

Participation Manager

Job Description and Person Specification

Job title	Participation Manager
Hours	35 hours per week. We are opening to discussing flexible arrangements – please highlight any requests when applying.
Salary	Between £35,000 - £43,750. Placement within the band will depend on skills and experience, with the upper end reflecting significant, directly relevant expertise.
Length of contract	Permanent
Location	Hybrid work between home and our Vauxhall office. Please read more about our approach to hybrid working in the relevant section below.
Reports to	Director of Evidence and Improvement

National Voices

Making what matters to people matter in health and care

National Voices is the leading coalition of health and social care charities in England. We have more than 200 members covering a diverse range of health conditions and communities, connecting us with the experiences of millions of people. We work together to strengthen the voice of people: patients, service users, carers, their families, and the voluntary organisations that work for them.

Our Vision: People shaping their health and care.

Our Mission: We advocate for more inclusive and person centred health and care, shaped by the people who use and need it the most.

We do this by:

- Understanding and advocating for what matters to people especially those living with health conditions and groups who experience inequalities.
- Finding common cause across communities and conditions by working with member charities and those they support.
- Connecting and convening charities, decision makers and citizens to work together to change health and care for good.

The Role

At National Voices, our aim is to make what matters to people matter in health and care. Too often, we see decisions made about the design of health and care services which don't consider the people who use and need those services – especially those with long term conditions and from groups experiencing inequality. While the intentions of decision makers are usually good, they can unwittingly develop services which are difficult to access, stressful to experience and which don't enable people to live life to its full potential.

We believe that if health and care leaders were better supported to meaningfully involve people living with health conditions, disability, inequality and their carers in decisions about how services are delivered then our NHS and social care services would be more equitable, and person centred.

At National Voices, we believe that this can best be achieved by connecting health and care leaders in health and care to key groups including:

- **Leaders within the patient participation movement**, who can support and advise health and care leaders on how to share power with people and communities using coaching and quality improvement techniques, and by acting as a critical friend.
- **Leaders from voluntary sector organisations and community groups**, who can bring insight into the needs, experiences and priorities of the communities they serve. They can identify opportunities to improve how services are designed and delivered, and help connect decision-makers with communities whose voices are often underrepresented.
- **People with lived experience of inequality, particular conditions or services**, who bring unique expertise based on their direct experience of care. They can provide timely insight into the impact of policies and services, helping decision-makers stay tuned to current needs, experiences and priorities, rather than relying on historical evidence or assumptions.

We are looking for a Participation Manager who can manage our **lived experience programme**, our **membership scheme** and our **partnership scheme**. This role will ensure that where there are opportunities for people and communities to shape health and care, National Voices has the right relationships, processes and support systems in place to connect decision makers with our Lived Experience Partners, members and people with lived experience.

The Participation Manager will:

- Lead National Voices' Lived Experience Partner programme by strengthening engagement and participation, investing in members' knowledge, skills and confidence, and ensuring lived experience insights shape our work.
- Lead National Voices' membership scheme by driving engagement, retention and inclusion, strengthening member relationships, embedding member insights across the organisation, and overseeing satisfaction, records and knowledge management.

- Lead National Voices' scheme by managing partner engagement, retention and recruitment, overseeing delivery of the partnership offer, and ensuring partners receive high-quality advice, insight, connections and access to relevant people and communities.
- Develop and deliver funded projects, supporting income generation and securing resources to advance National Voices' strategic priorities.

The Participation Manager will work in collaboration with:

- Policy and communications colleagues who have worked hard to ensure when we capture insights from people and communities, we have established relationships and ways of communicating with key players in health and care so that insights collected lead to impact.
- Research and insight colleagues who have expertise around qualitative research methods and inclusive engagement, who regularly deliver high quality qualitative research on a range of topics and on a range of topics – often focussed on surfacing the experiences of those least well served by health and care services.
- Colleagues across the organisation who lead and contribute to member and partner benefits, including policy forums, networking opportunities, events and other engagement activities.

The Participation Manager will play a central role in ensuring National Voices' lives its values around meaningful participation so that in both our internal and external work people and communities are engaged in a timely and inclusive way, using methods that ensure their input is heard and acted upon, and their knowledge, priorities, and contributions are recognised and fairly valued.

Responsibilities

Lead our Lived Experience Partner programme

National Voices' Lived Experience Partners are a group of 15 people who have significant experience of navigating the health and care system, expertise in meaningful participation and who have received training and support to enable constructive and strategic input into improving health and care. The majority of Lived Experience Partners have also accessed learning around coaching and are regularly matched into coaching relationships with senior leaders in health and care. Your role will be to:

- Deliver meetings where our Lived Experience Partners have opportunities for peer learning and opportunities to influence live pieces of work.
- Gather insights from our Lived Experience Partners on how they are experiencing working with National Voices and how they want to grow.
- Ensure our Lived Experience Partners are supported to grow in their knowledge, skills and confidence to influence decision making – through 1:1 catch ups, training and more.
- Lead our work matching Lived Experience Partners in high quality coaching relationships with senior leaders in health and care, ensuring that coaching duos have the support they need to gain value from the relationship.

- Diversify and grow our network of Lived Experience Partners as needed.

Lead our membership programme

National Voices' members are a group of over 200 not-for-profit organisations who serve a diverse range of communities, including: condition-specific charities - such as Diabetes UK, Allergy UK and Lupus UK; equality charities - such as the Caribbean and African Health Network, Groundswell and National Ugly Mugs; other health, care and community based organisations – such as Compassion in Dying, Pain UK and Patient Information Forum. Our members include some of the biggest and smallest charities in England. They connect us with the experience of millions of people. Your role will be to:

- Direct the activities of our membership working group, taking lead responsibility for member engagement, stewardship, renewals, support and retention.
- Deepen the relationship with our membership, ensuring that we have the structures in place to understand their ambitions, insights, practice and ideas.
- Collaborate with colleagues across the team to ensure our members' insights become more central to everything that we do.
- Diversify and grow our membership.
- Oversee our annual survey on member satisfaction.
- Oversee improvements in records and knowledge management.

Lead our partnership programme

National Voices' Partners are a small group of impactful organisations who want to join National Voices in achieving our mission of making what matters to people matter in health and care, including the Nuffield Trust, the Kings Fund, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and others. Your role will be to:

- Take lead responsibility for engagement, stewardship, renewals, support and retention of organisations in our partnership scheme.
- Oversee the delivery of the partnership offer – co-ordinating requests which come from partners and collaborating with colleagues, members and Lived Experience Partners to ensure partners receive high-quality advice, insight, connections and access to relevant people and communities.

Develop and deliver funded projects

- Identify opportunities for collaboration, partnership and income generation that support our strategic priorities – leading on selected funding bids and supporting others as required.
- Develop ideas into clear, fundable proposals and secured projects. This may include designing and delivering activity such as workshops, coordinating advisory or lived experience groups, undertaking qualitative research, facilitation and engagement work.
- Plan confidently and realistically across lived experience workstreams, taking accountability for delivery, spend, and completion of agreed outcomes.

- Manage projects, programmes and budgets in partnership with colleagues and stakeholders, putting in place effective systems to ensure timely, high-quality delivery and reporting.

General

- Provide line management one Project Officer within the team, quality assuring outputs, holding regular 1-2-1s as well as setting annual objectives and completing appraisals.
- Provide matrix management for other National Voices colleagues as and when required.
- Work in sync with other managers across National Voices, contributing to a joined-up, supportive team culture.
- Deputise for the Director of Evidence and Improvement, or other senior colleagues, when required.
- Follow organisational processes to measure, monitor and communicate the impact of our work
- Support good project, financial and data management

Person Specification

Values, attitudes and behaviours

- Passionate about National Voices' mission and the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience
- Strong commitment to equity, inclusion, and reducing health inequalities
- Proactive, flexible, and responsive, with a willingness to work in complexity
- Comfortable working both collaboratively and independently, taking ownership of delivery
- Calm under pressure and able to manage multiple priorities and tight deadlines without compromising quality
- Confident engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including constructively challenging where appropriate
- Entrepreneurial - able to spot opportunities for growth, collaboration, and impact
- Energised by variety, able to work across diverse themes while identifying connections and opportunities

Skills and abilities

- Strong project and/or programme management skills, with demonstrable experience delivering complex, multi-stakeholder work
- Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to prioritise, plan, manage risk, and maintain high-quality delivery
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to translate complex insight and evidence into clear, accessible outputs
- Confident relationship and stakeholder management skills, including working with partners, subcontractors, and commissioned work
- Excellent facilitation and presentation skills, including delivering workshops and events to diverse audiences

Experience, knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrable experience of leading or delivering participation work with people with lived experience, ideally addressing inequality
- Strong experience of designing and delivering insight generation projects (qualitative and/or quantitative) that have led to real-world impact and improvement
- Experience of working meaningfully with people experiencing inequalities in safe and inclusive ways
- Experience of managing projects, budgets, and multiple stakeholders, working with a high degree of autonomy
- Experience of managing partnerships, funders, or commissioned work, including contributing to income generation
- Experience of facilitating workshops, events, or participatory sessions
- Understanding of the health and care landscape
- Good understanding of the participation landscape, with the ability to act as a credible contributor in the field (desirable)
- Experience of managing or contributing to coalitions or networks of VCSE or membership organisations (desirable)
- Understanding of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) approaches to evidence generation and analysis (desirable)
- Coaching and/or quality improvement qualifications (desirable)
- Lived experience of disability, caring responsibilities and/or inequality (desirable)

Our approach to hybrid working

We recognise the importance of coming together regularly, in-person, as a team, so we can share learnings and spend social time with each other. We also recognise that people need flexibility, and that homeworking enables focused work and can fit well in people's lives.

We ask all staff to take part in pre-arranged team meetings which take place every six weeks in our office space. We also might ask you to meet in-person with members of your team from time to time, or to be available for face-to-face meetings with clients and partners where this enhances the work.

We assume that this would usually not amount to more than one day per fortnight for people who work full time. We are happy to discuss how this sits in your life. This can be agreed by your line manager.

Please note that [our offices](#) are fully wheelchair accessible and that we are committed to making our workplace fully inclusive.

Application guidance

Please submit a CV and cover letter to apply. We are also recruiting a 12 month fixed term Participation Manager role at the same time. If you would like your application to be for both roles, please make this clear when applying.

Applications should be addressed to our Director Evidence and Improvement, Sarah Sweeney, and submitted through CharityJob.

You're welcome to use AI tools to help you prepare your application. However, we encourage you to make sure your application reflects your own voice and experiences. We often see similar AI-generated writing styles, which can make applications less distinctive. As a charity, we're particularly interested in hearing why our mission matters to you and how your values align with ours.

Please specify any access or other requirements of which we need to be aware for the online interview.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Thursday 30th July.

The interviews will take place in early August on Microsoft Teams. Details of an interview task and interview questions will be emailed to you in advance.

We are committed to diversifying our team in order to broaden the insight and experiences we can draw on, and to do our work more credibly. In particular, we would welcome applications from older people, disabled people and people who have experienced socioeconomic inequality. Our offices are fully accessible and we are a Disability Confident and an LGBT+ friendly employer.