



# Breaking Barriers

Meaningful employment  
for refugees



## Chief Executive

Appointment Brief | July 2026





# Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is a pleasure to invite applications for the role of Chief Executive of Breaking Barriers.

This is a significant moment for the organisation. Over the past decade, Breaking Barriers has established itself as a leading refugee employment charity, supporting thousands of individuals to build new lives through meaningful work. As the number of refugees in the UK continues to rise, and the barriers to employment they face remain substantial, the need for focused, high-quality support has never been greater.

Breaking Barriers has achieved considerable impact, combining one-to-one support, skills development, and strong partnerships with employers to create pathways into sustainable employment. In recent years, the organisation has also taken the opportunity to consolidate - refining its model, strengthening its financial sustainability, and embedding its purpose more deeply across its work. As a result, it is now reaching more people than ever before, with a clearer focus and a strong platform for future growth.

We are particularly proud of the organisation's values-led and collaborative culture, and its commitment to ensuring that lived experience is embedded at every level - from service design through to strategic decision-making. This is central to how Breaking Barriers delivers its mission and maintains its relevance and impact.

We are now seeking an outstanding Chief Executive to lead the organisation into its next phase. This is an exciting opportunity for a strategic, entrepreneurial, and values-driven leader who can build on existing strengths, deepen partnerships with employers and funders, and guide the organisation through a period of sustainable growth and increased impact.

The Board is ambitious for what comes next, and we are looking for a leader who shares that ambition. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

**Alba Lamberti**  
Chair of Trustees  
Breaking Barriers

# About us

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Breaking Barriers is a specialist refugee employment charity, supporting people to build new lives, step by step.

The organisation enables refugees to access meaningful employment through one-to-one advice and guidance, education and training, helping individuals find financial independence, purpose, and identity through work. Breaking Barriers believes in the power of responsible business to drive social change through innovative partnerships.

There are now more than 500,000 refugees in the UK - a number that has more than doubled in the past five years. Refugees flee their homes due to war, persecution, and violence, often encountering further challenges upon arrival in the UK. Despite an urgent need to work, refugees are around three times more likely to be unemployed and face significant barriers to accessing meaningful employment. Breaking Barriers exists to change this - working to ensure that every refugee can build a new life through employment.



At the heart of Breaking Barriers' work are its values:

### Mission-led

They put refugees first in everything they do, listening and responding with integrity.



### Welcoming

They welcome people of all backgrounds with an open mind.



### Entrepreneurial

They believe in the entrepreneurial spirit of every individual to build a better life, and in the power of responsible businesses to drive social change.



### Collaborative

They believe in the power of teamwork and partnerships.



## Breaking Barriers supports refugees across the UK in four ways:

**EMPLOYMENT** – Personalised employment support, focused not just on securing a job but on finding meaning and purpose, and working with employers to provide targeted timebound support to access defined job opportunities within a particular career path.

**LANGUAGE TUITION** – Structured English courses to achieve a high level of proficiency or qualifications for higher education.

**RE-ACCREDITATION** – Support for refugees with international qualifications to gain the necessary UK certifications.

**SKILLS-BUILDING** – Partnerships offering workshops, mentoring, and work experience to develop employability skills.

Founded in 2015, Breaking Barriers celebrated a decade of impact last year. The organisation now helps more than **1,300 individuals every year**, and over the years Breaking Barriers' clients have achieved over **4,000 positive outcomes** in employment, education, and volunteering.

## Finances

Breaking Barriers' financial year runs from June to May, so published financial figures are now a year old. Approximated draft figures for 2025-26 show costs of £3.1m and income of £3m, with the charity expecting audited accounts to show approximately six months of reserves. Budgeted income and expenditure for 2026-27 is set at approximately £3m.

# Equity, diversity and inclusion statement

Breaking Barriers is committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace where people from all backgrounds can thrive.

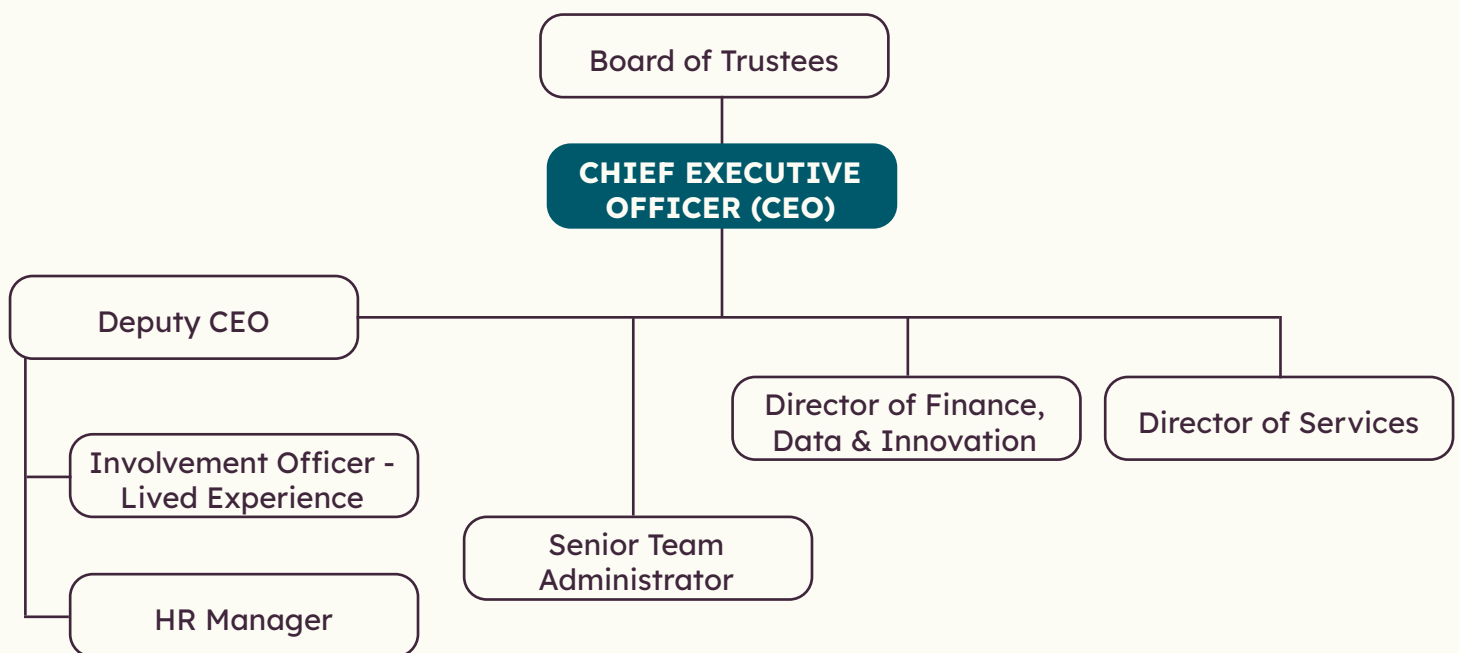
Reflecting its values, the organisation actively works to ensure that staff feel respected, supported, and able to bring their full selves to work.

Breaking Barriers places particular importance on lived experience, supporting colleagues from refugee backgrounds and ensuring their voices help inform decision-making and strategy.

Alongside this, a strong focus on wellbeing, inclusive policies, and ongoing development aims to create an environment where everyone can succeed.

We are committed to equitable recruitment practices, ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all and that selection processes are fair, transparent, and inclusive. We welcome applications from individuals with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, and we are committed to making reasonable adjustments wherever needed to support candidates fully.

## Organisation chart







## Role description

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>SALARY:</b>	£95,000 - £99,000 including allowance for London Weighting
<b>HOURS:</b>	Full-time (37.5 hours)
<b>LOCATION:</b>	London (regular travel to Birmingham, Manchester and other parts of the UK; minimum 60% office based, more initially)
<b>REPORTING TO:</b>	Board of trustees, via the chair of trustees
<b>DIRECT REPORTS:</b>	Senior leadership team, operations staff (currently 4 people)
<b>BENEFITS:</b>	25 days' holiday, 3% contributory pension, flexible approach to working

### Purpose

The Chief Executive Officer will lead Breaking Barriers through its next phase of growth, driving greater impact in supporting refugees to rebuild their lives through meaningful employment.

At a pivotal moment for both organisation and the communities it serves, the CEO will shape and deliver an ambitious strategy that strengthens Breaking Barriers' reach, influence, and sustainability. Working closely with the Board, they will champion the charity's mission externally, deepen strategic partnerships, and secure the resources needed to expand its work.

This role offers the opportunity to lead a respected and purpose-driven organisation, inspiring a talented team and ensuring that Breaking Barriers continues to deliver high-quality, life-changing support - while reaching many more people who stand to benefit from it.

# Key responsibilities

## Strategy and planning

- Lead the development of strategic plans to guide Breaking Barriers towards achieving its vision and mission.
- Oversee the translation of strategic objectives into achievable operational plans.
- Work with the trustees to set annual KPIs and longer-term targets and lead the staff team in delivering against them.
- Leadership, Management and Culture.
- Lead the organisation, defining and embedding its culture, embodying its' values and always working to ensure Breaking Barriers best achieves its mission.
- Promote a work environment that recruits, retains and supports high-performing staff.
- Ensure that lived experience is at the heart of decision-making within the organisation and drive forward the organisation's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Develop and support a high performing, collaborative senior leadership team.
- Monitor and review performance across all aspects of the organisation.

## Partnerships and fundraising

- Support and work with the deputy chief executive to ensure that the charity raises the funds it needs to deliver its goals and maintain financial stability.
- Meet with external partners and funders, with aim of promoting the work of the charity and raising funds.
- Develop relationships with complementary charities, government agencies, businesses, donors and other stakeholders in order to deliver Breaking Barriers' mission.
- Act as a spokesperson for the Charity, including via the media.

## Finance and operations

- Support and work with the Director of Finance to maintain effective financial management and control systems, and ensure annual budgets, accounts, and financial forecasts are produced in line with annual plans.
- Ensure the organisation has the highest standards in relation to human resources, supporting staff to be able to best delivery the charity's mission.
- Ensure the organisation's responsibilities in relation to health and safety are understood with proportionate action taken.

## Service delivery

- Support and work with the Director of Services to ensure that the charity delivers high quality support to its clients which achieves agreed outcomes.
- With services colleagues ensure the safety of clients and staff.

## Governance

- Ensure that the board of trustees have the information they need to undertake their responsibilities, and that the organisation is compliant with relevant legislation and statutory reporting requirements.
- Work closely with the chair of trustees to ensure that the board is kept informed of the organisation's progress, including reporting to quarterly meetings and sub-committees.
- Make decisions within the agreed authority delegated by the Board.
- Support Trustee recruitment and development alongside the Chair.
- Ensure the timely preparation of the annual report, statutory accounts, and returns to the Charity Commission.

# Person specification

## Essential

### Experience and knowledge

- Significant experience as a Chief Executive OR as a senior leader in a complex social impact organisation.
- Experience in developing and setting organisational strategies, including vision-setting and leading associated change management.
- Significant experience in developing strategic partnerships with corporate funders and partner organisations to drive income growth and create employment opportunities for clients.
- Experience of managing a large directorate or team.
- A strong track-record of driving organisational excellence and long-term sustainability, ensuring both operational effectiveness and financial resilience.
- Experience embedding lived experience approaches, ensuring the voices of those with direct experience inform strategy, service design, and organisational culture.
- Knowledge of UK charity governance, for example as a CEO or trustee.

### Skills, abilities and attitude

- Ability to encourage and motivate staff and volunteer colleagues at all levels to best carry out their roles, in the interests of delivering the charity's mission.
- Skilled communicator, able to translate complex information into clear, accessible, and persuasive messages, with the confidence and gravitas to represent the organisation publicly and build strong relationships with corporate partners.
- Skilled at prioritising, quickly establishing which activities and tasks should be carried out by yourself and members of the team.
- Committed to ensure decision-making is driven by integrity and equity.
- Able to deal with sensitive and confidential information and manage professional boundaries.
- Committed to the mission of Breaking Barriers.
- Committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.

## Desirable

- Experience of employability.
- Experience of forced migration.
- Lived experience of forced migration.



# How to apply

To apply for the role, please upload your CV together with a supporting statement (of no more than 500 words) onto the Prospectus website via the link.

For guidance on formulating your supporting statement, please review our guide [here](#).

Please ensure that you have included a telephone number, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with the recruitment timetable.

If you wish to apply using an alternative format please contact Prospectus on 020 7691 1920 or email [executive.admin@prospect-us.co.uk](mailto:executive.admin@prospect-us.co.uk)

Applications via the Prospectus website should be made at: <https://prospect-us.co.uk/job/195000>

At Prospectus we believe passionately that a truly inclusive workplace leads to increased social impact. We are committed to supporting our clients build more inclusive teams. To understand how we are performing, we ask that you kindly complete the brief equal opportunities questionnaire when you submit your application via our website. Please be assured that your responses are kept confidential, separate from your candidate record, are not part of any application you make, and that the consultants never see individual responses to the questionnaire.

## Recruitment Timetable

**Deadline for applications:** 9th August

**Interviews with Prospectus:** w/c 24th August

**Interviews with Breaking Barriers:** 11th September

## Queries

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the opportunity, please contact our retained advisors Rhys Barber or Borge Andreassen at Prospectus on 020 7691 1920, or email:

[Rhys.Barber@prospect-us.co.uk](mailto:Rhys.Barber@prospect-us.co.uk)

[Borge.Andreassen@prospect-us.co.uk](mailto:Borge.Andreassen@prospect-us.co.uk)





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