People Engagement and Development Partner

Now is an exciting time to Mercy Ships UK. With a growing supporter base, a talented staff team and ambitious targets to reach over the next five years, we are looking for a talented People Engagement and Development Partner to join our team.

Mercy Ships is a faith-based charity, bringing safe surgery to people in Africa who have limited access to healthcare and little or no money to pay for it. For over 40 years, Mercy Ships has visited more than 55 developing nations. We are passionate to serve those in need and to leave a lasting impact for the future by working alongside governments, supporting health systems and delivering training within the countries we visit. Our volunteer crew represent our organisation onboard our two ships through excellence and diligence. Sixteen Mercy Ships offices around the world collaborate on fundraising, recruitment and public relations.

Mercy Ships UK

The UK currently raises circa £9 million a year to support Mercy Ships' operations, benefiting from a diverse base of committed funders and partners. As well as providing financial resources for surgeries, healthcare, education and local partnerships, the UK identifies over 400 professional volunteers with medical, maritime and many other skills to crew the world's largest charitable hospital ships '*Africa Mercy*' and '*Global Mercy*', – bringing immediate relief to thousands of individuals and leaving a sustainable legacy of hope and healing in every nation we visit.

Values

Mercy Ships was founded by Don and Deyon Stephens in 1978, committed Christians with a vision to follow the model of Jesus, who inspires action and guides us to imitate God's heart for those marginalised by poverty and disease. Mercy Ships is a diverse community made of people from all walks of life, practically demonstrating love, integrity and excellence to make a lasting impact. While not all of our staff are practising Christians, they all align with and respect the Christian values that underpin Mercy Ships' work.

Approximately 90% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa lacks access to safe and affordable surgical care. On average, there are only 1.8 beds per 1,000 people, and nearly 40% of healthcare settings lack hygiene infrastructure. The need for Mercy Ships is clear – we strive to provide safe and equitable healthcare for those who need it most.

Shelley Pigott,
Executive Director, Mercy Ships UK

Impact

Since 1978, Mercy Ships has brought hope and healing to more than **2.88 million people** through free, life-changing healthcare and training. Our volunteer professionals have performed over **122,000 surgical procedures** and provided more than **556,900 dental procedures** to those in desperate need. Alongside this, we have trained more than **55,500 local professionals** in their area of expertise, equipping them to go on and impact over **252,000 others** within their own communities.

Our commitment extends beyond the hospital ship—we have completed over **1,110 community development projects**, including the reconstruction of schools, clinics, orphanages, water wells, and agricultural programmes. These initiatives ensure sustainable transformation by strengthening local infrastructure and skills for the future.

Today, we have proudly served across more than **55 of the world's poorest nations,** with two remarkable hospital ships:

- ***The Global Mercy***: the world's largest civilian hospital ship, featuring 6 state-of-the-art operating theatres, 199 patient beds, the capacity for 640 crew, and a gross tonnage of 37,856.
- ***The Africa Mercy***: with 5 fully equipped operating theatres, 85 patient beds, space for 470 crew, and a gross tonnage of 16,572.

Together, these ships represent a unique and powerful force for good, bringing hope, healing, and lasting change to those who need it most.

Our Mission

Mercy Ships follows the 2,000 year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor.

Our Vision

Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to transform individuals and partner with nations.

Our Values

Following the model of Jesus, we seek to:

- Love God
- Love and serve others
- Be people of integrity
- Strive for excellence in all we say and do

Our work

Mariama's story

Mariama is a lively and healthy baby, but a severe facial cleft strained her joyful smile. This facial cleft affected 7-month-old Mariama's lip and nose, making it difficult for her to eat and causing her parents to worry about their child's future.

Since paediatric services capable of treating baby Mariama's condition were not available near the family, local doctors directed her father to Senegal's capital city in hopes of finding help.

It was there that he heard about a hospital ship capable of providing healing for his little girl.

Soon after, Mariama received an operation onboard the *Africa Mercy* that repaired her cleft lip. After surgery, Mariama and her family stayed at the HOPE Centre, where her mother learned how to make nutritional baby formula and learned about the importance of nutrition for her child. Now, Mariama is home with her family, happy and healthy!

History of Mercy Ships

Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 55 countries, providing services valued at more than £1.3 billion.

By improving healthcare delivery in every country visited, Mercy Ships is working to eradicate the diseases of poverty. Mercy Ships follows the model of Jesus by "bringing hope and healing to the forgotten poor", helping people of any faith or none.

Mercy Ships delivers a customised five-year partnership model with every country it is invited to support. Relationships are built with the national government and ministry of health, so that the specific needs of each country are met; we work to strengthen the country's healthcare systems and drive policy change.

The aim is to tackle the root causes of the problems rather than just the consequences.

Mercy Ships UK (a key member of the Mercy Ships global partnership) was founded in 1996. We run the two largest charity hospital ships in the world: the *Global Mercy* and the *Africa Mercy*.

Behaviours

We put beneficiaries first

Our performance impacts lives, so we strive for the very best results.

We are open to challenge

We challenge current norms, ideate, create and develop.

We expect the best

We consistently seek the best in and for others.

Together in everything

We are a relationally-driven team.

Effective interaction

We communicate with clarity and purpose.

Role Description

Main Workbase: 12 Meadway Court, Stevenage SG1 2EF

Hours of Work: Full-time

Contract: Permanent

Line Manager: Executive Director

Salary: £45,000-£52,000 (DOE)

Line Management Responsibility : None

Benefits:

- 25 days annual leave + bank holidays, increasing + 1 day with each year of service, up to 30 days annual leave
- Up to 7% Employer pension contribution
- Access to a personal Learning & Development budget of £1,000 per year (pro rata), supporting professional growth and skills development
- Travel and training loans
- Free parking onsite

Overall focus

Relationships, culture, wellbeing, manager support, team dynamics, Learning and Development, values, engagement

Purpose of the Role

To play a critical role in cultivating a healthy, values-aligned culture within Mercy Ships UK.
By consulting with the Leadership Team and partnering with managers the role will embed strong people practices, engagement, learning and performance frameworks, while working alongside the HR Consultant on governance, policy and complex employment matters.

Key Responsibilities

1. People, Management & Leadership Support (People facing)

- Provide day-to-day people management support to managers and ELT, including performance, absence, well-being, capability, and general employment matters.
- Hold regular check-ins with all managers to provide proactive HR support and identify emerging issues early (such as performance, wellbeing, conflict, morale).
- Support managers with HR processes such as 1-2-1 frameworks, maternity and family leave, exit interviews, disciplinaries, investigations, staff conflict and probation reviews.
- Managing routine employee relations matters and referring complex, high-risk or legally sensitive cases to the HR Consultant in line with agreed governance boundaries.

2. Culture, Values & Behaviours

- Contribute to cross-departmental HR and culture projects, ensuring consistency and good practice.
- Champion organisational values, behaviours and strength-based approaches across all teams,
- Reinforce values during team gatherings, key moments in the year and in alignment with organisational activity.
- Facilitating StrengthsFinder insights, sharing at team meetings, and bringing them into daily practice.
- Support staff in understanding and engaging positively with the organisation's Christian faith identity in an inclusive, respectful way.
- Attending Teams meetings periodically to share cultural messages or insights.
- Working with the Head of Brand and Communications on managing internal communications to the staff team for engagement and culture alignment.

3. Recruitment & Onboarding

- Partner with hiring managers to deliver value-aligned recruitment processes, ensuring an excellent candidate experience and compliance with agreed frameworks.
- Supporting hiring managers with interview experiences.
- Ensuring candidates experience a values-aligned recruitment journey.
- Design, build and maintain a strong, consistent induction process, incorporating global context, organisational mission, faith identity orientation and future aspirations.
- Drop into manager 1-2-1s and conduct onboarding meetings as needed to ensure new staff are settling well.

4. Policy, Frameworks & HR Infrastructure

- Promote consistent application of policies and people frameworks, ensuring managers understand and apply them effectively.
- Design and implement a clear, fair probation process including structured reviews and documentation.
- Review the appraisal process (midyear and end of year), including purpose, questions, documentation, implementation and training for managers.
- Ensure accurate and timely communication of people changes to payroll, maintaining compliance with agreed internal processes.

5. Learning, Development & Talent Growth

- Lead the organisation's learning and development approach, ensuring opportunities are accessible, relevant and aligned with organisational needs.
- Share available courses and development options with staff proactively (without "spoon feeding"), enabling self-driven development journeys.
- Support managers to embed value-based development, strengths-based leadership and personal growth conversations.
- Drop into team meetings occasionally to share updates, values refreshers or development opportunities.

Person Specification

Attribute	Essential	Desirable
Education/ qualification	• Demonstrable literacy and numeracy skills equivalent to GCSE level.	• CIPD Level 5 (or equivalent experience). • Additional relevant qualifications in administration, HR, or customer service.
Proven experience	• Experience in HR generalist or people-focused roles with strong advisory capabilities.	• Experience in the charity or international development sector. • Familiarity with BrightHR or equivalent HR systems. • Experience in values-based or strengths-based development. • Experience delivering culture, wellbeing or change programmes.
Skills and abilities	• Confident supporting managers through a broad range of employment matters. • Strong understanding of UK employment law and charity-sector HR dynamics. • Excellent relationship-building, coaching and communication skills. • Experience designing and implementing people processes (recruitment, onboarding, performance, etc). • Ability to handle sensitive situations with diplomacy, care and confidentiality. • Strong organisational and administrative skills with attention to detail.	
Personal qualities	• Honesty, integrity and a passion to serve others. • An eye for detail • Creative and innovative, with a passion for driving brand awareness. • Self-starter / self-motivated • Calm and professional under pressure • Adaptable and positive approach	• A good awareness and passion for development work within sub-Saharan Africa.

Person Specification

The Postholder:

- This role has an Occupational Requirement for the post holder to be a practicing Christian in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010
- Oversees staff engagement activities and makes recommendations to the Executive Team.
- Provides first-line People-related advisory support.
- Coaches managers on people matters.
- Leads engagement and development initiatives.

The HR Consultant:

- Leads governance, legal risk, policy drafting and complex employee relations.
- Advises Executive Leadership Team and Board on legal compliance.
- Oversees pay, benchmarking and compliance frameworks

How to apply

to join us in transforming lives:

Please send a CV and cover letter detailing your relevant experience and why you want to work for Mercy Ships to:

careers@mercyships.org.uk

Salary : £45,000-£52,000 (DOE)

Don't delay applying as we screen applications on receipt and reserve the right to close early.

Equal opportunities

Mercy Ships UK is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from all individuals and value diversity in our workforce.

DBS check

Candidates will be asked to declare any 'unspent convictions.' Further information can be found here.

Eligible roles may require a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check.

Hope.
Healing.
Transforming Lives.

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Company No: 3147724 (England and Wales)