



ZSL London Zoo

International scientific, conservation and educational charity

ZSL (Zoological Society of London) is an international conservation charity working to create a world where wildlife thrives. From investigating the health threats facing animals to helping people and wildlife live alongside each other, ZSL is committed to bringing wildlife back from the brink of extinction. Established in 1826, ZSL's work expands across 50 countries and has HRH The Queen and HRH The Prince of Wales as Patron and Vice Patron respectively. Their work is realised through ground-breaking science, field conservation around the world and engaging millions of

people through its two zoos - ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo. Employing over 250 people and with 2.6 million people visiting ZSL's zoos each year, the organisation is investing heavily in its infrastructure and world-class research projects as part of its aim to deliver truly innovative, educational and inspiring conservation programmes worldwide.

The Employer's perspective

Aaron Thomas, Recruitment Manager

The brief

Following a restructure of the fundraising team, we had a member of the team take a secondment elsewhere within the organisation. This created an opportunity for a new person to come onboard. Rather than hire someone on a like for like basis, we modified the remit of the person we needed in line with the requirements of the newly restructured team.

As a non-profit organisation, ZSL's fundraising team play a vital role in generating the funds it needs to continue the conservation work it undertakes, both at home and around the world. As such, the role of Fundraising Executive is an important one.

While we may be a high-profile organisation, we're not immune to the challenges faced by other charities when it comes to recruiting talented fundraisers. Demand is very much outstripping supply, so we needed to be specific in what we required in our new hire.

It was important that the successful candidate had proven experience in helping to raise funds from high-value donors, along with the ability to manage and develop effective relationships with those individuals who could best advance ZSL's ability to achieve its mission objectives.

They also needed to have a genuine interest in and general knowledge of animal conservation. The role offers a great opportunity to play a key role in building the charity's portfolio of major donors and supporters.

The approach

Good fundraisers are hard to find and when they present themselves, the recruitment experience needs to be just right and speed needs to be of the essence – great talent won't hang around too long. The other challenge is having the right support to enable us to find and attract that talent in the first place.

There is a plethora of recruitment firms out there and choosing the right one to partner with can be something of a minefield. Luckily the task was made all the easier when one of the team suggested contacting Allen Associates having worked alongside them in a previous role.

The first thing we did was to provide a detailed brief of the role with the team at Allen Associates, in which we outlined the specific requirements of the role. They not only understood what we needed in our ideal candidate, they asked a number of probing questions that would enable them to effectively 'sell' ZSL as an employer of choice to the very people we were looking to attract.

By taking the time to get to know us, coupled with their extensive network and database of candidates, we felt confident that Allen Associates would be best-placed to support our recruitment needs.

The process was simple yet thorough and we were kept up to date regularly with how Allen Associates' search was progressing. With regards to candidates sent, I was given a variety to choose from – all of whom had the required skill-set for the role, which is always a positive experience.

The outcome

The only way to guarantee getting the right person for the right role is by being absolutely clear on the skills and experiences ideally sought, as well as the personality fit of the individual too. This is often easier said than done, which is why it is important to work with partners that 'get' this and have the means and wherewithal to deliver.

Kayleigh's background and prior experience very much matched what we were looking for. With over five years' fundraising experience under her belt, many of which were spent operating as a sole fundraiser for a leading charity in Oxford, Kayleigh very much stood out for us. In addition to demonstrating a clear understanding of the sector itself, her experience and approach to her work made her a good fit for us.

We felt we could benefit from Kayleigh's solid experience that she had gained at organisations that are similar to ZSL, in addition to the fact she had been involved in some interesting projects. This has certainly proven to be the case so far as Kayleigh has successfully integrated with the wider fundraising team.

The Candidate's perspective

Kayleigh McDougall, Fundraising Executive

The brief

For five of the last six years, I have immersed myself in the charity sector with my most recent position working for one of the region's leading charitable organisations. While I very much enjoyed each role, I was also keen to move forward in my career and so I registered my details with Allen Associates.

They took the time to understand what I was looking for in my next role and when the vacancy at ZSL became available they contacted me to discuss it in more detail.

The approach

Initially Allen Associates contacted me on the phone and then emailed over a more specific job spec for me to consider. I was instantly drawn to the role due to knowing of ZSL and their work. I was keen to work for a bigger, more far-reaching charitable organisation, having spent a lot of time working for a leading local charity.

The opportunities that working for such an established national and international brand would bring were a big draw for me. In addition to that, knowing that the department had been through recent change led me to believe that they would be looking for someone who could be innovative and contribute to the new structure of the team, something I was keen to do.

The outcome

Allen Associates were incredibly supportive throughout the process, keeping in regular contact leading up to the interview, helping me prepare effectively and offering advice where appropriate.

Initially I was unable to attend the proposed interview date, but Allen Associates immediately went to work to arrange an alternative date with ZSL, thankfully ensuring that I was able to continue with the application process. Any questions I had were answered promptly, and they were quick to contact me after the interview to get my feedback and see how I was feeling.

The interview was originally proposed as a two-stage process, but this was then amended to both stages occurring on the same date. I have used recruitment agencies in the past, but have almost exclusively been placed in temporary roles.

I was extremely pleased with my experience of working with Allen Associates and will be recommending them to friends in both Oxford and London! They were supportive, well-organised and went the extra mile to guide me through the process.

For more details about how Allen Associates could help your organisation recruit, please contact our **London team** on **0203 800 1920** or visit www.allen-associates.co.uk