



Recruiting the Chief Executive for YMCA Norfolk

CASE STUDY

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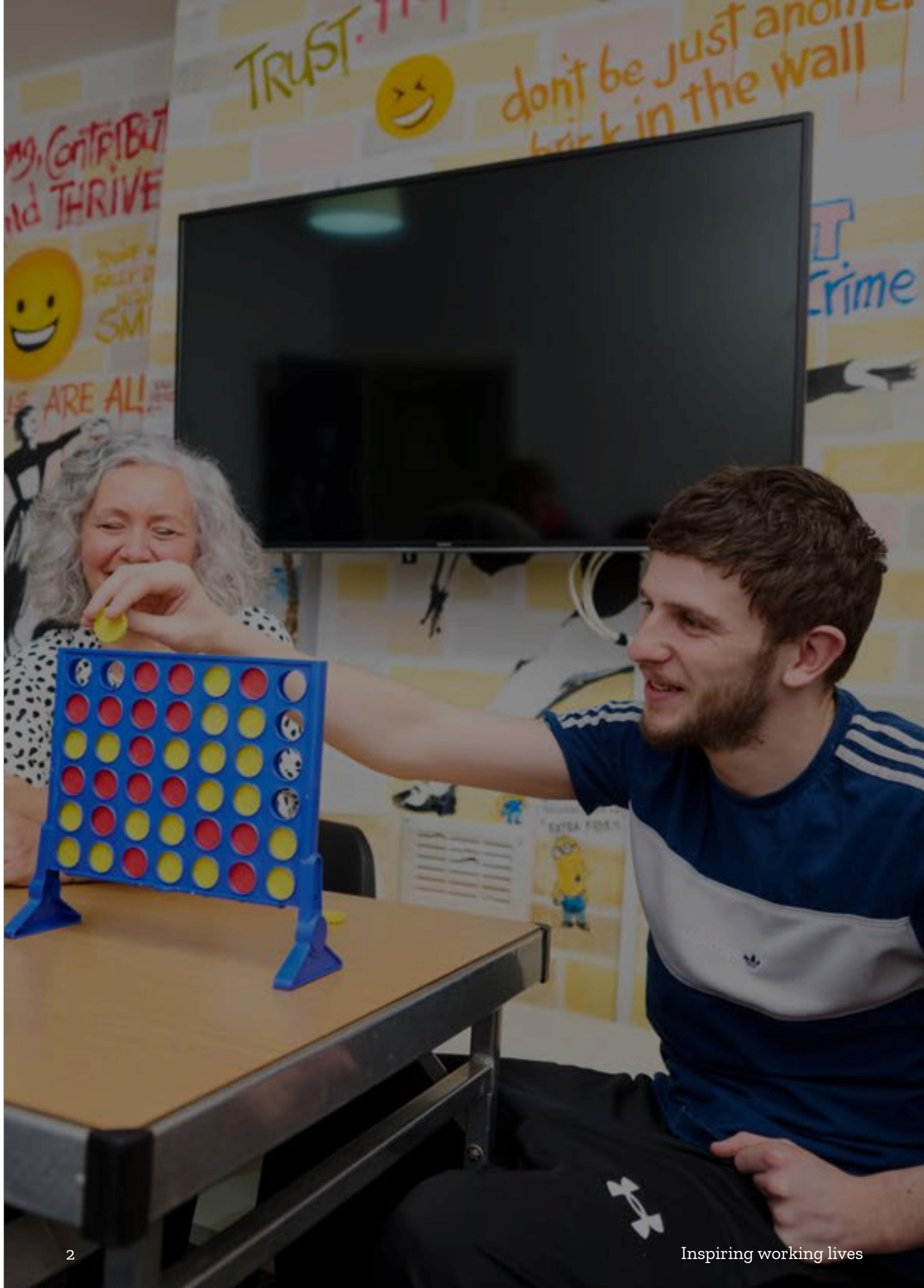
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Background

YMCA Norfolk is a Christian charity supporting young people and families through housing, advice, and support services. As part of the global YMCA movement, the organisation has a strong values-led mission and operates within a complex charitable and regulatory environment.

The outgoing Chief Executive had been in post for over 12 years, creating a long-standing legacy. This required a carefully managed transition to identify a successor who could demonstrate strong leadership capability, emotional intelligence, and alignment with the organisation's faith-based values.



"Our mission is to inspire young people to discover their potential so that they can live life in all its fullness."



Challenges

This was a highly complex executive search requiring alignment of leadership capability, values, and statutory requirements within a limited talent pool.

Key challenges included:

- Long-serving Chief Executive created a significant legacy and high expectations for the successor
- Genuine Occupational Requirement (Christian faith) under Equality Act 2010 restricted the candidate pool
- Need for proven charity leadership experience within a complex multi-service organisation
- Requirement for understanding of regulatory frameworks such as Charity Commission, Ofsted, or Social Housing regulation
- Limited local talent pool in Norfolk requiring national search and relocation considerations
- Need to assess candidates' leadership capability, emotional intelligence, and values alignment



Actions

We delivered a structured executive search process, combining targeted outreach, values-based assessment, and a multi-stage selection approach to identify a Chief Executive aligned with YMCA Norfolk's mission and requirements.

Our approach included: →



1.

Delivered a detailed briefing with trustees to define leadership requirements, values, and success criteria

2.

Developed a targeted search strategy focused on senior leaders within faith-based and charity organisations

3.

Conducted outreach across Christian networks to identify and attract suitable candidates

4.

Expanded search nationally to engage experienced charity leaders open to relocation

5.

Completed rigorous assessment including telephone screening and competency-based interviews focused on leadership and values

6.

Coordinated a multi-stage selection process including stakeholder panels, executive interviews, and psychometric testing



Results

YMCA Norfolk successfully appointed a Chief Executive who met both the leadership and values requirements of the organisation, ensuring a smooth transition following a long-serving incumbent.



Submitted 8 high-quality candidates at longlist stage with clear recommendations

4 candidates progressed to a multi-stage panel interview process

Successfully appointed a Chief Executive with strong charity leadership experience and clear alignment to YMCA values

Delivered a structured, multi-layered selection process including stakeholder panels and psychometric testing

Managed full end-to-end recruitment process from briefing through to appointment and onboarding



Testimonial

When YMCA Norfolk commenced its search for a new CEO, we were clear that we required some professional assistance. We approached three companies who were recommended to us as ones with experience in recruiting in the charity sector. We were conscious that we did have an occupational requirement that was central to our recruitment need. We chose Will for a variety of reasons including his professionalism, his interest in acting on our behalf and his ability to reach right candidates.

We were impressed with his interrogation of our brief and we felt confident that he understood our requirements. Will facilitated all parts of the process, advised as appropriate but never overpowered; he kept us updated throughout.

We found the psychometrics really useful in the interview process; the summary was particularly helpful and assisted us in directing some of our questioning.

We look back and are grateful for the crucial part he played in helping us to find the right candidate and are pleased to recommend him as a recruitment agent.

Philip MacDonald
Chair of Trustees; YMCA Norfolk

