

Talkback

DEVELOPING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES



Interim CEO

Candidate Information Pack

September 2026

What we do

Talkback is an autism and learning disability charity that creates unique pathways for young people and adults to ensure a positive transition to adulthood and 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.

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.

For more information, please visit <https://talkback-uk.com/>



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 an interim CEO

Talkback is entering an important period of transition and we are seeking an Interim Chief Executive to provide visible, values-led leadership and guide the organisation through its next chapter.

This is a significant opportunity to lead a well-established charity with a strong reputation for delivering impactful services. Working closely with the Board, staff team and other stakeholders, the Interim CEO will help ensure organisational stability, strengthen performance and maintain momentum at a pivotal time for the charity.

We are looking for an experienced and emotionally intelligent leader who can quickly build credibility, bring clarity and focus, and support the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives. The successful candidate will be comfortable working with trustees and senior leaders, providing support and challenge where needed, and helping to strengthen organisational effectiveness, accountability and financial sustainability. The role will also play an important part in supporting the Board as it considers the future leadership and development of the charity.

You will be working with a skilled and committed team of around 70 staff who are passionate about improving the lives of autistic people and people with learning disabilities. We foster a culture of trust, inclusion, creativity and continuous improvement, guided by a person-centred approach that values individuals for who they are and champions their potential. As Interim CEO, you will help build on these strengths, ensuring that our people, culture and services continue to deliver meaningful impact for the communities we serve.



Interim Chief Executive Officer

Key Information

Location	Our main office is in Amersham, and we also have sites in Aylesbury and Wycombe. We welcome conversations about flexible working. Due to the nature of the role, a significant on-site presence will be required, typically around four days per week.
Contract	Full-time, fixed term for one year
Salary	£75,000 to £85,000 depending on experience
Reports to	The Chair of the Board of Trustees

Overall Purpose

To provide visible, values-led leadership and stability during a period of organisational transition. Working closely with the Board, leadership team and key stakeholders, the Interim CEO will strengthen organisational effectiveness, ensure financial sustainability, maintain stakeholder confidence and create the foundations for the successful appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

The Interim CEO will review organisational capacity, leadership effectiveness, culture and operational performance, ensuring that Talkback remains responsive to the needs of our community while delivering its strategic objectives.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Provide confident and visible leadership during a period of organisational change, helping to build trust, clarity and stability across the charity.
- Deliver the strategic direction and continue to build and develop Talkback to ensure sustainability and maximise impact.
- 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, mission and values and are supported to deliver outcomes.
- Orchestrate and lead a strong and supportive line management function, including reviewing, setting and monitoring of performance management, individual and team development and staff recruitment and retention.
- Strengthen an organisational culture of accountability, continuous improvement and collaboration.
- Ensure we have clear outcome measures that monitor and manage our impact.
- Provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Board regarding organisational priorities, risks and opportunities during the interim period.

Development and Fundraising

- Work with the leadership team to maximise income generation, strengthen commissioner and funder relationships, and ensure existing services remain financially sustainable and strategically aligned.
- Ensure the highest quality standards are upheld to meet contractual obligations and requirements.
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with commissioners, funders and key external stakeholders to protect and enhance income streams.
- 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.

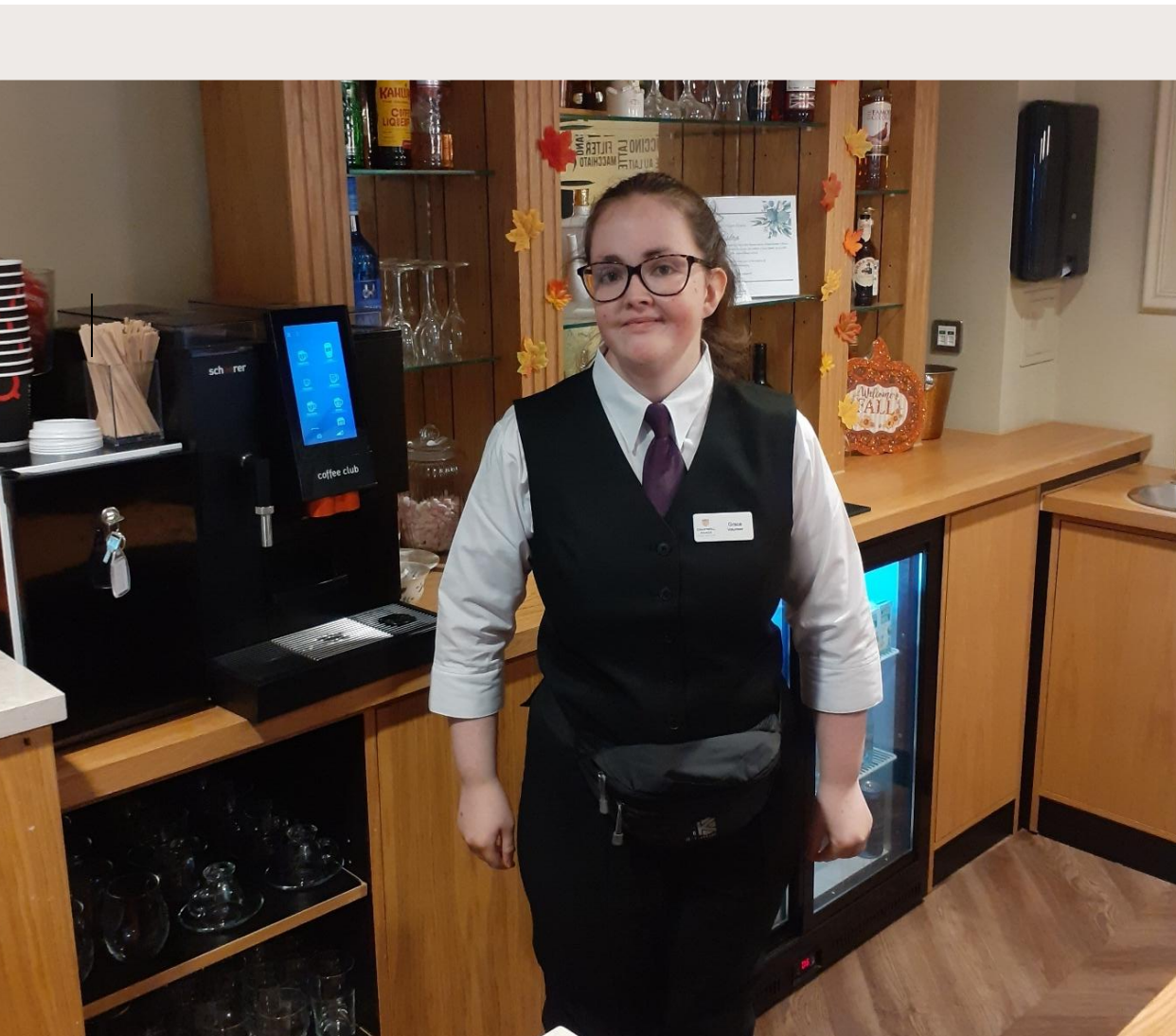
Business, Finance and Operations

- Ensure robust financial oversight and work closely with the finance function to maintain financial sustainability and effective financial controls.
- Review organisational infrastructure, including property and facilities arrangements, and develop recommendations regarding future accommodation needs.
- Ensure organisational risks are actively managed, and appropriate governance, safeguarding and compliance arrangements are maintained.
- Oversee the successful delivery of the business plan.
- Ensure that Talkback meets its constitutional, legal, financial, audit and statutory duties and that all activities meet agreed values and quality standards.

Communications and external voice

- Act as a trusted ambassador for the organisation, providing confidence and reassurance to key stakeholders during a period of transition.
- Build and maintain productive relationships with commissioners, partners, local authorities, funders, and sector networks.
- 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 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.



Person specification

Experience

- Experienced senior leader who can lead strategy, generate income and manage and motivate a large staff team.
- Experience of leading organisations through periods of transition, change, or organisational development.
- Experience of leading organisational stabilisation, culture change and performance improvement initiatives.
- Experience of supporting and strengthening senior leadership teams to maximise organisational effectiveness, performance and long-term sustainability.
- Understanding of services supporting autistic people, people with learning disabilities and/or other disadvantaged communities.
- Track record of building productive, impactful relationships with a range of stakeholders, including commissioners, sector stakeholders and external funders.
- Strong understanding of charity governance, safeguarding and financial management.
- Strong working knowledge of IT and software systems, including Excel and Word.

Personal competencies and skills

- Ability to establish credibility quickly and build constructive relationships with trustees, staff and external stakeholders.
- Skilled at balancing support and challenge, holding people accountable while developing capability and confidence.
- Excellent judgement, emotional intelligence and resilience.
- Able to communicate complex issues clearly, concisely and appropriately for different audiences.
- Capable 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.



Ready to apply?

Eastside People is supporting Talkback in the recruitment for this role. Please [click here](#) to apply by submitting a CV and a cover letter **both in Word doc. format**.

Please use the cover letter (max 2 pages) as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV and ensure that you cover the following:

- Why are you interested in the interim Chief Executive Officer role at Talkback?
- What recent experience do you have which is relevant for the role?
- Your availability, notice period and any information you would like us to take into account during the recruitment process.

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Bernice at bernice@eastsidepeople.org to arrange a convenient time. 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. Please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can make the application process work for you.

The closing date for applications is **Monday 14 September**, with online shortlisting interviews with Eastside People taking place throughout the advertising period and the week after. Interviews with Talkback will take place on the 21st or 22nd September. The role is due to start at the beginning of October.

Eastside People is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity. We work closely with our clients to recruit inclusively and widen representation in leadership roles.

Finally

We recognise that AI can be a helpful tool, but please use it with care and ensure your application is accurate, personal, and genuinely reflects you. We do not use AI in our sifting or selection process - a human reviews every application!



Eastside People

Eastside People
Canopi
82 Tanner Street
London
SE1 3GN

0203 821 6174
eastsidepeople.org

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