

Director of Operations Candidate Pack



We believe that life is for living.



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Introduction from the **Chief Executive**



Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this role.

Thistle Foundation is an organisation that supports people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to lead good lives and achieve what matters most to them. Our 400 plus colleagues are the beating heart of our organisation offering support that is grounded in what matters most to people, their best hopes in life and their gifts and strengths. Every year, our Health and Wellbeing team supports 1000s of people across Scotland, and our Supported Living teams work alongside just under 100 people in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife. They promote citizenship and inclusion and support people to live in their own homes, in their local community.

The Director of Operations role is a new role that will lead and provide strategic direction for all colleagues in the Operations Directorate. As a member of the Strategic Leaders Team, this role will assist the Chief Executive and Director of Resources in the strategic planning, development and management of the whole organisation to support the achievement of the Thistle strategy.

This role needs someone who can provide strategic direction for the development and delivery of a broad range of innovative and strengths-based, person-centred wellbeing activities. We are looking for someone who is focused on continuous improvement to ensure that we are achieving the highest quality of support. To be successful in this role, our new Director of Operations must demonstrate a collaborative and partnership

style of working gained across a range of sectors and professional backgrounds and have a track record of engaging, motivating and leading staff and colleagues in new ways of thinking and working.

We are committed to making Thistle a diverse and inclusive place to work and we welcome applications regardless of sex, gender, race, age, sexuality, belief or disability.

In this pack you can find out more about Thistle, the work we do and the details of the role. I hope that you will feel inspired to apply for this role which will make a real difference to people with disabilities and long-term health conditions in Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Mark Hoolahan'.

Mark Hoolahan,
Chief Executive



About **Thistle Foundation**

Our ambition

At Thistle we believe in a world of inclusion, free of isolation and loneliness, where a health crisis doesn't mean a life crisis.

What we do

We believe that life is for living. We support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to lead good lives and achieve what matters most to them.

How we do it

At Thistle, we push boundaries and offer a pioneering range of support that champions inclusion and citizenship. We work with people, not conditions, developing person-centred plans grounded in what matters most to them, their best hopes in life and their gifts and strengths.

The Thistle Approach is our unique approach to wellbeing. We base our work and decision-making on:

- Delivering person-centred strengths-based support that focuses on what matters to people.
- Engaging with people we support, families, and volunteers – our Thistle Community.

- Achieving financial and environmental sustainability.
- Facilitating wellbeing and fun.

Our strategic priorities

Promote and develop the Thistle approach to wellbeing by delivering high quality support through our supported living and wellbeing teams.

Develop a self-organised teams model that helps the people we support, employees, families and volunteers to be in control.

Value the contribution of people we support, employees, families and volunteers through our people programme.

Create a modern digital environment to ensure efficient, effective decision-making, and facilitate collaboration and communication.

Build creative partnerships to innovate and develop our work further.

Engage with our stakeholders to create a shared understanding and build community and fundraising support to make a sustainable difference.

Role description and person spec

Job details

Job title	Director of Operations
Line manager	Chief Executive
Salary	£64,104 per annum
Directorate	Operations
Location	Edinburgh
Hours	39
FTE	1

Job Purpose

To lead and provide strategic direction for all staff in the Operations Directorate and as a member of the Strategic Leaders Team to assist the Chief Executive (and Director of Resources) in the strategic planning, development and management of the whole organisation to support the achievement of the Thistle Strategy. You can find a link to our strategy [here](#).

Main Responsibilities

1. To provide leadership and strategic direction for the development and delivery of a broad range of innovative and person-centred support activities, and ensure continuous improvement to achieve the highest quality of delivery.

This will involve:

- Leading by example and developing/modelling best practice in outcomes focused, person-centred wellbeing work.
- Ensuring that everything Thistle does promotes and maximises choice and control for people we support and their families.
- Ensuring that everything Thistle does aims to empower individuals, families and communities to maximise their potential and live good lives.
- Keeping up-to-date, anticipating and planning for changes in legislation and best practice.
- Being proactive in networking and professional development events and opportunities.
- Implementing change initiatives designed to secure improvements in the quality, range and diversity of the work that Thistle undertakes.

2. To lead and manage in ways that promotes partnership and collaboration within, across and outwith the organisation, in a person-centred and strengths-based way.

This will involve:

- Recruiting, objective setting, development and performance management of staff and promoting wellbeing, attendance and resilience.
- Putting in place effective team building strategies.

- Ensuring staff take ownership for their individual and team's objectives and have the resources and skills to achieve goals.
 - Providing regular support and supervision whilst also creatively and continuously supporting learning and development opportunities within team.
 - Keeping under review the operation, size and balance of responsibilities of all staff within the Operations Directorate.
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3. To contribute appropriate leadership and teamwork, promoting professional integrity, commitment to excellence, and to person-centred, strength-based ways of working.

This will involve:

- Effectively representing the work of the organisation to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts to influence the development of the national policy agenda.
 - Sharing feedback on achievements, performance and lessons learned to internal and external stakeholders.
 - Undertaking relevant personal and professional development and bringing the learning back into the workplace.
 - Making decisions within the limit of authority, as delegated by the Chief Executive and Trustees, and actively supporting Thistle's governance and strategic planning.
 - Carrying out other duties as reasonably required by the Chief Executive or Trustees.
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4. To take lead responsibility for the operational management of Thistle's Supported Living services and ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

This will involve:

- Being responsible for ensuring that all services provided by Thistle are compliant with all legislative standards.
 - Maintaining an overview of the operational plans that ensure that all activities and services are consistently delivered to a high standard.
 - Ensuring that an adequate level of resource is available to achieve the quantity and quality of service required.
 - Responding to issues/crises as they occur and advising the Chief Executive of any potential risk to the organisation.
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5. To act as a key point of contact for contracting organisations.

This will involve:

- Building effective long-term relationships with key contacts in contracting organisations.
- Representing Thistle to actual and potential contracting organisations.
- Monitoring contract compliance and performance.
- Working closely with the Director of Resources and the Head of Business Development and Income Generation on submitting contract bids, including working to agreed Thistle standards/guidelines.
- Producing reports that measure performance against internal and external criteria.

Thistle Approach: a Framework to Supporting Wellbeing

The post holder is required to demonstrate these behaviours and qualities in ways which are relevant to their role. You can find a link to the Thistle Approach [here](#).

Behaviours and qualities which enable...	Description
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Understanding self	We develop a good understanding of ourselves and the impact we have on other people. Being genuine, respectful and listening with empathy to other people's perspectives lies at the heart of all our interactions. We believe this practice is nurtured by the ability to continually reflect on ourselves and the impact we have on others.
Building person-centred relationships	We develop supportive, collaborative and enabling relationships. We also believe that people are the experts in their lives and that they are doing their best and that by working alongside people we are more likely to succeed. We reflect on the extent to which we create trust in all our relationships and how well we work within teams.
Making a difference using person-centred approaches	We believe that using person-centred approaches can be critical to whether people make the changes they want in their lives or not. We do this by focusing on what matters to each person and what they want specifically to achieve including taking life enhancing risks. We always encourage feedback in order to learn and improve on what we do.
Focusing on strengths, resilience and contribution	We believe that people have strengths, skills, knowledge and resilience and the ability to contribute to their own and others' lives. We need to be flexible and innovative to enable people to share these attributes and make the most of all contributions in order to find creative solutions. We celebrate the successes this brings and build our resilience by learning from setbacks.
Promoting wellbeing, citizenship and community	We believe that everyone is a citizen with rights, responsibilities and a contribution to make to their community. This is only meaningfully possible when you have genuine wellbeing and are fully included in your community. This belief drives the work we do at Thistle so we know we must try to influence the unequal and discriminatory aspects of our society in order to change how things currently are. This requires us to share the 'Thistle Approach' more widely and in turn, learn from the world around us. To do this well we must continually reflect on what this means for us as individuals and as an organisation.

Key Contacts and Relationships

- Key external contacts include Thistle's strategic partners in the third and statutory sectors, government bodies and regulatory groups, appointed advisers and agents, suppliers and contractors, professional bodies and associations, and key funding bodies.
- Key internal contacts include the Chair of Trustees, Trustees, Chief Executive, internal improvement and development groups, Strategic Leaders Team, Extended Leadership Team, Supported Living staff.

Essential Knowledge and Experience

- Qualified to a minimum SCQF level 10 in a health and/or social care discipline with additional evidence of professional leadership and management qualifications or equivalent learning.
- Significant experience of working at a management level in the health or social care field and able to demonstrate in-depth operational knowledge and strategic impact.
- Comprehensive understanding of both the principles and practical application of person-centred health and wellbeing services.
- Substantial knowledge and understanding of all current health and social care legislation.
- Substantial knowledge and understanding of the regulatory framework and compliance and quality requirements.
- Evidence of continued professional development relevant to the role.

Essential Skills and Experience

- Effective strategic leadership skills and experience particularly in service planning, in the meeting of (and exceeding) quality framework standards within a regulated profession and the ability to make credible evidence-based decisions.
- Successful change management experience e.g. ability to rethink structures, systems and processes to support new approaches to working practice.
- Influential and effective interactive skills: confident addressing a range of audiences and in the delivery of written documentation including strategic policy and procedure development.
- Extensive experience of designing and managing the delivery of support to people with complex needs and direct engagement with people and families to inform how support is delivered.
- Skilled in operational management including project planning; staff management; management of key performance targets; and working with financial reports.
- Able to anticipate and plan for what is required in the future.
- IT skills – a competent skills level in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Teams together with an ability to maximise the use of IT systems.

Essential Qualities

- Highly credible and senior level practitioner.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain, develop and enhance Thistle's reputation for delivering innovative and pioneering ways of providing person-centred support.
- Successful track record of engaging, motivating and leading staff and colleagues in new ways of thinking and working.
- Demonstrated ability to question, challenge and encourage different and creative ways of thinking, putting theories/concepts into practice.
- Evidence of contributing to and role modelling an effective intra-disciplinary and collaborative approach to work with people from varied professional backgrounds.

Special Conditions

Responsiveness outside of normal office hours and at weekends as required and occasional meetings in the evenings e.g. Board meetings. The post holder will be expected to role model a high level of flexibility and responsiveness in how they approach the role.

Dimensions

- The post holder has line management responsibility for the managers of the Supported Living teams within Thistle, although the structure of the Directorate will develop and change over time. For this reason a degree of fluidity will be required when considering how the Directorate will meet the needs of the service.
- The post holder will be based at Thistle Foundation office in Edinburgh.
- This is a permanent position.

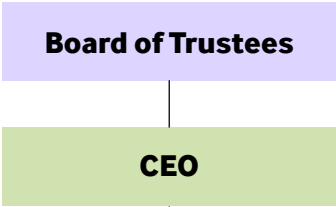
Job Context and other Related Information

The post holder is expected to commit to continually developing a personal understanding of the Thistle Strategy and strategic aspirations of Thistle Foundation.

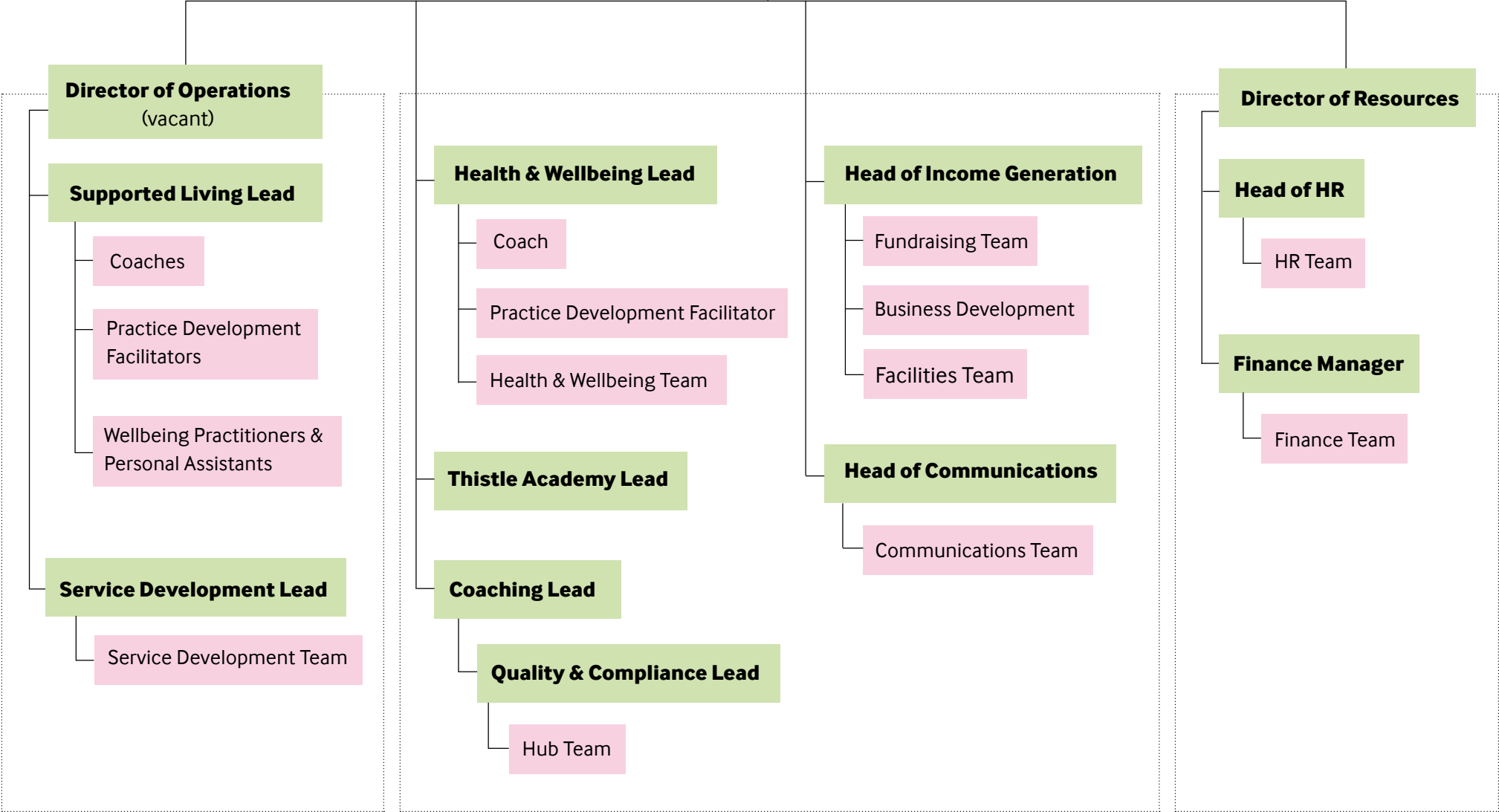
Job Description Creation and Revision

Created	October 2024
For Review	October 2025

Thistle Organisational Chart



Strategic Leaders Team



Supported Living Operations

People and Organisational Development

Resources

We believe that life is for living.

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Thistle Foundation is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland, number SC24409.
Our Scottish charity number is SC016816.

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