

Portobello Business Centre CIC

Non-Executive Director, Education & Student Programmes

Location: Board meetings are held online, with at least one meeting a year held in person in North Kensington. You do not need to live in West London

Remuneration: Unremunerated. Reasonable expenses reimbursed

Term: Three years, with eligibility for re-appointment (see Eligibility and Governance)

Time commitment: Approximately 12 to 15 days a year in steady state, with a heavier first year (see Commitment below)

Reports to: Chair of the Board

Commencement: End October 2026

Application deadline: 30 September 2026

About Portobello Business Centre CIC

Portobello Business Centre CIC is a social enterprise that helps people start, grow and scale successful businesses.

For more than 30 years we have promoted entrepreneurship, social mobility and economic inclusion, working with more than 15,000 people and businesses. Our alumni include household names such as Innocent Drinks, Charlie Bigham's and Karen Millen, alongside thousands of sole traders, start-ups and growing businesses.

West London remains our core focus, and we increasingly deliver business support across London and beyond. As a Community Interest Company rather than a charity, our income combines contracts, commercial activity, grants and philanthropic support.

We are now seeking a Non-Executive Director with senior education experience to strengthen our Board and support the development of our student programmes.

About NextGen Elevate

NextGen Elevate is our student entrepreneurship programme for 15- to 19-year-olds with the seed of a business idea. It runs as a five-day intensive summer programme covering idea development and market research, branding and marketing, building an online presence, financial planning and pricing, and pitching.

The programme culminates in a live pitch event where participants present to a panel of judges and compete for a share of a £5,000 investment fund. Every participant is then offered up to twelve months of free one-to-one adviser support. Participants currently complete daily assessments and a final pitch and receive a certificate on completion.

The programme is free to state school students through sponsorship. Our ambition is that completing NextGen Elevate should lead to a regulated qualification and deciding how best to achieve that is live work in which this Director will play a significant part.

The Role

We are looking for a senior education leader: a headteacher or principal, a deputy or assistant head, a head of sixth form, or a head of department in economics, business studies or a related subject. You may be currently in post or recently so. Both bring something useful and we will judge on fit.

Your role is to bring educational rigour to a programme built by people whose expertise is business rather than teaching. You will advise on curriculum design and assessment, on the route to regulated qualification status, and on safeguarding as it applies to working with young people. You will also help us

understand how schools and colleges actually make decisions, which shapes how we recruit participants and build partnerships.

Alongside this, you will serve as a full member of the Board, contributing to strategy, risk, financial sustainability and governance across all of PBC's work, not only the student programmes.

Key Responsibilities

- Advise on the design, structure, sequencing and assessment of NextGen Elevate, and on how learning outcomes are defined and evidenced.
- Advise on the route to regulated qualification status, including whether PBC seeks recognition as an awarding organisation in its own right or partners with an organisation already recognised by Ofqual, and what size and title our programme can realistically support.
- Provide advice and guidance on child safeguarding as it applies to the student entrepreneurship programme, including how our policies, practice and culture stand up to scrutiny.
- Advise on rebuilding our assessment model so that it withstands external scrutiny. This is likely to be the first substantial piece of work, spanning assessment validity and reliability, internal verification and external moderation, and policies covering malpractice, appeals, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- Help us understand how schools and colleges make decisions about external programmes, including who decides, what evidence they need and how the school year shapes timing.
- Support the Chief Executive and programme team on educational credibility with schools, sponsors, funders and partners.
- Contribute to PBC's strategy, growth, governance and long-term sustainability as an active member of the Board, including collective responsibility for the organisation's financial health and statutory duties.

Experience & Expertise

Essential

- Senior leadership experience in a secondary school, sixth form or further education college, at headteacher, principal, deputy or assistant head, head of sixth form or head of department level.
- Substantial experience of curriculum design and development, including how a programme of learning is structured, sequenced, assessed and quality assured.
- Direct, hands-on experience of assessment design, moderation, or internal and external quality assurance. Rebuilding our assessment model is likely to be the first substantial task, so we are looking for someone who has done this work rather than overseen it from a distance.
- A working understanding of the regulated qualifications landscape, including the role of Ofqual, the Regulated Qualifications Framework, awarding organisations and what recognition or accreditation involves.
- Deep and current safeguarding knowledge, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, safer recruitment, and how a strong safeguarding culture is built and tested in practice.
- A clear understanding of how schools and colleges evaluate and adopt external programmes, and what makes them credible to senior leaders.
- The judgement and confidence to contribute to general Board business on strategy, risk and organisational sustainability, beyond your specialist area.
- A strong commitment to entrepreneurship, social mobility and widening access to opportunity.

Desirable

- Experience of working with or within an awarding organisation, or of taking a qualification through accreditation.
- Experience as a Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.
- Knowledge of careers education policy, including the Gatsby Benchmarks and provider access requirements, which shape how organisations like PBC reach students.
- Experience across both the state and independent sectors.
- Familiarity with the London school and college landscape.
- Previous Non-Executive Director, trustee or school governor experience.

Commitment

We want to be clear about what this role asks of you, so that you can judge whether it fits alongside your existing commitments.

- Attendance at five Board meetings a year. Most are held online, with at least one held in person in North Kensington. Papers are circulated in advance and we expect them to be read.
- Periodic contact with the Chief Executive and programme team on curriculum, assessment, qualification and safeguarding matters, typically by phone or video.
- Participation in the annual strategy session.
- An invitation, if you would like it, to observe part of the summer programme and the final pitch event.

Taken together, this amounts to approximately 12 to 15 days a year in steady state. The first year will be heavier. Rebuilding the assessment model is front-loaded, detailed work and we would expect year one to run closer to 20 days, concentrated in the first six to nine months.

Eligibility & Governance

As a Non-Executive Director you will be a statutory director of Portobello Business Centre CIC, registered at Companies House, with the legal duties that carries under the Companies Act 2006. Please note the following, which reflect PBC's Articles of Association.

- You will also become a member of the Company. Under our Articles, every member must be a Director and the Directors are the only members. You will be asked to complete a short membership application, and your liability as a member is limited to £1.
- Directors serve a term of three years, ending at the Board meeting following the third anniversary of appointment. Directors are eligible for re-appointment by the Board for a second consecutive term, and exceptionally for a third, after which a break of at least twelve months is required.
- You must be eligible to act as a company director and not disqualified from doing so.
- You will be asked to disclose other directorships, trusteeships and relevant interests. These are recorded in a register of Directors' interests, and conflicts must be declared as they arise.
- PBC is a Community Interest Company subject to an asset lock, meaning its assets are held for community benefit and cannot be distributed for private gain.
- A Director who misses three consecutive Board meetings may be removed from office by resolution of the Board.
- Appointments are subject to satisfactory references and to a DBS check at the level appropriate to the role. Because the Board oversees a programme working with under-18s, we ask Directors connected to NextGen Elevate to hold a current DBS certificate.

Our Commitment to Inclusion

PBC exists to widen access to entrepreneurship, and we want our Board to reflect the communities we serve. We particularly welcome applications from people currently under-represented on charity and social enterprise boards. If you meet most but not all of the essential criteria and believe you could do this role well, we would still encourage you to apply and tell us why. We are happy to discuss adjustments to the application process or to how the role is carried out.

How to Apply

Please send your CV and a short covering letter outlining your relevant experience and your motivation for joining our Board, to info@pbc.co.uk by 30 September 2026. An informal conversation with the Chief Executive can be arranged beforehand. Shortlisted candidates will meet the Chair and Chief Executive, and then the wider Board.