Absolute Support
Leading Light
We care.
Charity No. 1183041

Chief Executive Officer

Appointment Brief
September 2026

Nick Shanks
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About us

Absolute Support Leading Light (ASLL) is a small local charity based in Richmond-upon-Thames supporting people with learning disabilities and autism. Founded in 2006 and registered as a charity in 2019, Absolute Support has built a solid reputation as a caring provider with a warm and supportive home setting for the people we support. Through our two community-based, supported living homes and via a small outreach service, we work to enable 11 young adults to live happy and meaningful lives.

Our mission is to support adults with learning disabilities and autism in Richmond and the surrounding areas to live independently, developing the capacity and skills to identify and meet their own needs, and to participate more fully in society. Our vision is simple: living life, moving forward, having fun.

ASLL works in close partnership with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and is currently strengthening its infrastructure as it moves through CQC registration for its regulated services.

Job description

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Reporting to: Chair and Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Service Manager and any other staff reporting directly to the CEO

Location: Office-based at ASLL's Teddington office, with regular travel to client sites

Salary: £60,000 FTE (£36,000 based on 24 hours per week)

Main Purpose

To set and lead the strategic direction of ASLL, working closely with the Board of Trustees and the Service Manager to sustain and grow safe, high-quality, person-centred supported living and outreach services. To lead ASLL's CQC registration application and, once approved, to act as CQC Nominated Individual, taking senior-level responsibility for regulatory compliance and quality assurance on behalf of the Board, working closely with the Service Manager who will hold day-to-day responsibility for ASLL's regulated activity as Registered Manager. To provide the Board with the information, advice and judgement it needs to fulfil its governance responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities

- Strategic leadership & governance: Lead strategic direction and annual business planning; support the Board through clear, regular reporting (at least fortnightly) and sound judgement; in consultation with the Chair, prepare the Board's meeting calendar and advise on agenda items, board composition and organisational structure.

- CQC registration: Lead ASLL's application for CQC registration, working with the Board and Service Manager to prepare the evidence and systems required for approval.

- Regulatory compliance, quality & safeguarding: Act as CQC Nominated Individual once registration is approved, working with the Service Manager as Registered Manager to oversee regulated activity; oversee compliance with the Charity Commission, Fundraising Regulator, Companies House, ICO and CQC; own the quality assurance and complaints process; ensure robust governance, risk management and incident-learning systems; manage complex safeguarding issues at service and organisational level, including compliance with DoLS and anticipated Liberty Protection Safeguards reforms.

- People & culture leadership: Mentor and coordinate direct reports, identifying skill gaps and training needs; lead staff recruitment and build a culture of support, engagement and wellbeing; oversee pay and working-hours systems and ensure regular staff supervision; keep staff contracts and the Handbook current with legislation.

- Service delivery & client outcomes: Oversee clients' Service Level Agreements and correct invoicing; ensure regular client assessment with targets set and reviewed and maintain up-to-date knowledge of issues affecting people with learning disabilities and autism.

- Financial sustainability & growth: Provide financial oversight (including payroll), working with the Treasurer on budgeting; identify funders and support the Board in preparing funding bids; identify opportunities for sustainable growth and service improvement; oversee KPIs.

- External relations & representation: Act as ASLL's lead spokesperson; build and maintain constructive relationships with the commissioner, families, regulators and partner organisations.

- Policy & continuous improvement: Formulate and review policies for Board approval; lead the management team in implementing strategies aligned with ASLL's mission; protect ASLL's reputation through consistently high standards of delivery.

Person specification

Experience

- **Essential:** Strong financial capability and budget management experience; senior leadership/management experience in a charity, care or closely comparable regulated organisation; managing complex safeguarding at service and organisational level; writing business plans and funding bids; managing staff working remotely or in non-office settings.
- **Essential:** Holds, or is immediately eligible for registration with CQC as, Nominated Individual for ASLL's regulated activity.
- **Desirable:** Direct experience within learning disability, autism and/or mental health services; managing a CQC registration application; payroll processing; digital systems implementation.

Skills & Personal Qualities

- **Essential:** An unwavering commitment to ASLL's vision, mission and values, and the ability to relate to and empathise with people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- **Essential:** Integrity and discretion; genuine commitment to equality and challenging bias; self-aware, accountable, and committed to a positive, can-do approach with healthy boundaries.
- **Essential:** Strong analytical, financial and communication skills; ability to identify, manage and mitigate risk; ability to motivate and support staff through change; resilient under pressure with strong prioritisation and IT skills (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, CRM, MS Teams).
- **Desirable:** Full UK driving licence, given regular travel between sites.

Qualifications & Knowledge

- **Essential:** Educated to degree level or equivalent experience; understanding of national and local health and social care agendas, CQC fundamental standards, and current safeguarding legislation including DoLS and anticipated Liberty Protection Safeguards reforms.
- **Desirable**: Relevant health and social care leadership/management qualification (e.g. Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care); awareness of alternative funding/commissioning models such as Individual Service Funds, PBS Practitioner trained.

CQC Nominated Individual: fit and proper person

ASLL is currently preparing its application for CQC registration. Once approved, ASLL's intended staffing structure has the CEO acting as Nominated Individual, providing senior-level supervision of the regulated activity on behalf of the provider, while the Service Manager acts as Registered Manager, with direct day-to-day responsibility for managing the regulated activity. CQC permits the same person to hold both roles in a small organisation but advises against this wherever possible; ASLL's intended structure follows CQC's preferred separation. The post-holder must satisfy CQC's fit and proper person requirements as Nominated Individual, including Regulation 5 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: demonstrating good character and the qualifications, competence, skills and experience necessary to supervise ASLL's regulated activity. Leading the registration application, and subsequent formal appointment as Nominated Individual, will be a key early priority for the role, subject to CQC approval.

Terms of appointment

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Reporting to: Chair and Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Service Manager and any other staff reporting directly to the CEO

Location: Office-based at ASLL's Teddington office, with regular travel to client sites

Salary: £60,000 FTE (£36,000 based on 24 hours per week)

Hours: 24 hours (3 days per week)

Contract: Permanent, subject to probation, three months' contractual notice period on both sides

DBS / regulatory: Enhanced DBS (Adult's workforce); CQC Nominated Individual (designate) for ASLL's regulated activity, pending CQC registration

How to apply

If you would like to apply, please send the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A Supporting Statement (no more than 2 x A4 pages) outlining why you are interested in becoming Chief Executive Officer and relevant experience for the role.

Please submit your completed application to nick.shanks@harrishill.co.uk by **9am Monday 5 October 2026**

Dates for your diary

Closing date for applications: 9am Monday 5 October

First interviews: w/c 19 October

Second interviews: w/c 26 October

Please could you also let us know if you will require any special provision should you be called forward for interview.

Please state in your application if you have any commitments during the interview period that may coincide with these dates.

Advertisement

Absolute Support Leading Light (ASLL) is looking for an inspiring, values-led Chief Executive to lead the charity through its next stage of development. This is a significant opportunity for an experienced leader to work closely with the Board of Trustees, senior leadership team, staff, commissioners, families and the people we support to sustain and grow high-quality outreach and supported living services for people with learning disabilities and autism.

ASLL is a small local charity based in Richmond-upon-Thames supporting people with learning disabilities and autism. Founded in 2006 and registered as a charity in 2019, Absolute Support has built a solid reputation as a caring provider with a warm and supportive home setting for the people we support. Through our two community-based, supported living homes and via a small outreach service, we work to enable 11 young adults to live happy and meaningful lives.

You will lead a skilled and committed staff team within a welcoming and collaborative culture whilst being supported by the active and experienced board of trustees. The successful candidate will provide strategic direction, strengthen governance and quality assurance, oversee compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, and act as the organisation's lead spokesperson.

Job title: Chief Executive Officer.

Location: Office-based at ASLL's Teddington office, with regular travel to the locally based client sites.

Working hours: 24 hours (3 days per week).

Salary: £60,000 FTE (£36,000 based on 24 hours per week).

Regulatory role: CQC Nominated Individual (designate) for ASLL's regulated activity, pending CQC registration.

How to apply:

Please review the Recruitment Pack for further information about ASLL, the CEO position and for details on how to apply.

Closing date for applications: 9am Monday 5 October 2026

Both ASLL and Harris Hill operate an equal opportunity policy and commit to treating all of our candidates and jobseekers fairly. We welcome and encourage applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.