

Talkback

DEVELOPING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES



CEO

Candidate Information Pack

March 2025



Eastside People

Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to extend a warm welcome and thank you for your interest in the position of Chief Executive Officer of Talkback UK Ltd.

As a forward-thinking and compassionate organisation, Talkback is committed to making a positive and lasting impact on the lives of individuals with learning disabilities and autism. We have an ambitious vision for the future, and we are excited to identify a leader who shares our values and will drive our mission forward.

The role of CEO is both challenging and rewarding, and we are seeking someone with exceptional leadership, innovation, and passion for empowering others. You will have the opportunity to shape the future of Talkback, enhance our services, and contribute to a growing community that is dedicated to improving lives.

As you review this application pack, we hope you will feel inspired by the work we do and the potential to create meaningful change in the lives of those we serve. We are excited to learn more about you and how your expertise can help us realise our goals.

Thank you once again for considering this opportunity. We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Louise Joslin

Chair of Trustees, Talkback UK Ltd

About Us

Talkback is an autism and learning disability charity that creates unique pathways for neurodiverse young adults and people with learning disabilities to ensure a positive transition to adulthood and forms of employability. We provide our services in Bucks and the surrounding areas.

We are on a mission to provide autism and learning disability services that empower individuals to grow, build meaningful friendships, and embrace new experiences with confidence—at any stage of life. Everyone who walks through our doors will receive the support and tools they need to thrive in whatever way matters most to them.

Our programmes are all about engaging with all people with and without funding to deal with life challenges.

For young people, our **Engage** programme focuses on those who are excluded, NEET and those who want help transitioning back from homeschooling to educational settings or other challenges.

The **Equip** programme supports young people from 16 to 25 years old through all stages of education and combines this with life skills, employability skills, social skills, confidence building and work experience opportunities.

Our **Employability** programme helps individuals achieve their career goals by offering tailored support, including career advice, a personalised employment pathway, work skills training, and compliance qualifications. We also provide a wide range of opportunities, such as work experience, job clubs, supported internships, supported employment, and volunteering placements.

We have a dedicated **Your Voice** consultancy team that provides guidance and support, signposting individuals to the help they need. Additionally, we gather and share people's experiences with statutory bodies and employers to challenge perceptions, enhance services, and shape future policies. Our specialist programmes cater to employers and individuals of all ages.

The Talkback Manifesto

See us as people who...

are valued, just like everyone else

enjoy the same things as everyone else; sport, drama,
shopping and having fun

don't deserve labels or stigma or discrimination

can make our own decisions and have a right to be
heard

want to have relationships and love

have skills and abilities to positively change things
around us

want all the opportunities that life can bring

have so much to offer

...see us as people



Recruiting a CEO

Our CEO, Jeremy Hay, is leaving Talkback after a highly successful seven years, which has seen Talkback grow and develop, going from strength to strength. Jeremy has played a pivotal role in guiding Talkback and leading our person-centred strategy and approach.

We are now seeking a new CEO to guide the organisation into its next chapter. We are looking for an individual with passion, energy and the ability to collaborate to springboard Talkback upwards and onward for the next phase of its evolution. This is an immensely rewarding role which would perfectly suit a person of vision, positivity and proven delivery.

We are looking for a leader with the emotional intelligence, initiative, and confidence to listen, understand, and drive Talkback's strategic and operational planning. This individual will play a key role in decision-making, helping us achieve our ambitious goals and expand our support for our growing community, including the launch of our specialist alternative education provision.

You will be working with a skilled and talented team of 70 dedicated staff members. Our staff are passionate about making a difference. We foster a culture of trust, creativity, continuous improvement, and responsibility. Guided by a person-centred, solutions-focused approach, we believe in valuing people for who they are—not the labels society may place on them.



Role description: CEO

Key Information

Location	Our main office is in Amersham, and we also have sites in Aylesbury and Wycombe (potential for hybrid working with a minimum of 80% of working hours in the office)
Contract	Full time
Salary	£70,000 to £75,000 depending on experience
Reports to	The Chair of the Board of Trustees
Annual leave	23 days per year, increasing to 27 days with service
Benefits	Long service award, Employee Assistance Programme, health cash-back scheme, death in service benefit, critical illness benefit, free parking

Overall Purpose

To provide visible, motivational leadership and, with strategic oversight, ensure the continued development of Talkback in response to the needs of the autistic and learning disability communities.

To lead the charity through an exciting phase of its journey, launching a high-quality specialist alternative education and skills provision for neurodiverse individuals and those with learning disabilities. To continuously identify gaps in existing support from statutory authorities and voluntary services and develop innovative solutions to meet those needs.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Deliver the strategic direction and continue to build and develop Talkback to ensure sustainability and growth.
- Be responsible for the overall financial performance of the charity across its sites and programmes, ensuring that it achieves its objectives and can respond positively and appropriately to challenges and opportunities.

- Ensure that our values, ethos, and policies are relevant, fair, and consistently applied.
- Provide visible and motivational leadership, ensuring all staff share an understanding of Talkback's vision and mission and are supported to deliver outcomes.
- Orchestrate and lead a strong and supportive line management function, including setting and monitoring of performance management, individual and team development and staff recruitment and retention.
- Enhance the success focused culture and continually transform the charity's approach to quality improvement.
- Ensure we have clear outcome measures that monitor and manage our impact.
- Ensure that the Trustees receive timely advice and appropriate information on all relevant matters so that they can fully engage with Talkback and use their skills and time wisely.

Development and Fundraising

- Lead the development and implementation of Talkback's fundraising activity, the growth of services and the creation of new areas of work, ensuring that sufficient funds are secured to deliver plans.
- Ensure the highest quality standards are upheld to meet contractual obligations and requirements.
- Lead the bid process, including the bid writing and submission, to target our goal of 15% income from additional external sources.
- Identify fundraising and business opportunities for growth in existing and new areas.

Business, Finance and Operations

- Oversee the future business planning process to deliver our vision and work within agreed budgets and time limits.
- Oversee the successful delivery of the business plan in relation to curriculum, student recruitment, quality assurance, finance, people, and corporate services.
- Work to develop an excellent reputation as an alternative education provider amongst the business and education communities.
- Ensure that Talkback meets its constitutional, legal, financial, audit and statutory duties and that all activities meet agreed values and quality standards.
- Report on and discuss progress with the Board and relevant committees.

Communications and external voice

- Build and maintain relationships with stakeholders that add value to Talkback and work to ensure that programmes are aligned with workforce needs and local economic development.
- Always act in a way that safeguards the interests of members and upholds public trust and confidence in the charity.
- Take ownership of professional development by attending all mandatory training, as well as relevant conferences, networking events, and additional training opportunities.
- Build and manage stakeholder relationships while serving as a lead ambassador and spokesperson for Talkback.
- Build strong relationships with a range of stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and the wider community.

This job description is intended to be an indication of the scope of the role. In addition to these functions, employees are required to carry out such other duties as may reasonably be required.

Talkback

DEVELOPING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES



Person specification

Experience

- Experienced senior leader who can lead strategy, generate income and manage and motivate a large staff team.
- Good understanding of the education sector and its funding mechanisms and the experience and confidence to lead Talkback to be a flagship provider supporting the needs of SEN children and young adults locally and nationally.
- Proven experience in strategic growth planning & implementation, delivering business plans, working to budgets and leading change in a complex organisation.
- Track record of building productive, impactful relationships with a range of stakeholders, including commissioners, agencies, influencers and partners.
- Strong working knowledge of IT and software systems, including Excel and Word.
- Educated to degree level or higher (or equivalent through relevant experience/training) with a track record of experience in a similar position.

Personal competencies and skills

- Distinct ability to lead with honesty and integrity through inspiring confidence and enthusiasm in others in a values-led organisation.
- Enthusiasm and curiosity to learn and innovate across boundaries.
- Strong numerical and analytical skills. Excellent attention to detail.
- Effective communicator, written and verbal.
- Decision maker - calm temperament under complex, pressured conditions.
- Strong influencing skills, including senior decision makers at Board level.
- Capability of timely travel between locations - UK driving licence and vehicle access preferred.

Our Safeguarding Statement

Our organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We expect all staff to have some knowledge, understanding of and demonstrable commitment to safeguarding children and young people (Every Child Matters) and vulnerable adults.

All staff must show a desire to challenge inequality, promote diversity and adhere to Talkback's policies and procedures.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions, which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the Act.

We are committed to carefully screening all applicants who will collaborate with our vulnerable members, including children, young people and adults with care and support needs. All applicants are expected to undertake employment checks, a Disclosure & Barring Service check and provide previous employment references.



How to apply

[Eastside People](#) is supporting Talkback in the recruitment of this role. Click [here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter, both in Word doc. format. Please use the cover letter as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV, and ensure that you cover the following (max 2 pages):

1. Why you are interested in the CEO role at Talkback and how the position is a good fit for your skills and approach.
2. Your experience of working at a strategic level and leading an organisation or large team.
3. Key experience/knowledge in relation to the other essential skills and experience specified in the job description and person specification.

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Paul Venning at our recruitment partners [Eastside People](#) to arrange a convenient time at p.venning@eastsidepeople.org. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability, and potential and we are happy to discuss any assistance or adjustments to make the application process work for you.

The closing date for applications is Wed 9th April 2025, and interviews with Eastside People will take place that week and the week after. Interviews with Talkback will take place towards the end of April.

And finally, we understand AI can be a helpful tool, but please use it with caution and ensure your application is personalised and accurate.



Eastside People

Eastside People
Canopi
7-14 Dover Street
London
SE1 4YR

0203 821 6174
eastsidepeople.org

Eastside People is the trading name for Eastside Consulting Ltd. Company number:
4958922.



Eastside People