



Chief Executive - Appointment Brief

2026

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive at the Career Development Institute (CDI).

The UK is facing social and economic challenges such as an ageing population, the NEET crisis, low economic growth and productivity, the rise of AI and the need to achieve net zero. To overcome this, there is a growing awareness of the role of career development to foster a career-ready population that enables people to achieve their potential and form a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The CDI is at the forefront of raising the profile of the sector as a key lever in addressing these needs. We also play a central role in monitoring the workforce in our own profession, with an ageing workforce and areas of low pay causing recruitment issues for organisations employing career development professionals.

The CDI is uniquely placed to raise awareness of the value of high quality, impactful careers provision for young people and adults. The CDI already has visibility across national, nations and regional government, which our next Chief Executive will further develop.

The incoming Chief Executive will also grow the organisation's capabilities to enhance professional standards across the sector, extend membership reach and benefits, and widen our commercial activities to increase investment.

This is an exceptional role for an inspiring Chief Executive with a blend of people, commercial, social justice and political skills to make a genuine difference to the support received by millions of people across the UK. If you have the skills and passion to lead the CDI on the next stage of our journey, We look forward to hearing from you.

About the CDI

The CDI is the professional body for the UK career development sector, with a membership of over 4,800 individuals and organisations. We exist to fulfil two broad purposes – to enable our members to offer the best support they can to their clients, and to champion the profession for the value it can add to individuals, the economy and society.

The CDI was established in 2013 bringing together four founding bodies– ACEG (representing careers educators); ACPI-UK (representing private practitioners); NAEGA (representing adult guidance) and the ICG (representing public sector practitioners) – to create a single voice for the career development sector.

The CDI has grown from an initial membership of 3,500 to over 4,800.

Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values



PURPOSE

As the professional body for career development in the UK, to support members and champion the profession.



VISION

For every individual to realise their career potential so they can thrive and contribute fully to society and the economy.



MISSION

- To promote the career development profession and define its ethics, principles, and standards;
- To support and enable members to advance their professional practice and achieve high standards in the provision of career development support, and
- To promote public understanding of career development and the resulting benefits to prosperity and well-being for individuals and society. and facilitate public access to professional career development.



VALUES

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and **ethical** practice, leading by example for the sector.

We operate and promote an **inclusive** culture where everyone can thrive, respecting others and working collaboratively to realise the best for everyone.

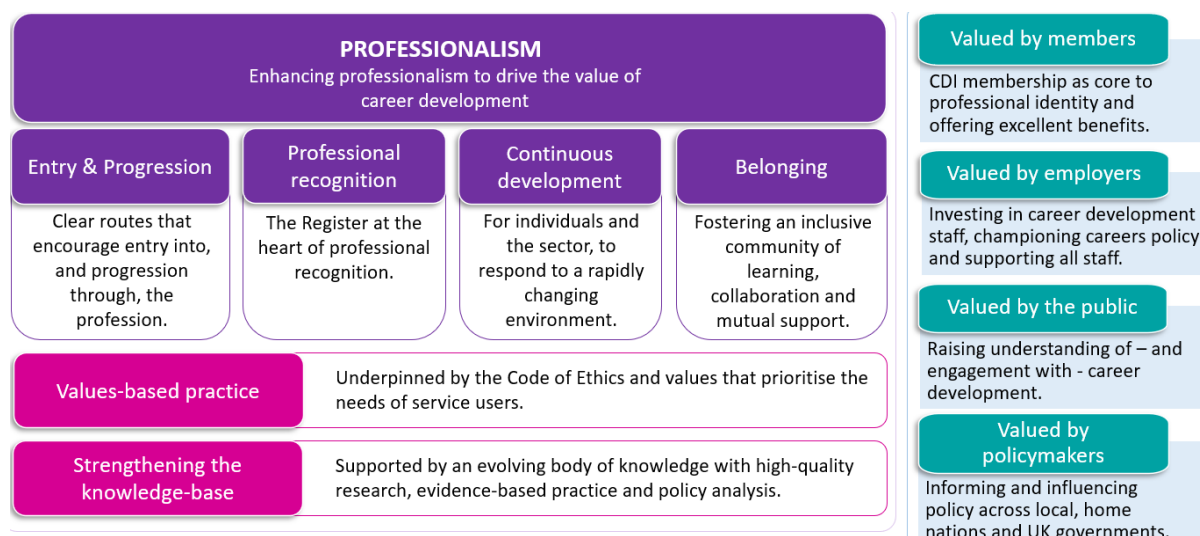
We **strive to advance** professionalism in career development, seeking to increase our benefit to members and working closely with our stakeholders to raise the status of career development.

We actively demonstrate and evidence the value that the profession offers; engaging and **inspiring** colleagues, stakeholders and the public about career development expertise.

2030 Strategy

We launched our 2030 strategy in November 2025, setting out the direction of the CDI for the next five years. With a focus on enhancing professionalism, the 2030 strategy provides an overview of our focus and the goals for each of the four main stakeholder groups – members, employers, the public and policymakers.

Visit the CDI website to find more detail on the [2030 Strategy](#). It is summarised as follows:



Governance

The CDI is a company limited by guarantee with Articles of Association and Company Rules. It is led by the Board of Directors, which comprises up to 12 elected and appointed Directors and is chaired by the CDI President. The Board oversees the strategy and ensures the organisation is fulfilling its purpose in a sustainable manner.

One of the Board Directors is the Chair of the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee (EPSC), which oversees the Code of Ethics and complaints process, and advises the Board and CDI team on ethics and professional standards matters.



The Members' Advisory Council is chaired by the President and represents the nations and regions across the UK. It offers advice on key initiatives presented by the Board, as well as feedback from members across the UK.

Key activities

Memberships:

We offer memberships to individuals and organisations (including bulk memberships for large organisations) across all areas of career development. There are no requirements to become a member other than committing to the Code of Ethics. Members are primarily UK-based with a small number based internationally, and we offer reduced fees for student members. See [all our membership options](#).

We provide a variety of services to our members, including:

- A wide range of continuous professional development (CPD) webinars – free or discounted to members.
- The quarterly Career Matters magazine.
- Monthly email updates, covering sector news, training and events, and CPD advice.
- Access to an online CPD diary to record time spent on personal development – a requirement for members on the Register.
- Access to a large library of resources including a research directory with regular updates on latest career development research.
- Careers in Careers jobs board – the UK's dedicated recruitment site for jobs in career development.

Professional standards:

The CDI acts as the standard bearer for professionalism in the sector across the UK. Members sign up to the Code of Ethics, which ensures the independence and impartiality of career development services provided to clients by our members. The Code of Ethics is backed by a complaints procedure for clients to raise concerns about practitioners.

Members who have appropriate qualifications can apply to join the Register of Career Development Professionals, a database of qualified career development professionals that is referenced in UK government's statutory guidance and is the highest level of recognition in the sector. We have been exploring the option of applying for chartered status, which would further enhance professional recognition, and this is an area the incoming Chief Executive will progress.



We also develop and maintain key professional resources, such as the [Career Development Framework](#), setting out expectations of outcomes from career programmes in education.

Training:

Through the CDI Academy, we deliver training to enable people to become qualified to work in career development or enhance their skills. We are the largest provider of Careers Leader training in England, funded by government through the Careers & Enterprise Company.

We offer level 6 and level 4 training to enable people to gain professional qualifications, as well a range of bespoke training courses for individuals and organisations – including to careers services across the UK, local authorities and more.

We also accredit level 7 career development courses offered by universities across the UK, providing another route to become qualified.

Conferences and events:

The CDI hosts some of the key events in the career development calendar, supporting specific aspects of work and the sector in general. Key annual events are the:

- CDI National Conference – a unique conference bringing together practitioners, researchers, leaders and policymakers from across all areas of the profession.
- UK Career development Awards – prestigious awards recognising excellence across the profession, with the awards dinner held on the first night of the CDI National Conference.
- National Careers Leaders' Conference – hosted with the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), for careers leaders, careers advisers and others working with schools and colleges in England. The conference includes the Career Education Awards for supporting young people in education.
- National Research Conference – hosted with iCeGS, Graduate Futures Institute and the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, the conference encourages research by practitioners.
- Student Conference Scotland – hosted with Edinburgh Napier University, University of the West of Scotland and Skills Development Scotland.

Research:

The CDI has carried out seminal research projects to benefit the profession and add to the evidence base. Our CDI Big Listen survey, seeking the views of members and others



working in the profession, has been running for five years and provides a tracker of sentiment across the sector.

We carried out a landmark research project, Valuing Careers, in 2024 which explored the public's perception of career development and how it has impacted their life. We also commissioned iCeGS to undertake an in-depth study of professional development in the sector which informed our 2030 strategy and projects to effect improvements across the profession.

We regularly highlight the latest research and maintain the research repository to widen and simplify access to the latest insights for practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

News and resources:

Alongside our well-loved Career Matters magazine, we host the UK's career development news site, providing updates on the latest policy, sector, research and resource news.

In addition to the CDI Framework and the research directory, we host a technical Education Resources hub, designed specifically for career development professionals, and a host of best practice, digital and ad hoc resources to support the work of professionals.

Through our partnership with Trotman publishing, we have supported the publication of 10 new book titles, with more to come. These are effectively growing the materials available to support different aspects of practice.

Commercial:

Our commercial team builds sustainable relationships with organisations who wish to reach our membership and the wider profession. Our commercial offer includes event sponsorship and exhibition, sponsored emails and advertising, job vacancy posting and bespoke services.

Policy and media:

A significant part of the Chief Executive's role, supported by the team, is building external relationships to raise the profile, understanding and appreciation of the sector. This ranges from regular meetings with government policymakers and key stakeholders, to presentations at UK and international events.

Our policy development includes working as part of the Career Development Policy Group, submitting responses to consultations and inquiries, and creating thought



leadership content for the CDI's own channels as well as sector and mainstream media.

Financials

The CDI maintains a healthy financial position despite a significant one-off loss in 2024-25 due to lower than planned income and issues with the transition to new website and CRM platforms. Our strong balance sheet enabled us to absorb this, and the organisation recovered to nearly break-even in 2025-26.

Income has increased steadily from £980k in 2021-22 to a budgeted £1,475k in 2026-27. Approximately 55% of income comes from qualifications and training and 30% from membership fees. We aim to achieve a profit for the year to further improve the balance sheet.

View more financial details in [our annual report and accounts](#).

A Chief Executive to achieve the 2030 Strategy and beyond

With our current Chief executive, David Morgan, stepping down to retire, we are looking for a leader to build on the strong foundations and positive progress of the organisation, to grow our membership, play an active role in professionalising the sector and raise the profile of career development with government, the public and employers.

The CDI has come a long way over the past 13 years and is well-regarded by its members and stakeholders. With a highly capable and supportive team, the organisation has a reputation for ‘punching above its weight’ in terms of reach and achievements, and we are look to extend that in the coming years, steered by our 2030 strategy.

Below are the Board’s goals for the incoming Chief Executive. In the shorter term, the focus is on maintaining stability and progress during the handover and establishing themselves in the role. Beyond that, the goals are to drive further development of the organisation and widen and deepen our impact as a professional body.

In the first year after appointment, the Board expect to see that:

- The progress of the organisation has been maintained throughout the handover.
- The Chief Executive has established a positive relationship with the team, with a shared sense of purpose.
- The Chief Executive has a clear understanding of the key aspects of the organisation and sector, and can talk meaningfully on behalf of the profession.
- They have a high level of visibility among the membership and stakeholders.
- Plans for each area of the CDI team have been reviewed and agreed to deliver the 2027-28 business plan and beyond, including growing memberships, increasing commercial income and delivering against key contracts.

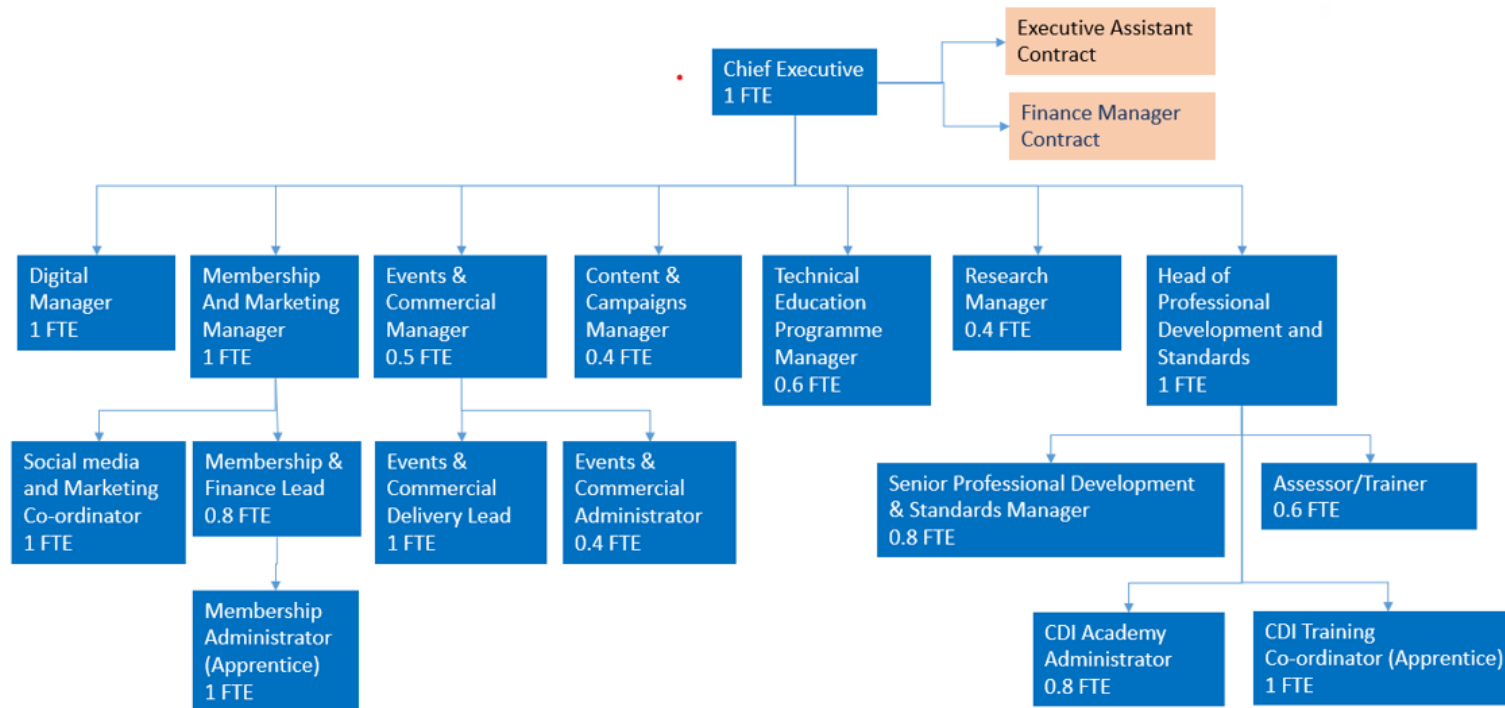
In 5 years’ time the aims are to:

- Achieve the key elements of the 2030 Strategy, as well as develop and sign-off the 2035 Strategy with the Board.
- Consolidate the CDI’s position as the UK’s professional body for career development across all four nations, through further membership growth and embedding of professional standards.
- Ensured the structure and capabilities of the CDI enables long-term, sustainable growth.
- Lead the CDI and stakeholders to a position to apply for chartered status.
- Reach high levels of member satisfaction and retention, investing in new and improved benefits, services and support so members value their membership.



- Increase commercial revenues to reduce reliance on key training contracts as an income source and demonstrate the value of the CDI's reach.
- Sustainably grow CDI Academy training, extending reach through new opportunities and courses related to career development.
- Significantly raise the profile of the CDI and the career development profession with the public, employers and local to national government. Ensure ongoing proactive and reactive media engagement to reinforce the benefits career development brings to individuals, the economy and society.

Organisation



The CDI team works in a hybrid fashion, with around half the team based locally to the Stourbridge office and half based around the country.

The core team is made up of 17 people, working as 13.3 FTE. They are supported by a number of paid associates (such as trainers, assessors and nations representatives) and volunteers (Board and committee members, regional representatives, etc.).



Job Description

Role title: Chief Executive

Primary role function: To inspire, grow and ensure the sustainability of the UK's professional body for career development.

Responsible for: The CDI team of employees, associates and volunteers.

Accountable to: The Board of Directors, through the President.

Salary: £80,603

Hours: Full time, with occasional evening and weekend work.

Location: Home based with a requirement to have a regular presence in the Stourbridge office (Ground Floor, Copthall House, 1 New Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1PH).

Pension: 4% employer contribution to personal pension.

Annual leave: 25 days annual leave plus public holidays. Three days leave is given to staff between Christmas and New Year at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

About the CDI

The CDI is the professional body for the UK career development sector, with a membership of over 4,800 individuals and organisations. We exist to fulfil two broad purposes – to enable our members to offer the best support they can to their clients, and to champion the profession for the value it can add to individuals, the economy and society.

Our members help people define their career goals, identify their strengths and development needs, and choose the right pathway to gain the skills they need to progress. The cumulative effect of these millions of careers interventions each year helps address social mobility and economic issues such as workforce skills shortages, productivity challenges and moving to a net zero economy.

Membership of the CDI brings a variety of benefits, including gaining qualifications, a wide range of continuous professional development (CPD), recognition on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals (the Register), key resources to support practice and policy, the latest sector news and access to communities of professionals.

You can read the full applicant briefing pack on the [Recruitment for CDI Chief Executive](#) page of the CDI website.

Key accountabilities

- Work in partnership with the President and Board of Directors to set out a five-year strategic plan that reflects the culture and vision of the CDI, and set short and long-term goals through a clear annual Business Plan.
- Provide inspiring and empowering leadership to the CDI team, to ensure delivery of the Strategy and Business Plans, while achieving a balance between member services, championing of the profession and commercial growth.
- Be an active and visible champion for the CDI and the profession, engaging across the career development sector, with stakeholders, the media and the public to raise the profile and understanding of the profession.
- Be accountable to the CDI Board for managing the CDI's financial position, set the budget, monitor the monthly management accounts and balance sheet, and report to the Finance and Risk Committee.
- Provide the CDI Board with regular risk assessments, reports on key business activities and updates on policy and political developments across the UK.
- Ensure good governance of the CDI by having appropriate policies and procedures in place to meet legal and regulatory compliance, and ensure that all legal and regulatory documents are filed.
- Provide effective leadership for the CDI staff to create a positive and supportive working environment, and enable them to develop and perform at their best.
- Responsible for the effective and efficient operation of CDI activities, through managing and developing the capability of staff, associates and volunteers.
- Ensure development and delivery of exceptional member services, professional training and events, with an excellent standard of customer service across all departments.
- Ensure effective communications to engage members, work with home nations' Associates and regional reps to tailor support to meet local needs, and ensure the CDI is representative of all areas of the profession.
- With the team, develop a business development plan to generate and realise opportunities for commercial revenue growth, from both existing and new partners. Includes commercial opportunities (such as advertising and sponsorship), contracts and grants.
- Build relationships with senior civil servants, politicians, government agencies and strategic employer organisations across the UK. Champion the profession and wider career development sector and provide input to government policy development at local, regional, nations and national level.

- Forge collaborative partnerships with stakeholders and external bodies, to enhance the CDI's reputation as a credible professional institute, enhance the impact of activities and add value to the profession.
- As the primary spokesperson for the CDI, engage with stakeholder groups through social media, media relations and at UK and international meetings and conferences.
- Undertake any other duties that are commensurate with the level and intent of the role.

While the successful candidate may not meet all the following criteria, these are the areas that the Chief Executive will need to have on joining or have the capability to develop within the role.

Personal qualities

- Highly ethical ways of working.
- Collaborative and inclusive, encouraging and enabling others to support the goals of the CDI.
- A strategic thinker who is also able to effectively undertake tasks to support the team and achieve targets.
- Approachable and supportive leadership style, developing an environment where everyone can thrive.
- Enthusiastic, personable and positively memorable.
- Resilient and positive when under pressure.
- Conscientious, flexible and dependable.
- Diplomatic and politically astute, able to cope with difficult situations.
- Decisive.

Qualifications

Essential:

- Commitment to the purpose, mission and values of the CDI.

Desirable:

- Understanding and appreciation of the career development sector.
- Level 6 or Level 7 career development qualification.

Experience

Essential:

- Setting strategic objectives in collaboration with the Board, the team and stakeholders.
- Providing effective management of teams to continually raise performance through inspired leadership, coaching and empowerment.
- Developing and maintaining high level relationships with key strategic partners, stakeholders and policymakers.
- Identifying, developing and realising new business opportunities.
- Managing a business or substantial department.
- Experience of setting, managing and tracking significant budgets.

Desirable:

- Experience of the career development profession, skills, employment or education sectors.
- Operating in the context of a membership or similar organisation.
- Delivery of a service that is accountable to a diverse membership.

Knowledge

Essential:

- National strategies and policies affecting the career development sector across the UK.
- Multi-agency working at a senior level with partner organisations.
- Professional development – understanding of qualifications and accreditation.
- Marketing and commercial sales.
- Use of social media and media channels to produce content and communicate with a variety of audiences.

Desirable:

- Quality control and assurance systems.

Skills

Essential:

- Strategic and operational planning, including working with a Board.
- Effective networking skills with the ability to build and sustain collaborative partnerships.
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, to a range of audiences.
- Ability to lead and motivate staff to meet demanding targets and maintain high standards of service.



- Able to identify and secure profitable commercial opportunities with a range of partners.
- Able to work to demanding deadlines under considerable pressure and sometimes complex situations.
- Able to make key choices in the context of limited resources.
- Proven ability in effective financial management.

Other:

- Willingness and ability to travel throughout the UK with regular overnight stays, and on occasion travel internationally.



How to apply

If you would like to apply for this position, please send the following:

- An up-to-date CV outlining your employment history, academic and professional qualifications, and contact details.
- A supporting cover letter of no more than 2 sides of A4, demonstrating how you meet the criteria outlined in the person specification, and why you are interested in working for the CDI.

Please submit your completed application to liz.treadwell@thecdi.net.

Applications for this position will be open until Friday 30th October at the latest.

However, we will review applications part-way through October to fast-track interviews for any shortlisted candidates and may withdraw the vacancy before the closing date.

Diversity

Our members help people from across society to thrive in their careers and lives. As their professional body we are led by our values:



VALUES

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and **ethical** practice, leading by example for the sector.

We operate and promote an **inclusive** culture where everyone can thrive, respecting others and working collaboratively to realise the best for everyone.

We **strive to advance** professionalism in career development, seeking to increase our benefit to members and working closely with our stakeholders to raise the status of career development.

We actively demonstrate and evidence the value that the profession offers; engaging and **inspiring** colleagues, stakeholders and the public about career development expertise.

CDI members and staff are required to abide by the CDI Code of Ethics, holding each of us to the high standard expected of a valued profession.

The CDI's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy sets out our work to welcome, encourage and enable people from diverse communities to succeed in the career development profession. In our recruitment we encourage applications from candidates from under-represented communities, and if you require any assistance during the application process, please contact liz.treadwell@thecdi.net.

Next steps

- Closing date for applications: Friday 30th October, with interim review of applications from 15th October.



- First interview with the CDI Board: 15th-30 October for early applicants, 2-13th November for final applicants.
- Meeting with current Chief Executive and staff: 9th to 27th November.
- Second interview with the CDI Board: 16th to 27th November.
- Appointment to be made by 30th November.

Please state in your application if you have any commitments during the interview period that may coincide with these dates.

The successful candidate may be invited to attend the CDI National Conference on 2nd and 3rd December as an observer. Applicants are asked to try and be available for at least one of these days in case they are successful.

The current Chief Executive will remain in post to conduct an effective handover until at least the end of April 2026.

If you require any further information or would like an informal conversation with our current Chief Executive, David Morgan, about the role, please contact Liz Treadwell at liz.treadwell@thecdi.net.