

CEO



Recruitment Pack

| Dorset Youth Association



CEO RECRUITMENT / 2026

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Lead the next chapter. Develop the work. Grow the impact.

CANDIDATE PACK

A senior leadership opportunity with a trusted Dorset charity working across systems, communities and direct youth provision

Role summary

Dorset Youth Association is seeking a strategic, commercially aware and grounded Chief Executive Officer to lead with care and accountability. The CEO will work with trustees, staff, young people and partners to agree priorities and strengthen how the organisation works across its connected portfolio.



www.dorsetyouth.com

Dorset Youth Association Charity no. 306009.

Key facts

Detail	Information
JOB TITLE	Chief Executive Officer
REPORTS TO	Board of Trustees
BASE	Dorchester, county-wide travel and agreed hybrid working
SALARY / PENSION	£45,000–50,000 / 6% matched contribution
HOURS	37 Hours a week
CLOSING DATE	13th November 2026 5pm
INTERVIEWS	8th/10th December 2026

The opportunity

A welcome from Patricia Price, Chair of Trustees



"Thank you for considering the Chief Executive Officer role at Dorset Youth Association. Dorset Youth Association has grown in reach, confidence and relevance. We combine county-wide voluntary and community sector (VCS) leadership with practical support for youth clubs and groups, direct youth work, wellbeing, youth voice and leadership pathways.

This is an important moment for the organisation. We are looking for a strategic, commercially aware and grounded leader who can maintain excellent safeguarding and turn ambition into disciplined delivery. The successful candidate will help Dorset Youth Association remain trusted and accountable to young people, communities, partners, funders and trustees across Dorset.

We welcome applications from people who bring the experience, judgement and values needed for this work, whether that experience has been gained through a traditional charity leadership route or another relevant setting."

VISION AND MISSION

VISION

- For all children and young people to be empowered, feel respected and know that they are valued

MISSION

- Ensuring the development and recognition of a vibrant, strong and diverse voluntary sector, with a focus on supporting those aged 0-25 and their families

HOW WE WORK

- Trustworthy
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Ambitious
- Reflective
- Dedicated
- Supportive
- Committed to excellence



www.dorsetyouth.com

Dorset Youth Association Charity no. 306009. Known as Dorset Youth.

What we do

Dorset Youth brings together sector infrastructure, practical support, direct provision, youth voice, skills and shared learning. The portfolio is broad, but it is designed to connect: strengthening the conditions around young people while responding where support is needed directly.

Portfolio strand	Description
O-25 VCS infrastructure	The O-25 VCS Forum provides representation, connection and a shared voice for organisations working with children, young people and families across Dorset. Dorset Youth supports the infrastructure that helps the sector collaborate, build capacity and respond to local need.
Youth club support	Dorset Youth supports youth clubs and groups across Dorset with practical help, safeguarding, governance, DBS, workforce development, connections and access to knowledge, so that local provision can remain safe, inclusive and sustainable.
Our Youth Clubs: The Reef + Lytchett	The Reef and Lytchett are direct youth provision and community spaces where young people can participate, build relationships, access support and enjoy positive activities.
DCH Youth Wellbeing Service	The DCH youth Wellbeing Service provides targeted support and contributes insight into the needs, experiences and strengths of young people.
Core Memories Dorset	Core Memories Dorset connects support, memory and wellbeing work with the wider learning of Dorset's youth sector. Delivering £300,000 over two years to local organisations.
Pathways to Participation	Youth voice and wider participation work help young people influence decisions, shape services and contribute to conversations about their lives and communities.
Skills Passport	The Skills Passport recognises development and creates routes into the Young Volunteer, Young Leader, Young Ambassador and Young Trustee pathways, supporting progression, leadership and contribution.
Knowledge Hub + JUICE	Our website known as; The Knowledge Hub and our purpose built CRM JUICE for VCS orgs, connects information, opportunities, learning and practical resources, helping people and organisations find what they need and share what works.

Job description

Role detail	Information
Job title	Chief Executive Officer
Employer	The Trustees of Dorset Youth Association on behalf of the Association
Accountable to	Board of Trustees
Direct reports	Senior and operational leads as agreed within the organisational structure
Location	Dorset Youth HQ in Dorchester, agreed hybrid working and regular travel across Dorset
Contract / hours	37 hrs a week, with flexibility for occasional evening and weekend commitments
Salary / pension	£45,000–50,000 / 6% matched contribution

Purpose of the role

The Chief Executive Officer is the charity's principal staff leader, senior ambassador and lead adviser to trustees. Working with the Board, staff, young people and partners, the CEO will provide strategic and organisational leadership for Dorset Youth Association, translate purpose into clear priorities, strong delivery and demonstrable impact, and hold together strategy, culture, safeguarding, finance, income, partnerships, delivery and learning while keeping young people's voice visible.

The CEO will balance ambition with care, making decisions that strengthen Dorset's 0–25 voluntary and community sector while ensuring Dorset Youth can deliver direct support where gaps exist. The role will uphold accountability, support high-quality work and maintain clear communication about what is confirmed, planned or still subject to decision.

Working with people and partners

The CEO will work closely with trustees, staff, young people and partners to turn agreed priorities into practical action. They will create clarity across the organisation, encourage shared ownership, and ensure that decisions are grounded in Dorset Youth's purpose, safeguarding responsibilities, available resources and the experiences of the communities it serves.

Key accountabilities

The scope of the role is broad and connected. The CEO will lead across the following eight areas, working within the organisation's agreed governance, policies, resources and delegated authority.

1. Strategy and impact

Work with the Board, staff, young people and partners to shape and deliver strategy; turn the developing 2026 plan into clear organisational priorities, ownership, milestones and measures; connect the portfolio to Dorset Youth's purpose; and use evidence, outcomes, insight and learning to demonstrate and improve impact. Keep the distinction between confirmed activity, planned developments and material still to be confirmed clear in decisions and communications.

2. Governance and accountability

Act as lead adviser to the trustees and work constructively with the Chair and Board; provide accurate, timely and useful information; support effective decision-making; maintain appropriate policies, records and delegated authorities; and ensure legal, regulatory, contractual and charitable responsibilities are understood and met. Maintain a healthy boundary between governance and management, support trustee effectiveness and ensure serious matters are escalated appropriately.

3. Finance, income and sustainability

Lead responsible financial management across budgets, cash flow, forecasting, management accounts, controls, reporting and restricted funds; work with trustees and colleagues to maintain appropriate reserves and understand financial risk; ensure resources are aligned with agreed priorities and sustainable delivery; and strengthen income development, major bids, funder relationships, commissioned work, corporate partnerships, trading and digital income where appropriate. Steward the Core Memories Project.

4. People and culture

Build a confident, inclusive, accountable and supportive culture; lead and develop a multi-disciplinary team; clarify responsibilities and reporting lines; oversee recruitment, induction, performance, supervision, wellbeing, workforce development and change; encourage collaboration and healthy challenge; and model Dorset Youth's values through everyday leadership. Ensure staff understand priorities, have the support to do excellent work and are treated fairly.

5. Safeguarding, quality and risk

Ensure safeguarding is central to strategy, decisions, partnerships and practice; maintain clear quality-assurance arrangements across direct provision, infrastructure work and services; identify, assess and manage organisational and delivery risks; and maintain effective business continuity, insurance and incident arrangements. Create a culture where concerns are heard, recorded, escalated and acted on appropriately, including the prompt reporting and review of serious incidents and the learning that follows.

6. Partnerships and sector leadership

Develop trusted relationships across Dorset's 0-25 voluntary and community sector and wider systems around young people, including Dorset Council, NHS, education, funders, community organisations and statutory partners. Represent Dorset Youth with credibility; convene, influence and collaborate through the VCS Forum and other networks; strengthen the organisation's role in county-wide infrastructure and representation; and ensure partnership work remains purposeful, reciprocal and accountable to young people and communities.

7. Programmes, digital and learning

Provide oversight across programmes, services, direct youth provision, digital activity and shared learning; connect the Knowledge Hub, JUICE, Skills Passport, VCS organisation need and youth voice alongside other portfolio strands; support consistent delivery, outcomes and quality; and use digital tools, information and data responsibly to improve reach and effectiveness. Promote learning across the organisation and sector, with proper information governance, consent and ethical use of stories and data.

8. Communications and reputation

Communicate Dorset Youth's purpose, offer, impact and developing plans clearly and consistently; support a strong public profile; maintain confidence with partners, funders, communities and trustees; and ensure young people's contribution is represented with respect. Use stories, images and data ethically, obtain appropriate consent and never exploit young people's experiences for publicity or fundraising.

What you will bring

The successful candidate will be able to show how their experience, judgement and approach meet the role's requirements. Essential and desirable criteria should be read alongside the full job description.

Area	Essential	Desirable
Senior leadership	Substantial senior experience leading people, services and organisational development; evidence of turning strategy into priorities, ownership and results.	CEO or equivalent charity, social enterprise or public-service experience.
Governance	Effective work with a Board or governing body; sound judgement on accountability, risk and governance-management boundaries.	Trustee/director experience; governance or CIO transition.
Finance and income	Strong financial literacy across budgets, cash flow, forecasts, controls and reporting; track record of securing, managing or diversifying significant income.	Major bids, commissioned services, corporate partnerships, trading or digital income.
People and culture	Inclusive, accountable leadership of multi-disciplinary teams; experience of performance, change, wellbeing and workforce development.	Relevant leadership, management or HR qualification.
Safeguarding and risk	Strong safeguarding judgement and experience creating safe organisational practice; calm leadership through risk, incidents and difficult decisions.	Current advanced safeguarding and safer-recruitment training.
Partnerships and influence	Credible relationships across voluntary, statutory, health, education, funding and community partners; strong written, verbal and public communication.	Dorset or comparable rural-system networks.
Young people and the VCS	Commitment to youth voice, inclusion and relationship-based practice; understanding of the VCS and local youth provision.	JNC Qualified Youth Worker, community development or related professional experience.
Data and digital	Uses evidence, outcomes and learning to improve decisions; confident overseeing digital systems, information governance and responsible innovation.	Digital product, platform or data-partnership experience.
Personal approach	Trustworthy, reflective and resilient; combines warmth with accountability, prioritises well and makes sound decisions under pressure.	
Practical	Eligible to work in the UK; willing to complete required checks; able to travel across Dorset and attend occasional evening/weekend commitments, with reasonable adjustments considered.	Full driving licence and access to insured transport.

Terms and how to apply

Terms

Detail	Information
Salary / Pension	£45,000–50,000 / 6% matched contribution
Contract / probation	Permanent F/T subject to 6 months probation
Hours	37 Hours a week
Location	Dorset Youth HQ, Lubbecke Way, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1QL; Including county-wide travel and agreed hybrid working
Apply to / closing date	Charity Jobs by 5pm 13 th November 2026
Interview date(s)	8th/10th December 2026
Informal conversation	Mike Bennett CEO – info@dorsetyouth.com

ACCESS

Dorset Youth welcomes applications from people with different experiences and perspectives. If you need a reasonable adjustment at any stage, please let us know. We will discuss and make reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

Your application

Please prepare the following documents, using your own experience and judgement to demonstrate how you meet the role and its criteria, and upload them via the Charity Job portal.

NB: Please do not send the documents below by email, as emailed applications will not be considered for shortlisting.

- Complete the Pre-qualifying application checks via the Charity Job portal
- Current CV — including your full employment history with dates in MM/YYYY format, any significant gaps, and relevant education and qualifications.
- Covering letter — no more than two A4 pages, with clear examples showing how you meet the essential criteria and identifying your own contribution.
- Two referees — including your current or most recent employer wherever possible.

References will normally be requested only after a conditional offer has been made and with your permission. Your current employer will not be contacted without your knowledge.

Terms and how to apply, cont...

Recruitment process

1. Eligibility check and scored shortlisting against the published criteria.
2. Structured interview.
3. A prepared presentation or work-based exercise, if required.
4. Conditional offer followed by the required pre-employment checks.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Checks will include identity and right to work, two satisfactory references, and an Enhanced DBS check. Subject to confirming duties and eligibility a Barred-list check will only be requested where legally eligible.

Safeguarding, equality, AI and privacy

Dorset Youth is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, and to creating safe, respectful and accountable practice. Selection decisions will be based on the published criteria and evidence relevant to the role. Any offer will be conditional on satisfactory references, eligibility checks and the safeguarding checks that apply to the final duties.

Dorset Youth is committed to fair, inclusive recruitment. We welcome applications from people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the process and should be requested as early as possible.

YOUR OWN VOICE

Your application must reflect your own experience, judgement and voice. Applicants should not use generative AI to draft or substantially rewrite their CV, supporting statement, presentation or work-based exercise. Dorset Youth may ask candidates to verify or discuss the authorship, examples and evidence in their application, and anything shared at interview must be their own.

Privacy and further information

Application information will be used only for recruitment, shared only with those who need it for the process and retained under Dorset Youth's data-protection arrangements.

