of young people asked, said KEY+ will have a positive impact on their future



KEY YOUNG PEOPLE QUOTES

"We know each other a lot better. We can come to each other when we have problems & don't feel afraid."
- Will, KEY+ completer

"It has helped me gain confidence around people and work in a social environment. It helped me realise that I can achieve what I believe and encouraged me to get into the world and explore."
- Ellie, KEY+ completer

"Taking part in KEY+ made me more resilient because I know how much the work we do means; in the future it'll make me more ambitious also because I know what I can achieve now, so why not go further? I wish everyone could experience it."
- Jessica, KEY+ completer

"We developed our problem solving, communication, team working, and independence skills. It has helped us develop our character more and learn new life skills that will help us in the future with jobs."
- Emy, KEY+ completer



Why us



Why work for The Key

We are seeking a new Chief Executive Officer to continue our journey and position KEY+ as an excellent kitemark for any organisation wanting to evidence high quality skills development work with young people. We'll be working in areas where deprivation and poverty are prevalent, with young people who are facing additional barriers. We'll need to deliver on the funding pledges we've secured, and we'll need to continue to attract new funders.

Five reasons to choose The Key

- An opportunity to inspire belief in young people through the KEY+ Challenge.
- To work alongside a fantastically skilled and dedicated team and Board of Trustees, who promise to challenge, empower and support you.
- A unique chance to play a significant and developmental role in an exciting period for a long-serving North East youth charity.
- Great professional development and profile-raising opportunities.
- Excellent team spirit with a cracking selection of cake and biscuits.



Liz Watchorn

The Key's Chair of Trustees

A few words from our Chair

"On behalf of The Key's Board, hello and thank you for your interest in our CEO vacancy. This is a thrilling time for our charity as we look for someone to take our longstanding and respected charity into its next chapter. We have a strong set of core beliefs, collaborative values and a real drive to see as many young people as possible complete our refreshed and impactful programme, The KEY+ Challenge.

We have a dedicated Board of Trustees with a strong mix of backgrounds and experience and a passion to inspire belief in young people. The CEO role is both rewarding and challenging, and you will have the full support of the Board and staff team. Together, we can inspire belief in young people who need it most."

Who we're looking for

We are delighted that you're considering applying to be our next CEO. We want to make sure the right candidate matches our culture as well having the skills to help us on our journey. If this sounds like you, we want to hear from you!

As our next CEO you will continue to drive The Key forward whilst achieving our aims and objectives. You will recognise the need for stability but also when it is a time for change, moreover you will never lose sight of our values and culture. You will have a genuine passion for improving opportunities for disadvantaged young people, along with a deep understanding of the youth sector and the political landscape in which we operate. You will be comfortable working across multiple contracts and grants, income streams and managing the conflicting priorities of them.

Our team is our greatest asset, whilst continuing to help them grow professionally, you will stretch and support them to deliver to their best ability.

The Role

Job Description: Chief Executive Officer

Purpose of the Role: The core of your job is to provide daily leadership for The Key going forward. You will support The Key to continue to build the delivery of the KEY+ Challenge throughout the North East. This will involve working closely with our team, young people, volunteers, and our Board. You'll use your strategic skills to co-ordinate the creation of the next three year strategy to continue our journey. You'll be closely involved in income generation and ensuring our financial stability, and you'll develop and assess new opportunities that fit our values and retain our focus.

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Salary: £52,000 - £55,000

Contract: Permanent

Hours: Full-time but consideration will be given to candidates who require a different working pattern. We do not anticipate the role being delivered in less than 3 days per week.

Location: The Key are currently located in MEA House but will be relocating to Hadrian House in central Newcastle in February 2024.

Main Responsibilities:

Leadership

- Provide strong and dynamic leadership to the organisation, motivating and supporting the team, volunteers, Board and delivery partners to deliver an excellent service for young people which supports our values, culture and objectives and provides clear opportunities for young people's development.
- With significant input from the team, lead on the creation and delivery of the annual tactical plans, ensuring Key Performance Indicators are clear and achievable, and systems are in place to monitor and respond to performance challenges.

Governance

- Proactively manage and support the Board so that effective governance is established, maintained, and continually developed.
- Support the Board to recruit talented and passionate trustees who meet the skill sets we identify as gaps.
- Ensure that The Key fulfils all of its legal, statutory and regulatory responsibilities, including acting as 'Secretary'.
- Take lead responsibility for maintaining an organisational risk register to manage and mitigate identified risks as needed.

Financial Management

- Develop and deliver against an annual budget plan, as agreed by the Board annually, and report regularly into Finance & Risk sub-committee.
- Work closely with our accountant to ensure accurate, regular management accounts are maintained.
- Oversee our day-to-day income and expenditure, whilst monitoring performance against grant and contract obligations.
- Work closely with our Finance & Administration coordinator to ensure contract performance monitoring is accurate and claims are made in a timely manner.

The Role

Job Description: Chief Executive Officer

Main Responsibilities (Continued):

Income Generation

- Work with our Fundraising and Marketing Manager to set and achieve income targets as determined by the annual budget, as well as stretch targets to ensure our long-term sustainability.
- Identify opportunities for income diversity including which may arise from changes to local and national government, priorities for young people.
- Advocate for the organisation for inclusion in larger strategically important funding or contract bids.

About you

Essential criteria

We expect our next CEO will have the following qualities, skills and experience:

- Authentic and passionate about inspiring belief in young people, with a deep understanding of the youth sector and the issues faced by young people in the UK.
- Experience of working in or with the not-for-profit sector.
- Operates with integrity, self-awareness and empathy and demonstrates credibility and authenticity.
- Someone who builds effective partnerships and relationships, born out of knowledge, respect and an outstanding ability to communicate well at all levels.
- A real “people person” who can effectively manage individuals, teams and external relationships.
- Proven ability to balance strategic and operational demands, with a willingness to “roll sleeves up” and operate at whatever level needed when necessary to ensure our work is done effectively.
- Proven track record of being accountable for the successful delivery of multiple projects and income streams simultaneously.
- Financially astute in managing complex contracts as well as grant funding, managing their conflicting priorities and able to assess how performance may impact income.
- Ability to effectively interpret and interrogate data to inform decision making.
- Understanding of and commitment to the importance of excellent safeguarding practice.
- Experience of reporting to and managing a board of directors or trustees.

Desirable criteria

You may also have:

- Knowledge of local and national political landscapes both in relation to young people and changes in local government structures.
- Up to date knowledge of impact monitoring and measurement.
- Experience within organisations relying on volunteers as part of their service delivery.
- An understanding of technological advances and how these may influence the organisation.
- Sound understanding and experience of the requirements relating to GDPR.
- Knowledge and experience of marketing, human resources and recruitment and office management.

The Role

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The people we work with come from all walks of life and we want our workforce to reflect that diversity.

We recognise that we are under-represented in terms of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and so we encourage applications from under-represented individuals regardless of age or background.

Working Circumstances

- You have access to transport and a willingness and ability to travel throughout the region to meet job requirements
- You're prepared to work flexibly to meet the needs and priorities of The Key - including working evenings and weekends
- You operate within The Key's policies and procedures and comply with statutory requirements

Additional benefits

Significant professional development budget annually, wellbeing offer, 27 days annual leave entitlement (pro rata) plus Bank Holidays and your birthday off!

Hybrid working details

Our team currently work from the office 3 days per week, and home the other 2, however we remain committed to reviewing this in line with staff welfare, team spirit and accommodation changes.

Apply

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.

If you think this could be the exciting opportunity that you are seeking, please contact Peter Neal for more information.

Applicants should apply with their CV to Peter:

peter@theexperiencebank.co.uk

Deadline: Sunday 11th February 2024

*We encourage candidates to submit an early application, as due to expected interest, we reserve the right to close this vacancies early.

