



Finding **strength**
through **support**

Executive Director, Giving, Volunteering and Voice

Recruitment pack





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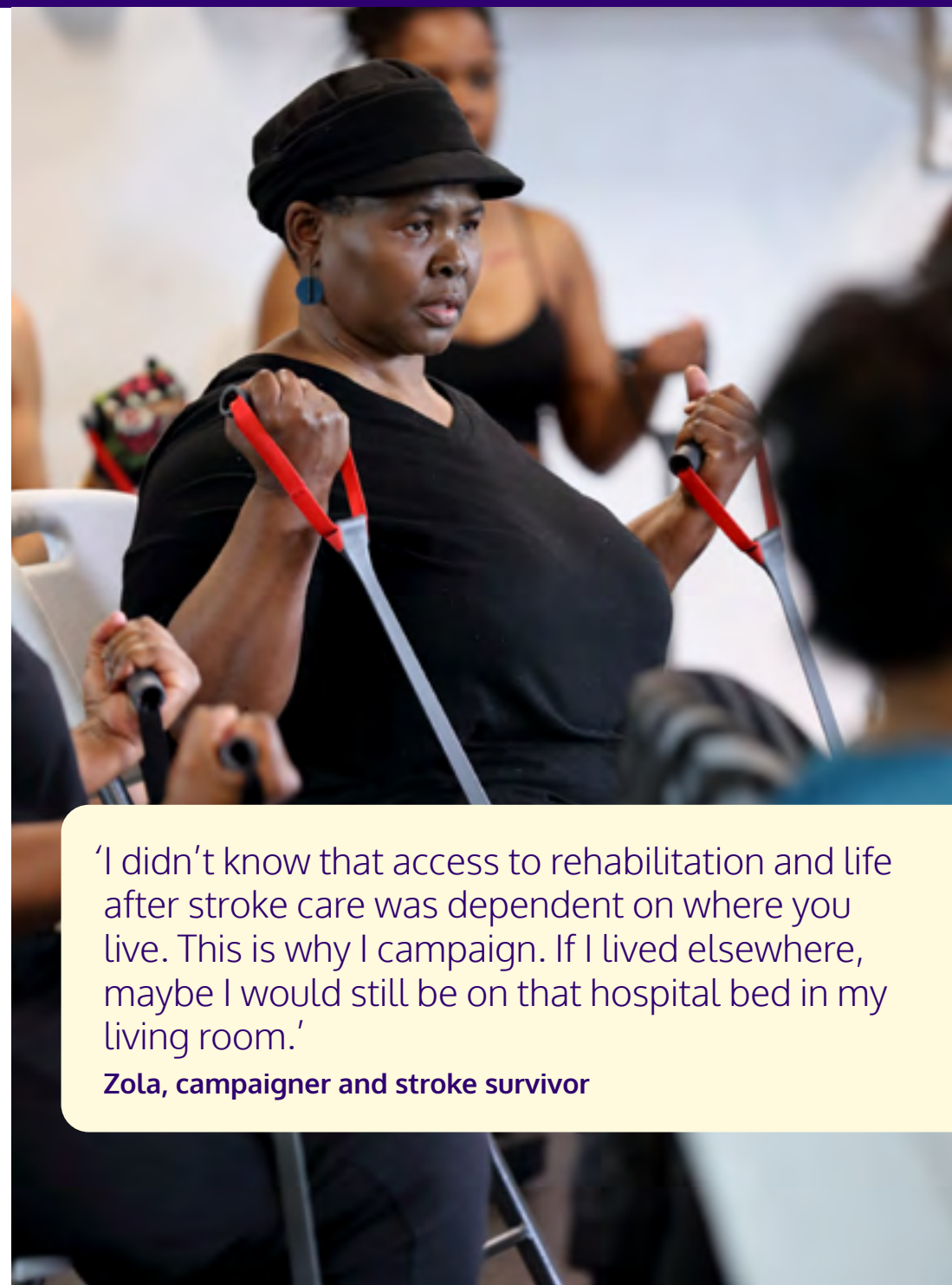


Purpose of the role

You'll connect, convene and enable people across our organisation and beyond to help and inspire all those who give their money, time or voice to the cause of stroke – making sure that all our supporters feel understood, valued and able to make their best possible contribution.

You will galvanise the organisation, align us behind a shared purpose, and help us move from a function-driven model of giving to a high-performing approach that prioritises supporter experience and mutual benefit across all forms of contribution. By leading a supporter-centred approach, you'll generate the resources, relationships and momentum needed to fund and fuel our impact.

Harnessing the talent of our people with the power of data, digital and human connection, you'll help us grow and unlock the full potential of our supporter community so that, together, we can tackle the devastation of stroke.



'I didn't know that access to rehabilitation and life after stroke care was dependent on where you live. This is why I campaign. If I lived elsewhere, maybe I would still be on that hospital bed in my living room.'

Zola, campaigner and stroke survivor



Our approach to strategy

Internally, we call the areas of our strategy 'systems' as we draw on the approach of **systems thinking** to make sure we pay attention to the complexity and interconnected nature of our work.

Our **corporate strategy** sets out why the work of our three customer-facing areas – or systems – is vital.

Support

Help stroke survivors and their loved ones to live their best lives after stroke.

Influence

Catalyse action with decision-makers to drive improvement in stroke.

Contribute

Help and inspire supporters to make their best contribution.

Underpin

Help our people to work safely, legally, ethically, sustainably and continuously.

Something for you to reflect on

As you read about these systems, what contribution do you see yourself being able to make? What are the opportunities you see in connections between **Contribute** and our other purposeful systems?





How we're delivering our strategy

We're making a shift from being a very traditional, 'industrialised' charity to one that's more responsive to a changing world, and that enables our people to be their best at work.

We call this new culture 'relational' because it's about connection – connecting our work with our purpose as a charity, with what matters most to stroke survivors and families, and with each other as we work across team boundaries.



Hear more about this from **Alexis Kolodziej**, our Executive Director who leads our Influence system.

'You have to be comfortable with uncertainty if you're going to work in this way. Try to be more in the moment, just doing the work and paying attention to what we're learning in the moment. And know what's in the toolbox, to know what will help you. And then be in the work with people to see what happens – because that's the exciting thing isn't it?'

Josie Hoskins, Head of Statutory and Case Creation

Something for you to reflect on

How comfortable do you feel in ambiguity, where you're having to lead people through a change that you're experiencing too?



Living by our values

Our values underpin our strategy, guiding how we behave and interact.

They're the characteristics that make us distinctive and spell out our standards.

We are human

We believe in better

We give our all

We say it how it is

We are human

We've seen the full range of human emotions that stroke brings out. The devastation, despair, shock and indignity. We put ourselves in the shoes of the people we support. We recognise their unique needs, experiences, strengths and weaknesses with kindness. And we do the same with our colleagues, too. We embrace this to achieve the best possible outcomes for stroke survivors, our charity and our partners.

We believe in better

We're optimistic for the future. For all people living with the devastating effects of stroke and for our charity. We are driven by our desire for improvement, however big or small. We use real life stories to celebrate achievement and inspire hope for a better future. To learn from our mistakes. And move forward stronger than before.

We give our all

Our resolve to make a difference motivates everyone we work with. We inspire stroke survivors to gather the determination and strength they need to make their best recovery. And champion their needs when they can't. Together, our colleagues motivate each other and move people to support us however they can.

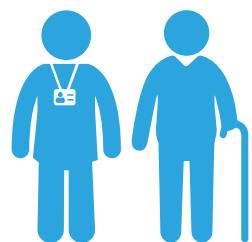
We say it how it is

Working together, we set realistic but challenging goals for ourselves and the people we support. We listen to what matters most to people so we can deliver what we said we would. We aren't afraid to show people the devastation that stroke causes. And what people can do to help those affected live their best life after stroke.



Our 2024/25 achievements

We are the UK's leading stroke charity, delivering amazing, life-changing support for all stroke survivors and their families. During 2024 to 2025:



We provided vital support to nearly
66,000 people
through all our support services.



Over **1,150 volunteers**
gave their time to **help us and
the stroke community.**



434 stroke support groups
are run by **volunteers** in our **Stroke Group Network.**



Thanks to the **generosity of our
supporters**, we raised
£31.4 million
(compared to £28.9 million in 2023-24)



Our 2024/25 achievements

We now have

460 people affected by stroke

in our **Stroke Views Involvement Network**, who this year contributed to projects on:

- Our 'In memory' fundraising communications.
- Our brand refresh.
- Our in-hospital displays.
- Our support packs for stroke survivors, carers and family members.



We supported more than

350 members of the stroke community



to bring their voice to the **10 Year Health Plan** development.



We invested more than

£2.4 million

in pioneering stroke research.



We saw

18% growth

in legacy income.



Funding our work in 2024/25

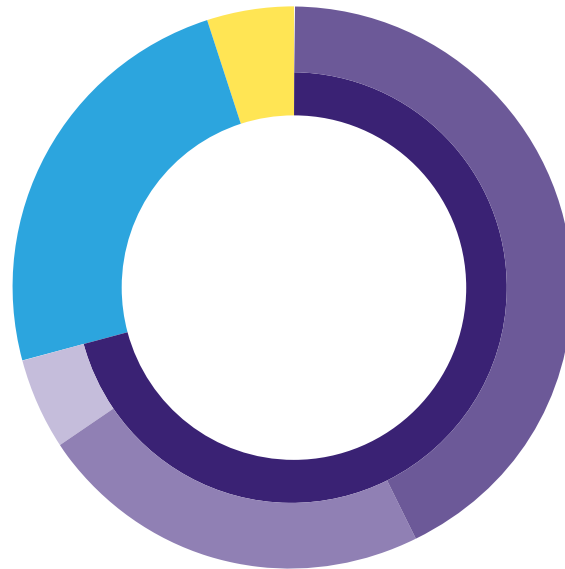
How we raised our money

■ Fundraised income:
£31.4 million made up of:

- Legacies: £18.9 million
- Supporter contributions: £10.2 million
- Income from Trusts, Foundations and Corporates: £2.3 million

■ Commissioned stroke support services: £10.7 million

■ Other income (including trading, investments, grants and the Stroke Group Network): £2.1 million



Total income: £44.4 million

How we spent our money



Stroke Support Services:
£21.0 million



Community development and volunteering:
£2.4 million



Research:
£2.6 million



Systems influencing and engagement with stroke:
£9.4 million



Raising funds:
£9.4 million

Total expenditure: £44.8 million



For every £1 we received, we spent 79p on our charitable work to support people affected by stroke through our tailored support services, research and campaigning. (2023-24: 80p).



Your opportunity to **make an impact**

Our work to inspire supporters to make their best contributions has many strengths we can build on.

- We receive **lots of great feedback** from supporters who give time, voice and money about what it's meant to them to give – and the value of support they've received from us too.
- We have **talented colleagues and teams** working in this system– bringing a wealth of skills across fundraising, volunteering, campaigning, involvement, marketing, communications, digital and data.
- We have **lots of different ways that people can give** – including big contributions and small.

'I was honoured to run the 2024 London Marathon for the Stroke Association after my mum had a significant stroke in late 2023. Taking on this challenge gave me a real sense of purpose during an incredibly difficult time for our family.'

Chris, supporter





Your opportunity to **make an impact**

Alongside those strengths are **gaps or weaknesses** that we're yet to close – which get in the way of our teams:

- **Inadequate data, a fragmented mix of tools** and many manual processes can lead to mistakes being made – impacting the supporter experience.
- A **lack of shared marketing strategy**, aligned to our corporate strategy, drives internal competition for our supporter's attention – creating a confused experience for our audiences.
- An **unbalanced income portfolio** – combined with a small donor database makes us vulnerable to external changes.
- **Low maturity in our approach to measurement** in this space – with shorter-term targets taking priority over longer term customer value and sustainable returns on investment (ROI).
- We need to strengthen both **capacity and capability in both volunteering (time) and campaigning (voice)** to deliver their full potential across our strategy.
- We are **missing opportunities to fundraise** against our fantastic stroke support offer.



Your opportunity to **make an impact**

And there are growing challenges in the **external environment**:

- The **cost of living** continues to bite – leading to **fewer people giving** and creating an increasingly competitive market.
- People have less time, and often want **shorter, one-off and more flexible volunteering opportunities** over longer term commitments.
- **Awareness of our charity is declining.** The health charity space is as crowded as ever, with lots of other causes and organisations communicating to the same audience.
- The public have **low understanding of what surviving a stroke looks like**, or what's possible when it comes to recovering after stroke.

'Volunteering is my medicine. Helping other stroke survivors keeps me going with my recovery. I am grateful for every day, for the things that I have and for simply being here.'

Russell, stroke survivor

'Giving contributes to regenerating our communities, improving outcomes, and strengthening social cohesion.'

CAF UK Giving Report 2025

Your opportunity to **make an impact**

There is **so much opportunity** for people to give – and to experience the benefits of giving – to us and the wider stroke community:

- Stronger digital, data and AI tools and practices could deliver **personalised supporter journeys**, that respond to individual preferences and motivations and predict the best next ask.
- A growing number of **younger adults are having strokes and want to contribute to stroke** – an audience we've not yet prioritised.
- We're in touch with a fraction of the **22+ million adults connected to stroke** living across the UK – and could do more to attract people less connected to give with us.
- Recent research tells us more people **would like to give to fund stroke support** than we've previously thought.
- Our work to **change the narrative on stroke**, continues to provide opportunities for us to grow awareness, inspire action and deepen relationships.
- There is enormous passion in the stroke community – a real **opportunity to create a powerful movement of support**.



What we'll achieve together

- Every **supporter experiences outstanding, relational stewardship** where each interaction makes them feel important, valued and considered – however they are contributing.
- The organisation is fuelled by significant **growth – in sustainable income, impactful volunteering and campaigning that's driving change** – that's increasing our impact across our strategy.
- Teams work together to create integrated supporter journeys that make it **easy and inspiring for people to give, volunteer and speak out**.
- We are building capability through data, insight and feedback to **deeply understand, anticipate and respond** to supporter needs.
- Our strong brand, strategic marketing and tailored communications tell powerful stories that **drive engagement and impact**.
- We are **increasing the public's understanding of, and commitment to, the cause of stroke and the Stroke Association**.
- Our **organisational reach and impact is continuously growing** through alignment and integration of work and learning across our purposeful systems – Support, Influence, Contribute and Underpin.



'I'm incredibly proud of my involvement with the campaigns network. Since joining, I've been involved heavily with the Saving Brains campaign, which focuses on better access to thrombectomy. This even included helping deliver the open letter, with 9,000 signatures attached, to Number 10 Downing Street.'

Phil, stroke survivor and campaigner



What we're **looking** for in **you**

We're building an Executive Team who work together as a collective team, rather than functional leads. We're looking for an experienced leader who'll bring a proven track record of delivering significant income growth, with a relentless focus on outstanding customer experience. Your leadership skills will be **equally important** – creating the conditions for our teams to do their best work, working across team boundaries to deliver on purpose. Experience we'd love to see in applicants includes:

- **Relational presence** – you build trust, communicate vision, and coach with clarity and compassion, especially through uncertainty.
- **Culture-shaping experience** – you've led shifts towards more supporter-centric thinking, bringing people with you in the process.
- **Proven leadership of growth** – you'll have grown engagement through strategic, relationship-led fundraising, marketing or sales and understand what makes customers feel valued and inspired.
- **Impact achieved through excellent supporter journeys** – from acquisition and onboarding through to retention and re-engagement, across different supporter types (ideally including volunteers and campaigners).
- **Strategic and commercial acumen** – you spot opportunities, make the most of resources, and build strong, balanced portfolios that fuel long-term growth.
- **Collaborative leadership** – you've worked across functions to break down silos and create unified supporter experiences.
- **Curiosity and creativity** – you've created the conditions for teams to think boldly about new approaches, including those enabled by rapidly advancing technology.





Knowing **you're** doing a **great job**

This role will evolve as we experience and learn together in the work. We'll review it together every six months, or sooner if there's learning that prompts us to make changes sooner. Some of the ways you'll know you're helping us move in the right direction might include:

- People across the organisation understand and prioritise a customer-perspective when designing opportunities to contribute time, voice or money.
- Contribute focused projects and sprints feel energising and inclusive – prioritising customer experience in service of sustainable growth, even over 'hitting the numbers' in the short-term.
- We're confident that we can meaningfully measure supporter satisfaction and retention – and can see improvements in these measures.
- Our comms and marketing are strategically aligned – prioritising and driving engagement where it's most needed.
- Staff and supporters can name improvements in their experience that have made it easier or more inspiring to get involved and give.
- You're seeking and hearing feedback from colleagues reflecting the value you're creating with and for them.
- You feel supported, stretched and aligned with purpose.





Leadership capabilities we need

At the Stroke Association, leadership isn't about control or hierarchy. Leadership is about how we show up within and beyond our charity.

The skills you bring as an Executive Leader are just as – if not more important than – the technical skills you'll bring to the role.

As an **executive leader** I am

Something for you to reflect on

When you think about your own leadership, which of these leadership skill areas feel most comfortable for you? Which feels most stretching – and how would you want us to support you in it?





As an **executive leader** I am



Thinking

systemically and strategically

Understanding and working with complexity and purpose.



Designing

for impact

Shaping services, systems and experiences that serve the whole.



Safeguarding

our future

Shaping governance that drives purpose, protects trust and enables lasting impact.



Developing

people and culture

Growing others and shaping the organisational environment.



Relating and influencing

with integrity

Connecting, communicating and stewarding relationships.



Leading self

with awareness and wholeness

Leading from within with presence and responsibility.



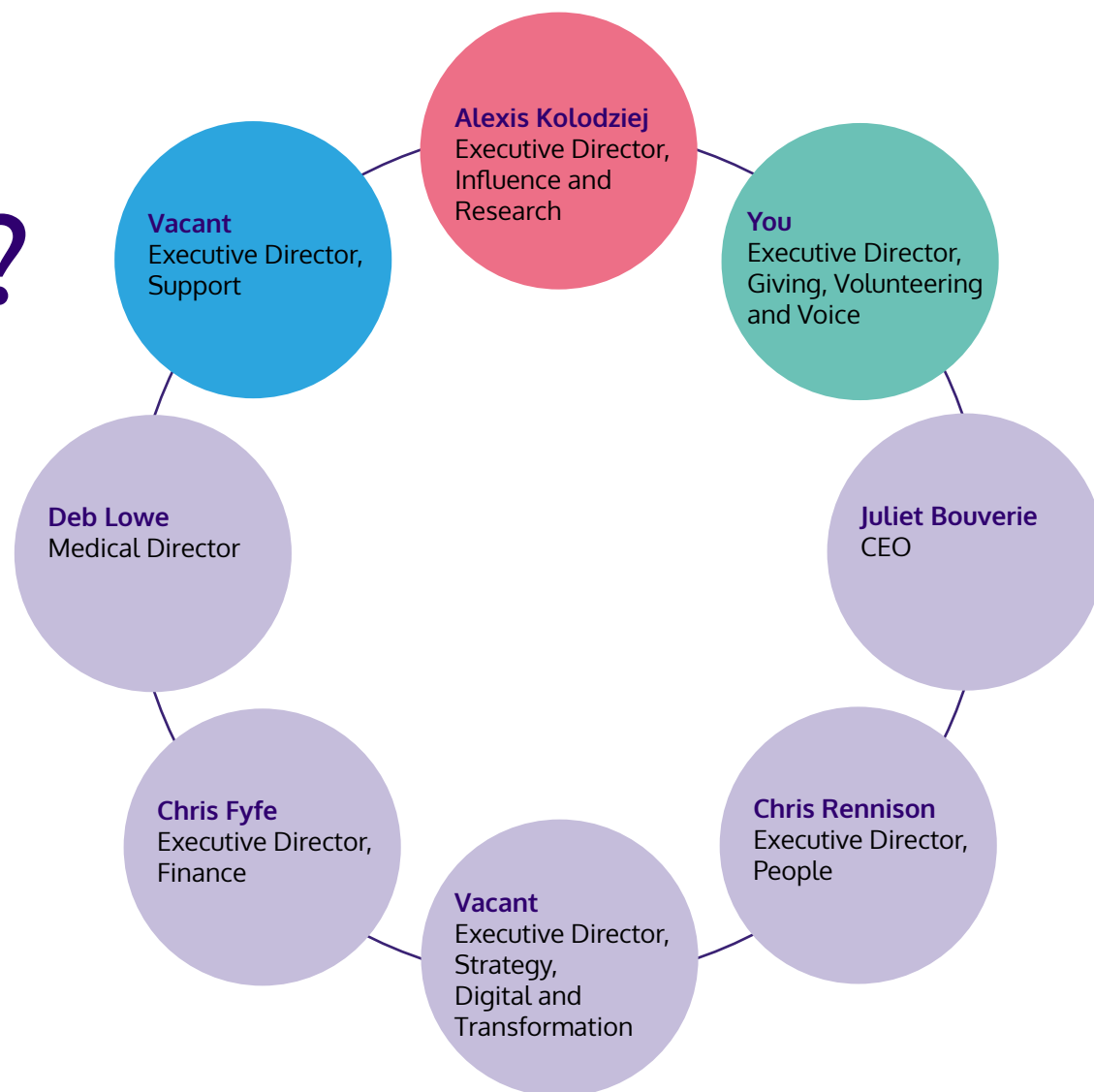
Click on each of the headings for more detail.



Who will you be joining in our executive team?

You'll be joining us at a time of change.

We've been holding one Executive vacancy, and our valued colleague Dominic Brand is retiring. We're taking this opportunity to evolve our Executive Team. We've already begun our search for our new Support director. We're now starting to look to find a Executive Director, Giving, Volunteering and Voice – before concluding with our search for a fantastic digital leader to lead our Strategy, Digital and Transformation team.





Working together

This role is a fantastic opportunity to transform the impact that our supporters can have – growing the number of people who choose to give their time, voice or money to the cause of stroke. But we don't expect you to do it alone, or without support.

Throughout the recruitment process, we'll learn more about each other and the role. Through those conversations, we'll build a clearer picture of the support you might need if you're appointed to the role. We'll co-design an induction process that helps you feel connected to our customers, our work, our people and our culture.

Some things we know are likely to be important for you to thrive in this role, and which you'll have a role to play in, are:

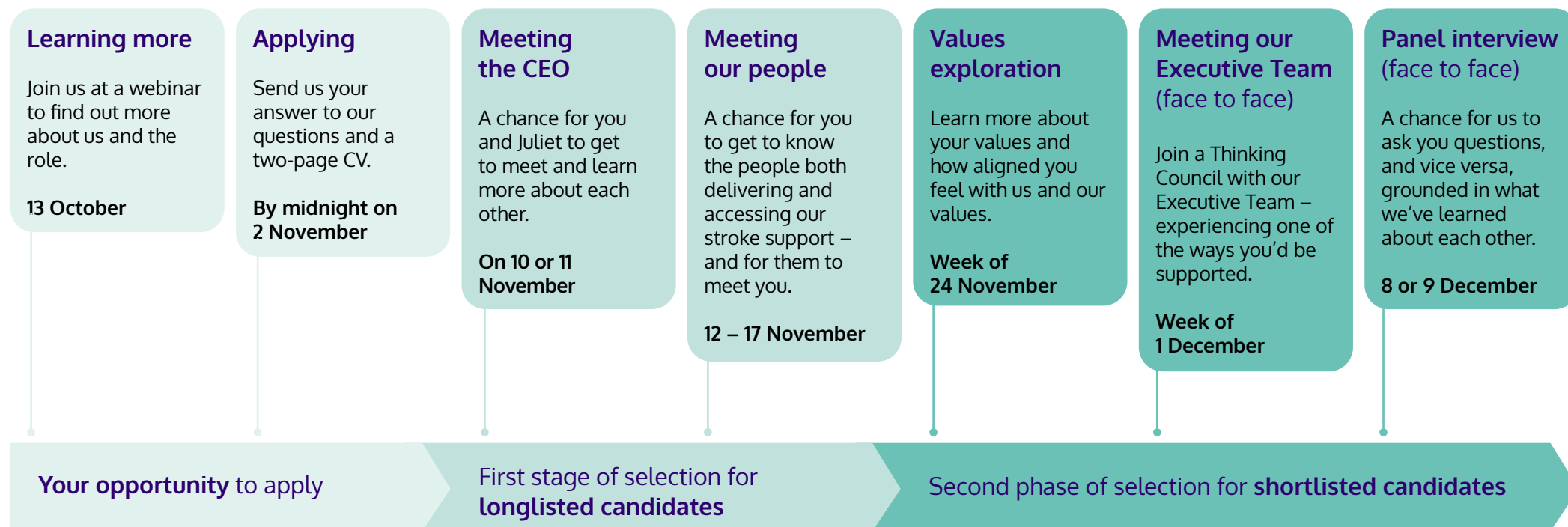
- Executive team collaboration, with space for strategic reflection, peer support and team development.
- Leaders at every level of the organisation working together to connect, align and integrate work across our four interconnected systems of Support, Influence, Contribute, Underpin.
- A commitment to invest in capabilities we need to help and inspire thousands more supporters to make their best contribution.
- Regular connection with people affected by stroke and frontline colleagues, to help us put stroke survivors first, and stay locally informed.





How we'll find the right person

We want to find the right person for this role – and we want this to be the right role for you. We've designed a process that gives us both the opportunity to make sure that this is the right role and match for us both. If we invite you to move through to the next stage of the process with us, we'll share more about what each moment involves.



Please get in touch with us at applications@stroke.org.uk if any of these dates present an issue for you. We'll do our best to accommodate any longlisted and shortlisted candidates.



Let's get the ball rolling!

To apply for this role, we invite you to send us your response to three questions, as well as your CV.

Visit our **website** to find out more about how to answer these questions and apply.

If you require any adjustments to support accessibility, please let us know - we are committed to ensuring a fair and inclusive process for all candidates.



Join us at our **webinar** on **13 October** to find out more about us and the role.

'I am currently raising money for the Stroke Association. This is how strongly I support this service as I know without it so many patients and families would remain vulnerable and lost'

Nicola, Community Stroke Specialist Nurse

'I get as much from volunteering as the people I support through weekly calls. Speaking to other people who, despite their challenges, are managing to adapt, is inspiring. Hearing their tales of perseverance gives me the strength to keep pushing forward too.'

Daniel, stroke survivor and volunteer



As an **executive leader** I am

Thinking

systemically and strategically

Understanding and working with complexity and purpose.

- Mapping and navigating interconnections within and across systems: people, processes, and environments.
- Aligning decisions and actions with a clear organisational purpose.
- Interpreting complex information to identify priorities and pathways forward.
- Anticipating possible futures and preparing flexible responses to changes in the internal and external environment.
- Recognising conditions at play within the organisation – including assumptions held – that help or hinder our work .
- Embedding long-term sustainability and regenerative practices into leadership.

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As an **executive leader** I am

Relating

and influencing with integrity

Connecting, communicating and stewarding relationships.

- Creating and nurturing alliances and strategic partnerships for greater impact.
- Shaping compelling stories that inspire shared understanding.
- Building trust and alignment with diverse stakeholders.
- Listening deeply and expressing needs with clarity and respect.
- Using influence responsibly to create fair and ethical outcomes.
- Turning tensions into opportunities for constructive change by knowing when and how to be a critical friend.
- Championing equity, diversity, and inclusion to reduce disparities.

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As an **executive leader** I am

Designing for impact

Shaping services, systems and experiences that serve the whole.

- Creating services that respond effectively to user and community needs.
- Driving digital innovation to improve reach and impact.
- Designing solutions rooted in the lived experiences of users.
- Leading across boundaries to connect people, organisations, and systems.
- Tackling inequity in access and outcomes.

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As an **executive leader** I am

Developing people and culture

Growing others and shaping the organisational environment.

- Nurturing collective strengths and capabilities that drive learning and results.
- Coaching by default, helping people to think and act for themselves.
- Creating an environment where people feel safe to contribute and grow.
- Giving feedback that builds confidence, supports growth and helps people to account for their behaviour and performance.
- Encouraging others to step into leadership and share responsibility.

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As an **executive leader** I am

Leading self

with awareness and
wholeness

Leading from within with presence and responsibility.

- Using feedback and reflection to develop my strengths, values, and growth edges.
- Managing my emotions effectively to strengthen relationships.
- Recognising power and ego, in myself and others, and responding with balance.
- Sustaining my energy, wellbeing, and grounded leadership through good and hard times.
- Using myself intentionally as a tool for positive change.

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As an **executive leader** I am

Safeguarding

our future

Shaping governance that drives purpose, protects trust and enables lasting impact.

- Creating governance that empowers bold, learning-led action.
- Building trusted relationships with regulators, funders, partners.
- Embedding compliance and risk as purposeful, shared practices.
- Balancing trust, empowerment and experimentation with appropriate safeguards and controls.
- Using purpose and values to navigate complexity, balancing risk and opportunity.
- Stewarding resources wisely to secure long-term viability and impact.
- Championing equity, inclusion, and lived experience in decisions.

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