



Position Specification

Resolution Foundation
Chief Executive

Introduction

The Resolution Foundation was founded in 2005 against a backdrop of a strong economy and a confident national mood.

At the time, the country was seeing then-record highs for property prices and surging corporate salaries. But there were also overlooked warning signs that economic growth wasn't feeding through sufficiently into improved living standards for millions of households working on low incomes.

We have long been told that the route to financial security is work. But what was striking about this period and the subsequent era is that so many families and young people were in work and still struggling.

In the post-war era there was shared pride in the welfare state that was developed which offered support to those with limited incomes. I am personally the grateful recipient of this national generosity, having been raised on welfare throughout the 1960's and 70's.

But that system, now barely recognisable, was not designed to underpin an economic structure where insecurity is mainstream and the routes to advancement seem blocked for so many in our country.

Improving the plight of those in work yet still economically vulnerable was the founding mission of the Resolution Foundation and still continues to be.

In our first 20 years we have pursued specific changes to lift low pay and raise living standards more widely through a combination of forensic analysis, careful policy development and strong advocacy. We have secured important policy changes, helped shift private sector attitudes through initiatives like the real Living Wage, and steered public debate towards the wider goal of shared growth.

There is much more to do. On top of today's problems, the next decade will bring new challenges to the living standards of the group we serve, from technological change in the workplace, to demographic shifts and the transition to net zero.

I'm very proud of the work the Foundation's team does to push against the pessimism and fatalism which is too often the knee-jerk response to the issues of low-growth, high inequality and frozen social mobility.

Through our analysis, policy solutions and advocacy we will continue to push for economic and social change.

Leading our talented team, and taking forward our mission, is the great task and privilege of the next Chief Executive of the Resolution Foundation. If our purpose chimes with yours we look forward to hearing from you.



Sir Clive Cowdery, Founder and Chairman

Background

The Resolution Foundation is an independent think-tank focused on improving the living standards of those on low-to-middle incomes. It works across a wide range of economic and social policy, combining its core purpose with a commitment to analytical rigour. These twin pillars of rigour and purpose underpin everything the Foundation does and has helped establish it as the leading UK authority on securing widely-shared economic growth.

The Foundation's established work programme includes incomes and inequality; jobs, skills and pay; housing, wealth and debt; tax and welfare; public finances and the macroeconomy. More recently, it has added work-developed expertise on trade, net zero and productivity, as well as covering its core issues through both an intergenerational and cities lens.

The Foundation informs public debate, alongside key decision makers in government, the private sector, and civil society. Alongside regular publications from its team on a range of policy issues, it holds a wide ranging programme of events, hosting diverse speakers from academia, the voluntary sector and business, and regularly engages with politicians from across the political spectrum. Its reputation for analytical work that results in effective policy solutions places it at the forefront of the UK debate on economic and social policy. To learn more about the Foundation's work and research areas, please visit [this section](#) of its website.

In addition to its core purpose and analytical rigour, the Foundation is distinctive for its deep commitment to securing impact and bringing about economic and social change. Over recent years its flagship programme of work has been the Economy 2030 Inquiry – undertaken in partnership with the London School of Economics – that set out a new, comprehensive and long-term economic strategy for the UK to tackle its deep-rooted challenges. It was launched in December 2023 with the UK's most senior politicians (including the new PM) and economic decision takers, and has since shaped the UK's debate on how to end the current era of stagnation. Its conclusions have been debated extensively with key city and business leaders at major events across all the nations and key cities of the UK. Over the last decade the Foundation has also secured direct impact for employers and workers by setting the rates of the real Living Wage (paid by over 15,000 employers and directly benefiting 500k workers). Resolution Ventures, the social investment arm of the Foundation, is also bringing about change by pioneering a new fund that backs innovative ventures seeking to improve the prospects of low-wage workers. The Foundation shapes thinking and policy in Whitehall and Westminster at the same time as it looks outwards to secure lasting impact in the nations, cities, communities and workplaces of the UK.

Until recently, the Foundation has been led by Torsten Bell (Chief Executive, who recently left to become an MP) and Gavin Kelly (Executive Chair, who is leaving in January 2025). The Foundation is overseen by a board of trustees, led by its founder and chairman, Sir Clive Cowdery, and it is primarily funded by the Resolution Trust.

The Role

The next Chief Executive, working closely with the Chair and board of trustees – together with Lord David Willetts, President of the Advisory Council – will create and oversee a work programme that builds on the core strengths of the Foundation, while having the flexibility to expand into new areas.

We are seeking an exceptional candidate with a track record of intellectual leadership and the senior management and communication skills to lead the Foundation team and build on the organisation's high levels of influence. As well as demonstrating analytical credibility, excellent judgement, strong management skills and political sensitivity, the successful candidate will need the vision to lead the next phase of development at an exciting time for the Foundation. They must also have a clear commitment to achieving effective change that improves the lives of those on low to middle incomes.

Main duties and responsibilities

- Working in close collaboration with the Chair and trustees to establish the overall strategic direction for the next phase of the Foundation across all of its areas of activity, including Resolution Ventures.
- Lead and manage the delivery of the Foundation's work programme, setting a clear work plan and set of priorities for the development of the organisation consistent with its intellectual/policy mission and charitable objectives.
- Inspire, manage, develop and recruit/retain the Foundation team, building on its existing strengths and ensuring that it has the appropriate skills and capacity needed to extend its areas of expertise in accordance with the next phase of development.
- Deepen the Foundation's relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders, including leading employers, the City, unions, universities, research institutes and other relevant sector-based organisations as well as senior journalists and editors.
- Successfully plan and manage the Foundation's budget, ensuring resources are spent wisely and undertaking targeted external fundraising where appropriate.
- Generate timely new research ideas that shape and anticipate public and policy debate in key areas for the Foundation.
- Ensure the rigour, quality and independence of the Foundation's work is maintained.
- Report to the Trustees on the operational, administrative, financial and charitable compliance aspects of the Foundation at board meetings and as required.

Candidate Profile

This is a varied and fast-paced role and the post-holder will need to be a highly credible leader in the economic and social policy space, with a proven ability to shape and lead the delivery of a varied work programme. Candidates for the role will bring the following skills, experience, and competencies:

Leadership

- A proven track record of working with others to set the strategic vision for an organisation and deliver it successfully.
- A sophisticated understanding of how to deploy quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques and lead evidence-based policy development.
- A commitment to good governance, integrity, transparency, increasing diversity, and sound operational management.
- Demonstrable experience of acting as an empowering, inclusive, supportive and engaging leader, who has motivated and developed others.

External Representation

- The ability and authority to command the respect of the UK's most senior economic decision makers along with key policy influencers and economic opinion shapers.
- First-class influencing and communication skills, with a track record of pursuing change at the highest levels of relevant stakeholder groups, including government, media, business community and other key policy-makers.
- Strong public-speaking skills and advocacy at a national level.

Personal Attributes

- Communicates with outstanding impact.
- Brings real intellectual energy, analytical rigour, political sensitivity and financial acumen to a complex programme of work.
- Takes the initiative and sets a fast-paced momentum for an organisation and its people.
- Shows dexterity in setting a clear strategy while also being agile and able to respond to events in a nimble, entrepreneurial organisation.
- Has sound judgment combined with an ability to work effectively with others.
- Has a commitment to the Resolution Foundation's core mission.

Potential Backgrounds

It is likely that the successful candidate will have a senior background in one or more of the following fields:

- A major research and policy institution.
- An economic or social policy focused government department.
- A policy-driven NGO.
- An advocacy or campaigning organisation rooted in empirical research.
- A consultancy or private sector organisation with a keen understanding of government and public policy.

Particulars

The Chief Executive will be based at the Resolution Foundation's office in Queen Anne's Gate, London. The organisation supports flexible working and offers a range of family-friendly policies.

The role comes with a competitive benefits package, including a defined contribution pension scheme, and 30 days annual leave per annum (plus bank/public holidays).

Application Process

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates (RRA) on behalf of the Resolution Foundation. Please submit your full application by email to responses@russellreynolds.com. Please quote the role title and assignment code **2407-073L** in the subject heading of the email. All applications will be acknowledged. **The closing date for applications is 23:59 on Monday 2nd September 2024.**

Your submission should include:

- A **CV** setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps within the last two years.
- A **Statement of Suitability** (no longer than two pages) explaining how you consider your personal skills, qualities and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria in the candidate profile.
- A completed [Diversity Monitoring Form](#). We value and are committed to increasing diversity within both our own organisation and the economic policy making sector more widely and undertake a range of initiatives to further these aims. Any information you provide is collated anonymously and used solely to track the effectiveness of our recruitment strategy. We welcome applications and expressions of interest from all under-represented groups and are happy to make reasonable adjustments in advance for candidates with disabilities. We have achieved Disability Confident Level 1 status which means we are committed to providing inclusive, accessible recruitment procedures and reasonable adjustments to meet employee needs.

Please submit all documents so that the selection panel will have all the required information on which to assess your application against the criteria in the person specification.

Indicative Timeline

Following the submission of applications by 2nd September, longlisted candidates will be invited for interviews with RRA in September. Shortlisted candidates will be then be invited for a series of interviews and other informal engagement opportunities with the Resolution Foundation in September and October. If required, please notify RRA of any likely logistical challenges during this period as part of any application. For any other questions, please contact responses@russellreynolds.com.

Please note that due diligence will be carried out on shortlisted candidates. Candidates should expect this to include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information.
