

Recruitment Pack

Information for candidates



Autism Employment Lead (Project Manager)

April 2024

About Us

When I joined the Autism Centre of Excellence at Cambridge (ACE), I went through the same thought process that anyone applying for a new role goes through, and the one that you will be going through right now. I asked myself a series of questions, about my values and ambitions and how they aligned with the charity and role I was applying to. I spoke to family and friends and thought about the future. I hope that this recruitment pack helps you answer those questions.

As Chief Executive at ACE it's important to me that anyone interested in a role at ACE shares our ambition – to remove the barriers and stigma that autistic face every single day of their lives. Our small but passionate and driven charity exists to make a big difference, through funding and commissioning world-leading research, delivering projects which directly impact the lives of autistic people, and campaigning to achieve change. As a small team every person in our charity can make a real and unique contribution. We value the different perspectives that employing people of all neurotypes brings and believe in making work work to get the best out of everyone and give them a great experience of being part of ACE. We work hard but we do it because we know the scale of challenge that autistic people and their families face requires it.

We have big plans and need people to join us who will be inspired and inspirational, full of energy and ideas, who will enrich our team and our efforts to make a big difference for autistic people.

I hope like me you find the answers to your questions, that you find out work and mission motivating and that we are a good match for one another. We look forward to your application.



Tom Purser
Chief Executive
Autism Centre of Excellence

Job Description

Job Title: Autism Employment Lead (Project Manager)

Salary: up to £50,000 FTE, dependent on skills and experience.

The role is permanent and full-time. However, we will consider part-time applications.

Location: Hybrid, available to work in Cambridge a minimum of two days a week.

Reporting to: Director of Workstreams

Closing date: 5pm on Friday 26 April 2024.

Overall purpose of the role

This new team member will lead our employment work, which aims to create 10,000 jobs for autistic people over the next ten year. Over the last twelve months we have undertaken a significant piece of practical research, investigating how organisations employ autistic people, or provide support to autistic people into employment. We have focused particularly on those autistic people who do not fit a stereotypical autistic graduate profile, and perhaps have further support needs, for example due to learning disabilities, additional diagnoses or disabilities.

Tackling the high unemployment rate among autistic people is one of our main priorities. We know that there are already lots of charities and projects that work with large companies to offer internships and jobs to autistic graduates in certain industries. However, these often don't support other groups of autistic people, such as those with additional disabilities, fewer formal qualifications, complex care needs, or those from marginalised groups.



**Just 30% of
autistic people
are in
employment**

We want all autistic people to be able to find the right role for them

We have chosen to look at the problem from a different angle. There are many small, local organisations that offer help to these under-supported groups. Many directly employ autistic people and/or provide training, work experience and other support to help people on the route to employment.

Most employment projects focus on graduates

There are already lots of projects that work with large companies to offer internships and jobs to autistic graduates. However, these often don't support other groups of autistic people, such as those with additional disabilities, fewer formal qualifications, complex care needs, or those from marginalised groups.

We want to help other, under-supported groups by working with smaller, local organisations

We have chosen a different approach. There are many *small, local organisations* offering help to these under-supported groups. Many directly employ autistic people and/or provide training, work experience and other support to help people on the route to employment.

We've identified over 200 of these organisations, already doing fabulous work. These include cafes, restaurants, charity shops, farms, a chocolate factory, a brewing company, art studios, recycling units and more. These organisations often struggle to stay afloat in this challenging financial climate. Many are run by people who are passionate about the issue but who may not have the knowledge or network needed to run and grow a business.

Given that there are hundreds of these organisations across the UK, helping each one create just a few extra jobs or training opportunities could make a significant impact on employment rates for autistic people.

We are creating a network to support these organisations

We want to help these organisations thrive, so they can provide employment opportunities to many more autistic people. The network will be a free online platform where these organisations can connect with each other. As the network develops, we will be able to offer a range of additional opportunities, such as:

- Hosting regular in-person and online meetings for members to access webinars and share their good ideas and advice with each other.
- Supporting members to build relationships with larger employers that their autistic employees could work towards employment with.
- Helping member organisations to identify and apply to potential funders.
- Providing communications support and advice for members to help them publicise their work and become more attractive to job-seekers, funders and the public.

It is important to say that while we believe this network can make a real difference, it won't be enough on its own to make the significant change we want to see. We have several other projects in development that the Employment Lead will take ownership of.

**We want your recruitment experience to be positive.
Please contact us to request any adjustments you need for the
application or interview process.**

Main duties and responsibilities

- Implement the plan as has been specified and agreed by our Board.
- Convene and run a network of employers and members of the autism community to share and discuss good practice.
- Undertake project management across the workstream, managing and monitoring activities and outcomes.
- Identify need, find options, evaluate, enlist and manage service and contract providers; services that are introduced to the network (recruitment and HR advice, financial advice, property advice, franchising advice, pooled procurement).
- Identify funding opportunities, coordinate funding applications to secure financial backing for the services to be offered.
- Build engagement with autistic people into all aspects of the workstream.
- Support the leadership team to develop plans for improving employment for autistic people in the UK and worldwide.
- Build and maintain effective collaborative relationships with a range of partner organisations; and large employers.
- Line-manage any future staff employed in this workstream/ project.
- Create and present progress reports as required by the leadership team and board of Trustees.
- Develop and maintain an evaluation system for the whole project.
- Support the Autism Centre of Excellence to manage recruitment and retention in line with best practice.
- Sensitively manage the challenges of organisations holding themselves to account in discharging their responsibilities around employment of autistic people.
- Contribute to other team activities in line with the post-holder's skills and commensurate with the grade, such as arranging meetings, taking notes, organising and hosting focus groups.

Selection process

We will select applicants for interview based on who best demonstrate the person specification, and notify them by **5pm on Wednesday 1 May 2024**.

First interviews will be held on **Thursday 9** and **Friday 10 May 2024**. These will be via Microsoft Teams with Direct of Workstreams, Tracey Pearson, Workstream Lead, Ian Iceton, and Project Assistant, Hannah Mclinden.

Second interviews will take place in-person in Cambridge, with Direct of Workstreams, Tracey Pearson and CEO Tom Purser, on **Wednesday 15** and **Thursday 16 May 2024**.

Interview questions and tasks will be provided in advance.

Personal Specification

Essential

Desirable

Qualifications

While there are no specific essential qualifications, the successful candidate will need to demonstrate that they are appropriately qualified for the role.

Project management qualifications or equivalent experience of managing large projects.

University degree.

Experience

Managing medium and large-scale projects with multiple stakeholders.

Experience of working autonomously to achieve specified goals within a time limit.

Experience of line managing or supervising staff

Managing contracts of service providers. Knowledge of and/or personal interest in autism.

Experience of interacting positively with autistic people and/or other neurodivergent people.

Some knowledge of small business development and growth.

Knowledge or awareness of building and running business networks and hubs.

Some knowledge or experience of business franchising.

Knowledge of current issues relating to autism and community preferences.

Experience of organising and hosting meetings, including virtual meetings.

Experience of remote working.

Skills

Ability to focus on a complex task for a long period of time, working systematically to ensure a high-quality outcome.

Ability to contribute to team discussions and work collaboratively with colleagues in person or via video calls and messaging.

High level of confidentiality and discretion.

A good working knowledge of MS Office 365 and Teams/Zoom.

Excellent organisational skills with an ability to prioritise workload, and plan ahead.

Personal Attributes / Abilities

A strong work ethic.

Pride in a job well done.

“I wanted to work somewhere that shared my values and was as dedicated as I am to making a difference in the lives of autistic people. I’ve found that at ACE, that mission is deeply embedded in all the work we do and is a passion shared across the team.”

Hannah, Autism Project Assistant



**AUTISM CENTRE
OF EXCELLENCE
AT CAMBRIDGE**



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