



**Appointment brief  
Director,  
Institute of Development Studies**



**Delivering world-class  
research, learning and  
teaching that transforms  
the knowledge, action and  
leadership needed for  
more equitable and  
sustainable development  
globally**

## Contents

Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Trustees	04
About the Institute of Development Studies	06
Strategic aims	07
A history of impact	08
Current areas of work	09
Governance and management	10
IDS structure	11
Finances	12
The role	13
The location	15
Appointment process	17



## Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

### Deepak Nayyar

In April 2024, Professor Melissa Leach steps down after ten years of outstanding leadership as Director of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

The world has witnessed profound changes over the past decade, and is confronted with mounting economic, social, and political challenges. Economic inequalities between people, within countries, and in the world, have increased at an alarming rate. Geopolitical divides are more visible than they have been for decades. Democracy is at risk in many countries. Rights and freedoms of citizens are being circumscribed almost everywhere. There are multiple intersecting crises. The recent pandemic, which turned our lives upside down, has affected the health and wellbeing of people. The consequences of climate change are visible in more frequent natural disasters across the world. Armed conflicts, national and international, are on the rise. Inflation, driven in part by rising food and fuel prices, is eroding real incomes and living standards. Across the world, the poor are the most vulnerable.

In such a global context, the need for new approaches to development has never been greater. IDS is performing a vital role at this critical juncture in transforming knowledge to contemplate policies and practices for transforming lives, as a catalyst for action and leadership which are essential for development that is more equitable and more sustainable. We do this through rigorous evidence-based research, high-quality teaching, and learning from experience, seeking to translate research into action.

For the last seven successive years IDS, together with the University of Sussex, has been ranked first in the world for Development Studies according to the QS World University Rankings. This ranking reflects our track record in ground-breaking research, combined with our willingness and ability to challenge mainstream thinking and practices. Collaborating with partners around the world, our work is identifying injustices, explaining why these occur and persist, and developing more equitable approaches.

As the new Director, you will have a unique opportunity to inherit this international reputation and build on it further, so that we continue to be an influential voice in domains that matter enormously for the poor and the excluded around the world.

This will be a demanding task which requires combining academic excellence with institutional leadership. But you will have an excellent team at IDS to support you in this quest. Just as important, you will have the guidance of a Board – comprising outstanding persons from across the world with an impressive range of talents and experience – with a deep interest in, and commitment to, development that improves people's wellbeing.

Our worldwide network of alumni is a strength to build on, with around 4,000 alumni. The Institute has some 250 staff, including 83 Research Fellows, and we work with hundreds of partners and funders from across the world.

In addition, for IDS, our close affiliation with the University of Sussex is an asset. It is a relationship which ensures the highest quality of teaching, and brings synergies around research. Yet, we are an autonomous institution, independent from the University, that has the freedom to choose its research agendas and priorities.

From my perspective as Chair of the Board, there are three broad areas where you will have scope for, and will need, purposive action.

The first is positioning IDS in the changing environment as our 2020–25 strategic plan draws to a close and work starts on the 2025–30 strategy. This is a significant transformational moment for IDS to determine how we will respond to the changing demands of development in a profoundly changed national and international context.

The second is building and diversifying IDS' funding base at a time when resources are scarce. The fundamental underlying objective should be to ensure the financial sustainability of the Institute over the medium term. Your ideas, your networks, and your ability to demonstrate the relevance of IDS, will be very important in building on our current £30m annual turnover.

The third is supporting, motivating, and managing our staff to live IDS values in all that we do. We strive for equality, diversity, and inclusion in our conception of development. We would also like to strive for the same within IDS as an institution. It involves influencing and leading change at IDS and managing our staff to deliver excellence in work, whether in their research, teaching, or professional roles. In this quest, your people skills will be most important. Indeed, your style of leadership, in openness, communication, collegiality, consensus-building, and strategic decision-making, will be hugely important to the Institute's ethos, reputation, and impact, as well as its ability to retain and attract talent.

These areas, central as they are, by no means define the whole range of activities which will engage your attention. You will have the freedom and the space to shape the content of your job. We also hope that you will think of this as an opportunity to continue and further your own research interests.

This adds up to a unique opportunity for you to work with a great team in an influential institution to help shape the future of thinking and practice in tackling some of the world's most complex and significant challenges. You could be the ideal candidate.

This pack sets out the qualities we are seeking for this post, but I want also to emphasise that no one will have equal strengths in all areas, and that we are open to candidates with a wide range of skills, backgrounds, and experience, so long as you have a genuine desire and real enthusiasm for making a difference.



## About the Institute of Development Studies

IDS delivers world-class research, learning, and teaching that transforms the knowledge, action, and leadership needed for more equitable and sustainable development globally.

We work with governments, philanthropic foundations, non-governmental organisations, academics, and civil society to transform approaches to progressive social, political, and economic change in ways that ultimately make a difference to people's lives. Each year, we work with hundreds of partners from across the world.

Our reputation for research and international outlook is second to none and reflected in our performance in the latest QS World University Rankings, where we have been ranked first in the world for Development Studies for the seventh year in a row, together with the University of Sussex.

Our research work covers a broad range of issues in development, including environmental justice, inequalities, and civic engagement. We believe in giving marginalised communities a voice and agency to shape their own futures, and much of our work centres on uncovering power imbalances, with a strong focus on participatory research methods.

Our work in teaching is recognised around the world, and many of our 4,000 alumni have gone on to establish successful careers in fields such as social entrepreneurship, government, impact investing, and research. Amongst those who have studied at IDS are a former president of Costa Rica and a former vice-president of The Gambia.

Our professional development learning helps equip professionals working in development and social policy with the knowledge and skills needed. We run short courses on topics such as impact evaluation, evidence into policy, and participatory action research; we create tailored learning programmes for organisations; and we embed learning activities into larger research programmes.

For more information go to: [www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)

## Strategic aims

**Our 2020–25 strategy, entitled *Transforming Knowledge, Transforming Lives*, is based on five priorities:**

- 1** Collaborate across sciences and disciplines, sectors and communities to do research that brings about progressive change;
- 2** Build future leadership for development;
- 3** Champion the use of evidence for social and environmental justice;
- 4** Work with partners to expand international research and mutual learning networks for development;
- 5** Create a sustainable, resilient and equitable institution.

Our commitments:

- Upholding climate and environmental justice;
- Reducing extreme inequities;
- Fostering healthy and fulfilling lives;
- Nurturing inclusive, democratic, and accountable societies.

[Read the full IDS strategy](#)

Our values:

### Respectful

IDS is respectful of all those who work within and with the Institute and, by acting with integrity towards others, fosters relationships built on trust.

### Inclusive

IDS promotes and enables a working culture that is inclusive of diverse voices and alternative perspectives.

### Resourceful

IDS is resourceful in its institutional practices and in working with those whose skills and knowledge complement, enhance and contribute to IDS' ability to deliver its mission.

### Excellent

IDS strives to be excellent across all of its working practices, how it listens and learns, and in promoting the wellbeing of those who work within and with IDS.

## A history of impact

Over nearly 60 years, IDS has played a huge role in development thinking, policy, and practice around the world. Our research on topics as diverse as social protection, agricultural livelihoods, and pathways to change has influenced generations of development professionals. We champion the use of evidence for social justice across multiple pathways, including informing practice, engaging with policy, influencing thinking, enhancing capacities to produce and use evidence, and strengthening networks.

We are renowned as one of the pioneers of participatory approaches to development, arguing that, in the words of our eminent researcher Robert Chambers, progress only occurs when we 'put the last first'.

Over four decades we helped inform the design of programmes in Bangladesh and India that target the ultra-poor. Meanwhile, John Gaventa and colleagues' Powercube revolutionised understandings of power relations to bring about social change.

Landmark publications such as *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis* (1998) and *Transformative Social Protection* (2004) have had major influence in their respective fields and continue to be read and cited today. More recently, the work of the ESRC STEPS Centre, which explored transformative pathways to sustainability, has fundamentally shifted understandings of complex systems.

IDS played a significant role in shaping international responses to Ebola and Covid-19. Our work on Ebola helped change the way the World Health Organization and humanitarian agencies intervened in West Africa's pandemic in 2015, helping them to gain the trust of the communities they were trying to help, and save thousands of lives. Our rapid response to Covid-19 catalysed new thinking about local capacities in preparing for and responding to disease threats and advocated for more people-centred responses to pandemics. Our support for local research organisations transformed their ability to bridge different ways of knowing and engage rapidly with national and global pandemic policy.

Our work is also engaging directly with national policy. Our partnerships with revenue authorities, particularly in Africa, have transformed tax policy and administration, and helped generate millions of dollars in additional tax revenues that can be reinvested in countries' national development.

IDS has helped shape official development assistance through our groundbreaking Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development programme with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and multiple learning partnerships with bilateral donors and philanthropic foundations.



## Current areas of work

IDS is involved in a wide range of initiatives around the world, engaging with approximately 500 partners. Here is just a snapshot of our current priorities:

### **Upholding climate and environmental justice**

PASTRES (Pastoralism, Uncertainty and Resilience: Global Lessons from the Margins) aims to learn from pastoralists, whose perspectives are often dismissed despite their important role as custodians of nature. Our Centre for Future Natures seeks to better understand commons (shared resources that are collectively governed by people), challenge efforts to enclose resources and support efforts to defend threatened ecologies.

### **Reducing extreme inequities**

Through our involvement in the Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) programme, we are exploring the link between the worst forms of child labour and global supply chains in Bangladesh and Nepal. We are examining the backlash in women's rights across East Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East with partners via Countering Backlash, and Sustaining Power: Women's Struggles Against Contemporary Backlash in South Asia. With a specific focus on Bangladesh, the Covid-19 Learning, Evidence and Research Programme (CLEAR) is supporting evidence-informed pandemic response and recovery.

### **Fostering healthy and fulfilling lives**

The Food Equity Centre is a partnership which aims to counter the lack of justice in food systems, focusing particularly on diets, hunger, livelihoods and territories. IDS is a partner on Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity (ARISE) a programme which seeks to catalyse change in approaches to enhancing accountability and improving the health and wellbeing of poor, marginalised people living in informal urban settlements.

### **Nurturing inclusive, democratic, and accountable societies**

Our digital research explores both how citizens are using technology to promote free speech and use of digital by governments to limit freedoms. The International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD) works with revenue authorities to identify how taxation policies can promote inclusive growth and good governance. BASIC (Better Assistance in Crises) Research examines the use of social protection approaches in crisis contexts.

### **Supporting and understanding evidence use in policy and practice**

The Knowledge for Development and Diplomacy programme (K4DD) is providing the UK government with evidence to improve development programmes. This builds on over 20 years of supporting the government's use of evidence with helpdesks and learning initiatives. IDS is pioneering new approaches to the mobilisation of knowledge for enhanced social protection, climate change adaptation, health system strengthening, and food and agriculture reform. We support learning in these areas for networks of Southern research institutions, global development agencies, and research funders.



Photo: © IDS

## Governance and management

IDS was founded in 1966 as an independent research institute based at the University of Sussex. IDS has close links with the University. The Vice-Chancellor of Sussex serves as an ex officio Trustee, but IDS is financially and constitutionally independent.

As a UK registered charity and company limited by guarantee, IDS is governed by a Board of Trustees, who are responsible for agreeing our overall strategy, setting policy, monitoring performance, and promoting the interests of the Institute. Our Board of Trustees consists of people from around the world with expertise in international development, research, operations, and policy. It includes two staff Trustees elected by the staff.

IDS has a Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) chaired by the Director and comprising the Directors of Research, Evidence and Impact, Human Resources, Teaching and Learning, and Finance and Operations. The SLG meets monthly, and several all-staff forums take place during the year on various topics – particularly finances.

IDS also recognises two Trade Unions for the purposes of negotiating aspects of staff pay and conditions.

IDS structure

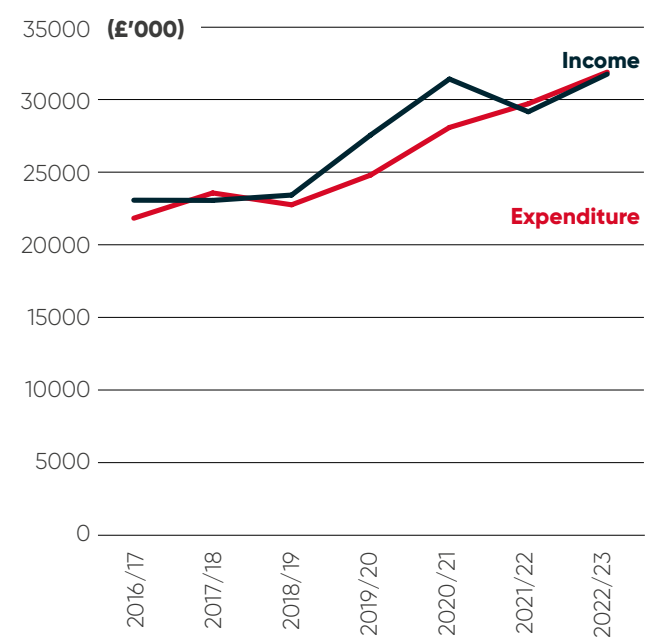


Finances

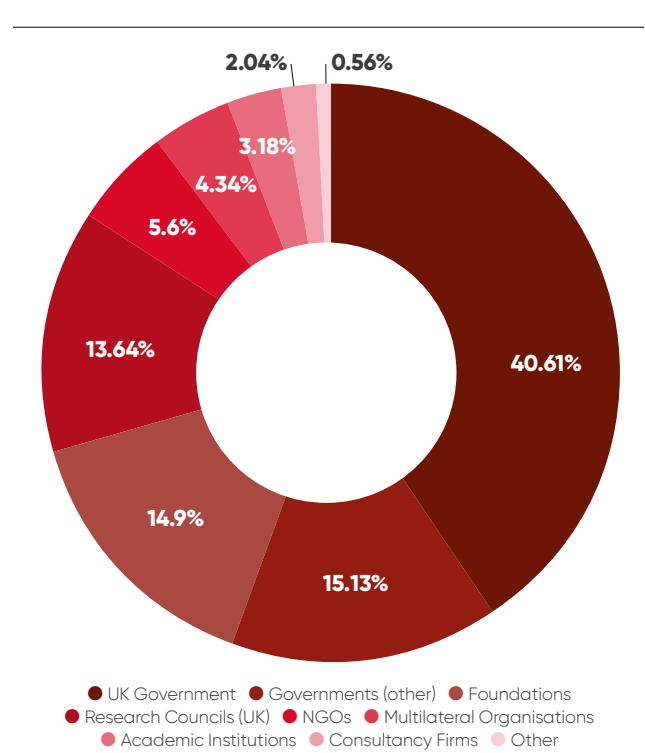
IDS has an annual turnover of £30m.

IDS receives no core funding. Funds are secured from a range of organisations and represent a combination of research grants and contracts, fees from advisory work, teaching, and income from investments and trading.

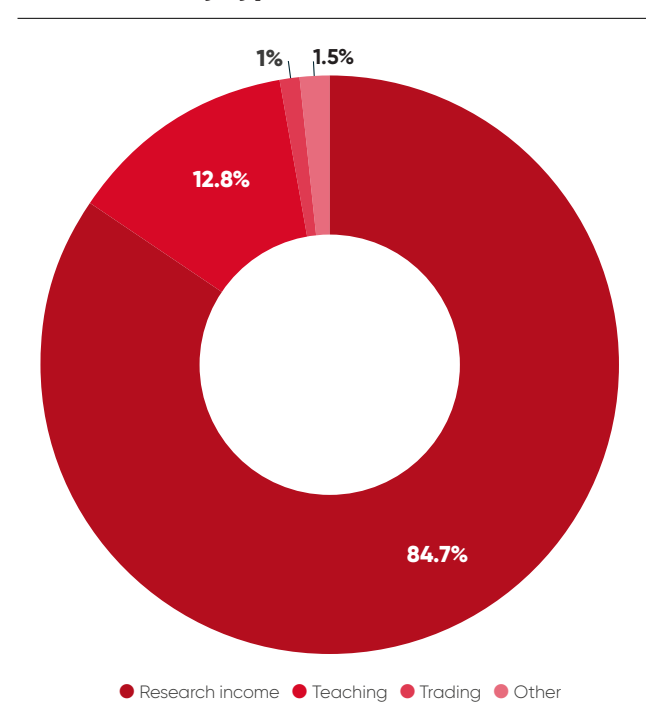
Total income and expenditure



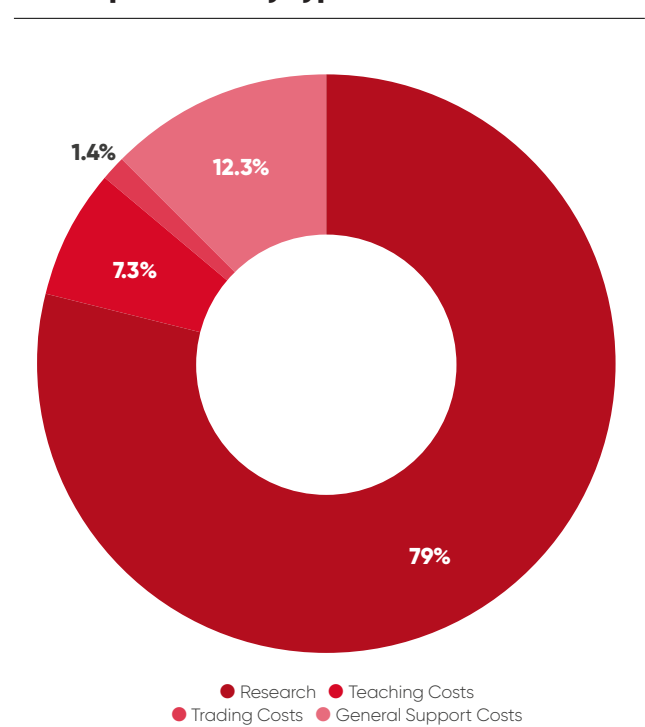
Funders



Total income by type



Total expenditure by type





## The role

The Director of IDS is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the governance and strategic leadership of the Institute. The Director has overall responsibility, working with the Board and Institute colleagues, for shaping and implementing IDS' strategy. The Director presently leads a team of five senior leaders covering research, teaching, finance, human resources, and impact, to support the development and delivery of the IDS strategy, in line with IDS values.

The Director provides intellectual inspiration and leadership to the Institute. They represent and position the organisation externally, raising the profile through building partnerships and relationships with multiple external stakeholders, specifically funders, academic institutions, and research partners.

The Director agrees strategic objectives with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Director is expected to:

### Strategic leadership and governance

- Work with the Board to develop a vision and strategy to deliver the IDS mission, with clear and measurable objectives and associated operational plans.
- Plan and lead the implementation of organisational strategy, including monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of progress.
- Be responsible for the overall financial health of the Institute, ensuring its financial stability with a strong emphasis on diversifying funding sources.
- Lead, empower, and enable the diverse range of IDS employees to implement the IDS vision and strategy through delivering outstanding research, teaching, communication, impact, and professional support.
- Foster a culture of respect and collegiality, where equality, diversity, participation, and inclusion are central to all IDS activities.
- Strengthen the culture of interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration across the range of disciplines and roles at IDS.
- Ensure and maintain an excellent working relationship and collaboration with the University of Sussex.
- Ensure appropriate governance arrangements in line with the Institute's charitable status and the requirements of the Charity Commission, and to support the Chair and Trustees.

### External representation

- Represent IDS with external stakeholders, including policymakers, funders, and the media, to ensure global impact.
- Maintain and enhance existing collaborations as well as inclusive and equitable partnerships with global partners.
- Develop strong relations with alumni as part of the global IDS community.
- Be prepared to challenge commonly accepted orthodoxies and prevailing attitudes.

## Person specification

IDS encourages applications from leaders drawn from a wide range of relevant backgrounds, particularly welcoming applicants from the global South. Candidates must be of exceptional intellectual calibre with excellent people skills, and share IDS values, so that they can lead IDS with a clear vision and purpose. Applications are welcome from candidates wishing to remain research active whilst recognising that this is predominantly a leadership role.

## Skills, knowledge, and experience

- The academic and intellectual credibility to command respect and inspire staff from different disciplines, students, and external stakeholders.
- A successful track record of leadership in a multidimensional, diverse organisation, with the ability to unite people behind a compelling vision.
- Experience of working in the global South and establishing strong working relationships with partners across the globe on an equal basis.
- A clear understanding of, and commitment to, teaching and pedagogy.
- Experience of, and a commitment to, working in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner.
- An excellent understanding of the changing UK, global, and geopolitical environment and the implications and opportunities for IDS.
- Experience of initiating and implementing change when needed.
- People management experience, with the ability to create a supportive, transparent, participatory, and accountable working culture, enabling people to deliver agreed goals.
- A track record of fundraising and identifying new opportunities for income generation.
- The ability and standing to promote the Institute globally with confidence and authority.
- An understanding of the importance of emerging new technologies and their implications for the Institute's work.
- The ability to appreciate and contribute to the wide range of research interests in the Institute.
- Excellent networking skills with links to relevant national and international networks.
- Exceptional communication skills.

## Personal qualities and values

- Personal integrity and high ethical standards.
- A commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Awareness and understanding of important trends, discourses, debates, and controversies in development.
- The ability to listen and have strong empathy with all members of the Institute.
- The ability to demonstrate good judgment and sound decision-making skills in line with the IDS values.
- The ability to develop innovative solutions to organisational problems.
- A commitment to the empowerment of people living in poverty or with injustice.
- An insight into the issues and causes of poverty, inequality, injustice, and environmental concerns.
- The ability to foster open and effective communications.



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## The location

IDS is based on the campus of the University of Sussex, just a few miles outside of Brighton.

Brighton is a vibrant and diverse city located on the south coast of England with a unique blend of culture, history, and seaside charm. Brighton is a city known for its open-mindedness, creativity, and community spirit. It offers a diverse range of experiences and opportunities for its residents, making it an appealing place to live.

Throughout May, the city hosts England's biggest arts festival. Brighton Festival features theatre, music, art, and visual media by leading names from around the world. All year round, there are plays, art exhibitions, gigs, and events at many of the theatres, pubs, museums, and galleries in the city.

Brighton, which has a population of around 280,000, benefits from receiving more sunshine per annum and a warmer climate than most of the UK.

Our office is on the doorstep of the beautiful South Downs National Park, with plenty of potential for outdoor pursuits. It is also within walking distance of the Amex Stadium, home to Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club.

IDS is only an hour away from Central London by train and 30 minutes from London Gatwick, one of the UK's major international airports.







## Appointment process

To apply, please submit a CV and covering letter, detailing how you fulfil the role description and personal specification to Perrett Laver at:

<https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/3818/director/> quoting reference **6790**. **The deadline for applications is 9am GMT Monday 20th November.**

The role will be based in Sussex and the salary is competitive with the market rate and negotiable depending on experience and skills.

The post is offered for an initial period of five years.

IDS is committed to eliminating discrimination, and to embedding and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, in our work and in all our activities. We welcome applications from all sections of the community, irrespective of background, belief or identity and particularly encourage applications from groups which are underrepresented at IDS.

### Accessibility statement

For any advice on submitting your application or for an initial conversation in confidence, please contact George Hourmouzios: [George.Hourmouzios@perrettlaver.com](mailto:George.Hourmouzios@perrettlaver.com)

Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact Mandy Wedgwood: [mandy.wedgwood@perrettlaver.com](mailto:mandy.wedgwood@perrettlaver.com)

If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via [accessibility@perrettlaver.com](mailto:accessibility@perrettlaver.com)

### Perrett Laver GDPR

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, as defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR 2018). Our legal basis for much of our data processing activity is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website: <http://www.perrettlaver.com/information/privacy-policy/>



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