

# Chief Executive

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## Candidate Pack

April 2026

# Contents

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Thank you for taking the time to find out more about this exciting role. On the following pages you'll find all the information you need to understand us better, discover what the role involves and how to apply.



## Part 1

Learn about us and explore how we work.



## Part 2

Learn about the role and what it involves.



## Part 3

Learn how to apply, review the selection process, and use a checklist to ensure you've covered everything.

# Part 1 - About Us

## Welcome Letter

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive at Launchpad. This is a pivotal moment for our charity, and we are seeking an exceptional leader to guide us through our next phase of growth, impact, and transformation.

Launchpad exists to support homeless military veterans in rebuilding their lives after service. We provide safe housing, tailored support, and pathways into employment, enabling individuals to regain independence and purpose. Our work is rooted in respect, dignity, and a deep understanding of the challenges veterans can face when transitioning to civilian life. Over recent years, we have strengthened our service model and governance, expanded our partnerships, and delivered measurable outcomes for those we support.

So, this is more than a leadership role—it is an opportunity to shape the future of a mission-driven organisation and make a lasting difference to the lives of veterans. As Chief Executive, you will provide strategic and operational leadership, ensuring Launchpad delivers high-quality services while remaining financially sustainable and forward-looking. You will act as an ambassador for the charity, strengthening partnerships across the public, private, and third sectors, and raising our profile nationally.

The role requires both strategic oversight and a willingness to engage directly with the realities of service delivery, so we are seeking a leader who combines strategic clarity with compassion, credibility and tenacity. The ideal candidate will bring proven executive leadership experience within the housing or homelessness sectors, with a genuine commitment to supporting veterans and an awareness of the challenges they may face.

This role will suit an individual who is motivated by purpose, comfortable with challenge, and ready to lead with both head and heart. This position offers highly flexible working hours and days.

If this sounds like you, take a look through the pack in more detail then contact our retained recruitment consultant Denise Kirkham, at Distinctive People, on 07833 475669 for an informal discussion.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Ian Dormer  
Chair



## Part 1 - About Us

Launchpad are a homeless veterans charity, who have three supported housing schemes, in Newcastle, Durham and Liverpool, including 98 fully self-contained apartments for veterans.

Launchpad don't just provide a roof over the head of our veterans, we provide individually tailored, wrap around support for every individual. We have an excellent track record of achieving positive results, with around 62% of veterans moving on successfully, into independent living, 45% into employment, and 65% gaining valuable training to meet their needs and aspirations. Some veterans are unable to work for a range of different reasons, and our specialist team of Case Workers, Wellbeing and Activity Advisers, Psychotherapists and Independent Living Coordinators, help to support every resident into a positive, independent life, where we will continue to provide floating support, until they no longer require it. Prior to coming to us, veterans were experiencing the following challenges:

- 88% were sleeping on the streets or sofa surfing.
- 81% experienced mental health problems, often service-related.
- 82% were long-term unemployed.
- 76% struggled to afford food & 67% survived thanks to food banks.
- 54% considered suicide to escape their challenges.
- 54% experiencing long term physical health or disability

Many say that they feel abandoned by the country which they served!

**Since our founding in 2013, Launchpad has supported over 861 homeless veterans.**

Over the last year, 62% of veterans leaving us successfully moved on to long-term accommodation. Given that most were previously sleeping on the streets, we are deeply proud of this achievement.



Michael joined the Army in 2007 and served 9 years, including in Afghanistan. He witnessed a friend's death in an IED strike, which resulted in PTSD – something he tried to self-manage through alcohol. Eventually, his relationship broke down, he found himself homeless and he tried to take his own life.

*“Launchpad gave me a place to get the right help at the time I needed it most. The help I have received has been second to none.”*

# Part 1 - About Us

## More veterans than ever supported – more successful leavers!



The last 12 months have been the most successful in our history. In the year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (our last financial year), we supported 178 homeless veterans - 10% more than last year and 35% more than four years ago.

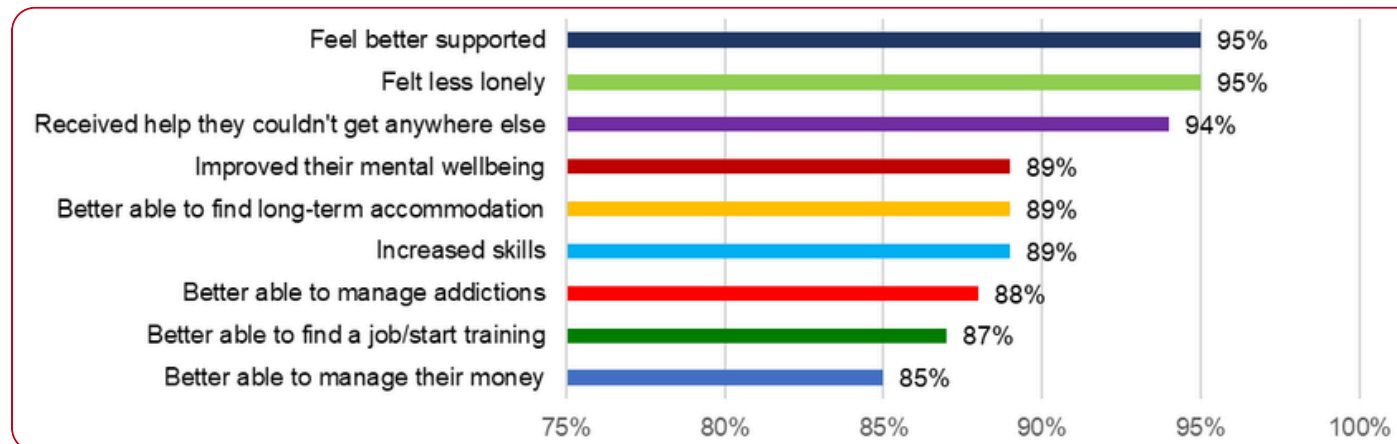
Pictured left is Adam, a resident who has secured a job with Sunderland University.

Most importantly, 80% of leavers moved on successfully either to an independent home of their own or to settled accommodation with the support they need to thrive. This is a significant increase from the 62% successful move-on rates we achieved just four years ago. There are many reasons for our increased success. Most significant perhaps, is the ability we've had since 2023 to provide psychotherapy to help veterans overcome mental health problems and associated addictions, together with increased employment support. This extra support is only possible thanks to kind donations from the government and other funders.

## Outcomes achieved thanks to your support

Each year, we ask our residents to complete an in-depth evaluation to assess the wider difference our work is making and to enable continuous improvement to our services. The results of our most recent evaluation in spring 2025 are shown below.

## Wider outcomes reported by Launchpad veterans in 2025



These underlying improvements in confidence and wellbeing are critical contributors to enabling 80% of our veterans to successfully move on to settled accommodation and 36% to secure employment.

# Part 1 - About Us

## Stuart's Story



*"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for support I got from Launchpad. My life has changed for the better and I'm in the right place to see my future and hopefully gain full time employment - that is my goal."*

Stuart joined the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in 1990, aged 16. Soon after starting, he heard that his best friend, who was serving in Northern Ireland, had been fatally shot in the head.

This had a huge and life-changing effect on Stuart's mental health, which was made worse when he witnessed (and survived) the tsunami in Thailand in 2004. He stayed out in Thailand for three weeks to help the clean-up operation, but during his stay he says he witnessed things he says "no one ever wants to experience." Twice, Stuart tried to take his own life, and he still suffers from nightmares and flashbacks. Most recently, he made a further suicide attempt after being made redundant from a job which came with accommodation, leaving him both homeless and unemployed.

Stuart came to live with us in April 2024 - we provided support for his mental health and helped him secure re-employment training with the RMF Group in driving and groundworks. We're delighted to report that Stuart's health is much improved, and he has now successfully moved on to independent accommodation. He says: *"I am so grateful for support from Launchpad, and even though I have now moved out, I'm in constant contact with the staff for support and the residents who I have made my friends."*

We provide a wide range of 'diversionary' activities for veterans to undertake during the day, including volunteering opportunities, sport, mindfulness, arts and music. These keep veterans focused on their recovery, helping them to avoid falling back into self-destructive behaviours. They also enable them to build positive, supportive relationships with their peers, to support their recovery.

Each house has an Employment and Training Co-ordinator who works alongside veterans once their mental health has stabilised and helps them gain skills and experience for employment. We work in partnership with many local employers and training organisations, including Esh Construction, BAE Systems, Learning Curve and Speke Training and Education Centre, who provide work experience and skills development.



## Part 1 - About Us

When the veterans' health has stabilised and they are ready to move on, typically after a year, we help them find long-term, settled accommodation. Each house has an Independent Living Co-ordinator who helps the veterans identify suitable places to move on to and continues to support them for around two years whilst they adapt to independent living.

We know that, for many veterans, the period after they leave is high risk, and so our Independent Living Co-ordinators help them engage with support providers in their new area to maintain their recovery. Psychotherapy is provided in our houses on a one to one basis, to support improved mental health, PTSD, and other complex challenges which are often experienced by homeless veterans.

We work alongside many specialist partners, including the NHS who provide physical and mental health support, although the latter has extremely long waiting lists and NHS mental health support is often insufficient for those with military-related PTSD and associated addictions. Other close partners include Combat Stress, CRISIS Skylight, Walking with the Wounded and the Royal British Legion.



# Part 1 - About Us

## Our Mission

To become a leading provider of supported housing for homeless veterans, by building upon our successful transformational delivery model of providing a tailored wrap around support package for every resident, to help build confidence and self-determination, so they can thrive.

## Our vision for 2030

Promoting our residents' voices, to ensure that their powerful stories are heard and that they are used to help tackle veterans' homelessness and social exclusion.

## Our Values

Our values are at the core of everything we do



Launchpad Veterans 2024



Launchpad Veterans 2025 -  
Employment and Independent  
Living

“ I can't thank the team at Speke House enough for everything they've done. Their belief in me has helped me believe in myself again. ”

Richard, Veteran

## Part 1 - About Us

Here's the difference you could make in numbers:

**849+**

veterans helped since  
2013

**88%**

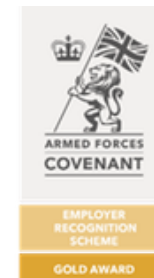
from a homeless  
background

**62%**

successful move-ons

**45%**

gained employment  
during their time with  
Launchpad



# Part 1 - About Us

## Our People

Our executive management team consists of our Chief Executive, a Head of Operations, Head of Finance, Head of Property, Health and Safety and ICT. We have a board of Trustees who provide strategic leadership and bring a range of senior commercial, military, and housing/homelessness expertise.

Launchpad's trustees oversee all activities of the charity.

They come from a cross-section of community sectors and bring individual experiences and capabilities to bear on the charity. They are guided by the advice and rules of the Charity Commission and Charity law. From time to time, the membership of the board of trustees is changed in order to bring in fresh ideas. The trustees are unpaid however, they may claim travel and subsistence costs to attend meetings and to visit the Launchpad houses in the course of charity business. We are currently in the process of recruiting three trustees.



**Ian Dormer CBE**  
Chair



**Jill Murray**  
FCIH  
CEO



**Brigadier  
(Retired) Paul J A  
Baker**



**Mark Underhill**  
OBE



**Sarah-Louise  
McCartney**



**Katherine  
McGough**



**Aaron Sahota**



**Chris Smith**



**Silvana Michelini**  
Head of Finance



**Samantha Jackson**  
Head of Operations

### Ambassadors



**James Rose**



**Dan Smith**

“ I'd still be homeless and really struggling with my mental health if it wasn't for Launchpad. ”

Nicholas, Veteran

## Part 2 - About the Role Chief Executive Officer

We are seeking a dynamic and driven Chief Executive Officer to lead the organisation and ensure its continued success and sustainability. The role is responsible for overall performance, strong governance and financial oversight, as well as building partnerships, securing funding and identifying opportunities for growth. Working closely with the Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer will provide visible and proactive leadership, ensuring the organisation delivers high-quality services and achieves lasting impact.

### 1. Service Delivery

- You will provide overall strategic and operational leadership of the organisation, ensuring high-quality supported housing services are delivered across all sites.
- You will ensure services are safe, compliant and effective, with a clear focus on resident outcomes and continuous improvement.
- You will oversee organisational performance, ensuring delivery against strategic objectives, KPIs and regulatory expectations.
- You will ensure robust systems and processes are in place to support service quality, safeguarding and operational effectiveness.
- You will drive a culture of accountability, professionalism and resident-focused delivery across the organisation.

### 2. Relationships

- You will act as the principal ambassador for the organisation, representing its interests with stakeholders, partners and funders.
- You will build and maintain strong relationships with local authorities, housing providers, funders and partner organisations.
- You will identify and develop partnership opportunities that enhance service delivery and organisational sustainability.
- You will line manage and lead the senior leadership team, including the Director of Operations, Director of Finance/Company Secretary and Head of Property, Health & Safety & ICT.
- You will support, challenge and develop senior leaders to ensure high performance and effective service delivery.
- You will work closely with the Board of Trustees, ensuring effective communication, reporting and governance.

### 3. Managing Resources and Risk

- You will ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation, including oversight of budgets, funding and income generation.
- You will lead on securing funding, identifying opportunities and developing proposals to support organisational growth.
- You will ensure robust financial controls, reporting and accountability are in place.
- You will oversee risk management, compliance and safeguarding across the organisation.
- You will ensure the organisation operates in line with relevant regulatory and legal requirements, including those relating to housing and supported accommodation.

### 4. Support, Supervision & Development

- You will lead and develop the senior leadership team, ensuring clear accountability and high performance.
- You will support and challenge managers to deliver effective services and achieve organisational objectives.
- You will ensure appropriate structures, systems and processes are in place to support staff performance and development.
- You will promote a positive organisational culture aligned to the charity's values.

### 5. Other

- You will provide regular reports to the Board of Trustees on performance, risk, finance and strategic delivery.
- You will support the development and delivery of organisational strategy. You will ensure the organisation is responsive to change and able to adapt to new opportunities and challenges.
- You will undertake any other duties consistent with the nature and level of the role.

## Part 2 - About You Chief Executive Officer

We look for a range of experience, skills and knowledge. If you feel a connection with our approach, beliefs and values, we'd love to hear from you even if you don't have all the required experience, skills and knowledge. We can help you develop those..



We value lived and professional experience equally.



We support ongoing learning and sponsor many employees to undertake further qualifications:



If you do not currently have all the skills required, we can build these into a tailored development plan:



Our behaviours are underpinned by our values.

I can demonstrate that I have:

- Senior leadership experience in social/supported housing, homelessness or related sector.
- Track record of leading multi-site or complex services and delivering outcomes for vulnerable groups.
- Experience working with Boards/Trustees and contributing to governance and strategy.
- Financial oversight experience, including budgets, sustainability and income generation.
- Proven success securing funding (grants, contracts, commissioning).
- Experience of strong partnership development with local authorities, government bodies, housing providers and funders.
- Experience leading and developing senior teams, including performance and people management.
- Experience in building organisational growth, profile and service development.

I can demonstrate that I have:

- Strong understanding of social/supported housing, including operational and sector challenges.
- Knowledge of governance, regulation and compliance (e.g. safeguarding, H&S, risk).
- Financial management and sustainability within a charitable or housing context.
- Understanding of commissioning, funding streams and income generation.
- Use of data, performance frameworks and service improvement methods.
- Awareness of operating in regulated, high-quality service environments.

I can demonstrate that I have:

- Strategic and operational leadership; able to inspire, energise and hold teams to account.
- Strong decision-making using financial and performance insight.
- Excellent communication, influencing and stakeholder management skills.
- Ability to build and sustain high-level partnerships and organisational profile.
- Commercial and entrepreneurial mindset; identifies funding and growth opportunities.
- Strong organisational, problem-solving and prioritisation capability.
- Confident external ambassador for the organisation.

I can demonstrate that I have:

- Strong alignment to mission, values and resident outcomes. Integrity, accountability and professional credibility.
- Collaborative and relationship- focused leadership style.
- Energy, drive and resilience to deliver results in complex environments.
- Proactive, solution-oriented and improvement-focused mindset.
- Ability to empower others and build a high-performance culture.

## Part 2 - About the Role Salary & Benefits



Salary - £100,000 pro rata.



Working Hours – Part-time (24 hours per week), with flexible days/hours.



Location – This is a hybrid role, with regular travel required to Launchpad's three supported housing schemes in the North of England, based in Newcastle, Durham, and Liverpool.

This is a unique opportunity working across multiple government departments, driving performance, and delivering the 2030 strategy. You will act as an ambassador for the organisation, leading by example and championing excellence in everything you do.

*“ I felt cheated by the country I served... abandoned when I needed help most. ”*

*“ I was homeless, living in the back of my van for best part of a year – very cold and my mental health was bad. ”*

*“ If it wasn't for Launchpad, I wouldn't be alive now. ”*

# Part 3 - How to Apply

## Submit your application

1.

Polish up your CV: Ensure it tells us what you can bring to the role and organisation but make sure it's no longer than three pages.

2.

Answer the following 3 questions via [Willo Video](#) (1 minute per question):

1. What excites you about this role and the ability to impact the lives of Veterans?
2. What achievement are you most proud of in your career to date, and why?
3. How can you evidence the tenacity and resilience required in this Chief Executive role?

Willo Support: If you encounter any issues whilst completing your video interview, please email Willo Support who will be able to assist you: [support@willotalent.com](mailto:support@willotalent.com)

3.

Send it into us before the deadline: Answer the video questions and send your CV, with the role in the subject bar, to: [recruitment@distinctivepeople.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@distinctivepeople.co.uk) by 9am on Tuesday 26th May 2026.

Please also fill in the [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#) and [Personal Declaration Form](#) and return them with your CV.

**Closing date:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**First Stage Interviews (MS Teams):**  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Final Stage Interviews (in-person Newcastle):** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Inclusivity and Accessibility are very important to us at Launchpad. If this means of applying does not work for you that's not a problem. Just contact Denise on 07833 475669 and we'll arrange for your application to be submitted in the best way for you!

