



Role Briefing: Employment and Talent Lead

Location	London SE13 (Lewisham) based
Salary	£34,000 - £39,000 dependent on experience
Start Date	As soon as possible
Job type	Full time – on-site in person
Reports to	Director of Impact, Strategy, and Development

INTRODUCING ONWARDS & UPWARDS

Onwards and Upwards (O&U) is a charity created to directly tackle the cycle of reoffending driven by the barriers to unemployment faced; our purpose is clear, and our plan is simple. We will break the cycle of reoffending by starting sustainable businesses which train and employ ex-offenders. These must be organisations that people are proud to work for, provide personal and professional development, that operate in high demand sectors, and that showcase the talents and potential of ex-offenders as employees to businesses and society at large.

Our plan in the long-term is to launch, test, and grow a range of businesses that all follow this model – of training, supporting and employing ex-offenders in positive environments that are part of a community, with aspirational brands, and with full support for people to grow and move on with their lives.

Our first commercial venture is XO Bikes – where we train people to become qualified bike mechanics and then aim to find them meaningful jobs in the cycling sector and beyond. Our second venture is in development.

We have been training mechanics for two years and have supported people into employment in the cycling sector, into roles in other sectors ranging from hospitality to construction, and have now reached the point where we want to develop and formalise this function. It is a magnificent opportunity to build an effective process at the heart of our mission, and as such we are thrilled to have created a new role to own and lead this work.

THE ROLE

This is a new role that will be a part of and work closely with our Programme team to create an energetic, effective, and tenacious employment function within Onwards & Upwards that will initially focus on XO Bikes and then extend across future portfolio ventures as and when they are launched.

There are three main functions, all of which are vital in achieving the positive outcomes for individuals we support – sustained meaningful employment. The three functions are as follows:

Employment Support – designing, testing, and delivering a pre-employment programme to trainees whilst they are on our mechanics course, and then working with all our graduates supporting them in job searching, applications, and interviews. This will need an organised and efficient individual with empathy

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and good communication skills. One size does not fit all, working well with a range of people with a range of needs, and taking satisfaction in the support you give, is vital.

Employer Engagement – expanding our network of employers who understand our purpose and their role within it, is central to generating enough open job opportunities and sufficient variation within them. This will require initiative, brilliant relationship management, and reliability – we must always follow-up with people and organisations who are willing to come on the journey with us. We will learn over time what jobs are most sought after, and what types of organisations are best suited to the people we support – and use this learning to improve

Sustained Employment Support – once people begin jobs it is our aspiration that employer and employee are happy, productive, and growing together. We can and must contribute to this with flexible support offered to both parties from the first day and ever after. There will be issues, barriers, and unforeseen challenges that can be resolved, overcome and learnt from with our help. Again, this requires building open and honest relationships and having difficult conversations as early as possible.

As a new role there is the opportunity to design a best-in-class function specialised for the people we support, and for the nature of our organisation. It is an exciting starting point with variable phases of development over the next few years. This is not a business-as-usual role, and needs ingenuity, ownership, and an experimental approach to sit comfortably next to our commitment to continuous improvement, even if with very small steps.

THE PERSON

We are looking for someone who shares our belief that individuals who commit crimes should be given the opportunity to build themselves a positive and productive life atop the foundations of secure employment. The cycle of reoffending is an enormous issue, but one we can start to solve.

Our hope is to find an energetic, organised, and positive team player, similarly comfortable working independently. It is a very varied role and one that needs calm focus as well as spontaneity and initiative – things change fast here, and this allows us to progress towards our mission rapidly.

Success in this role will depend on a combination of organisation, structure, and rigour, alongside confidence and comfort in generating and building new relationships. Initiative and dynamism much sought after, together with a genuine delight found in working with a wide range of people.

Most importantly, we want someone who cares as much as we do about why we exist – the people we aim to help. Bikes are an end to a means, and that means is giving people ready to turn away from crime the platform on which to launch a successful and rewarding career. Cycle broken, bikes coincidental.

We are looking for someone with at least a few years of relevant experience ideally spanning more than one of the three functions above. There will always be support and help available but this role will own responsibility for the design and delivery of this function.

The role would be ideal for someone with an understanding of the challenges faced within the prison system and the difficulties faced after release.

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As a rough guide, with poetic interpretation encouraged, we are looking for:

Essential skills

- Delivery of employability sessions to a range of people at different distances from employment
- Programme design and development through continuous improvement – monitoring, reporting, review
- Empathy and a supportive approach even when the road is long
- Employer engagement and relationship building and management – we must be reliable, honest, and responsive to support organisations through cultural change
- Generating opportunities and leads through networking – to grow our network of employers
- Strong admin and IT skills to effectively manage the recruitment process and monitor our efficacy
- High levels of professionalism and energy in all interactions with trainees and employers
- High motivation and pro-active initiative, able to adapt quickly when priorities change
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.

Desirable skills

- Experience working within a recruitment function
- Experience of working with diverse communities
- Experience of working with ex-offenders or in a prison setting

How to apply

If you would like an informal conversation before applying, have any specific questions, or would like the chance to come and visit us in person please do contact Will at will@onwardsandupwards.uk

To then apply please send an up-to-date CV and one page cover letter to Maria at maria@onwardsandupwards.uk. We will be reviewing applications as they come in so do please register your interest with us as soon as possible.

All applicants need to have the right to work in the UK and be able to provide two references.

We believe we'll work better if our employees come from different backgrounds and if we create an environment of inclusion and belonging for them.