

Programme Lead - Capability



The power of design

The Design Council is an independent charity championing the power of design to drive economic growth, improve lives, and build a regenerative future.

For over 80 years, we have expanded the understanding and effective use of design across the public and private sectors, academia and education.

Welcome from our Chief Executive – Minnie Moll

I feel so proud to be leading an organisation with such an amazing heritage and reputation. The calibre of our people, the extraordinary talent in our unique network of Experts and the impact we have working with our clients, partners and Government is without comparison. It is a real privilege to be carrying the torch as we enter the next chapter for the Design Council.

This chapter will be led by our mission: Design for Planet. The greatest challenge of our era is the climate crisis, so as the national champion for design, we are focusing our efforts on galvanizing and supporting the 1.97m people across the design sector to make sustainability central to their work.

Design shapes the world and has a critical role to play in meeting Net Zero targets and beyond. As a design organisation we have power and responsibility to make a difference.

At the heart of the Design Council are our colleagues. We offer a structured career path, great learning and development, exposure to unique and exciting projects and the opportunity to work with our leading Experts. In addition, our pension scheme goes up to a 7.5% employee and employer contribution, 30 days annual leave (including time off for everyone over the Christmas period) and a range of flexible ways to work as part of our Hybrid Working policy.

At more than at any other time in our long and distinguished history, now is an incredibly exciting time to be at the Design Council.



Minnie Moll

About the Design Council



Established in 1944, the Design Council is a royal chartered charity and the UK's long standing and highly respected national champion for the effective use of design, for the benefit of the UK economy, society and the environment.

The Design Council's purpose is to make life better by design. And our mission is to do that by focusing on Design for Planet. There can be no greater cause than fighting to save our precious planet. Design for Planet will be a theme through all our work to create better places, better products and better processes, all of which lead to better performance.

Our funding comes from a range of sources, including an annual grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, corporate partnerships and paid projects. We have also recently launched a refreshed commercial model as we look to grow and diversify our revenue base so are looking to build longer term partnerships with trusts and foundations as well as across central and regional government and other research councils.

Good design is inclusive design. We actively aim to build a diverse team, and we have a commitment to do that (see our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement](#)).

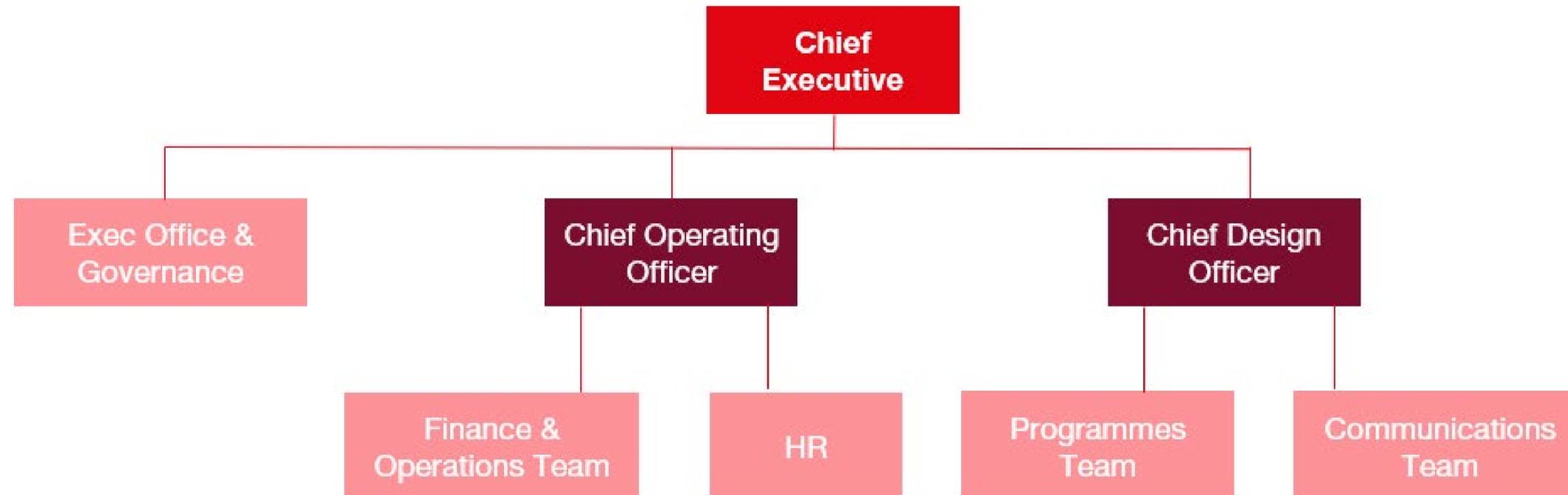
We encourage conversations around flexibility in terms of location, hours and other arrangement and we actively welcome people with different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives so that everyone can bring their whole selves to work.

Our recently refreshed People Strategy published in 2025 makes clear that people are key to the Design Council's success and our biggest asset. This outlines our approach to providing meaningful, motivating work, competitive pay and benefits and fostering a positive organisational culture of wellbeing and happiness.

We are also committed to the learning and development of our colleagues so that they gain the necessary skills to reach their full potential and progress within their profession and within their career.

About the team

Based in central London, the Design Council is a team of around 30 people.
As a small team with a massive remit, we work collaboratively to be greater than the sum of our parts.



“If you’re not designing for planet, what planet are you on?”

Kate Raworth
Author, Doughnut Economics

Our remit and Design for Planet

As well as being a charity, the Design Council's role is *the national champion for the effective use of design for the benefit of the UK economy, society and the environment.*

Our Design for Planet mission, launched in 2021, aims to galvanise and support the nearly 2 million people working in the UK's design economy to help address the climate crisis and achieve net zero and beyond, making design regenerative and not extractive.

Design for Planet provides a platform for visionaries, designers, business, government and communities who are leading the way in climate action. Our goal is to provide support for everyone to make the planet a key stakeholder in everything we do. We need to accelerate the speed with which we make design part of the solution, acknowledging that it has been a big part of the problem.

Skills for Planet sits at the core of our Design for Planet programme of work, with the mission of upskilling 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030. The programme encompasses a range of initiatives and interventions across design skills, capability building and innovation as well as proving the case for investment in design as a key enabler of green growth. This mission and the wider role of design is championed and amplified through our policy and advocacy work, flagship Design Economy research programme as well as events and thought leadership.



About us

The Programmes Team and our funding model

Programmes Team

The Design Council's Programmes Team is responsible for delivering core parts of our Design for Planet Theory of Change.

Therefore, the Programme team's core programmes of work focus on the key areas where we believe design and the effective use of it can have the most impact on delivering change. This being:

- **Skills** – creating the frameworks and advocating for policies to upskill designers in green design skills and designing for planet
- **Capability building** – helping those who commission design in both the public and private sector to understand how design adds value and can drive green growth and demand for design
- **Research** – proving the value of design to the UK economy, both nationally and at a regional level as well as highlighting key gaps in areas such as green design skills and diversity
- **Innovation** – design is the fuel of innovation and therefore is a key driver of growth and developing solutions for the complex challenges we are facing. Therefore, innovation is a common and vital thread running throughout our programmes.

Our funding model

As a high-profile national charity with a vital remit, Design Council's funding comes from a range of sources.

This includes an annual core grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (part of UKRI), funded partnerships from corporate and other sources as well as paid project work across the range of skills, capability, innovation and research.

Early 2025 saw us review our commercial model and update it as we look to grow and diversify our revenue base to ensure we remain resilient and can increase our impact into the future.

To achieve this, we want to build longer term partnerships with trusts and foundations, corporates as well as across central and regional government and other research councils. This is why we now require an experienced fundraising professional to help spearhead this work.

Our convening power and valuable brand are key strengths supported by events, policy and advocacy and our network of respected design experts. And the Fundraising & Partnerships Lead will sit at the very heart of this work to forge and grow the partnerships that can catalyse our theory of change and help Design Council thrive for another 80 years.

Role summary

Programme Lead - Capability

Salary: £57,200

Contract Type: Permanent

Reports to: Head of Programmes

Location: Hybrid working with 2 days per week minimum (preferably more) in our office in Clerkenwell, London

This role will involve some evening work and travel as required in accordance with the needs of the job.

About the role

Programme Lead – Capability

This role sits within the Programmes Team led by the Chief Design Officer and has responsibility for developing and overseeing the delivery of programmes which build the design capability of commissioning organisations, ideally at a sector scale. Working with commissioners ensures that we are creating the demand for design and Design for Planet skills which is a critical part of our Theory of Change as well as becoming a material source of income over time.

Commissioning organisations can include national infrastructure bodies, regional and local government, and major businesses across Industrial Strategy sectors. A large majority of our work in this space sits across the Built Environment, Placemaking, Housing and Infrastructure due to the Design Council's heritage, expertise and networks.

Reporting to the Head of Programmes, this is a critical role in ensuring the success of Design Council's ambition to grow and diversify overall revenue, create lighter touch and passive income streams and develop new and lasting partnerships and funding relationships related to commissioners and capability.

The role will also have line management responsibility.

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities include:

- Leading the organisation's approach to a commercial, scalable and profitable capability building programme for commissioners, under the banner of Design Academy, including:
 - Research into the Value of Design for that sector
 - Developing best Practice for that sector (e.g. patterns, principles or guidance)
 - Establishing Design Governance & Leadership across the sector: e.g. Design Champions and Design Review
 - Embedding design skills across the sector through bespoke organizational training or mass-market online courses. (Design Academy)

Overseeing the development of Regional Design Growth Hubs, working with other Programme Leads to draw in designer skills, econometric research and innovation components.

- Responsible for developing commercial 'paid project' capability programmes with individuals and/or partners (organization, sectors or regions). Working with our Fundraising & Partnerships Lead on further programmes which have the potential to attract sponsorship or partner funding (e.g. champions or alumni networks).
- Expanding our Design Review programme, broadening our offer to include support for Design Champions (a legal requirement within the Built Environment) as well as capability building.
- Working with the Head of Programmes and other Programme Leads to ensure that capability aligns with and contributes to the overall Design Council skills mission to upskill 1 million designers and non-designers in green design by 2030. Ensuring programmes are designed with clear M&E structures to capture this impact.

Key Responsibilities

- Be actively engaged and visible in external networks with potential funders around public sector design capability and pedagogy. Find ways to embed key sectorial design areas within the capability programmes including place and the built environment, business product/service innovation and public sector service design as well as ensuring they interlink with the other Theory of Change pillars of skills, innovation and research
- Leading the business planning, budget and resource management for capability programmes ensuring that planned activities can be achieved within current financial and resourcing constraints and that they remain strategically aligned with the overall organisation's objectives
- Developing thought leadership, representing DC at events in relation to capability building in the context of place, business and public sector

About you

Who we're looking for

The role requires a driven, self-motivated professional, with solid and demonstrated project / programme management experience and an understanding of and connected with the design and education ecosystem.

You have an entrepreneurial mindset, seeking out opportunities to fund the development of the programme, and working in partnership to deliver it.

You must be excellent at building and nurturing relationships, with a wide range of external stakeholders, and effectively collaborate internally across the organisation.

You thrive on developing people and empowering them to deliver and grow. You are passionate about our Design for Planet and Green Design Skills missions and demonstrate an ability to think strategically as well as commercially and work collaboratively.

About You

You will also be:

- An excellent communicator
- Be able to be diplomatic, able to act with confidence and integrity in all situations while influencing others
- Be excellent at synthesising diverse perspectives into clear, concise and accessible communication
- Empathetic, pragmatic and adaptable, with a solutions-mindset
- Proactive, hands on and willing to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in
- Confident working at different levels within an organisation
- Willing and able to take a risk-based approach to making decisions
- Curious and open to new ideas and ways of working
- A team player but also comfortable working on your own
- Resilient and comfortable with navigating and leading through change
- Aware of some of the challenges and rewards of working in the not-for-profit sector
- Passionate about Design for Planet

Skills and Experience

- At least 5 years' experience in a project / programme management environment
- Experience of the place and built environment world, but able and keen to work across all commissioner sectors.
- Experience in developing and implementing learning and capability building programmes, and ideally understanding of learning experience design
- Understanding and demonstrated experience of routes to market and building partnerships to embed learning frameworks within a variety of settings
- Experience in translating professional practice into frameworks, toolkits and methods that others can easily understand and action and upskilling people to use them
- Strong relationship management skills and experience in working with a large group of diverse stakeholders to research and agree a collective way forward
- Understanding of design thinking and systemic design and be able to communicate the value of design to others
- Experience of testing and scaling new products and services
- Effective at fostering relationships with both public and private sector organisations at regional and national level to deliver impact and value to build long term partnerships
- Demonstratable commercial acumen and understanding of competitive landscape in the development of new products and services
- Experience of developing compelling business case and pitching to new clients

Our culture

Values & Behaviours

All Design Council colleagues are expected to demonstrate and live by our core values and behaviours. These underpin and enhance our culture.

Our core values

At Design Council we:

- **Have Boundless Curiosity.** Exploration of best and next working practices from across and beyond design.
- **Inspire Possibility.** Bring together different designers, stakeholders and perspectives to create collective knowledge that inspires others.
- **Are Powerful Together.** Role modelling how to problem-solve and get the best out of everyone so our whole is greater than the sum of our parts.

Our core behaviours

Living our values mean we are all:

Collaborative

Inquisitive

Ambitious

Kind

Expansive

Hopeful

Empowering

Understanding

Energising

Benefits



Design Council offers colleagues great benefits.

- 28 annual leave days pro rata (plus buy up to 5 additional days)
- 2 additional days for Christmas closure and birthday day off
- 5% employer pension contribution (up to 7.5% if matched)
- Hybrid working policy (working in our office at least 2 days per week)
- Flexible working policy (if you require to work non-standard hours)
- Life Assurance cover
- Season ticket loan
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Enhanced maternity & paternity leave policy
- Enhanced sick leave policy
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Birthday Day Off
- Social committee organizing regular colleague events

Join us

If you think this is the role for you and you would like to join us, please submit your CV and a covering letter via this [link](#) by **9 February 2026**.

Please email Ishbel Allotey, our Head of People if you have any questions about the role:
recruitment@designcouncil.org.uk

The Design Council is fully committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We welcome applications from everyone who meets the criteria. If you need any additional support, please do send in an early alert to this email address.

Visit designcouncil.org.uk to discover more about our work and mission.





“The fundamental idea of design is to make the world a better place”.

Bruce Mau, Designer