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Consulting

Executive Search by Professionals, for Professionals
Our Experience Makes the Difference



HMS Unicorn

Engaged by our client to recruit a
Senior Fundraising Officer

Candidate Information Brief



About our Client

Unicorn Preservation Society

Launched in 1824, HMS Unicorn is the third oldest ship in the world still afloat and Scotland's only surviving wooden warship. Now an Accredited Museum in Dundee's City Quay, visitors can explore four decks that offer a unique glimpse into 19th century naval life. Our mission is to deliver a world-class museum experience while safeguarding HMS Unicorn's future and making our collections accessible to all. We aim to inspire visitors and staff alike, providing lifelong learning and engagement opportunities for our local communities and beyond.

A Huge Ambition

The Unicorn Preservation Society (UPS) has recently secured nearly £1 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to advance Project Safe Haven - our ambitious conservation initiative to relocate HMS Unicorn to Dundee's East Graving Dock. This critical move will ensure the long-term preservation of this irreplaceable maritime treasure while creating a purpose-built visitor centre that will transform Dundee's historic waterfront and enhance community engagement. This role is made possible through National Lottery Heritage Fund support and represents an exciting opportunity to join our team at a pivotal moment in HMS Unicorn's 200-year history

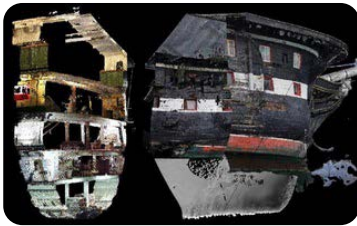


PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT SAFE HAVEN

A Master Plan for Scotland's Oldest Ship, 2019 - 2035.

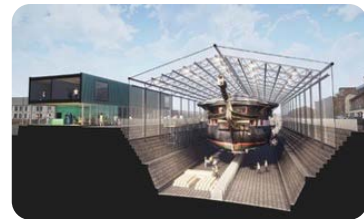
The below infographic outlines the current planned phases of Project Safe Haven, from 2019 to 2032 onwards. UPS is significantly progressing through Phase 1 and will begin Phase 2 from 2025.



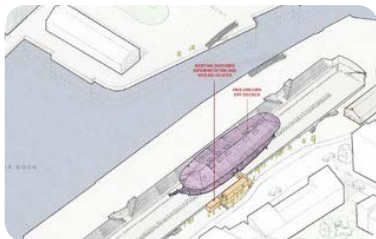
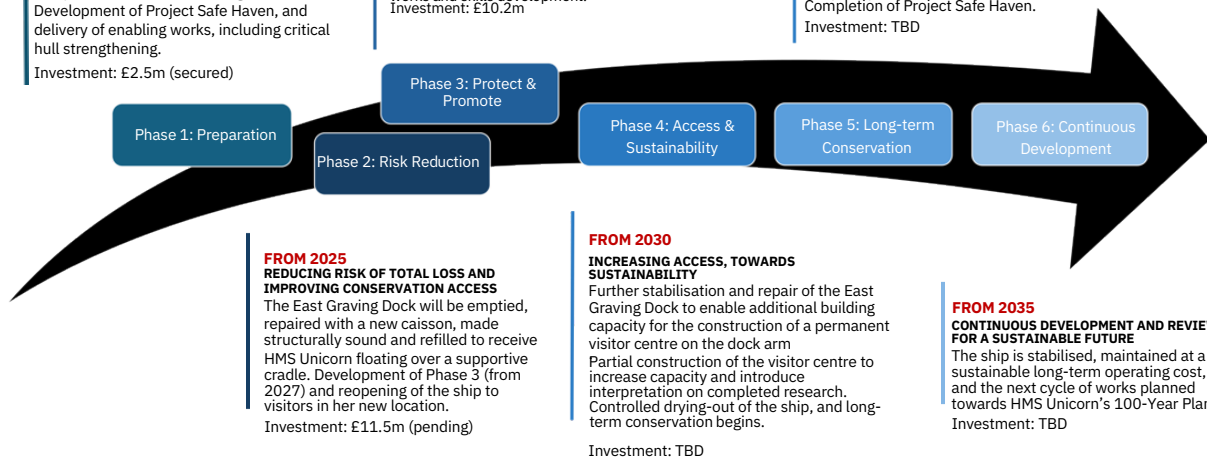
SINCE 2019
PREPARATION, PLANNING AND URGENT WORKS
Condition surveys and research to understand HMS Unicorn's condition and complex conservation challenges. Development of Project Safe Haven, and delivery of enabling works, including critical hull strengthening.
Investment: £2.5m (secured)



FROM 2027
ENHANCING VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND TOWARDS A STABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR PRESERVATION
The East Graving Dock will be emptied, with HMS Unicorn supported by her cradle, allowing access for immediate conservation, further research and start of the drying-out process. A rainwater shelter will be built over the ship. Construction of a temporary modular visitor centre on the dockside, to enhance the visitor experience, with a focus on the conservation works and skills development.
Investment: £10.2m



FROM 2032
LONG-TERM CONSERVATION
Continued and reviewed conservation of the ship in her long-term cradle. Completion of the final visitor centre with reuse of the temporary facilities.
Completion of Project Safe Haven.
Investment: TBD



HMS Unicorn
Preserve The Ship

In the News

Dr Andrew Tibbs has only been in post for a couple of months as the newly appointed interim chief executive of Dundee's Unicorn Preservation Society. But in a sit-down interview with The Courier to learn more about his role and the latest in the £30 million race against time to save Scotland's oldest ship, the Fifer's bold vision for the future of HMS Unicorn is clear.

"When you look at ships of her age and older across the world - the Mary Rose, the Victory, Vasa in Sweden, Viking ships in Oslo - all of these are on the world stage," he says.

"We've got the world's third oldest floating ship - Unicorn - here in Dundee, and we should be on the world stage with them.

"That's where we want to go with her. We want to create an experience that gets the international attention.

"But also, something that Dundee and Dundonians can be proud of and that's in our city."

Unicorn's future is inseparable from Dundee's. Andrew is therefore keen to continue working with other heritage attractions to create a unified visitor experience.

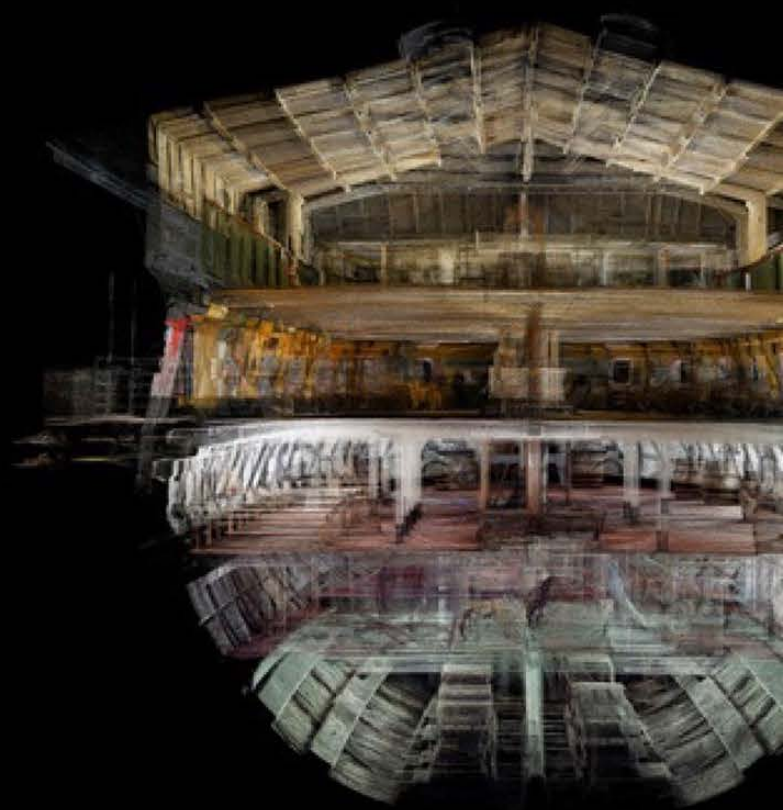
"We've got Discovery, the V&A, Verdant Works, the McManus, the Eden Project on the way - and us. That's a heritage route waiting to happen. We don't want to be a one-day city. We want people here for three, four days, immersed in a bigger story."

On Television

We are fortunate to be still able to view The Repair Shop on the Road episode shown on 17th February 2025 that shows the team visiting HMS Unicorn.

Some repair work to an essential fundraising item is shown in detail and it gives great insight into the background and ambitious future for this amazing ship.

View here <https://bit.ly/4mrIUcS>



LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

PARTNER PROJECTS

We continue to deliver meaningful, diverse and inclusive learning and training opportunities for a wide range of people, thanks to ever-growing partnerships across Dundee's communities and beyond. Below are just a few examples!

UKRAINIANS TOGETHER AND UNICORN

The Unicorn Preservation Society has been reaching out to Ukrainians displaced by the Russian-Ukraine war, using Scotland's heritage to help them develop transferable skills including mastering the English language and social integration.

The Ukrainians Together and Unicorn project, which has received funding from the Museum Galleries Scotland Sustainable Co-Production Fund, aims to build bridges between local museums and the Ukrainian community. It is part of the work undertaken by social enterprise 'Bring Together Ltd', started by Vitalii Diakov and Hanna Dushkova in 2022 with a vision to transform the challenges of displaced people into resilient communities through workshops and training.

As well as welcoming cohorts of Ukrainian refugees to explore Dundee's much loved museum and visitor attraction, HMS Unicorn, the Unicorn Preservation Society has organised visits for the Ukrainians involved in the Ukrainians Together and Unicorn project to other major heritage sites across Tayside, such as the V&A Museum Dundee, Discovery Point Dundee, Perth Museum and Perth Art Gallery.



The Ukrainians Together and Unicorn project will help the Unicorn Preservation Society to gain insights from the Ukrainians about how they can improve cultural visits for people from the global majority and those with English as a second language. Another participant, Valentyna Bezsonova, added: "The project gave me positive emotions and practical knowledge, as well as an introduction to Dundee's history and culture. I have been in Scotland since July 2022. I am from Melitopol, a city on the south of Ukraine. I admire Scotland's culture, architecture, and natural beauty, but most importantly, people are genuine, open and eager to help."

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT



A "Drifting Histories" Session as part of the White Thinking project

2024 also saw UPS develop its skills in anti-oppression work through two programmes, the Museum Transformers programme run by Museums Galleries Scotland, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded "White Thinking" project.

Museum Transformers is an anti-oppression programme that aims to empower the museum workforce to make changes to help all people to access culture. It has been developed by Museums Galleries Scotland and an Expert Advisory Group. It's funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players, and the Scottish Government.

White Thinking run by Strathclyde University is a response to a key challenge in the Scottish heritage sector: what is the next step in transitioning small-scale diversity projects in Scottish heritage organisations to more sustainable, and structural, forms of organisational and cultural change? The focus is on bridging the gap between the wealth of smaller-scale anti-racist heritage projects taking place in Scotland today (which are often led by individuals and/or small collectives), and the 'promise' of structural change in the sector.

BE PART OF THE CHANGE

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT



- Gibson, Student Placement

We also hosted many formal and informal learning opportunities for students from high school through to postgraduate. This included:

- One Foundation Apprenticeship Placement with Dundee & Angus College
- Two student placements from local colleges and universities
- Three Work Experience placements from local schools
- Two paid internships (St Andrews University and The University of Glasgow)

"It was absolutely WONDERFUL!! I had an amazing time meeting kind people who were always patient with my questions. It was super informative and I have greatly increased my museum knowledge."

- Katie, Student Placement



LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

A COMMUNITY HUB

Our programme of volunteering, engagement and learning sessions, events and gatherings have further built our place at the heart of Dundee's social landscape, helping our local community to connect with their heritage and to lead happier, healthier lives.



3,955

people reached through our engagement programme, 400 more than 2023



60%

increase in primary school visits from previous year



2,218

attendees at FREE events & sessions

“

"HMS Unicorn's outlook is all encompassing and has shown it has the ability to make space for all forms of interests and encourages vivid creative engagement"

- Drifting Histories Participant

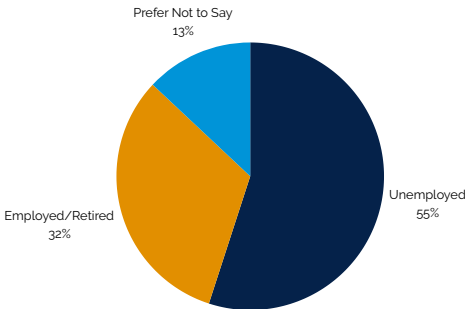


VOLUNTEERS

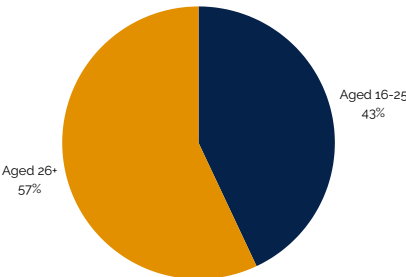
WAVEMAKERS

Our flagship volunteering programme continues to deliver excellent supported volunteer placements for people facing barriers to work and employment. The data below is drawn from our full crew of volunteers and demonstrates our excellent reach across Young People, those not in employment, and those living with a disability, with excellent onward movement to employment and education.

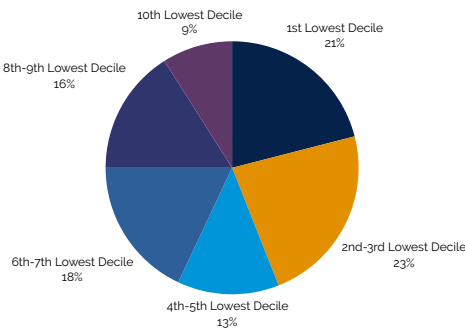
Employment



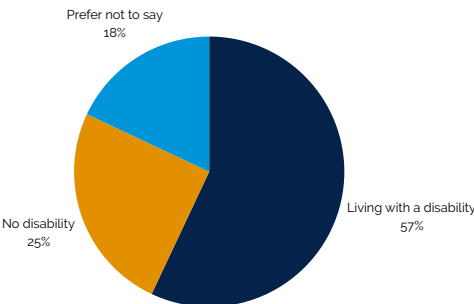
Age



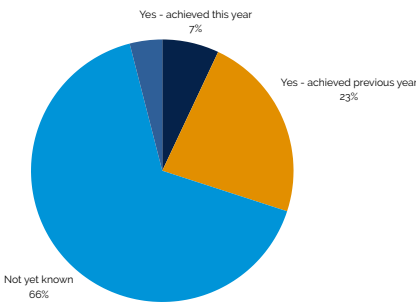
Deprivation (SIMD)



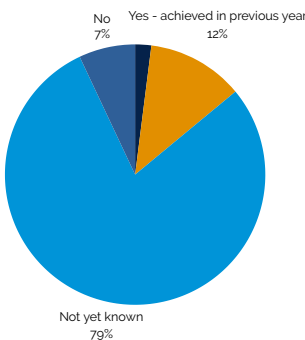
Disability



Onward to Employment



Onward to Further Education



sample size = 56

VOLUNTEERS

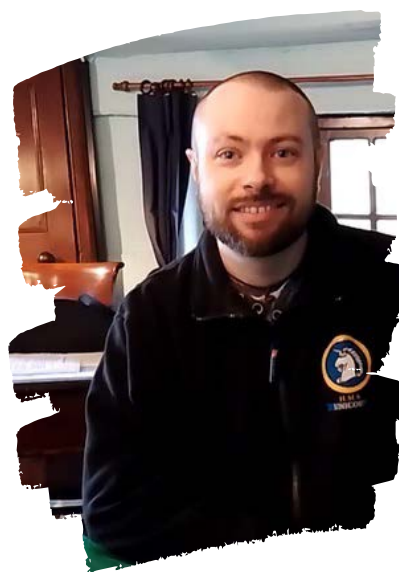
WAVEMAKERS


We try to make a difference for our volunteers and every year like to share an experience from our cohort. This year we'd like to share Doug's story.

"I have been volunteering aboard Unicorn for over 4 years now. I lived with severe agoraphobia for a large portion of my adult life, and volunteering aboard HMS Unicorn has been instrumental in my recovery and helped me greatly in finding employment upon my return to the world. I was referred to HMS Unicorn by Project Scotland as part of a program to help people with health barriers develop skills and experience for returning to work.

Initially I had only planned on staying until the end of this program, but after falling in love with the ship and her lovely crew, I decided to continue volunteering. I am a general volunteer aboard ship, I do a little bit of everything such as cleaning and maintenance, guiding and helping visitors, and dressing up as a shipwrecked pirate at Halloween. During my time aboard I have made great strides in learning to talk to the public, working as part of a team, and the logistics and day to day operation of working in a museum environment. This was one of the main factors that helped me secure my new job at the V&A.

On a personal level I am very proud of the progress I made in learning to speak to people, from initially being so shy that I barely spoke a word, to now where I am happily greeting visitors, engaging with them, helping them around the ship, and sharing the mountain of historical knowledge I've learned during my time there. Volunteering on board Unicorn has definitely been a turning point in my life. The staff and other volunteers are all extremely supportive, and understanding of my health requirements. Everyone is very lovely and friendly, and I honestly can't think of a single bad moment I've had there. For anyone who is considering volunteering, I say do it. The ship and her history is fascinating, no two days are ever the same, and you will love the team. I'd just like to add a personal note to say thank you for having me, for teaching me, and supporting me through these last few years of my personal journey. I would not be happily employed in my new job at the V&A had it not been for the support of Unicorn's crew, and the confidence you all helped me recover."





One of the
world's most
remarkable
historic ships



Dear prospective applicant

The Senior Fundraising Officer will play a crucial role in securing essential funds to bridge the gap between our major grants, particularly as we move forward with Project Safe Haven - our ambitious £25+ million, multi-phased, conservation masterplan to secure the ship's future for generations to come. Phase one is already underway (£2.5M secured) and Phase two is robustly supported by pledges of £5m, including £796,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We face an immediate challenge to match £500K of costs (by Feb '26), and to work towards full match-funding for Phase 2 (£1.9M remaining) by summer 2026. You'll be working alongside our committed staff, wonderful volunteers, engaged trustees, and our project team, to help unlock new funds and to steward existing pledges towards the next £10 million milestone.

If you're passionate about heritage, skilled in fundraising, and eager to make a genuine difference to an irreplaceable maritime treasure, we would be delighted to hear from you...

Dr. Andrew Tibbs
Chief Executive

Unicorn Preservation Society Staff Structure

■ The UPS Team



The Opportunity

This is a new role that offers a genuine opportunity to bring a strategic and creative mind to the Fundraising & Communications team.

You will be responsible for implementing and delivering HMS Unicorn's fundraising activities under the direction of the Fundraising & Communications Manager.

You will supervise specific members of the Fundraising & Communications team as directed by the Fundraising and Communications Manager.

Fundraising activities will include:



Supporting donor research, approaches and applications, reporting and relationship management across trusts, foundations and statutory sources



Developing and growing individual giving programmes, including regular giving and one-off donations

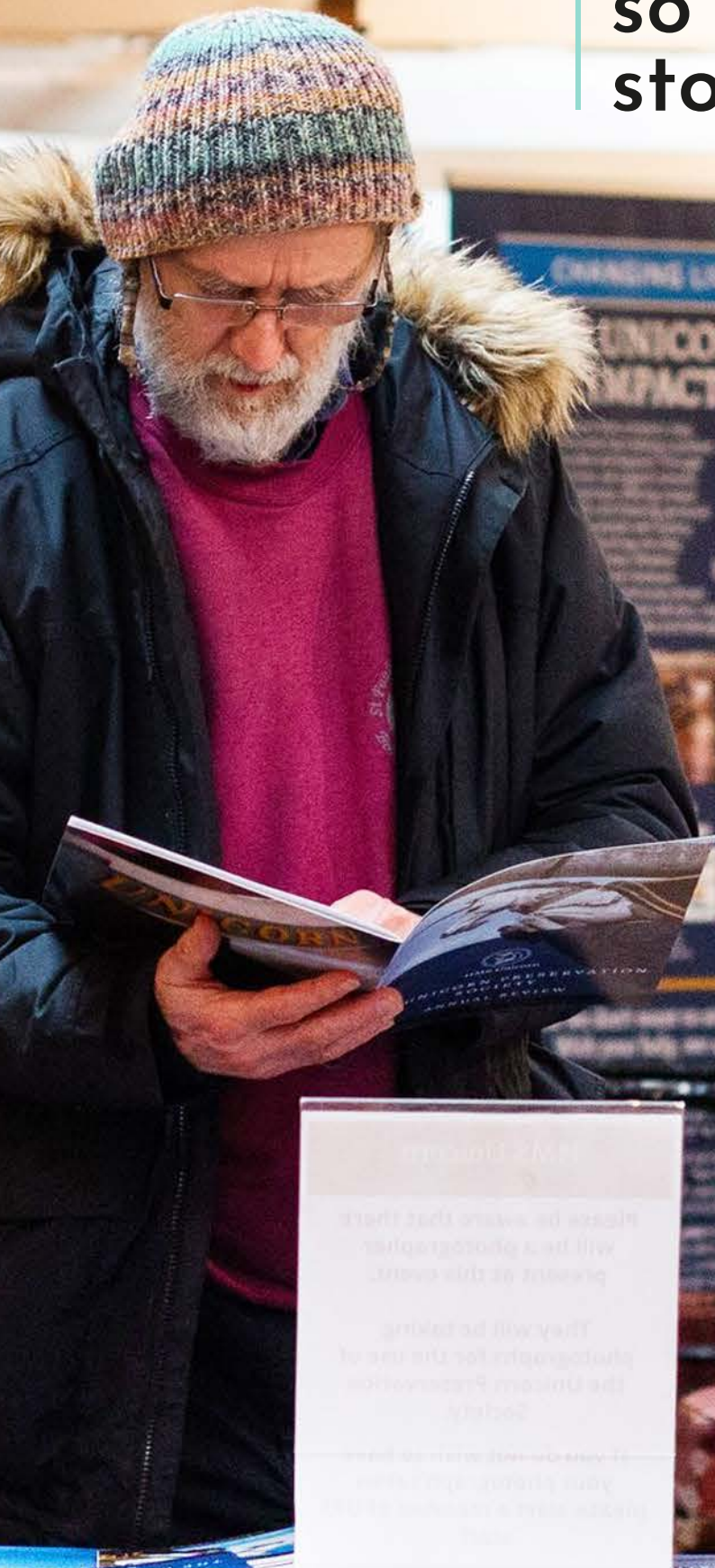


Developing and maintaining the membership scheme, ensuring excellent stewardship and value (See Job description for full information).

You will also have the opportunity to create and manage corporate partnership programmes and sponsorship opportunities as well as establishing and growing a legacy-giving programme.



HMS Unicorn,
so many incredible
stories to tell.



Skillset & Experience

You must have integrity, curiosity, and the ability to listen and learn from others. Comfortable working in a purposeful and rapidly evolving environment, you should possess experience in:

- Fundraising or development roles in charity, heritage or cultural settings
- Individual giving, corporate partnerships, and/or community fundraising
- Using databases/CRMs to gain supporter insight and inform decision making (UPS use Donorfy)
- Managing multiple projects and deadlines simultaneously
- Utilising written and verbal communication skills including copywriting
- Microsoft Word, Excel, and other packages
- Supervising staff or volunteers
- The ability to develop relationships with supporters/customers to grow engagement and loyalty



Remuneration Package & Benefits

Compensation:

The salary is up to £35,000 per annum.

The contract is up until the end of May 2026.

This may be extended beyond this subject to funding.

Benefits:

Remote/hybrid with some time in Dundee as agreed with the CEO.

Pension contribution.

34 days annual leave.





Eilish McDowell

Will be the Consultant who will lead on this role

Contact details

☎ Phone: +44 (0)7720 249200

✉ E-mail: eilish@caithnessconsulting.co.uk

How to Apply

Caithness Consulting has been appointed by the Unicorn Preservation Society to conduct this search on their behalf. We pride ourselves on our candidate centred approach and welcome initial confidential discussions with potential candidates before deciding to apply.

Should you wish to do so, please contact Eilish to arrange a convenient time. Alternatively, please submit a copy of your CV to Eilish along with a one or two page covering letter outlining why you believe you are a good fit for this role.

We will review your details and respond as soon as we can.

Closing Date: Friday 20th June 2025

Interview Date: Friday 27th June 2025

A full job and person specification, plus other documents of interest are available to download from the vacancy page on our website. www.caithnessconsulting.co.uk





Our professional integrity underpins and informs everything that we do individually and as a company.

As the world of recruitment becomes ever more reliant on technology and while we embrace these benefits, we never forget that we are in a “People Business” and People matter.



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