



CEO RECRUITMENT PACK



October
2026

322-324 Two Mile Hill Road
Kingswood
Bristol
BS15 1AJ



www.thehiveavon.org.uk



The Hive Avon



thehive.avon



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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for taking the time to consider becoming the next Chief Executive Officer of The Hive Avon. As Chair of the Board of Trustees, I am genuinely delighted to share this opportunity with you. The Hive Avon is a very special local charity, with a proud history, a clear purpose and a community of people who care deeply about making a positive difference.

I am continually inspired by the work The Hive Avon does alongside learning-disabled and autistic adults across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Whether through practical training, future-planning support, social activities, community meet-ups or the warm welcome at our Kingswood drop-in centre, our team helps people build independence, confidence, skills and lasting friendships. Just as importantly, we are there for families and carers, offering support and a sense of belonging.

We are now looking for a thoughtful, values-led leader to help us write the next chapter of that story. This is an exciting opportunity for someone who can combine ambition with sound judgement, bring out the best in our staff and volunteers, build strong and lasting partnerships, and ensure that the voices and aspirations of the people we support remain at the heart of every decision.

This recruitment pack will tell you more about our work, the role and the qualities we are seeking. What it cannot fully convey is the warmth, commitment and energy of the people behind The Hive Avon. You would be joining a dedicated staff team, generous volunteers and an engaged Board of Trustees who value openness, partnership and constructive challenge. As Chair, I would want to build a close and trusting relationship with our new Chief Executive—one grounded in honest conversation, mutual support and a shared determination to do the very best for our community.

If our mission speaks to you, and you feel you have the experience, energy and compassion to help shape our future, I would be very pleased to hear from you. Thank you for considering The Hive Avon. I hope this pack gives you a real sense of who we are, and I look forward to learning more about you and the contribution you could make to a charity that means so much to so many people.

With warm regards,

Brendan Tucker

Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Hive Avon

ABOUT THE CHARITY

The Hive Avon is a charity supporting autistic and learning-disabled adults to live with greater independence, confidence and connection. We believe that every person with a learning disability or autism should be included in their community, feel valued, and have the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and self-directed life. Based in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, we support around 300 adults each year, alongside their families and carers. Our services are designed to increase independence at a level appropriate for each individual, reduce isolation, and strengthen long-term support networks.

The Need for Our Work

Across our region, many autistic and learning-disabled adults face significant barriers to independence, social connection and community participation. We see this need daily:



- **Adults living alone without support**, who have become isolated and lack the confidence or skills to manage daily life.
- **People in their 40s and 50s still living with elderly parents**, who have not had opportunities to build the skills or networks needed to live independently.
- **Younger adults who want to be part of their community**, but do not have the support, social confidence or accessible opportunities to do so.
- **Families and carers under increasing pressure**, often unsure where to turn for help as their loved ones' needs change over time.

Without the right support, people can become socially isolated, experience declining mental health, and miss out on opportunities to develop independence. Families often reach crisis point, and individuals can require more intensive statutory intervention later on.

Our services prevent these outcomes by offering early, sustained and person-centred support.



ABOUT THE CHARITY

What We Do

We provide a wide range of daytime and evening services that help people build the skills, confidence and relationships they need to live more independently. These include:

- **Life-skills development** (cooking, budgeting, travel training, home management).
- **Social groups and community activities** that reduce isolation and build friendships.
- **Support to access education, volunteering and community opportunities.**
- **Independence-focused programmes** that help people move towards supported or independent living.
- **Family and carer support**, offering guidance, reassurance and practical help.

All support is tailored to the individual, delivered at a pace that respects their needs, abilities and aspirations.



Our Approach

Our work is built on:

- **Consistency and trust** — long-term relationships that help people feel safe and understood.
- **Person-centred planning** — supporting people to set their own goals and make their own choices.
- **Community inclusion** — ensuring people are not just supported but genuinely welcomed and involved.
- **Skill-building for life** — focusing on sustainable independence, not short-term fixes.

This approach enables people to grow in confidence, develop meaningful relationships and take control of their lives.

ABOUT THE CHARITY

Outcomes and Impact

With our support, autistic and learning-disabled adults achieve outcomes such as:

- Increased independence at home and in the community.
- Reduced isolation and improved emotional wellbeing.
- Stronger friendships and social networks.
- Greater confidence in decision-making and self-advocacy.
- Progression into supported living, volunteering or community roles.
- Reduced pressure on families and carers.

For many, these changes are transformative. People who were previously isolated become active members of their community. Those who relied heavily on family support begin to manage daily tasks independently. Families report reduced stress and improved wellbeing.

Our Staff

We have a well-established team of 7 staff members (3.2 full-time equivalents), led by our Chief Executive Liz Cooke. As a small team we have to work closely together, and communication is a key aspect of this. This vacancy has occurred because of the planned retirement of the current CEO at the beginning of April 2027.

Our Board

Our Board is currently made up of seven trustees, who bring a range of different skills and experiences which contribute to our work. The Board includes a mixture of individuals who have personal experience of learning disability and autism as well as those with specific business skills. All are committed to making The Hive Avon the best that it can be. The Board currently meets quarterly in person for full board meetings. In addition, there may be online meetings of the full Board, or subgroups working on particular issues.

Financials

Over the last five years The Hive Avon has had an average income of £144,000 pa. The last two years have shown a deficit budget; however, the trustees and CEO have been working to close this deficit by closely examining services and looking at different income sources. As with many small charities in the current climate, we have been less successful in obtaining money through grants as we have in previous years. The incoming CEO will need to have a good grasp of financial procedures and will work closely with the treasurer. Annual accounts are available from The Charity Commission or upon request.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Purpose of the Role

The Chief Executive Officer will provide strategic, operational and values-led leadership for The Hive Avon, a small local charity supporting learning disabled and autistic adults to become more independent, build confidence, make choices, develop friendships and lead great lives.

Working closely with the Board of Trustees, the CEO will ensure that The Hive Avon remains financially sustainable, well governed, safe, inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people it supports, their families and carers, staff, volunteers and local partners.

Key responsibilities

Leadership and Strategy

- Provide clear, visible and values-led leadership that reflects The Hive Avon's commitment to inclusion, respect, empowerment and community participation.
- Work with the Board of Trustees to develop and deliver a realistic strategic plan that protects the charity's mission while supporting sustainable growth and impact.
- Translate strategic priorities into practical plans, budgets and measurable objectives for staff, volunteers and services.
- Promote a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement and co-production with learning disabled and autistic adults and those who support them.

Governance and Compliance

- Ensure the charity complies with Charity Commission requirements, company law and all relevant legislation, including safeguarding, health and safety, employment, data protection and equality duties.
- Provide timely, accurate and balanced information to the Board of Trustees to support effective governance, scrutiny and decision-making.
- Maintain and regularly review appropriate policies, procedures, internal controls and risk management arrangements.
- Uphold high standards of transparency, accountability, ethical conduct and stewardship of charitable resources.

Financial Management

- Lead the preparation of annual budgets, forecasts and management reports, ensuring trustees have clear oversight of the charity's financial position.
- Ensure sound financial management, proportionate controls and effective use of resources in line with charitable objectives.
- Develop and maintain sustainable income through grants, fundraising, partnerships, donations, earned income and community support.
- Build and maintain constructive relationships with funders, donors, commissioners and partners.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Service Delivery and Impact

- Oversee high-quality, safe and person-centred activities, drop-in provision, training and impact projects for learning disabled and autistic adults.
- Ensure services are shaped by the voices, choices and experiences of the people The Hive Avon supports, as well as families and carers where appropriate.
- Develop proportionate ways to monitor outcomes, evidence impact and use learning to improve services.
- Ensure all activities are delivered in line with safeguarding, risk, quality and accessibility standards.

Fundraising and External Relations

- Represent The Hive Avon externally as a credible, trusted and passionate advocate for learning disabled and autistic adults.
- Lead and support fundraising activity, grant applications, partnerships, campaigns and community engagement.
- Build productive relationships with local authorities, NHS partners, funders, voluntary sector organisations, community groups and local businesses.
- Raise the charity's profile across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and surrounding areas through networking, events, communications and partnership working.

People Management

- Lead, support and develop staff and volunteers, ensuring they are clear about priorities, expectations and accountability.
- Champion a positive, inclusive and supportive working culture that reflects the values of the charity.
- Oversee recruitment, induction, supervision, appraisal and development in line with good employment practice and available resources.
- Work constructively with trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure the organisation has the skills, confidence and capacity required to deliver its mission.
- Embed equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility across organisational life.

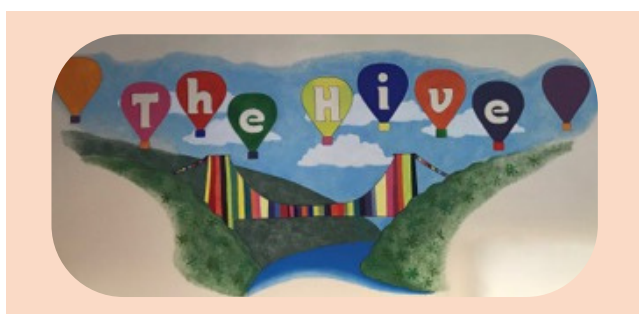
Key Relationships

- **Internal:** Board of Trustees, Chair of Trustees, staff, volunteers and the people The Hive Avon supports.
- **External:** Learning disabled and autistic adults, families and carers, local authorities, NHS partners, funders, donors, regulators, community organisations, local businesses and other voluntary sector partners.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Skills and Experience

- Proven leadership experience in a charity, social care, community, public sector or comparable values-led organisation.
- Strong understanding of the rights, needs and aspirations of learning disabled and autistic adults.
- Experience of strategic planning, business planning, financial oversight and organisational development.
- Successful track record in fundraising, grant applications, income generation or partnership development.
- Demonstrable ability to lead staff, volunteers and stakeholders through change with clarity, empathy and accountability.
- Excellent communication, influencing, relationship-building and partnership development skills.
- Sound understanding of safeguarding, risk management, equality, diversity and inclusion in a service-delivery environment.



Desirable Skills and Experience

- Experience of leading or managing a small charity or community-based organisation.
- Experience of working with learning disabled and /or autistic adults.
- Experience of co-production and involving people with lived experience in service design, delivery or evaluation.
- Experience of working effectively with a Board of Trustees, governing body or senior governance group.
- Understanding of current UK policy, commissioning arrangements and best practice in learning disability and autism support.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Qualities

- Experience of leading or managing a small charity or community-based organisation.
- Experience of working with learning disabled and /or autistic adults.
- Experience of co-production and involving people with lived experience in service design, delivery or evaluation.
- Experience of working effectively with a Board of Trustees, governing body or senior governance group.
- Understanding of current UK policy, commissioning arrangements and best practice in learning disability and autism support.

Additional Criteria Specific to The Hive Avon

- Ability to lead a small, local and self-funded charity with flexibility, resilience and sound judgement.
- Commitment to helping, including, valuing and empowering learning disabled and autistic people.
- Confidence to work directly with service users, families, carers, staff, volunteers, trustees, funders and local partners.
- Personal integrity, emotional intelligence and a calm, proportionate approach to challenge, safeguarding, risk and change.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- **Contract:** Permanent, 24 hours per week, subject to trustee approval of final terms
- **Location:** Kingswood, Bristol, with flexible working options
- **Annual Leave:** 5.6 weeks (pro rata)
- **Pension:** 6% employer contribution
- **Probation Period:** 6 months

Safeguarding and Equality Commitment

The Hive Avon is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk and expects all staff, volunteers and trustees to share this commitment.

Appointment will be subject to satisfactory references, appropriate eligibility checks and an Enhanced DBS check.

The Hive Avon is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from people with diverse backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from disabled people and people with lived experience of learning disability, autism, caring or advocacy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

How to Apply

To apply, please send your CV and a supporting statement of no more than two pages explaining how your experience, skills and values meet the person specification to liz.cooke@thehiveavon.org.uk.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, or to arrange a visit, please contact Liz Cooke, CEO, at liz.cooke@thehiveavon.org.uk or ring/text 07854856987.

Closing date: 10am, 6 November 2026

Interviews: We are anticipating interviewing on Thursday 3 December 2026

All shortlisted candidates will be contacted by Friday 20 November

Job offers will be subject to two satisfactory references and proof of right to work in the UK.

