

Executive Director

Job Description

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Executive Director role at Operation Smile UK. We are looking for an Executive Director to join our Charity on a full-time basis. This role reports to the Board of Trustees, Operation Smile UK.

About Operation Smile

Operation Smile is an international medical charity providing free, life-changing surgery and comprehensive care to children and adults born with cleft conditions. Through a global network of medical volunteers, cleft centres and local hospital partners, we are training healthcare professionals and investing in hospitals to improve local health facilities and bring safe cleft care within reach for 500 million people. With over 6,000 volunteers working across 37 countries, we are supporting families and communities worldwide.

Operation Smile UK (OSUK) is an independently registered UK charity that operates under a licence granted by Operation Smile Inc. (OSI), the international parent organisation headquartered in the United States. OSUK plays a critical role in fundraising, donor engagement, advocacy, and awareness-raising in the UK in support of OSI's global programmes.

Please read our job description, visit our websites, and read our latest Annual Report to learn more about us and the exciting times ahead.

Overview

The Executive Director is the senior executive leader of Operation Smile UK, accountable to the Board of Trustees for the charity's strategy, performance and organisational health.

They will lead the UK team, grow and diversify income, strengthen OSUK's profile and supporter base, and build an effective partnership with Operation Smile's global organisation.

This is a highly external role requiring strong fundraising instincts, sound organisational leadership and the ability to navigate a complex international stakeholder environment.

JOB TITLE	Executive Director
REPORTS TO	The Board of Trustees, Operation Smile UK
DIRECT REPORTS	Director of Finance & Operations, Director of Data & Technology, Director of Partnerships & Programmes, Director of Development & Communications & Governance & Volunteer Manager
JOB LOCATION	London

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	London office, hybrid working. The role requires a minimum of two days per week in the office, plus travel for meetings and international travel.
TRAVEL	Regular international travel required
PAY	In the region of £90,000 depending on experience
CONTRACT	Permanent, full-time
KEY RELATIONSHIPS	Operation Smile Inc. (OSI) (USA) – Global Licensor

The Opportunity

The Executive Director is joining OSUK at an important point in its development, in the second year of its five-year strategy. The Board is looking for a leader who can build on the charity's strengths while growing and diversifying income, strengthening organisational performance and profile, and ensuring an effective, constructive partnership with OSI.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategy, Governance & Organisational Leadership

- Set a clear strategic direction for OSUK, championing its mission externally and translating strategy into focused plans and measurable objectives.
- Develop and deliver OSUK's strategic plan with the Board, ensuring appropriate alignment with OSI's global strategy and the licence agreement.
- Identify and manage the organisation's principal strategic risks and ensure the Board receives clear, timely information to support effective oversight and decision-making.
- Ensure OSUK maintains effective governance and complies with relevant Charity Commission, company law and other UK regulatory requirements.
- Act as a trusted adviser to the Chair and Board, bringing insight, constructive challenge and practical solutions to strategic decisions.
- Provide executive leadership on safeguarding, ensuring effective policies, reporting and a strong culture of safeguarding across OSUK and its partnerships.

2. International Partnership — Operation Smile Inc.

- Serve as OSUK's principal relationship holder with OSI, building a productive, collaborative and values-aligned partnership with the global team.
- Represent OSUK at global meetings, leadership forums and international events, including regular international travel where required.
- Work with OSI to maximise the impact of UK fundraising on global programmes and communicate that impact effectively to UK audiences.

3. Fundraising & Income Growth

- Lead OSUK's fundraising strategy and personally cultivate and secure major gifts and partnerships, with a particular focus on sustainable income growth and

diversification across philanthropy, trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships and individual giving.

- Build a balanced and resilient income mix, developing new opportunities while strengthening existing supporter relationships and successful fundraising channels.
- Ensure fundraising is well managed, evidence-led and consistent with OSUK's values, with appropriate quality assurance across supporter acquisition and engagement.
- Maintain strong donor stewardship and ensure fundraising activities meet relevant regulatory and ethical standards.

4. Financial & Organisational Performance

- Take executive responsibility for OSUK's financial health, including budgeting, forecasting, cash-flow management and clear financial reporting to the Board and OSI.
- Maintain robust financial controls and proportionate risk management, ensuring resources are used effectively and sustainably.
- Set clear organisational priorities and performance measures, using data and insight to drive continuous improvement and accountability.

5. People & Culture

- Lead, inspire and develop the OSUK team, creating an inclusive, collaborative and high-performing culture in which people understand how their work contributes to the mission.
- Champion staff wellbeing and model OSUK's values in internal and external relationships.
- Lead and support the senior team, setting clear expectations while empowering colleagues to take ownership and deliver.

6. External Profile, Communications & Advocacy

- Act as a visible and credible ambassador for OSUK, building relationships with donors, partners, media, government, sector networks and other external stakeholders.
- Strengthen donor and community engagement, including through events and digital channels, to deepen supporter relationships and broaden OSUK's reach.
- Work with OSI to build OSUK's profile and influence in the UK, positioning the charity as a credible voice on global health, cleft care and international development.

Person Profile

We are looking for a senior leader who combines strategic judgement with practical delivery, strong relationship skills and a genuine commitment to Operation Smile's mission. The criteria below focus on the capabilities most important to success in the role.

Experience — Essential

- Substantial senior leadership experience in a charity, non-profit, social-impact organisation, or another purpose-led environment of comparable complexity, with evidence of organisation-wide accountability and working closely with a board.
- A strong track record of fundraising and income generation, including experience of developing major donor, trust and/or corporate income and of growing or diversifying revenue.
- Proven people leadership experience, including building, motivating and developing effective teams and leading through organisational change.
- Strong financial and commercial judgement, with experience of budget oversight, prioritisation and organisational performance management.
- Experience of managing complex external partnerships and senior stakeholder relationships; international experience would be an advantage.

Experience — Desirable

- Prior experience working within a federated or licensed charity model, or as part of a global affiliate network.
- Track record of growing a small-to-medium-sized charity in terms of income, profile, or impact, including diversifying away from concentrated or volatile income sources.

Knowledge and Skills — Essential

- Strong working knowledge of UK charity governance, regulation and Charity Commission expectations, with the judgement to seek specialist advice where appropriate.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills, with the confidence to represent OSUK and build trust with senior stakeholders.
- Highly developed relationship-management skills, particularly with donors, corporate partners, trustees and international counterparts.
- Sound knowledge of safeguarding principles and experience of ensuring appropriate policies, reporting arrangements and organisational practice.

Personal Qualities — Essential

- Authentic commitment to Operation Smile's mission and to improving access to safe, high-quality cleft care.
- Collaborative leadership style: a team builder who listens, empowers others and brings people with them.
- Entrepreneurial mindset: energetic, creative and resilient, with the ability to turn opportunities into practical action.
- Cultural sensitivity and enthusiasm for working across international boundaries.

Staff Benefits

- Hybrid Working
- Season Ticket Loan
- 1-day additional holiday each year to a maximum of 30 days annual leave
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Enhanced Maternity Package for qualifying Employees (minimum 24 months service)
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme, a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general well-being. The EAP service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. Services available include:
  - Support Counselling
  - Legal Information
  - Bereavement Support
  - Medical Information
  - Online CBT

How to Apply

Operation Smile UK is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We actively encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences, and we particularly welcome applicants from communities historically under-represented in charity leadership.

To apply, please submit a current CV and a covering letter of no more than two pages that sets out your interest in the role and how your experience meets the criteria in this person profile.

Please send your application to Carol Clairmont, Email: jobs.uk@operationsmile.org

Closing date for applications: 30 November 2026
First-stage interviews: Early December

Operation Smile UK is a registered charity in England and Wales. Charity No. 1091316

Disability Confident Committed Employer

We're a Disability Confident Committed employer, so we guarantee an interview to any disabled applicant who meets the minimum requirements for the job.

At Operation Smile UK, we value individuals based on their performance and potential. We're dedicated to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace that supports everyone's

needs. We're happy to make reasonable adjustments throughout the application and employment process, and we particularly welcome applications from diverse backgrounds.

If you need this document in a different format, require any adjustments, or need help with your application, please contact us at hr.uk@operationsmile.org or call us on 020 8338 0088.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Operation Smile UK knows fundraising could better reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the people the charity sector supports. If you don't meet every requirement but believe your transferable skills align with the role, we encourage you to contact us for a conversation.

We want our team to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, offering equal opportunities to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We celebrate diversity and encourage you to bring your authentic self to Operation Smile UK. We are committed to supporting all applicants and ensuring a fair hiring process. All appointments will be made solely on merit, and we are happy to make reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process.