

# CHANGE JOB CHANGE LIVES

## Finance Director Candidate Briefing Pack



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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this crucial role at the heart of our business. As we approach our tenth birthday in 2012, the need for what we do has never been greater – and in an ever-bleaker financial climate, the importance of having an exceptional Finance Director can't be over-stated.

I'm looking for candidates who can bring blue-chip financial rigour, with leadership and strategic planning skills commensurate with a place on the group's Executive Team. You need to be resilient, able to think quickly and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, and show an unshakeable commitment to our values and aims. In return, you'll find it a hugely satisfying role and a uniquely rewarding place to work.

I look forward to receiving your application

Yours sincerely

Fay Selvan  
Group Chief Executive  
The Big Life group

**Our mission is  
to change the  
world and turn  
it upside down.**



**The  
BigLife  
group**

business changing lives

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## Overview

The Big Life group is a social business unlike any other. Founded in April 2002 with a mission to Change the World, it's succeeded in pretty much every particular. With practical support and enterprise delivered by its five social businesses and three charities, it helps those who are most marginalised and overlooked by society and statutory agencies. A private Group which combines private companies with charitable ones, it operates under a Group structure with overall management control and administrative support at the centre.

Its achievements are staggering, and far greater than you would imagine from its relatively small size and turnover: it harnesses and channels the energy and influence of its staff and supporters in a fantastically efficient and purposeful way, and it's an exhilarating ride all the way. See [www.thebiglifegroup.com](http://www.thebiglifegroup.com) to find out more about key achievements; read our manifesto and look through our 2007-12 Business Plan.

## Our values

You can't change the world if you work in the same old ways. Everything we do will be driven by the need to help people change their lives, however small or large those changes might be. The Big Life group works differently, constantly challenging ourselves and others.

**Inspiring** – We inspire others to change their lives, their businesses and their worlds.

**Valuing Difference** – We strive to find the unique qualities, gifts, insights, skills and perspectives that different people offer. By encouraging diversity we constantly challenge ourselves and others.

**Creative** – We always look for new ways to do things and always question what is 'accepted'. We grab opportunities and always look for new solutions.

**Courageous** – We do what we think is right for the people we work with. We are proud to be different where difference is needed.

**Honest** – We are honest with ourselves and with others. We build on our strengths and learn from our weaknesses. We always want to improve.

**Thoughtful** – We reflect on all that we do. We take time to consider how effective we are and how we can be better. We do not react to circumstances, but are proactively working to achieve our vision. Giving the best to people who have had the worst.

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## The role

The role of Finance Director at The Big Life group is exhilarating, but has its share of challenges. The business's financial situation is – as you'd expect from an organisation that works on not-for-profit principles and low margins – one of the largest risk factors to its continued existence. Multiple income streams, short-term commissioning arrangements, a need to be able to invest without guaranteed returns, and a commitment to outcomes that may not be popular or profitable means that ensuring cashflow and predicting business performance is a difficult and exacting job.

Moreover, as a Director of the company the role demands a positive long-term approach to growth and planning which is constantly challenged by finance; and this sets up an inevitable tension between being risk-averse (stewarding and preserving what we've achieved) and progressive (leading the way into new and much-needed markets). It's a tough call, but uniquely personally rewarding as well.

## Job Description

**Post:** Finance Director  
**Salary:** £50,000  
**Responsible to:** Chief Executive  
**Based at:** Manchester

### Role

The Finance Director is responsible for the strategic and operational finances of the companies and charities within The Big Life group.

S/he will ensure that sound financial management operates at all levels; provide accurate and timely information to the Board of Directors and Trustees; engage fully in executive level planning and decision making; network nationally and regionally to promote The Big Life group; ensure systems are in place for accurate monitoring and control of contracts; and ensure that the group achieves its profit targets.

As a Director of the companies within The Big Life group, the Finance Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with legal and statutory duties, and will oversee the Company Secretary. Moreover, s/he will work as part of the Executive Team in leading the group to achieve its mission.

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## Principal task areas

### *Financial management*

Supply accurate and timely information to managers and the Boards to facilitate good decision-making

Prepare and achieve Board approval for financial plans, improving liquidity, capital assets and business growth.

To ensure the operation of financial policies and procedures across the group, consistent with stated and adopted policies, updating and developing them as required

To support the group to achieve profit targets

To negotiate with banks and other financial bodies to secure value for money investments and services

To monitor the procurement of services for the group

Obtain professional advice wherever required on behalf of the group and liaise with other professionals where necessary

Ensure efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place for all contracts delivered by the group.

### *Staff management*

Lead and manage the finance team (and other staff teams as agreed with the Chief Executive) in line with policy and procedures

Ensure staff understand their contribution to achieving the group objectives

In conjunction with the Chief Executive, set targets and plan with staff for continuous improvement

Ensure the finance team deliver a customer-focused service to the companies and charities within the group

### *General professional expectations*

To work within The Big Life Group's Values, Ethos and Vision.

To contribute to the development of The Big Life Group

To work in accordance with all Policies and Procedures of the Big Life Group

To identify and attend training as required

To work in accordance with all relevant legislation

To undergo regular supervision and an annual appraisal

To undertake any other duties as required, appropriate to the post.

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## Person Specification

### Skills/Knowledge

- Ability to network and influence others
- Basic understanding or willingness to learn about social business/charity sector both operationally and in a policy context
- Team working and working on own initiative
- Working to deadlines and under pressure
- Analytical approach
- Problem solving
- Knowledge of statutory responsibilities of Finance Director, charities and social businesses and corporate governance issues
- High level of personal responsibility
- Commitment to the values and mission of The Big Life group

### Experience/Qualifications

- Experience of leading a team, with direct line management for at least 2 years
- Establishing and monitoring systems for financial control across teams
- Relevant accountancy qualification
- Preparation of company and charity accounts, liaison with auditors and audit committees (Both desirable, one essential)
- Experience of managing contracts and procuring services
- Experience of managing European funding, trust grants, statutory contracts and trading income (All desirable, one essential)
- Demonstrate experience of working in a senior team or at Board level to develop strategy

**Some people are born with opportunity all around them. They enjoy financial and emotional security, good schools and belief in themselves. Others have never had these things.**

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## How to apply

We have commissioned NDC Ltd to support us in this appointment, and their consultant David Gooda is available for an informal discussion on 0845 862 0015. Any specific queries should be channelled through NDC in the first instance.

If you wish to apply, please prepare a full CV and supporting statement, addressing the role profile and person specification above. This should be sent to [info@northerndesigncollective.co.uk](mailto:info@northerndesigncollective.co.uk) or by post to Wykeham House, 101 Oxford Road, Macclesfield SK11 8JG.

## Timetable

Your application must arrive by noon, 14th November 2011. Late applications will not be accepted. This deadline is important because shortlisted candidates will be asked to an assessment day and interview on November 17th.

Shortlisted candidates will also be asked to undertake two short psychometric tests in advance of the final interview; you will be given all the information you need if you are called to final interview, but please be aware that these will need to be completed by 9am on November 16th.