

THE ELISCHER FOUNDATION

Talent. Passion. Purpose.

Invitation to tender

Freelance Development Manager

Six-month assignment · 2 days a week · Starting July 2026

This pack invites freelance fundraisers to tender for a six-month assignment with The Elischer Foundation. A separate Terms of engagement document sets out the contract that will sit alongside it.

1. Why we are commissioning this work

The Elischer Foundation supports and nurtures fundraisers who have already shown talent and ambition, and who are emerging as leaders early in their journey. We do that through a bespoke mentoring programme, a year-long leadership development experience, an annual Leadership Summit, and a growing community of mentees, mentors and alumni in the UK and around the world.

We are now in our next phase of growth. Thanks to a legacy following Nicky Elischer's death in 2023 — Nicky founded the Foundation in memory of her husband Tony, who died in 2016 — we can move at pace while we build a self-sustaining funding base. Our goal is to be fully self-sustaining within three years.

To do that we need a freelance fundraiser to come in alongside us, build pipeline, and bring in income. This is a doing role, not a strategising one. We have a starter prospect list, a sector sponsor map, and a list of trusts and foundations that back sector support bodies — we want someone who can take that material, sharpen it, and run.

Laura Swan, our Director, will be your day-to-day lead. Lucy Squance, Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee, holds the supporting oversight. Luke Mallett, Chair of Trustees, is on hand for sector network and Board-facing support. All three are personally invested in making this work; the Board includes several seasoned fundraisers, and as a fundraising leadership organisation we have many more in our wider community.

2. At a glance

Role	Freelance Development Manager
Day-to-day lead	Laura Swan, Director — your main point of contact, working with you week to week
Supporting oversight	Lucy Squance, Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee — governance lead and sponsor for the role
Also works with	Luke Mallett, Chair of Trustees — sector network and Board-facing support
Time commitment	Two days a week, flexed by mutual agreement
Duration	Six months from 1 July 2026, with a formal review at three months (w/c 28 September 2026)
Day rate	£325 a day, inclusive of VAT where applicable. This is a freelance role and you are responsible for your tax, NI etc.
Working pattern	Hybrid, with in-person attendance for meetings and events

3. What we want done

The initial brief focusses on three connected workstreams. Each contributes to the same ambition: a credible, diversified income base that can carry the Foundation beyond Nicky's legacy.

3.1 Plan and pipeline

- Build a short, board-ready fundraising plan covering income targets, priority channels, indicative costs and realistic timeline, aligned to our FY26–27 strategy.
- Set up and run a structured prospect pipeline in Beacon, our CRM, identifying and qualifying funders across trusts, foundations and partnerships.
- Surface quick wins and longer-term opportunities, and keep the Board honest about both.

3.2 Partners and sponsors

- Identify and approach strategic partnership prospects that fit our mission and our community of fundraising leaders.
- Shape sponsorship offers that sit inside aligned partnerships, anchored on the Leadership Summit cycle and the year-round mentoring programme.
- Get into meetings — discoveries, asks, negotiations — alongside Laura, Luke and Lucy.

3.3 Trusts and grants

- Map the trust and foundation landscape relevant to fundraising leadership development and sector support.
- Initiate the grants cycle: shortlist, draft and submit high-quality applications. Reporting commitments after the contract end will be picked up by the Foundation.
- Build and maintain a grants calendar inside Beacon so we can see what is live, what is next, and where the gaps are.

A note on membership

Our community of mentees, mentors and alumni is now around 200 strong, and a Friends-of or membership scheme is an obvious future move. For this assignment we are deliberately holding it back. We want the Foundation team, the Fundraising and Communications Committee, and our community to scope it together later in 2026. The Development Manager is asked only to leave a one-page starting point for that conversation.

4. How we will work together

4.1 Reporting and governance

You will engage with both Laura and Lucy throughout the assignment, in two distinct rhythms.

Laura Swan, our Director, is your day-to-day lead. You will work alongside her week to week — planning, prioritising, sharing draft proposals, talking through prospects, and making the operational decisions that move the work along.

Lucy Squance, Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee, provides supporting oversight. Lucy is the governance lead and sponsor for the role, holding the direction of travel and the connection back to the Board. You will meet Lucy regularly and ahead of each Fundraising and Communications Committee meeting.

Luke Mallett, Chair of Trustees, is on hand for sector network and Board-facing support.

Ahead of each Fundraising and Communications Committee meeting we ask for a short written update: progress against the three workstreams, what is emerging, what is blocking, and what we should expect next. Laura will help shape it; Lucy will table it.

4.2 Tools and access

We will provide access to Beacon (our CRM), Microsoft 365 and our shared drives. We will hand over an existing prospect list, the sponsor map Luke is building across the sector, and a starting list of trusts and foundations that back sector support organisations. There should be no need to start any of this from a spreadsheet.

4.3 Working pattern

The role is two days a week, hybrid, with the specific days agreed with the Director. The first weeks fall in July and August, when many trusts and partners are on summer holidays — we expect the working pattern to flex around that, so that effort is concentrated where it produces decisions. We are equally open to flex around school holidays for caring responsibilities.

4.4 Three-month review

We will run a formal review during the week of 28 September 2026. The Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee, the Director and the Chair of the Governance Committee will conduct it together. The review focuses on agreed indicators of future income rather than money raised by that point — the nature of these channels means returns will not arrive immediately.

Appendix A sets out the indicators we propose. We will agree the numbers with you at induction.

The review can decide to continue the assignment on the current terms, to adjust the scope or pattern, or to conclude early. Reasonable notice will be given for any change.

5. Who we are looking for

We are looking for a freelance fundraiser, not a fundraising consultant. The person who fits this assignment will be senior enough to set direction and confident enough to do the work themselves — including the parts that are not glamorous.

Essential

- Five years or more of fundraising experience with a real track record across at least trusts and foundations and corporate partnerships.
- You have built pipelines that have translated into income, and you have the proof of it.
- Strong writer — proposals, cases for support, pitch documents — and quick on your feet in conversation.
- Comfortable being the only fundraiser in the room, in a small team where flexibility and initiative matter more than process.
- Confident with stakeholders at trustee and senior leadership level, in person and in writing.
- A good working knowledge of the UK fundraising sector, ideally with live networks into sector bodies, agencies and suppliers.
- Comfortable in public speaking and networking settings — our community gives you a natural stage.

Desirable

- Experience of leadership development, mentoring or sector capacity-building work.
- Chartered Institute of Fundraising membership or equivalent professional development.

6. How to tender

Please send us:

- A short proposal (no more than four pages) setting out how you would approach the three workstreams in section 3, including how you would use the first month.
- A CV or biography showing relevant experience.
- Two referees from previous fundraising engagements.
- Confirmation of your day rate position relative to our £325 inclusive of VAT, and any working-pattern requests.

Deadline Monday 22nd June 2026 - send your tender to Laura Swan, Director (laura@elischerfoundation.org), as your day-to-day lead contact. Please include the subject heading: TENDER Development Manager [YOUR NAME].

We will acknowledge within three working days and confirm next steps.

Appendix A — Indicators for the three-month review

These are the qualifying indicators we will use at the three-month review. The numbers will be agreed with the appointee at induction, against our existing pipeline and the time spent on each area in the first 12 weeks.

Trusts and grants	A mapped, ranked landscape of trusts and foundations relevant to our work; a working pipeline of qualified prospects; at least two high-quality applications submitted; a third in drafting.
Strategic partnerships	A clear partnership architecture, with at least three qualified corporate or sector prospects in active conversation; sponsorship offers shaped and ready to test against the Leadership Summit cycle.
Plan and pipeline	A short, board-ready fundraising plan setting out income targets, channels, costs and indicators. The pipeline is live in Beacon, with a small set of agreed reports.
Ways of working	Regular written updates to the Fundraising and Communications Committee; a clear forward view; a starting position on a Friends-of architecture (handed back for the FCC to take forward).

Linked documents

- Terms of engagement — Freelance Development Manager (contractual terms).
- FY26–27 Strategy update (provided at induction).
- Board people and budget paper, March 2026 (provided at induction).