



Job pack

Executive Director for England

Salary: £75,000 DOE

Contract: Full-time

Location: Remote, home-based within proximity to London

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Career Ready.

Your start in life shapes the opportunities you have — and we exist to change that.

For over 20 years, we have delivered tangible, lasting impact to the lives of underserved young people through our network of employers, volunteers, schools, colleges and wider supporters.



James Bardrick
Chair, Board of Trustees

We are entering an important phase. Our 2025–30 strategy is clear: to deepen impact, grow our reach and strengthen the value we create for young people, employers and the communities who we work with.

It is a strategy rooted in focus and discipline: doing what we do best, at greater scale, with consistency and quality, while operating as a resilient and sustainable organisation.

We are also clear about where we are today. While we have strong foundations and a compelling offer, our potential, growth and income in England are not yet where they need to be.

We need to identify, engage and build new and strategic corporate relationships which provide core funding, mentors and paid internships. More of these corporate partnerships need to be built at greater scale and pace, and our external presence needs to translate more consistently into sustainable income and programme growth.

The Executive Director for England will play a central role in addressing this. This is not a role focused primarily on shaping strategy. It is a role for someone who can help us turn strategy into results: building relationships, securing income, driving growth and playing a defining role in advancing social mobility for thousands of young people.

This role sits alongside the Executive Director for Scotland, with shared responsibility for leading the organisation, supported by the Chief Operating Officer. While this reflects our current structure, there is clear scope for the role to evolve into a broader leadership position, which we will discuss with candidates at interview.

If you are motivated by delivery, comfortable with accountability and ready to build something at scale, leading a great team, we would be very interested to hear from you.

We are Career Ready

Who we are

We are a social mobility charity at the heart of a network of employers, volunteers, schools, and colleges. We all work together to invest in young people, boosting their social mobility and unlocking their futures.

Why we exist

We believe that every young person should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in life. However, the futures of far too many young people are determined by their background, not talent. We exist to help change that.



What we do

Since 2002, we've worked to transform outcomes for young people by connecting them to the opportunities, support, and networks they need and deserve to thrive through and beyond the programme after leaving school / college.

Our high-impact programme offers young people aged 16-18 with a dedicated mentor and a four-week paid internship with one of our employer partners, alongside skills masterclasses, insight sessions and events that build confidence and ambition.

Our work is enabled through strong partnerships with employers and their people, schools, and colleges.

Meet the team

[Watch the video](#) for a glimpse at what it's like to work at Career Ready.



Our values

Our values represent the core beliefs we hold as an organisation. They show how we work, and what we stand for at Career Ready.



Trust

We believe in our own, and others', ability to do our jobs well.



Empowerment

We feel confident and supported enough at work to take ownership of our role within the organisation.



Bravery

We face challenges with openness, honesty and positivity.



Collaboration

We work with colleagues across the organisation to achieve our goals.



Inclusion

We create an environment where everyone feels seen, valued and championed.



About the role

Role Summary

This is a senior, externally focused leadership role with direct responsibility for income generation, partnership development and programme growth across England. It requires a highly commercial, delivery orientated leader who can convert opportunity into sustainable income and long-term partnerships. You will combine strategic oversight with hands-on business development — personally leading on securing significant income opportunities and partnerships for the charity.

There is a clear, trustee-endorsed strategy in place and this role is about execution. Growth in England must accelerate, and partnerships must scale in width, depth and value.

You will represent Career Ready with credibility at the highest levels, while also ensuring that programme delivery in England is coherent, high quality and capable of supporting growth.

This is not a traditional charity leadership role. It is best suited to someone who is equally comfortable:

- creating and delivering high-value partnerships that generate significant income
- holding senior external relationships
- driving performance internally
- and being personally accountable for results

Success in this role will be defined not by plans developed, but by income secured, partnerships built and the number of young people we reach as a result. Longer term, there may be scope to explore rebuilding a presence in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Opportunity and Challenge

Career Ready has a strong track record, a clear strategy and a compelling proposition to employers and funders. In England, there is a significant opportunity — and expectation — to go further and faster.

The successful candidate will take on a role where:

- Income growth needs to accelerate and become more predictable and sustainable
- More employer partnerships need to move beyond transactional engagement into deeper, multi-year relationships

- External profile and influence needs to translate more consistently into funded growth
- Programme delivery must scale without compromising quality, outcomes and our USP
- Aligning capacity and capability with growth ambitions will be an important area of focus

This role requires someone who is comfortable leading through change while delivering results.

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Key relationships: Executive Director for Scotland; Chief Operating Officer

Key Responsibilities

Growth, Income and Partnerships

- Lead the commercial and partnerships strategy delivering income growth across England, with clear accountability for securing sustainable, multi-year funding from employers and funders.
- Personally originate, lead and close the charity's most significant partnership and income opportunities, acting as the lead relationship holder.
- Build and maintain a senior portfolio of relationships, converting networks and influence into tangible, long-term income.
- Oversee, quality-assure and, where appropriate, directly contribute to high-value proposals and partnership agreements.
- Ensure strong renewal and growth of existing partnerships.
- Set clear expectations and pace for business development activity across England, with a focus on results.

External Influence and Presence

- Act as a credible, senior ambassador for Career Ready in England, building relationships that lead to funded growth.
- Strengthen the organisation's position with employers, funders and key stakeholders, to deepen engagement, unlock new opportunities for growth, ensuring external profile translates into income and opportunity.

- Develop and lead regionally based, employer-led action boards that drive engagement, influence and growth.
- Build effective relationships with senior stakeholders across local, regional and combined authorities in England where this can unlock partnership and funding opportunities.
- Contribute to, and where appropriate influence, national and regional policy conversations relating to social mobility, skills and preparing young people for the world of work.

Leadership and Team Development

- Provide visible leadership across England, focused on delivery, pace and accountability.
- Lead and develop high-performing business development and programme teams, setting clear priorities and expectations.
- Foster a performance culture where activity leads to results, ensuring Career Ready continues to be a great place to work.
- Balance strategic oversight with personal delivery, staying close to the work that matters most.
- Be resilient, grounded and pragmatic, with the judgement to navigate complexity

Programme Oversight and Growth

- Provide senior oversight of programme delivery in England, ensuring it is consistent, high quality and capable of scaling sustainably.
- Maintain focus on outcomes for young people and stakeholders, ensuring growth does not dilute impact or quality.
- Use data and insight to guide decisions, improve performance and strengthen the case for investment.

Organisational Leadership and Governance

- Build strong, effective relationships with Trustees, operating confidently at Board level with clear accountability for performance.
- Work closely with the Executive Director for Scotland and Chief Operating Officer to ensure alignment, financial discipline, operational rigour and organisational coherence.

- Operate with sound judgement, resilience and integrity, balancing ambition with realism and delivery.

Person Specification

We are looking for a senior, commercially credible leader with a proven track record of delivering income growth and building high-value partnerships who is motivated by building and growing something that delivers at scale.

This is a role for someone who is as comfortable converting opportunities and landing agreements as they are setting direction — and who is motivated by delivery, accountability and visible leadership with a clear commitment to social mobility, inclusion and creating fairer access to opportunity, aligned with Career Ready's mission and values.

Experience and Track Record

- A strong personal track record of securing significant income, partnerships or commercial growth in a senior role.
- Clear evidence of originating, negotiating and closing high-value, complex or multi-year partnerships.
- Experience of converting senior relationships and networks into sustained income and strategic partnerships.
- Experience operating at Board and executive level, with confidence in environments of scrutiny and challenge.
- A track record of delivering growth within financial constraints, balancing ambition with discipline.
- Strategic, consultative and action-focused leadership experience, with the ability to set direction, drive delivery and achieve results through people.
- Excellent communication skills, with the presence and credibility to represent the organisation that compels and inspires confidence.
- Digitally confident, with experience using systems and digital tools to drive insight, performance and commercial decision-making.
- Comfortable using digital and social platforms to support engagement, influence and income generation.

Leadership and Approach

- A delivery-focused leader who sets clear expectations and holds themselves and others accountable.
- Able to lead through change, bringing clarity, focus and momentum.
- Builds and supports high-performing teams, while maintaining a strong focus on outcomes.
- Collaborative in approach, but willing to take decisions and drive performance where needed.

Additional Information

Salary

£75,000 Depending on Experience

Contract of Employment and Hours of Work

This is a full-time role with a flexible approach to working hours. As a mission-driven organisation, our work doesn't always fall within standard hours, so early starts and evening working are sometimes required.

Location

We are a remote, home-based organisation. The role requires regular attendance at meetings and events in London and travel across England. Candidates should live within proximity to London.

Other

This post is subject to a DBS check.

How to apply

Please submit your CV and a cover letter to Kelly Canham, Head of People & Culture: kelly.canham@careerready.org.uk

Please contact Kelly Canham at the email address above if you would like an informal discussion about the role prior to applying.

We are recruiting on a rolling basis and encourage applicants to apply as soon as possible.

Working at Career Ready

Our benefits

Nurturing and rewarding talent is important to us. We offer the following benefits to all team members:

- 6% pension contribution to personal pension plan, subject to 3% employee contribution
- Annual leave: 27 days per annum plus bank/public holidays. The charity is also closed between Christmas and New Year. Career Ready allows flexible use of some Bank and Public Holidays
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Access to our Reward Gateway Portal and an Employee Assistance Programme
- Flexible working
- Work from home allowance and paid travel expenses

How we work

Our colleagues are based remotely, across the UK – but we're well connected across our teams, and across the organisation.

We bring everyone together for our monthly all-colleague Teams calls and an annual in-person event. Our teams and project groups also have additional opportunities to meet and collaborate throughout the year.

Wellbeing is incredibly important at Career Ready. As well as providing an Employee Assistance Programme to support all colleagues, we have a group of wellbeing champions and host regular events and activities.



Our impact

Our year in numbers:



3,319

young people supported on our programme in 2025



1,189

paid internships in summer 2025



355

employers providing paid internships in summer 2025



£1.6 million

employer investment in young people's skills through paid internship salaries



3,300

volunteers supporting young people



98% of 2024 alumni¹ are in a positive destination of higher or further education, work, or an apprenticeship 12 months after the programme



90% of 2025 alumni feel more confident than they did before the programme, with **70%** saying this was down to Career Ready



96% of summer 2025 interns now feel confident making informed career decisions – and 39% have been inspired to rethink their future path altogether



93% of 2025 alumni rated their work and career readiness skills a strength by the end of the programme, up from **60%** at the start



89% of 2025 alumni² feel they have a good network of people who could help them find a job in future, up from **63%** at the start of the programme

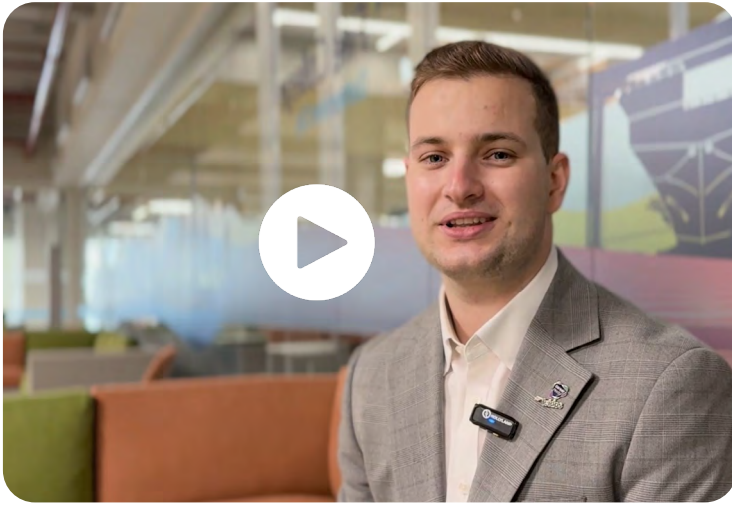


97% of young people who had a paid internship in 2025 say it increased their knowledge of career opportunities

1. Latest available destination data

2. Latest cohort with full programme impact data

What young people say...



"The corporate world was something that I had no touch point with, no route into. Career Ready gave me the chance to get into the workplace and figure out what I want to be and how to get there."

Ryan, 2017 alumnus. Now a Business Development Manager at Leidos. [Watch the video](#) to hear more about his journey.



"My internship opened my eyes to the variety of jobs available in the financial sector, ones that I never knew about.

Speaking to my mentor and all the people during my time at Phoenix also taught me that getting to your dream job is not always straightforward.

The skills and lessons you learn on the way are priceless and may lead you to a job that you initially didn't know about but is perfect for you."

Siyanda from Birmingham, mentor and paid internship at Phoenix in 2024.



"Before Career Ready I'd get anxious speaking to new people and overthink things. This has now completely changed.

The support of Emily, my mentor from CBRE, especially when I worked with her during my internship, has helped me grow in confidence and discover that a career in property is what I want to do – and now I am."

Ellie, 2024 alumnus from Glasgow. Now an apprentice at CBRE, where she had a mentor and paid internship.



We look forward to hearing from you.

For more information, please visit
[careerready.org.uk](https://www.careerready.org.uk)

Career Ready is a Registered Charity in England and Wales 1092891 and in Scotland SC043678

