

Chief Operating Officer

Job description

Job title: Chief Operating Officer

Office location: Vox Studios, 1–45 Durham Street, London, SE11 5JH

Contract: 37.5 hours per week (full time)

Salary: £80,000 depending on experience

Who we are and why we are needed

The Fore is creating a society that solves its own problems. Each year we provide funding and skills to the best grassroots charities and social enterprises in the UK and we are growing.

Across the UK, talented people within communities are building practical solutions to our most complex challenges – from poverty and mental health to education, exclusion and sustainability. However, the vast majority of these solutions do not achieve their potential to drive wider change across society because of failures in how the funding system works.

The Fore is the UK's only venture philanthropy fund that has cracked the code in how to identify and distribute funding to turbocharge grassroots innovation and catalyse change. Since 2017, The Fore has been backing the best small charities and social enterprises with astonishing results. So far over 50% of local organisations supported eight years ago have gone on to influence policy, shape national conversations and change lives at scale – see [The Fore's 2024/25 Impact Report](#).

Currently The Fore is funding around 50 of the best charities per year and supporting hundreds of others with skills. However, as an organisation we need to do more. We are looking to scale our impact through two routes. Firstly, by increasing our work backing the best charities and convening and educating donors, and secondly by leading change in the broader funding system.

The role

In the next phase of The Fore's development, it is a priority for the CEO to be able to concentrate on building the external profile and influence of The Fore's work. Therefore, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) will play a central role in leadership as the organisation develops. The role translates strategy into delivery, providing oversight across grant making, partnerships, people, and governance, and ensuring the organisation can deliver on its ambitions while managing risk and capacity. We're a small, agile charity so you'll work across both high-level direction and day-to-day organisational delivery. In the next eighteen months,

the COO will have responsibility for designing and delivering on a number of key strategic priorities, such as:

- ensuring the continued excellence of the grant and skills support we provide to the charities and social enterprises we back
- building out and refining existing activities and processes to ensure exceptional relationship management for our growing number of corporate and private philanthropic partners
- working with the CEO to develop the Partnerships Team to set it up for scaling and to meet the needs of new partnership models
- incorporating the use of AI into our systems and processes to streamline operations wherever possible while safeguarding the personalised experience we pride ourselves on offering all our partners.

Key responsibilities

Grant making and programme delivery

- Provides strategic oversight of the grant-making model, ensuring alignment with The Fore's overall mission and priorities
- Acts as a senior advisor and escalation point for the Programme Team on complex decisions and delivery challenges
- Ensures that operational delivery reflects agreed strategy, including any shifts in focus, criteria, or approach

Partnerships and income

- Provides strategic oversight of funder relationships and income streams, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and capacity
- Supports colleagues to shape high-quality proposals, renewals, and reporting
- Ensures the organisation delivers on all funding commitments, maintaining credibility and trust with funders
- Ensures that The Fore's external messaging and positioning are clear, compelling and aligned with partner priorities
- Acts as a senior escalation point for complex funder relationships or delivery challenges
- Supports the ongoing development of The Fore's Pro Bono (skilled volunteering) offer, ensuring it delivers meaningful value to charities while remaining a compelling and well-structured proposition for corporate partners
- Leads the commercialisation and rollout of the Fore Index (a tool that allows organisations to put a £ value on their impact), securing partners and funding to support its expansion beyond The Fore's portfolio

Impact, data and systems

- Holds responsibility for the organisation's impact framework, ensuring it is credible, proportionate, and aligned with strategic priorities
- Ensures data and insight are used effectively to inform decision-making, reporting, and external positioning
- Ensures that insight and impact are translated into clear, compelling external communications to support The Fore's positioning and influence

People and internal operations

- Holds responsibility for the effective functioning and integration of programme delivery and partnerships activity, ensuring teams are well supported and operating efficiently
- Leads and manages core operational staff, including the Head of Programmes and Impact, Partnerships and Programme Managers, and Partnerships and Programme Officers (currently seven team members, with line management responsibilities for three)
- Manages performance, wellbeing, and retention, fostering a high-performing and sustainable team culture
- Works closely with the CEO and trustees to support the development and delivery of strategic initiatives, ensuring these are operationally viable and effectively implemented
- Holds oversight responsibility for The Fore's physical office space and equipment, managing lease and facilities contracts
- Oversees IT and systems, managing contracts for IT support, Salesforce, and other platforms

Governance, compliance, risk and finance

- Oversees the organisation's financial management, risk management, and operational governance, ensuring robust and proportionate processes are in place
- Working with the external finance team, provides oversight of budgeting and financial performance, ensuring alignment between income, grant commitments, and operational capacity
- Contributes to the development of board and committee papers, leading on operational, financial, and risk-related content to ensure clear reporting
- Ensures appropriate compliance and governance frameworks are in place across grants, partnerships, and operations (including charity insurance, policies, health and safety, safeguarding, GDPR and cyber security)

Experience and attributes

- Minimum 5 years' experience in a senior operations or programme oversight role
- Track record of translating strategy into operational plans and delivery

- Exceptional interpersonal, communication and presentation skills
- Track record of developing and sustaining excellent relationships with stakeholders
- Exceptional people management skills
- Strong prioritisation skills and highly organised
- Demonstrable self-starter with excellent follow-through
- Enjoys working in a fast-paced environment with the ability to move between board-level thinking and day-to-day execution
- Takes pride in fostering a friendly, inclusive and productive working environment, with a positive and approachable style

Key details

Annual leave: 25 days leave, rising by 1 day for each year of service up to a total of 30 days, plus bank holidays and an additional 4 days during our Christmas closure.

Location: Our office is based at Vox Studios in Vauxhall, London. We have a hybrid working pattern (three days in the office and two days at home).

Reports to: CEO

Next steps

To apply, please email your CV (no more than two pages) and a covering letter to alexandra@thefore.org

In your covering letter, please:

- outline your interest in the role and your suitability; and
- highlight the three skills or strengths you would bring to The Fore that you believe would add the most value.

Application deadline: Tuesday 28 April 2026, 5pm

Interviews will take place in the first two weeks of May.

Equal opportunities

The Fore is committed to providing equal opportunities without regard to race, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability or age. We welcome applications from all qualified candidates. If you have any accessibility needs that require an alternative application format or any adjustments, please let us know by emailing alexandra@thefore.org.