



Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP



Interim Head of Policy & External Affairs

BRIEFING PACK



Introduction from Tom Ravenscroft, Founder & Global CEO

Hello!

I am really excited to be seeking the newest additions to our outstanding team and want to thank you for your interest in the Skills Builder Partnership.

We know that individuals who build their essential skills do better in their education, earn more in the workforce, are half as likely to be out of work or education, and have higher levels of wellbeing across their whole lives.

However, all too often individuals get into a skills trap: fewer opportunities to build essential skills as children mean they start secondary school at a disadvantage. As they enter the workplace, we see the divide widen: those who join graduate or apprenticeship schemes get lots of opportunities to boost essential skills. Those in 'lower-skilled' jobs do not – and so the gap is never bridged, and a lot of potential goes unrealised.

The Skills Builder Universal Framework is a breakthrough model for building these skills that is now widely adopted in education – 87% of secondary schools and colleges in the country have some touchpoint with our work.

Social impact organisations and employers are also rapidly adopting our approach. This work is critical to ensure that individuals have opportunities to boost their essential skills across their entire lives. In the last year, we worked with 120 employers as diverse as Lloyds Banking Group, Heathrow, Allen & Overy, and Boots to support them to use the Skills Builder approach for fairer and more transparent hiring, effective outreach, and transformative staff development.

In the last year, we delivered more than 2.6 million high quality programmes for individuals to boost their essential skills further across our Partnership.

This will be a vital senior role within our team. You will be managing some of our most important external relationships as a spokesperson for Skills Builder to effect change. Whether you are an ambitious policy-maker rapidly growing your career, or have deep experience in systemic change in skills and education, this could be a perfect fit.

Thanks for your interest in this role, and we look forward to meeting you

Tom Ravenscroft



Do you want to lead systemic change in skills and education through policy?



What it's like working at Skills Builder Partnership

Joining Skills Builder is not like working anywhere else. Our team consistently say they have never worked anywhere as collaborative, supportive or mission oriented. We combine the fun and dynamism of a start-up, the professional development opportunities of a corporate, the innovation of a digital native and the social impact focus of a charity.

We are serious about delivering social mobility through our vision that one day everyone builds the essential skills to succeed. That means we are ambitious and set high standards for ourselves. We are reflective, inclusive and supportive.

In practice this means that everyone makes time for others in the team, we get stuck in to solve problems together, we have regular employee surveys where leadership talk through every single suggestion and the whole team is involved in developing our strategy.

Quotes from our anonymous Team Survey:

I'm proud to work for Skills Builder, the impact we have and am privileged to be able to work with such brilliant colleagues.

I'm excited about the new 3-year strategy and the opportunities this will bring to the organisation and to personal development

I've said it before, I'll say it again: the support I've been getting in line management is simply amazing! Whether it's about development goals or workload management, I feel truly listened to and I'm benefitting hugely from being coached and/or mentored where relevant.



About the role

In this role, you will be leading systemic change in policy. To ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed, we need them to be threaded throughout education and skills policy: from schools through extra-curricular and job centres through to employment. It is a role of two parts: working with expert practitioners in our team alongside partners to develop policy, and then getting that policy adopted by government, political parties and policy-making organisations.

The Skills Builder approach and framework have serious traction and momentum. With an increasing amount of energy and activity in the skills and education policy space, this is a pivotal opportunity to directly make a lasting impact.

We already have strong relationships with key players in government and leading sectoral organisations from the CIPD to the Careers and Enterprise Company. Our approach is recommended by Ofsted and IfATE, as well as having been built into national curricula and assessment internationally. There is also growing support for Skills Builder politically. Your role will be to capitalise on this, bringing to bear your policy expertise and network to crystallise our approach in policy. To do this, you will understand how policy making processes work, who to speak to and how.

We have big ambitions and your scope to lead, learn and achieve matches that. If you want to benefit from working with an inspiring team, with potential for growth, lasting change and an interim role you'll love, we want to hear from you.

Key responsibilities

(1) Owning and driving policy strategy

- Owning the roadmap that works back from our top-level policy and external affairs goals to tangible actions in a structured way
- Delivering against this roadmap and tracking progress

(2) Shaping policy

- Building sufficiently deep knowledge of the policy environment and subject matter to inform the evolution of our policies
- Effectively combine this knowledge with our strategic aims to come up with policies that are detailed, feasible, plausible and on message

(3) Influencing through relationships

- Building on our mapping of the individuals and organisations that we need to influence specific outcomes
- Proactively stewarding and building those relationships
- Developing a clear offer for each of those that is tailored to their goals and messaging in order to secure buy-in
- Maintaining relationships and moving them towards achieving tangible outcomes

(4) Drafting political communications and consultation responses

- Consistently identify how to align our mission with the issue at hand
- Make those points accurately and with nuance, drawing on the appropriate research and information
- Draft with attention to detail, so that our communications are of the highest professional standard

(5) Representing Skills Builder

- Confidently represent Skills Builder with external - and often senior - stakeholders, including on round tables and panels, always being on message, authoritative and upholding our values

Technical Skills and Experience

- Strong expertise in education, skills and / or government and political policy making.
- Networks across areas like the civil service and policy making that will be an asset in the role.
- Credibility and experience that enable you to be a spokesperson for our work.

Essential Skills



Listening

Understanding what stakeholders are trying to achieve is vital for this role. You will use strategic questioning and evaluate different perspectives.



Speaking

You will be a spokesperson for our organisation with parliamentarians and policy-makers. You will communicate adaptively depending on audience reactions. You will speak engagingly and inspire others.



Problem Solving

We need people who are confident at problem-solving, often on the spot and with senior leaders. You will create solutions for complex problems by using logical reasoning, systems thinking and strategic planning.



Creativity

Setting the policy agenda will require creativity. You will generate ideas by combining different concepts. You will develop ideas by seeking different perspectives and using curiosity.



Adapting

Given the nature of the work, you will need to be able to take setbacks in your stride, and be able to identify new opportunities when they emerge. You will practise resilience, adapt plans to work through setbacks.



Planning

This role requires the management of a full and varied workload, and you need to be someone who gets stuff done – on time, and to exacting standards. You will adaptively plan projects, setting targets and seeking feedback.



Teamwork

This role requires strong collaboration to achieve our strategic objectives. You will network, be diplomatic and resolve conflicts by working collaboratively.



Leadership

You will be a leader both in our organisation and in the sector. To do this, you will lead thoughtfully, recognising your leadership style and adapting according to the situation.

Benefits

Salary: £50,000 per annum

Term: circa 12 months (ending January 2027)

Start Date: flexible but as soon as possible

Working hours: flexible

Travel: you'll be representing us in meetings with stakeholders, for example in Westminster and at conferences, so some travel will be required

Team days: we get together in person in London 6 times a year for strategy, fun and food

Holidays: 25 days per year, plus bank holidays & potential to buy back up to 5 days

Location: London (hybrid working with 1+ days in the office per week) or UK remote allowing for regular travel

Application Process

Applications should be made via our [online form](#) - on completion of the online application please also send your CV by email to jobs+p25@skillsbuilder.org. The application deadline is **0900 on 11th December**, with interviews on **17th & 19th December**.

Applicants are encouraged to explore our work at www.skillsbuilder.org before applying.



Skills Builder Partnership is a Top 100 Employer. We champion equal opportunities, and actively encourage applications from qualified individuals of all backgrounds.

Our recruitment process is designed to give you a sense of what this role as part of the Skills Builder team would be like. Our process is transparent and inclusive, following best practice. For example, we blind-score applications and use the [Skills Builder / Universal Framework](#) when assessing candidates' essential skills

