



Chief Executive Officer

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the William Merritt Disabled Living Centre as our new Chief Executive Officer.

Based in Leeds, the William Merritt Disabled Living Centre is a registered charity and social enterprise dedicated to enabling greater independence for people with a disability or long-term condition. We combine a clear social purpose with a commercial approach, generating income through our services and fundraising so that every pound we earn is reinvested to further our charitable objectives and the people we support.

Our roots go back to 1981, when the Centre opened as a permanent legacy of the International Year of Disabled Persons, with the support of the NHS in Leeds and Leeds City Council. We were named in memory of Councillor William Merritt, who championed the development of services for people with a disability or long-term condition in Leeds. More than four decades later, his commitment to improving independence and opportunity remains at the heart of our organisation.

You will be joining us at an important point in our development. The Centre has undergone a significant period of growth, expanding our team, opening new satellite offices and widening our range of services. They now include a full suite of driver services; mobility aid assessments for independent living inside and outside the home; running a successful Shopmobility scheme at the White Rose shopping centre in Leeds; and opening a technology room to provide adaptive interfaces for gaming and digital devices. Key to our success has been our strong partnerships with the Department for Transport, the national charity Driving Mobility, the NHS, local authorities and, above all, the people who work here.

Our next chapter is about building on that success and taking the organisation to the next level: strengthening our governance and organisational infrastructure, developing our commercial and income-generation capabilities, making effective use of technology and data, and ensuring we have the people, systems and processes needed to support a sustainable and ambitious organisation.

As CEO, you will be accountable to our Board of Trustees for the leadership, strategic direction, financial sustainability, governance and performance of the organisation. Working closely with the Board and Senior Management Team, you will develop and deliver our vision, mission and strategic objectives, balancing social impact and organisational resilience with commercial sustainability. This is an opportunity not simply to lead an established charity, but to help shape its next stage of development.

You will provide visible, values-led leadership, ensuring our services are high quality, inclusive and client-centred, and that they improve outcomes for people with a disability or long-term condition and other service users. At the same time, you will help develop a stronger corporate and business-focused culture with the leadership capacity, financial resilience, systems, governance and commercial capability required for the future. The successful candidate will inherit an organisation with a proud history, established services and strong foundations, but with considerable potential for its next phase.

If this reflects your ambition, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Rachel Beverley-Stevenson
Chair of the Board of Trustees, William Merritt Disabled Living Centre

About the Centre

Our history

The William Merritt Disabled Living Centre has been supporting people with a disability or long-term condition, older people, their families and carers since it opened in Leeds in December 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons. Established with the support of Leeds City Council Social Services and the NHS in Leeds, the Centre was created to provide independent, impartial advice and assessment to help people achieve greater independence in everyday life.

The Centre was named in memory of Councillor William Merritt, a nurse, Leeds City Councillor and Mayor and passionate advocate for people with a disability or long-term condition. During his long career in public service, he pioneered Leeds' Welfare Scheme for the Disabled and actively encouraged the development of voluntary organisations supporting people with a disability or long-term condition. As Chair of the Social Services Committee, he helped champion the proposal that ultimately led to the Centre's establishment. Sadly, he died before it opened, and it was unanimously agreed that the Centre should bear his name in recognition of his commitment to people with a disability or long-term condition.

How our services have developed

From its original focus on independent living equipment, the Centre has continued to develop its services. These have included dedicated assessments and advice for children with a disability or long-term condition and their families, the addition of Mobility Services in 1999, providing driving and passenger assessments, and the introduction of the Switches Project in 2010, supporting people to access technology.

Our purpose

While the range and scale of services have evolved considerably since 1981, the Centre's fundamental purpose has remained constant: providing impartial assessment, information and practical advice that enables people with a disability or long-term condition, and older people, to make informed choices, increase their independence and improve their quality of life.

Today the Centre is a registered charity (no. 513001) and social enterprise, combining a clear social purpose with a commercial approach so that every pound earned is reinvested in the people it supports.

About the Centre

The Centre combines a clear social purpose with a commercial approach, generating income through its services and fundraising so that every pound earned is reinvested to further its charitable objectives. Services are delivered from the head office in Rodley, Leeds, and at sites across Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

The Centre at a glance

- Established: December 1981, Leeds
- Status: Registered charity (no. 513001) and social enterprise
- Head office: Aire House, 100 Town Street, Rodley, Leeds LS13 1HP
- Our people: 39 employees (29.09 FTE), plus volunteers
- Where we work: Leeds, York, Sheffield, Hull, Scarborough, Huddersfield and Chesterfield
- Accreditation: Accredited member of Driving Mobility

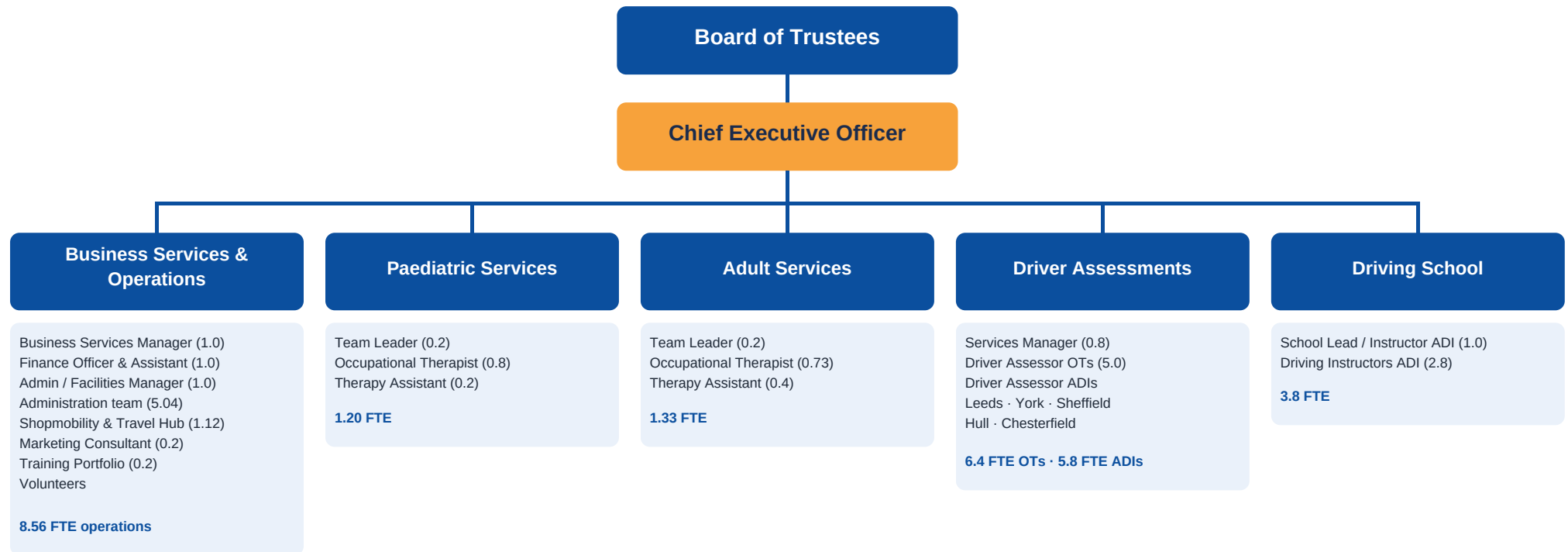
What we do

- Assessment & advice – impartial assessments and advice on independent living and mobility aids, at home, out and about and for leisure, including dedicated support for children with a disability or long-term condition and their families.
- Driving & mobility – driver and passenger assessments, vehicle adaptations and car access checks, plus a Driving School for Disabled People.
- Community & training – Shopmobility, Try B4 U Fly, the Switches Project helping people access technology, and moving & handling training for professionals.

As Chief Executive Officer, you will lead all of these services, ensuring they remain high quality, inclusive and client-centred, while developing the governance, systems and commercial capability the Centre needs for its next phase of growth.

Organisation Structure

The CEO is accountable to the Board of Trustees and leads a team of 39 employees across business services and four service areas. The chart below summarises the organisation's structure for 2026/27, with full-time equivalent (FTE) hours shown in brackets.



39 employees · 29.09 FTE in total (including Sheffield South)

About the Role

Job Title:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Reporting to:	Board of Trustees
Location:	Head Office, Rodley, Leeds (with regional and national travel as required) Hours: 37.5 hours per week (full time) Contract: Permanent
Salary:	£60,000 – £65,000 plus pension

Purpose of the Role

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the overall leadership, strategic direction, financial sustainability, governance and performance of the organisation.

The CEO provides visible, values-led leadership, ensuring the organisation delivers high-quality, inclusive and client-centred services that promote independence and improve outcomes for people with a disability or long-term condition and other service users. The postholder will work closely with the Board of Trustees to develop and implement the organisation's vision, mission and strategic objectives, whilst maintaining robust governance, financial resilience and operational effectiveness.

The CEO acts as the organisation's principal ambassador, representing the organisation locally, regionally and nationally, developing strategic partnerships, influencing policy and practice, and ensuring the voices of service users and stakeholders are heard and reflected throughout the organisation's work.

The CEO will provide overall leadership in line with established policies and strategic priorities, managing and developing key internal and external relationships, identifying opportunities for growth and innovation, and ensuring the organisation is well-positioned to respond to opportunities and challenges within the independent living, mobility, health and social care sectors.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership and Governance

- Lead the development and delivery of the organisation's vision, mission and long-term strategic plan.
- Work in close partnership with the Board of Trustees, providing professional advice, analysis and insight to support effective governance and decision-making.
- Develop and maintain rolling strategic, operational and business plans that support organisational objectives and financial sustainability.
- Ensure strategic priorities are translated into effective operational plans and measurable outcomes.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, inclusion and accountability.
- Ensure the organisation operates within its governing documents, regulatory requirements and charitable objectives.
- Serve as principal adviser to the Board on organisational performance, risks, opportunities and emerging sector developments.

2. Organisational Leadership and Service Delivery

- Provide inspirational leadership to staff and volunteers, promoting a positive, collaborative and high-performing culture.
- Ensure services remain relevant, responsive and accessible to the needs of clients, customers and communities.
- Maintain oversight of all operational activities and service locations, ensuring services operate effectively, efficiently and in accordance with agreed standards.
- Ensure all services comply with organisational policies, quality standards, legislative requirements and best practice.
- Promote client-centred services and embed co-production and the social model of disability throughout service design and delivery.
- Monitor service performance through agreed performance indicators and management information systems.
- Ensure the organisation is recognised for delivering high-quality, professional and responsive services.

3. Business Development and Growth

- Identify, evaluate and pursue opportunities for growth, diversification and service innovation.
- Develop robust business cases for new initiatives, services and investment opportunities.
- Lead negotiations with commissioners, funders and strategic partners.
- Explore and develop sustainable income-generating opportunities, including grants and trusts; contracts and commissioned services; trading and social enterprise activities; and corporate partnerships and sponsorship.
- Ensure the organisation remains responsive to changing market conditions, policy developments and stakeholder needs.

4. Financial Leadership and Sustainability

- Lead the organisation's financial planning process and develop annual budgets for approval by the Board.
- Ensure effective financial management, control and reporting across the organisation.
- Monitor organisational performance against agreed budgets, business plans and financial targets.
- Develop strategies to improve financial sustainability, efficiency and value for money.
- Ensure accurate financial management information is available to support decision-making.
- Oversee the preparation of statutory accounts, financial reports and regulatory submissions.
- Seek professional advice where necessary to protect organisational assets and ensure compliance with legal and financial obligations.

Key Responsibilities

5. Stakeholder Engagement and Representation

- Act as the principal spokesperson and ambassador for the organisation.
- Build and maintain productive relationships with trustees, funders, commissioners, local authorities, health services, voluntary sector organisations, community groups and commercial partners.
- Represent the organisation at local, regional, national and, where appropriate, international forums.
- Promote the organisation's profile, reputation and impact through effective networking, advocacy and communications.
- Ensure meaningful engagement with service users, stakeholders and partner organisations.
- Influence policy and practice to improve outcomes for people with a disability or long-term condition and other beneficiaries.

6. Leadership

- Provide effective leadership, management and development of all staff.
- Ensure organisational structures and resources are aligned to deliver strategic objectives.
- Recruit, retain and develop talented employees and volunteers.
- Lead performance management, appraisal and workforce planning processes.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion and employee wellbeing.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained, supported and equipped to perform their roles effectively.
- Foster a culture of accountability, learning and continuous professional development.

7. Risk, Compliance and Assurance

- Maintain oversight of organisational risk management and business continuity planning.
- Develop and maintain the organisational risk register.
- Ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory and governance requirements.
- Act as the accountable officer for information governance, data protection and organisational compliance.
- Ensure robust health and safety arrangements are in place across all operations.
- Report regularly to the Board on risk, compliance and assurance matters.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures remain current, effective and fit for purpose.

8. Crisis Management and Organisational Resilience

- Develop, implement and regularly review organisational crisis management, business continuity and emergency response plans.
- Ensure robust contingency arrangements are in place to maintain critical services during periods of disruption.
- Act as the senior organisational lead during major incidents, coordinating internal and external responses and ensuring appropriate escalation to the Board of Trustees.
- Maintain effective communication with trustees, staff, service users, regulators, commissioners, funders, partners and the media during periods of crisis.
- Lead the assessment and management of risks arising from operational, financial, safeguarding, cyber-security, information governance, health and safety, reputational and regulatory incidents.
- Ensure lessons learned from incidents, complaints, audits and investigations are captured and embedded into organisational improvement plans.
- Foster a culture of preparedness, resilience and continuous learning across the organisation.
- Provide assurance to the Board of Trustees regarding organisational resilience, business continuity arrangements and crisis readiness.
- Ensure appropriate reporting and liaison with statutory agencies, regulators, insurers and other relevant bodies where required.

9. Other Duties

- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as reasonably required by the Board of Trustees and Chair.
- Work flexibly, including occasional evening or weekend commitments where necessary.
- Travel regionally and nationally as required.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable	Assessment Criteria
Experience	• Significant senior leadership experience, ideally within the charity, social enterprise, health, social care or public sectors. • Proven experience of organisational leadership and strategic planning. • Experience of working effectively with Boards of Trustees or equivalent governance bodies. • Strong financial management experience, including budget development and oversight. • Demonstrable success in business development, partnership working and stakeholder engagement. • Experience securing funding through grants, contracts, tenders or commercial opportunities. • Track record of leading organisational change, growth and service improvement. • Experience of managing and developing high-performing teams. • Experience of leading organisations, departments or services through periods of significant change, challenge or crisis. • Proven ability to make sound decisions under pressure while balancing operational, financial, reputational and governance considerations. • Experience of business continuity planning, risk management and organisational resilience.	• Experience of leading within disability, independent living, mobility services or related sectors.	Application and Interview
Knowledge	• Understanding of charity governance and regulatory requirements. • Knowledge of financial management and organisational sustainability. • Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion principles. • Awareness of health, social care and voluntary sector environments. • Strong understanding of organisational risk management and compliance requirements. • Competent use of ICT systems and Microsoft Office applications.	• Knowledge of disability, independent living, mobility services or related sectors. • Understanding of the social model of disability. • Knowledge of health and social care legislation and policy.	Application and Interview

Person Specification

Essential skills and attributes

- Inspirational and inclusive leadership style.
- Strong strategic thinking and business planning capability.
- Excellent communication, presentation and influencing skills.
- Ability to build effective relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Excellent financial and commercial awareness.
- Strong negotiation and partnership-building skills.
- Sound judgement, integrity and resilience.
- Ability to manage complexity and deliver results through others.
- Commitment to the organisation's values and mission.
- Calm, decisive and resilient leadership style.
- Strong problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities.
- Ability to communicate clearly and confidently during high-pressure situations.
- Sound judgement and the ability to make timely decisions based on available evidence.
- Ability to manage competing priorities in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Qualifications

- Degree-level qualification or equivalent experience.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

Desirable

A leadership or management qualification, together with knowledge of disability, independent living or mobility services, an understanding of the social model of disability and knowledge of health and social care legislation and policy, would all be an advantage but are not essential.

How you will be assessed

Candidates will be assessed against the essential criteria through their CV and application, and at interview and presentation on Thursday 26 November 2026.

Find out more

For an informal and confidential conversation about the role before applying, please contact Hugh Fox at Castlefield Recruitment on 0113 212 4614 or hugh.fox@castlefieldrecruitment.com.

How to Apply

Key dates

Opening date: Friday 16 October 2026

Closing date: Wednesday 11 November 2026

Interviews & presentations: Thursday 26 November 2026

Making your application

Full details of the role, together with the application form, are available on the dedicated microsite. To apply, please submit your CV via the microsite:

www.microsite-castlefieldrecruitment.com/william-merritt-centre

For a confidential discussion about the role before applying, please contact Hugh Fox at Castlefield Recruitment, who is managing this appointment on behalf of the William Merritt Disabled Living Centre.

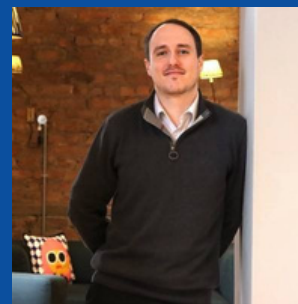
Find out more

[Take the virtual 3D tour of the Centre](#)

[Watch the welcome video](#)

[Visit the William Merritt Disabled Living Centre website: wmdlc.org](http://wmdlc.org)

Your consultant



Hugh Fox
Manager, Castlefield Recruitment

Hugh is a Manager within Castlefield's Yorkshire & North East Office and leads a team of specialist consultants who specialise in interim, fixed term and permanent recruitment. With over a decade of recruitment experience supporting the Public and Not-for-Profit Sectors, he has built a trusted network of clients and candidates and is known for delivering senior appointments as well as large-scale recruitment campaigns. He is well positioned to support you at every stage of the recruitment process, from initial discussions through to interview preparation and post-placement follow up.

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