Head of Strategic Partnerships and Income Generation

Senior leadership recruitment pack

Help shape how Bolster grows and the difference we can make.

A newly created senior leadership role for someone who can see opportunity, build trusted partnerships and turn ambition into sustainable results for our communities.

01 / The opportunity at a glance

Salary	Commitment	Base
£50,000–£53,000	Permanent 37.5 hours per week	Unit 1 Whitegates Business Park, Newry, BT35 6UA Hybrid working

Working alongside our Chief Executive, Head of Services and Board, you will turn promising opportunities into sustainable services, stronger partnerships and income that supports our mission.

Bolster has spent more than two decades responding to local need. Our next chapter is about building on that work: reaching more people, growing our social enterprise and creating the income and partnerships that allow good services to thrive.

Inside this pack

02 Welcome · 03 Our community and impact · 04 Our direction · 05 Social enterprise · 06 Why this role matters · 07 Your first year· 08 Working relationships · 09 Working at Bolster· 10 Applying · 11 Fair recruitment and checks

Welcome from our Chief Executive

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Bolster Community.

Bolster is an organisation that I am incredibly proud to be part of. Since our beginnings in 2004, we have grown from a small grassroots initiative into a thriving charity and social enterprise, supporting children, families, adults with disabilities and older people across our communities.

While we have grown considerably over the years, what matters most to us has remained the same - people, relationships and making a real difference in the communities we serve. We are practical, ambitious and not afraid to try something new when we believe it can improve people's lives.

We are now at an exciting point in our journey. Our services have expanded, our partnerships have strengthened and we have developed a reputation for responding to emerging needs and finding creative ways to make things happen. But we also recognise that, if we are to continue growing and making a meaningful difference, we need to be more strategic about the opportunities we pursue and how we build a sustainable future.

That is why we are creating this new senior leadership role.

We are looking for someone who can bring fresh thinking, energy and experience to help us build on what we have achieved. Someone who can spot opportunities, develop meaningful partnerships, secure new sources of income and help turn good ideas into services and initiatives that deliver real community benefit.

For me, finding the right person is about much more than qualifications or an impressive track record. We want someone who shares our values, enjoys working with people, is comfortable rolling up their sleeves and has the confidence to challenge our thinking as well as champion our ambitions. Someone who understands that successful partnerships are built on trust and that financial sustainability and social impact must go hand in hand.

You will be joining a committed, talented and genuinely passionate team, working closely with me, our Head of Services and our Board of Trustees. As a member of our Senior Leadership Team, you will have a real opportunity to influence our direction, shape new developments and play an important part in Bolster's next chapter.

We know there will be challenges along the way - there always are in the community and voluntary sector - but there is also enormous potential. We have strong foundations, good relationships and plenty of ambition. What we need now is someone who can help us to continue turning that potential into lasting opportunities.

If you are someone who enjoys building relationships, making things happen and wants your work to have a genuine purpose, I would love to hear from you.

Thank you for considering Bolster Community. If you would like an informal, confidential conversation about the role, please feel free to contact me directly.

Allison Slater

Interim Chief Executive

Bolster Community

allison@bolstercommunity.org

Our community and impact

Founded in 2004, Bolster Community began as a grassroots response to local need. Over more than two decades, we have grown into an award-winning charity and social enterprise, working alongside children, families, adults and older people to improve wellbeing, strengthen resilience and create opportunities.

Our roots remain in Newry, Mourne and Down, where community relationships and practical experience shape our work. From bases at Whitegates and Marcus Street in Newry and Newcastle Street in Kilkeel, we support urban, rural and coastal communities. Regional programmes, funded initiatives and collaborative partnerships also extend our work across Northern Ireland.

Our purpose

Vision: "A better-connected community, where everyone has access to the opportunities needed to reach their potential."

Mission: "We work alongside individuals, families and the community, to support improved opportunity, and health and wellbeing - and we support individuals of all ages."

Our values: People First, Compassion, Inclusion, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation and Sustainability

Family

We coordinate the Newry, Mourne and Down Family Support Hub, helping families connect with appropriate support before challenges escalate. Alongside this, evidence-based parenting programmes and early intervention help parents and children strengthen relationships, develop practical coping strategies and build confidence. In the last contractual year, 334 referrals were connected to early intervention support.

Ability

Our disability and autism services help children and adults build independence, access opportunities and participate in community life. We deliver 433 hours of support each week to adults with learning disabilities. Autism Connect, a five-year pilot, brings autistic adults, families and stakeholders together to help shape more inclusive communities and approaches that ensure people feel seen, heard and supported.

Seniors

Home2Hospital and Clover Club help older people remain connected, independent and able to access essential support. Last year, volunteers facilitated 557 hospital support journeys, while Clover Club created 504 opportunities for social connection. The aim is practical as well as social: helping people attend appointments, build friendships and remain involved in their communities.

"It's amazing how bad things can get. Then someone like you comes and gives you advice and support, and things have really turned around for us." — Parent feedback

Across six core services and more than 10 evidence-based programmes, our work is supported by 45 staff, equivalent to 20 full-time posts, and 30 volunteers. Those relationships and skills are the foundation on which future development will build.

You can read more in our latest Bolster Impact Report 25/26

BOLSTER COMMUNITY • 2025/26

The Numbers Behind The People

Behind every number is a person. A child settling into school. A parent finding their footing.
An older neighbour no longer travelling alone.
This year - as need grew, so did we.

9,791 people supported across our services this year
Improving opportunity, health and wellbeing.

11,645
personal support sessions

3,599
Seniors connected with through services and events

589
Organisations and community partners

557
Home to Hospital trips completed by our volunteer drivers

92%
parents reported feeling better equipped to respond to their child's needs

91%
children felt better able to manage their emotions

86%
parents reported improved wellbeing and confidence

£1.3M
Invested Across Our Community
Turned into support, opportunities and community impact.

Our strategic direction

Our Strategic Plan 2025–2030 sets the direction for Bolster's next phase. The focus is to increase access to support while building the partnerships, organisational capacity and income needed to sustain it.

The plan connects our ambition for communities with the organisation we need to become. It asks us to respond early, develop new approaches and strengthen the resources and systems that make our work sustainable. Growth needs to improve people's lives while protecting the quality and values of the services they rely on.

Four strategic goals

- Provide essential early help across Family, Seniors and Ability, expanding access to high-quality support.
- Innovate and advocate to reduce health inequalities through new solutions, stronger partnerships and influence.
- Develop a future-ready, innovative organisation, investing in our people, systems, infrastructure and financial sustainability.
- Champion sustainable development through environmental, economic and social impact.

Where we want to grow

We want to reach more people, develop services that respond to emerging need and increase our profile and influence across Northern Ireland. A specific ambition is to double the day opportunities available through Bolster Buddies, our adult learning disability group.

Income diversification is central to this direction. Alongside grants and commissioned services, we want to grow trading income, corporate partnerships and philanthropic support. Opportunities must strengthen our mission and be realistic about delivery capacity, cost and risk.

Our funding relationships span statutory, lottery, trust and philanthropic sources, alongside social enterprise activity. Developing a broader income base will create more flexibility to respond to need and reduce dependence on any single source. It also means making disciplined choices about which opportunities are right for Bolster.

The context for your decisions

Demand is increasing while public services and funding remain under pressure. Poverty, disability, mental health challenges and social isolation are shaping community need. Funders and commissioners expect collaboration, demonstrable outcomes, value for money and sustainable delivery.

The challenge for this role is to help Bolster choose where to invest its effort, build credible proposals and turn relationships into opportunities that improve outcomes.

For this appointment, the Strategic Plan provides both direction and a practical test: does a proposed partnership, service or enterprise opportunity help deliver our priorities, and can we sustain it? You will help the leadership team and trustees answer those questions with evidence and confidence.

If you'd like to read more, you can access our Strategic Plan 2025-2030 on our website.

Social enterprise with room to grow

Our social enterprises connect meaningful opportunities for adults with disabilities with commercial activity that supports Bolster's sustainability. The next stage is to grow both income and social value.

Acorn Candles

Our award-winning candle brand generates unrestricted income that is reinvested in Bolster's services. Candles are hand-poured in Northern Ireland by Bolster Buddies participants, supported by our disability support team.

Acorn generated more than £50,000 in sales in the last full financial year. Routes to market include online sales, retail spaces at Whitegates and Marcus Street, corporate gifting, weddings and events, and seasonal ranges.

Our dedicated production facility at Whitegates gives participants opportunities to develop practical skills, confidence and independence through production, packaging and preparation.

For participants, the enterprise offers pride, purpose and a visible contribution: a product they have helped make reaches a customer, a business or a special event. For Bolster, it demonstrates how supported participation and a credible commercial offer can reinforce one another.

Bolster Buddies

Bolster Buddies is our social enterprise support service for adults with disabilities. Structured support, community projects and enterprise activities help participants build life skills, relationships and independence. Work-based experiences, including Acorn production, give people opportunities to contribute and develop practical skills. Its emphasis is on participation and genuine social value, with growth shaped by both commercial potential and the quality of participants' experience.

The development opportunity

- Assess the market, product offer and commercial model to identify sustainable growth.
- Expand online and retail sales, corporate gifting and employer or retail partnerships.
- Explore new products and enterprise opportunities linked to participants' strengths and aspirations.
- Align growth with support capacity and the ambition to expand day opportunities.

We see potential in stronger brand awareness beyond our current area, new seasonal ranges and additional enterprise opportunities linked to Buddies. Corporate gifting and retail partnerships offer routes to new customers, while the ambition to expand day opportunities creates a clear connection between commercial development and community benefit.

You will inherit products, production facilities, customers and experienced service colleagues. Your contribution will be to establish priorities, secure investment and build an achievable plan for the next stage.

Why this role matters now

Bolster has identified promising opportunities but has not always had the dedicated senior capacity to pursue them fully. This newly created post brings that focus: identifying what is worth pursuing, building the right relationships and following opportunities through to a sustainable outcome. It is a business development and organisational leadership role with income generation at its core.

You will join the Senior Leadership Team alongside the Head of Services, reporting directly to the Chief Executive. Your remit spans the route from opportunity and business case to approval, investment or contract award and mobilisation planning. The Head of Services retains responsibility for ongoing service delivery.

Strategic partnerships and new services

Build relationships with commissioners, funders, businesses and community partners. Work with service colleagues to understand emerging needs, evaluate opportunities and develop proposals for commissioned services, collaborative delivery and investment.

Income and sustainability

Develop a coordinated approach to grants, commissioning, corporate support, philanthropy and trading income. Prioritise the strongest opportunities and develop business cases that support informed decisions by the Chief Executive and Board.

Social enterprise development

Lead the next phase of development for Acorn and Bolster Buddies, connecting market opportunity with operational capacity and social impact. Identify routes to growth and investment, with clear priorities and realistic targets.

Profile and influence

Represent Bolster externally, strengthen strategic relationships and work with communications colleagues to increase awareness of our services, impact and enterprise offer.

Organisational leadership

Contribute to strategic planning and collective leadership, present proposals to trustees and deputise for the Chief Executive where required. Help sustain a culture of evidence-informed decisions, collaboration and constructive challenge.

The judgement to say no matters alongside the ability to secure agreement. You will be expected to assess full costs, likely return, risk and capacity, and bring clear recommendations to the Chief Executive and Board. We want development that strengthens Bolster's purpose and resilience.

The leader we hope to meet

You will be able to connect long-term ambition with practical action, earn trust across sectors and assess opportunities with sound judgement. We welcome leadership that combines commercial awareness, a commitment to inclusion and a clear focus on community outcomes.

The accompanying Job Description and Person Specification set out the full duties and selection criteria. Please read these alongside this pack when preparing your application.

Your first year

Meaningful growth takes time. Year one will establish the relationships, evidence and priorities needed to convert opportunities into sustainable results. The following expectations provide a basis for agreeing your objectives.

When	Priority	What success looks like
First 90 days	Listen and assess	Trusted relationships with staff, trustees and partners; a clear assessment of services, income, enterprise activity and opportunities.
By six months	Agree an income development plan	A practical plan endorsed by the Board, with priorities and realistic targets across grants, commissioning, corporate support, philanthropy and trading.
During year one	Progress strategic opportunities	Two to three significant opportunities progressed, with at least one leading to a new partnership, income stream, commissioned service or enterprise opportunity.
During year one	Shape enterprise growth	An agreed growth strategy for Acorn and Bolster Buddies, with priorities and targets for years two and three.
Throughout year one	Contribute to collective leadership	Effective contribution to strategy, Board discussions and organisational decisions; deputising where appropriate and building confidence across the team.

An early priority will be to understand what already exists: the relationships colleagues have built, the ideas waiting to be developed and the constraints that may affect delivery. Listening across services will help you distinguish opportunities with immediate potential from those requiring longer-term development.

How you will approach the work

You will review the opportunity pipeline with colleagues, test the most promising ideas and develop business cases where needed. Early decisions should clarify where Bolster can deliver well, what investment is required and which relationships can make progress possible.

The Chief Executive will agree measurable objectives with you, reflecting the organisation's priorities, available resources and delivery capacity. The indicative milestones above provide a starting point; detailed targets should be informed by your assessment of the pipeline and agreed plans.

Success will include the quality of the decisions and partnerships established, as well as income and new activity secured. These priorities recognise both the time required to develop opportunities and the need to begin delivering results.

Your colleagues and relationships

The role sits alongside the Head of Services within the Senior Leadership Team, bringing dedicated capacity for development while service colleagues lead operational delivery. You will work closely with the Chief Executive and Board to shape priorities and progress proposals.

This will be a visible, relationship-led appointment. You will need to work across professional boundaries and build support for proposals, drawing on operational expertise rather than developing opportunities in isolation. Colleagues will bring the service knowledge, financial insight and evidence needed to test ideas well.

Collaboration across Bolster

- Chief Executive: organisational direction, strategic growth and external representation.
- Head of Services: emerging needs, service development and delivery capacity.
- Finance, office management and business support: financial insight, planning and organisational development.
- Communications and impact colleagues: profile, engagement, evidence and reporting.
- Service teams: practical insight across Family, Ability, Seniors and social enterprise.

Line management and support

As this is a new role, direct line management responsibilities may evolve. Initially, the postholder will work collaboratively across established teams, drawing on finance, communications, impact, programme and service expertise. Future responsibilities may include growth, business development, communications or enterprise staff as functions develop.

Your early influence will depend on the quality of collaboration as much as formal reporting lines. The ability to create shared priorities, respect expertise and maintain momentum across teams will be important to making this new role effective.

Working with trustees

Our Board provides strategic oversight, governance and support. You will contribute to Board and committee discussions as required, present development proposals and support delivery of agreed priorities.

External relationships

Your network will span statutory commissioners, trusts and foundations, corporate and philanthropic partners, community and voluntary organisations, social enterprise networks, educational institutions and partnership forums. Engagement with elected representatives and community leaders will be part of the remit where appropriate.

You will act as an ambassador for Bolster, building relationships that are credible, purposeful and aligned with our mission.

Working at Bolster

Delivering community services can be rewarding and emotionally demanding. We want our people to feel supported, valued and able to do their best work. Collaboration, trust and professional curiosity shape how we work, with supervision, reflective practice and performance discussions creating space to recognise progress, discuss challenges and identify support.

We invest in learning that strengthens individual capability and organisational impact. Staff are encouraged to identify relevant training, professional networks and development opportunities. For this role, that includes strategic leadership, partnerships, enterprise and business growth, with support for the broader leadership responsibilities involved in deputising for the Chief Executive.

“There is a real sense of teamwork at Bolster. People genuinely want to help each other succeed and you always feel supported when facing challenges.” — Staff feedback

Our family-friendly policies and flexible working arrangements recognise that work is one part of people’s lives. We value open conversations about wellbeing and encourage feedback, constructive challenge and ideas for improvement. As a senior leader, you will help sustain that culture while setting clear expectations and supporting colleagues to take ownership.

Terms and working arrangements

Term	Detail
Salary	£50,000–£53,000 per annum
Contract	Permanent, full-time, 37.5 hours per week
Probation	Six months
Base	Bolster Community, Unit 1, Killeavy Road, Newry, BT35 6UA
Hybrid working	Your week will be split between the office, external meetings and home working
Annual leave	25 days plus 11 public holidays, in line with Bolster Community policy
Pension	6% employer contribution
Health package	Employee Private Health Care through Axa Health
Other benefits	Access to training, professional networks and leadership development, regular supervision, a supportive working culture, and reimbursement of business mileage and expenses in line with policy.
Notice period	3 months

How to apply

Complete the accompanying Application Form and submit it by the closing date below. Shortlisting will assess the qualifications or equivalent experience and the essential experience and achievements in the Person Specification. Relevant experience may come from the voluntary, public or private sector.

Give specific examples of your own contribution, the scale and complexity of the work and the results achieved. The application form includes space for at least two opportunities you personally progressed to secured income, a contract, a charity partnership or a sustainable new service. Equivalent senior-level experience is accepted as an alternative to the specified qualification.

Do not rely on job titles to demonstrate experience. Applications without sufficient evidence against the essential criteria may not be shortlisted.

Return the completed Application Form to allison@bolstercommunity.org. CVs cannot be accepted in place of the form. Please complete the separate Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form using the link in the application.

An informal conversation

For a confidential discussion about the role, contact Allison Slator, Chief Executive Officer, at allison@bolstercommunity.org or 028 3083 5764. These conversations do not form part of selection.

Senior appointments are a significant career decision. An informal discussion is a chance to explore our ambitions, the scope of the role and what working at Bolster could mean for you. It is also an opportunity to clarify the support and working relationships around this new post.

Recruitment timetable

Stage	Provisional Dates
Advert opens	10th November 2026
Informal conversations	10th - 27th November 2026
Closing date	04th December 2026
Shortlisting	09th December 2026
Interview and practical exercise	16th December 2026
Expected start	TBC

Selection

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a panel interview, expected to include trustees and the Chief Executive. This will explore experience, strategic judgement, leadership approach and alignment with Bolster's values. A practical business development exercise will also form part of the interview, focusing on identifying, evaluating and progressing an opportunity, including recognising when it should not be pursued.

The full process is expected to take approximately two hours, including preparation, presentation and interview. Dates may change; applicants will be informed of amendments.

11 / APPLICANT PACK

Fair recruitment and employment checks

Equality of opportunity

Bolster Community is an Equal Opportunities Employer. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified people and make selection decisions on merit and the requirements of the role. We are committed to a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

Monitoring information

Applicants will be asked to complete a Community Background Monitoring Form. This is held separately from applications, is not available to the shortlisting or interview panel and plays no part in selection.

Reasonable adjustments

Please tell us as early as possible if you need adjustments to complete an application or take part in assessment or interview. We will work with you to identify appropriate arrangements. Requests will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Pre employment checks

Any offer is subject to satisfactory checks, which may include identity, right to work in the UK, employment references and history, relevant qualifications or professional memberships, and an AccessNI check at the level required for the role. The successful candidate will be required to cooperate with these checks before starting employment.

Your information

Application information will be used for recruitment and selection and processed in accordance with applicable data protection requirements. Access will be limited to those involved in the process, with disclosure only where needed for checks or required by law.

Records will be retained in line with Bolster's retention schedule and securely destroyed after the applicable period. Further information is available in our Privacy Policy on request.

Registered charity NIC107382 | Company registration NI655061