



## Interim director of external affairs (maternity cover)

**Job title:** Director of external affairs

**Reporting to:** Chief executive officer

**Salary:** £55,692.00

**Term:** May 2024-May 2025

**Location:** Central London, with flexible working available

### About the role

The Director of external affairs is a member of the senior management team responsible for building the relationships that ensure Autistica creates breakthroughs for autistic people over the next decade. You will fit in well at Autistica if you are passionate about enabling high performance and you value working with a team who think in diverse ways. You will support and develop the strategy and management of external relationships, communications, campaigns, and policy work.

### Key responsibilities

This is role that will sit at the heart of our relationships within the organisation. You will develop our strategies and operational plans for engaging with audiences that are critical to the Autistica mission, including: autistic people and their families, civil servants and politicians, donors, and the press. Here are some key responsibilities:

#### *External Relationships, communications, and policy*

- Ensure autism and autism research remain policy priorities, with Autistica continuing to have strong relationships with Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England.
- Ensure we build constructive collaborations and relationships with organisations working in related areas to Autistica.
- Develop relationships with key members of parliament ahead of the election, and post-election (both independently and in collaboration with other autism charities)
- Work with autistic people and families to ensure they help guide our work and priorities and are appropriately represented in our work.
- Act as a credible external ambassador for Autistica across all of Autistica's key audiences.
- Help to ensure that relationship management systems are seamless across the organisation.
- Ensure internal communications are effective – enabling the team, board, and external stakeholders to align with full clarity on the organisation's direction.
- Work with the fundraising team to ensure they have the tools to grow our income and market our work to a range of audiences.
- Work with the research team to deliver on our goal and partnership projects, including the marketing and development of the Neurodiversity Employers Index
- Run engaging campaigns that bring in new audiences and maximise our pro-bono creative support and other agency and influencer contacts
- Lead the way in championing our 2030 goals, and autism research to the public, press, and media.

#### *Leadership, management, and operations*

- Oversee, implement, and effectively deliver operational plans, a quarterly reporting cycle, monthly reporting of financial figures, and production of our annual report.



- You will be an effective visible leader and manager, passionately championing the charity's work and building confidence in our strategy and plans.
- You will champion our values and mission with enthusiasm and consistency
- Ensure organisation measures of success are embedded within team and for planning this year, and subsequent years.
- Help drive organisational change including key organisation-wide priorities.
- Ensure our focus on external affairs aligned with organisational strategic priorities.

## Who are we looking for?

### *Desirable experience*

- Experience of being at least “head of department” in an organisation overseeing planning, monitoring, management of resources within department and across an organisation. Ideally with a track record of delivering impact through communications and/or policy that has led to change for beneficiaries, income growth, and stronger relationships with key audiences.
- Enjoys and has a track record of overseeing change including system and process improvements.
- Experience of managing, leading or overseeing communications.
- Experience of running or least working with a policy team policy development in areas such as policy development and public affairs.
- Experience of strategically managing a range of relationships and communicating to a range of different audiences, including acting as an external ambassador to the charity.

### *Skills*

- Trustworthy and competent to others with the ability to oversee communications and policy.
- Able to motivate, inspire, empathise, with work with, and lead a neurodiverse team and enable a high-performance culture.
- Able to work across several areas of priority while maintaining exceptional attention to detail.
- Able to think strategically and innovatively, linking “why we exist” to “what we do” and “how we do it” in the context of relationships.
- Able to listen and think critically about a range of different perspectives.

### *Personal attributes*

- Comfortable with nuance and uncertainty, with the motivation and resilience to tackle a fascinating but complex and contentious area of focus (autism and autism research).
- Constructively identifies opportunities to make improve which will enable our mission.
- Able to create and follow long-term strategic plans, but also able to respond with agility, pace, and flexibility to emerging opportunities on a day to day basis.
- Highly committed to the Autistica mission, values, and activities.



## What success looks like in this role

- We will have clear strategies and plans for managing relationships with external audiences, this includes communications and policy.
- Politicians and civil servants will value research highly, will work with us to deliver the change required to achieve our goals, and are highly committed to our priorities and recommendations.
- Autistic people and families will guide, understand, and value our work.
- The media and other relevant audiences will see us as an important, visionary and thoughtful contributor to discussions around autism.
- Our fundraising and research team have the tools to raise vital funds and processes for building strong relationships and delivering on our 2030 Goals

We welcome applications from everyone, applicants with lived experience, those who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ), people with a disability, or those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are actively encouraged to apply.

## About Autistica

Autistica is the UK's leading autism research and campaigning charity. Our mission is to create breakthroughs which enable autistic people to live happier, healthier lives. We make that happen by funding research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference. We have six ambitious and visionary 2030 goals which call for radical improvement to the lives of autistic people over the next decade:

### Our Goals

By 2030:

- all autistic people will have proven **support from day one** .
- the **employment rate** for autistic people will double
- autistic people will have proven treatments for **anxiety**
- **public spaces** will be more accessible for neurodivergent people
- every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored **health check**
- **attitudes** to autistic people will change

### Our values

We embrace diverse expertise

- Our team are **diverse** and we support them to be the best they can be.
- We collaborate as a team and with a wide range of stakeholders, always including autistic people
- We believe that diversity of thought and experience is the only way we can make real and lasting change

We think differently to find solutions



- We speak up when evidence suggests a need
- We find solutions, however big or complex the problem
- We influence change because we're trusted

We act with urgency

- Research can take time, but that doesn't stop us from taking action now
- We work hard, but efficiently
- We're not afraid of taking risks and failure, we learn from it and move on quickly
- We're driven by a shared aim of improving the world for autistic people

## What we offer

**Flexibility:** We encourage flexible working arrangements and working patterns can be agreed with your manager to suit both parties. We want to work with you to get the best out of you in your role.

**Annual Leave:** 28 days annual leave a year, exclusive of bank holidays. The office is closed for three days between Christmas and New Year. For every two years of service, you will gain one additional day of annual leave to a maximum of three additional days.

**Death in Service:** Should you die while employed by the charity, Autistica will pay your named dependents six months of your salary.

**Season Ticket Loans:** You can apply for an interest free season ticket loan of up to £4,000 to cover your commuting costs, repaid monthly from your salary.

**Pensions:** Autistica has an auto-enrolment company pension scheme for all employees. Autistica contributes 3%, with employees contributing a minimum of 5% after three months' employment.

**Study and Volunteering:** As well as occasional all-staff training, you will have a personal training budget of £300 per year.

**Parental Leave:** After three months of employment on a permanent contract, new mothers will receive two months' full pay, two months' half pay then Statutory Maternity Benefit as normal. After three months of employment on a permanent contract, new fathers will receive two weeks' fully paid paternity leave after the birth of their child. Staff who leave the charity within 18 months of the birth of their child will be required to pay back 50% of any maternity or paternity pay received over and above the statutory maternity allowance.

**Health and wellbeing:** All employees are eligible for a free eye test annually and if spectacles are required for work, Autistica will contribute towards the cost.

## How to apply

Submit a one-page statement outlining your suitability for the role and a copy of your CV to [rebecca.sterry@autistica.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.sterry@autistica.org.uk) by 17:00 on Wed 27 March.

Interviews will be held on Thurs 4 April.

To discuss the role in more detail, email Rebecca to arrange a call.