



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 100 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 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 who are underserved

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

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 pandemic, 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 with young people who need new opportunities the most. We used this learning to focus on four initiatives:

- **Launching the KEY+ Challenge** – 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 who have funded a consortium of 18 organisations led by The Key. 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

904
unique young people were supported to participate in KEY+



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

226
of their own projects or activities


Including:

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



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

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.



Why us



Why work for The Key

We are now seeking a new Chief Executive Officer to continue our journey and position KEY+ as an excellent kitemark for any organisations who want 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 already secured, and we'll need to continue to secure new funders.

Our rich variety of stories from young people will continue to evidence that when young people are given the right platform, we can provide them with opportunities outside of formal education that help them to understand that they are someone. KEY+ will support young people to see that they can make things happen, and that they have the potential to do more and not get stuck. Our CEO vacancy creates a brilliant opportunity to play a vital part in supporting young people to create those stories at an important time in The Key's long-standing history. You will experience the difference our support makes to young people and witness the inspiring stories of their ideas, development, and progression. It's the fuel that drives and motivates us to achieve more and we hope it drives you too.



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."

Five reasons to choose The Key

- An opportunity to inspire belief in young people through the KEY+ Challenge.
- 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.

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 dedicated staff team, young people steering group, volunteers, freelance support and of course 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. As The Key's CEO, you'll be a strong relationship builder. You will be central to raising the profile of The Key in the North East and nationally whilst nurturing relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including young people, partners, funders, influencers and more.

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Salary: £52,000 - £55,000

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 in line with our funding agreements, culture and values.
- Lead on the creation and delivery of the three year strategy and annual tactical plans, reporting regularly to the Board and ensuring delivery is within budget.

Governance

- Proactively manage and support the Board so that effective governance is established, maintained, and continually developed.
- Ensure that The Key fulfils all of its legal, statutory and regulatory responsibilities.
- Take lead responsibility for maintaining an organisational risk register to manage and mitigate identified risks as needed.

Financial Management

- Work with the finance sub-committee, team and our accountancy support to closely monitor and report on the monthly budget position.
- Organise alternative plans or fulfil tasks as needed during staff vacancies and holidays to ensure effective operational delivery.

Income Generation

- Support income generation activities, with a range of activities from drafting funding applications through to targeted relationship building to ensure funding is secured from a variety of sources.
- Promote and advocate for the organisation effectively with a view to generating opportunities to develop income streams promoting sustainability and innovation.

General

- Support The Key to be a learning organisation, continually seeking to improve what we do and learn as we go to maximise our impact for young people.
- Represent The Key as needed in various forums to develop our place within the region and our ability to influence to get the best services and opportunities for young people.

The Role

About you

To be successful in this role you will need to have the following qualities:

- authentic and passionate about inspiring belief in young people
- strong people and performance management skills
- ability to achieve an appropriate balance between strategic and operational demands, with a willingness to “roll sleeves up” and operate at whatever level needed when necessary
- strong financial acumen – with an ability to operate at all levels of finance management and administration as needed
- understanding of the importance of excellent safeguarding practice when working with young people
- proven track record of being responsible for the successful delivery of multiple projects simultaneously
- the ability to lead, motivate and harness the talents of a small but growing team
- experience of working in or with the not-for-profit sector
- knowledge of the youth sector, with an understanding of the issues faced by young people in the UK
- ability to interpret and interrogate data to inform decision making
- articulate, with the ability to communicate effectively, to a variety of audiences both verbally and in writing
- proven networking and stakeholder management experience, with the ability to build and nurture strong relationships with people and organisations from a wide variety of sectors and backgrounds
- experience of reporting to and managing a board of directors or trustees

You may have, although not essential:

- knowledge of the youth sector and the different organisations and structures in the North East
- a strong track record in a business environment and with good all-round business skills
- up to date knowledge of impact monitoring and measurement
- experience within organisations relying on volunteers as part of their service delivery
- sufficient technical understanding to ensure the organisation is making optimum use of available technologies
- experience of leading successful recruitment and induction programmes
- knowledge and experience of marketing, human resources and office management

If you have life experience or grew up in a way that helps you to understand young people and the many barriers they can face, then this counts for a lot and we would really like to hear from you.

The Role

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

The Key currently adopts a '3 and 2' model. We ask employees to work in our Newcastle City Centre base* for three days and then provide flexibility for where they work the other two. We keep this under review to balance providing a great service, building a healthy team with the spirit of a shared mission, and providing staff with flexibility.

*The Key are currently located in MEA House but due to the sale of MEA House by MEA House Trust, we will be looking to relocate to a new permanent office base in early 2024.

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.

Applications with CV should also be submitted by email to Peter:
peter@theexperiencebank.co.uk

