

DFN Project SEARCH
Changing Lives Together



**Appointment of
Chief Executive Officer**
April 2024 | RBPSA



Saxton Bampfylde

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in DFN Project SEARCH. We are delighted to introduce you to this unique opportunity to lead one of the UK's most innovative and impact driven charities working with young people with special needs. Everyone deserves the right to aspire to the very best future – yet nationally only 4.8% of people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) go on to secure full-time paid employment. At DFN Project SEARCH we work hard to challenge and change cultures, demonstrating how young adults with a learning disability, autism spectrum condition, or both, can enrich the workforce, bring incredible skills and talent, encourage greater diversity and meet a real business need.

Our vision and ambitions are simple: a society where all young people with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition, or both, can secure high quality, paid employment and lead fulfilling lives.

We believe that the valuable work we are doing at DFN Project SEARCH is having a positive impact on society. It is widely agreed that employment improves health and wellbeing. Our business partners often tell us that working with us can dramatically improve performance and retention of staff whilst also improving skill levels across their business. Further benefits through partnering with this unique programme include enhanced local, regional, national and international recognition and engagement with communities of key stakeholders.

Transitioning people from education straight into competitive employment saves money for health and social care by around £2 million per person over their lifetime. Our graduates become net contributors rather than recipients of adult social care and health services.

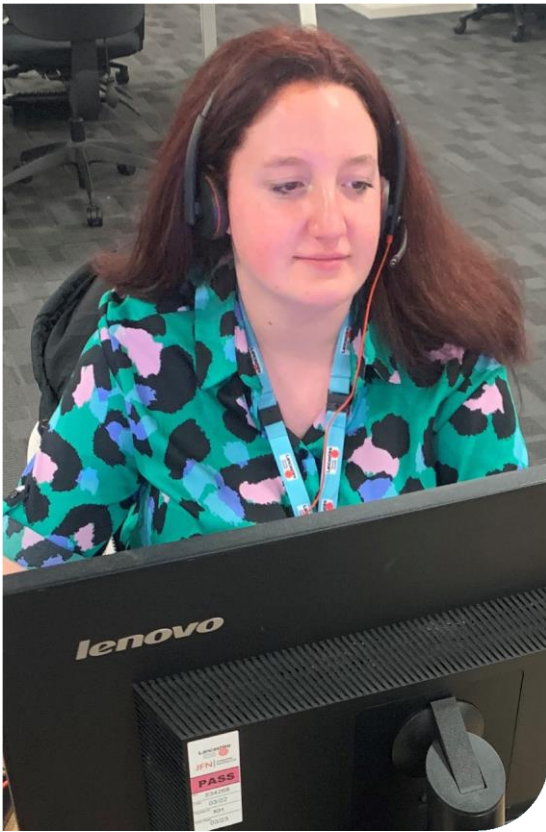
We are on the journey to achieving social justice for people who have been frequently marginalised from the world of work; communities are becoming more inclusive and people with learning disabilities more visible. We still have a big job ahead of us and we need an exceptional team to tackle it.

The young people we aim to serve – and the challenges they face - are all unique. We are looking for a leader to continue to build a team that reflects this diversity. Our commitment to inclusion across disability, race, gender, age, class, religion, identity, and experience forms the cornerstone of our work.

If you are driven by a desire to help young people improve their life chances and are willing to go the extra mile every day to achieve our aims, we want to hear from you. As the next CEO, you will have the opportunity to take the organisation to the next level of scale and impact and play a transformational role for thousands of young people.

We know there is much to do for us to achieve our goals, but we are excited and motivated by the opportunity. We hope that this pack gives you a sense of who we are, what we do and our huge ambition – and that it inspires you to apply to be our next CEO.

We look forward to hearing from you.



The DFN Foundation was established by city financier David Forbes-Nixon who has a son with learning disabilities. He became aware of the lack of effective provision to meet his son's needs and that of other young people like him and was determined to try and make a positive difference. He initially launched the DFN Foundation to create significantly improved provision at Undershaw School in Surrey. He asked the question 'what next?' as his research led him to discover the appalling lack of employment opportunities for young people with special needs. After spending a year researching best practice, the DFN Foundation concluded that Project SEARCH (a US based charity) was the most effective supported internship programme in the world and became its partner when they secured the master franchise agreement for DFN Project SEARCH in 2018.

DFN Project SEARCH holds the Master Franchise Agreement for Project SEARCH programmes in the UK and Ireland and our unique programmes include those that have been established in England, Ireland, Portugal, Scotland and Wales in various prestigious employers such as hospitals, local authorities, universities, laboratories and a variety of private sector businesses. DFN Project SEARCH are currently operating in just under 150 sites across the UK, Ireland and Iberia. This is expected to increase to c 200 sites in September 2024.

Our impact speaks for itself. So far, we have supported 2,100 interns into full-time, paid employment. On average 70% of our graduates transition to employment and 60% of them move into non-seasonal paid employment of more than 16 hours per week. This is compared to the UK average of 4.8% for people with a learning disability, autism spectrum condition, or both in employment of any kind. This provides young adults with the freedom of choice to lead more happy, healthy and fulfilled lives because they have an equal opportunity of financial independence through securing full-time, paid work. It's also good for society as a whole, helping to shape and build communities.

However, there is much more to do. Currently, only 1 in 22 young people aged 16 – 25 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in England gets a chance to participate in a DFN project SEARCH supported internship programme which will help them secure and stay in paid employment. Often these young people face significant social and economic exclusion at a massive personal, social, and economic cost.

We have bold ambitions for the future: by 2030 our aim is to have supported 14,000 young people into full-time paid jobs and operate in c500 sites, with over 70% of our graduates transitioning into full-time work.



We believe that a collaborative approach between businesses, local authorities, colleges and schools and supported employment providers, partnered with our evidenced-based DFN Project SEARCH supported internship programme, can be a force for transformative change in the lives of thousands of young adults with a learning disability, autism spectrum condition, or both.

Learners with an EHCP remain on roll at their school or college but are based full-time with a host business. They are supported through three 10-week rotations across the host business whilst also studying for an employability qualification.

We offer:

- Full-time supported internships at a host business - 800 hours of marketable skills acquisition.
- A focused employability curriculum delivered from the workplace.
- Groundbreaking opportunities to learn with prestigious employer partners.
- Combination of tutors and trained job coach support.

This leads to sustainable paid employment for people with an EHCP.

Our success lies in our partnership approach to working and our ability to influence changes across the wider eco-system impacting on young people's opportunities. As CEO you will lead an organisation that collaborates with a wide set of stakeholders including businesses, colleges, schools, local authorities, central government, and young people and their carers to drive the change we want to see.



DFN project Search is looking to appoint a Chief Executive who will be ambitious for the organisation and for the young people we serve.

They will take the organisation forward and build upon its successes to date. The charity has undergone rapid growth in response to the market need but we know there is a lot more to do.

The new CEO will lead and manage this continued growth, in line with our ambitions to see 20,000 young people in jobs by 2033. In addition, we are building a movement of people and organisations who share our purpose and want to change the status quo for young people with learning disabilities.

The charity is run on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive, assisted by around 30 staff. The Senior Team comprises: the Chief Executive, Operations Director, Development Director and Director of Finance.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a candidate who shares our passion and commitment, who has senior executive level experience in the charitable, public or business sector to join a growing charity which is delivering proven impact through the power of collaboration.

We are looking for someone with a track record of strategic leadership and teamwork, who can grow organisations, secure support for our work and influence policy makers.

The CEO reports to the Board of Trustees as a whole and will be line managed by the Chair of Trustees on behalf of the Board.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

LEADERSHIP

- Lead the charity through our next period of development and growth – helping us extend our reach and impact in a way that is sustainable and mindful of the wellbeing of our people.
- Hold and communicate a clear and inspiring vision for what DFN Project SEARCH can do to support young adults with a learning disability / autism or both, to transition into meaningful employment.
- Demonstrate high empathy and adopt a coaching line management style that empowers and develops individuals, enhances team collaboration, supports wellbeing and facilitates effective, robust decision-making and impact.
- Model organisational values and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGY, FINANCE & PERFORMANCE

- Deliver the long-term strategy for DFN Project SEARCH, monitoring objectives and KPI's, providing leadership to and working with SLT to monitor and review this strategy regularly.
- Monitor the operation of DFN Project SEARCH, keeping under review the structure of the organisation and making proposals for appropriate changes.
- Be accountable to the board of trustees for the efficient and effective achievement and implementation of policy objectives or decisions agreed with them.
- Ensure the development and delivery of robust annual plans and budgets agreed by trustees; monitor and adjust in-year as required and in line with delegated authority.
- Ensure sound financial, performance and risk management with effective monitoring and evaluation.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

PEOPLE

- Be responsible for the motivation, wellbeing and effectiveness of the people at DFN Project SEARCH.
- Ensure DFN Project SEARCH 's corporate values and policies are relevant, fair and consistently implemented.
- Ensure that the recruitment, management, training and development of staff is directed to achieving the objectives of DFN Project SEARCH, including the implementation of current employment and equity, diversity and inclusion legislation and good practice.
- Foster good communications across DFN Project SEARCH.
- Maintain a climate which attracts, retains, and motivates good people.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS & INCOME GENERATION

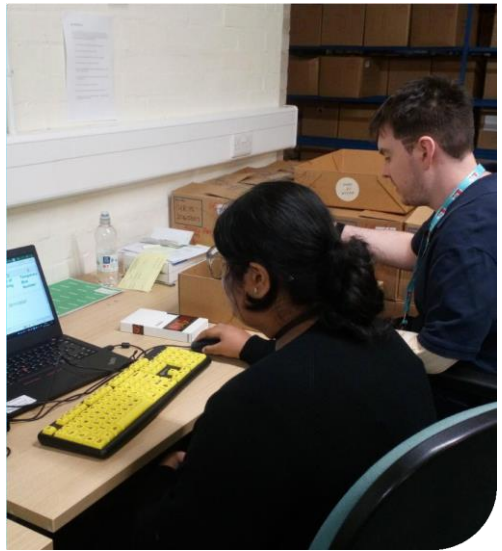
Present the charity, its mission, strategic aims, research programmes, services, products and campaigns in strong, positive image to relevant stakeholders by:

- Facilitating and building effective partnerships at all levels of government, education and third sector to further influence, reach and ability to shift broader systems in favour of young people's ability to transition to meaningful work.
- Ensuring DFN Project SEARCH continues to grow its income both by site growth and by representing its aims and work to major corporate and individual donors to ensure fundraising activities continue to prosper and grow.
- Ensure the charity continues to explore and maximise opportunities to secure major delivery contracts which support growth and financial sustainability.
- Ensure DFN Project SEARCH plays the lead role in furthering evidence-based research to drive quality supported internship provision across our sector.
- Promote DFN Project SEARCH 's aims and objectives with key stakeholders including MP's, academics, policy makers, the corporate and public sector partners, funding partners and sponsors through a public affairs and media strategy.
- Continue to develop and build DFN Project SEARCH 's public profile by maintaining appropriate relations with the media and presenting DFN Project SEARCH 's policies and campaigning positions.
- Maintain constant awareness of both the external and internal landscape, opportunities for growth and development, and new developments and standards.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

GOVERNANCE

- As designated safeguarding lead for the charity, ensure that safeguarding is front and centre of the way the organisation operates, both internally and externally, personally modelling the behaviours that are needed to create a safe culture.
- Ensure that the organisation has effective governance systems and processes in place to meet the changing needs of the charity and external environment, and that these are consistently adhered to, to maintain and enhance its reputation, and meet its constitutional, regulatory and statutory obligations.
- Report to the Board on progress against key strategic objectives, providing information and accountability for organisational performance.
- Identify and put in place effective risk management strategies and frameworks to measure progress against our objectives.



Our next Chief Executive will be committed to and passionate about putting those with a learning disability or autism or both at the heart of everything we do. They will have an outstanding track record of strategic leadership with experience of leading growth and change across a range of disciplines, teams, projects and responsibilities. A leader with integrity, resilience and optimism you will:

- Have excellent communication, negotiation, diplomacy and advocacy skills with the ability and presence to represent the DFN Project SEARCH brand in public and to influence senior figures in governments throughout the UK, business and the media.
- Be a collaborative leader with the capacity to inspire and motivate others; able to give clear, effective, sensitive and consistent leadership, and forge meaningful partnerships with external stakeholders.
- Have a creative and entrepreneurial approach to problem solving and new opportunities
- Be committed to DFN Project SEARCH's vision, mission, values and ambition and living the brand.
- Have a strategic view and the intellectual breadth to understand the complexities of an organisation delivering research, support services and influencing.
- Be attuned to emerging changes in running highly effective organisations including the role digital and technology plays in organisational development.
- Have a clear vision for how strategy translates into delivery.
- Be able to understand and balance the demands of an evidence-based organisation and take informed risks and grasp opportunities.
- Have strong personal credibility, humility and the ability to build effective relationships at all levels.
- A successful track record of leading a positive culture, business management, innovation and sound financial control at a senior level.
- Have a sound understanding of service delivery, including multi-channel/digital engagement.



SALARY, BENEFITS AND WAYS OF WORKING

We are a flexible and virtual organisation with staff across the UK who are all home-based. Staff members travel to meetings and sites depending on the needs of their role, including to an office we have in Victoria, London. All staff come together in person three times per year, including for our annual conference. There are also quarterly meetings for each team within the organisation. As CEO, you will be travelling frequently to meet with staff members, partners, donors and other stakeholders.

- This is a full-time role. Hours and location are flexible and as our CEO you will be comfortable with national travel.
- Salary is between £100,000 - £120,000 and commensurate with experience.
- Holiday entitlement of 25 days per annum (in addition to English bank holidays) plus other benefits.
- Employer pension contribution equivalent to 6% of your basic salary.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to DFN Project SEARCH on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **RBPSA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and personal statement and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 10th May**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete this as part of the application process.



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