

Recruitment Pack

Chief Executive -
National Voices

National Voices
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Foreword from the Chair

National Voices is in an exciting place full of new opportunities to grow and build on our successes.

For 30 years we have been known as an organisation with influence, with our work often at the heart of policy thinking – from the Five Year Forward View to the NHS 10 Year Plan. Over the last five or six years we have taken this to new heights – shaping national conversations, championing co-production and keeping what matters to people at the centre.

To deliver this, we have expanded our membership, ensuring that as a movement we are reflective of those most affected by health inequalities and have extended our reach to cover almost every community in the country. We have also developed a range of commissioned services.

Over the last 18 months in particular, our growth and influence have translated into increasing demand for our services, with commissioners and partners asking us to deliver more engagement, insight and co-designed solutions than ever before.

Our task now is to match that demand with consistent, high-quality delivery – growing in a way that is sustainable and faithful to our values. We are incredibly proud of the collaborative and inclusive culture that has powered our successes, and it is essential that we preserve the qualities that make National Voices distinctive.

We are therefore looking for a new Chief Executive who understands the importance of our culture, and can build on this whilst also strengthening the internal systems and ways of working needed to operate effectively at greater scale.

This includes continuing to build an organisation where leadership, decision-making and accountability are increasingly shared; where staff are empowered to lead externally facing work; and where strong coordination and prioritisation support our staff and Lived Experience Partners to deliver their best work.

We are a small team delivering significant impact at the highest level, so the successful candidate must bring demonstrable experience in overseeing a diverse portfolio of programmes, an ability to secure multi-year funding for projects and be comfortable representing the charity in front of key stakeholders, from leaders of member organisations to Government Ministers, and on public platforms.

This role is about purpose and practice. Purpose, because we exist to

reduce inequalities, transfer power to people and communities, and focus on outcomes that matter. Practice, because we must deliver excellent work – on time, on budget, and with inclusion built in – so that partners keep trusting us, members keep benefiting, and people’s voices keep shaping decisions.

If you are a values-led leader with the health sector or non-profit experience to help us strengthen what works, protect our mission and support a brilliant team to thrive, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Buckingham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Helen Buckingham

Chair of the Board of Trustees National Voices

Background information

About us:

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 patients, people with Lived Experience, unpaid carers, their families and the voluntary organisations that work for them.

Our mission:

We advocate for a more equitable 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, decisions makers and citizens to work together to change health and care for good.

Our five-year strategy:

In September 2024 we published a new five-year strategy that was co-produced with our staff, our member charities, our Lived Experience Partners and our key stakeholders. This set out three clear goals:

- **End unequal access**
By addressing the barriers experienced by those facing the worst outcomes, we will find solutions that improve care for all.
- **Transfer power to people and communities**
As a leader in co-production, we will help communities to work with system leaders at national and neighbourhood level to make big decisions together. This will maximise the skills and capabilities of patients, ensuring care is truly person-centred.
- **Shift the measures of success**
By campaigning for better patient experience and outcomes metrics, we can ensure that what matters to people becomes the key measure of success for the NHS.

In the first two years of the strategy we have already made big strides. For example, our work encouraging the Government to focus on “getting the basics right” has seen major policy initiatives designed to fix access to



primary care and the 8am rush. Similarly, our work on the experience of waiting for elective care has seen the introduction of the first ever set of minimum standards for waiting.

Our work on the 10 Year Plan, and on the Quality Strategy, has also seen both patient experience and outcome measures given much greater prominence in how the NHS judges success and National Voices has now been commissioned by NHS England to help design the future of patient feedback mechanisms.

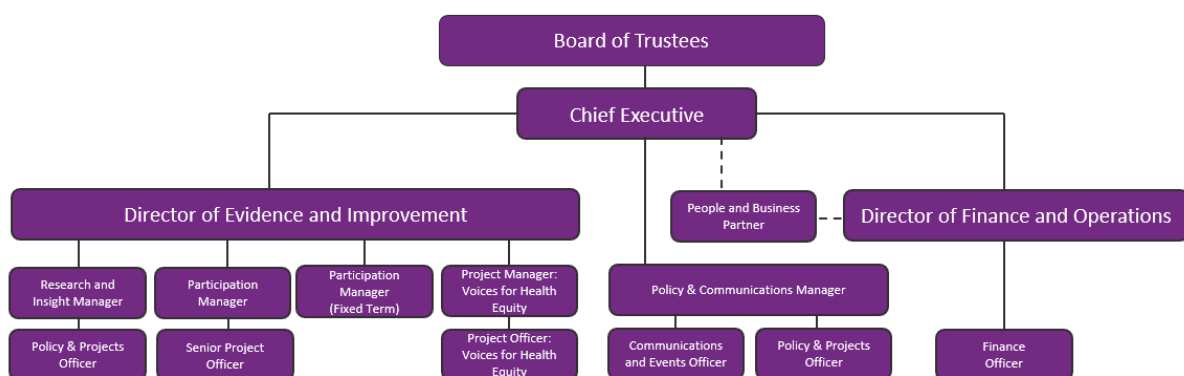
We have also successfully campaigned for funding formulas to be revised to enable the NHS to directly address the inverse care law and tackle the impact of health inequalities head on.

But there are challenges ahead, not least the role patients and communities play directly in co-producing improvement. With ICBs under huge financial pressures, and so much change in the health and care system, we need to make sure every piece of work we deliver is of the highest quality and adds real value. This is the only way to help others across the sector understand the value that people with Lived Experience offer to problem solving processes and creating better and more inclusive solutions.

Job description and person specification

Job title	Chief Executive
Contract	Permanent / Full time (35 hours a week)
Location	London / hybrid (regular London presence)
Salary	£95,000 - £100,000
Benefits	Up to 6.5% matched pension, total contributions of 13%. 28 days annual leave per year plus public holidays. Enhanced sick leave cover of up to 5 years. Death in service benefit of 2x annual salary. Employee Assistance scheme. Working from home allowance. Annual wellbeing allowance.
Reports to	Chair and Board of Trustees
Direct reports	Director of Finance and Operations Director of Evidence and Improvement Policy and Communications Manager People and Business Partner

Current organogram



A note for candidates on the current structure. Alongside the Chief Executive recruitment, the Board have been reviewing capacity across the SMT and have identified a need for additional resource. The broad scope of an additional senior role has been agreed, but recruitment has been paused to allow the incoming Chief Executive to finalise the role description and lead the appointment process for this.

In addition to the internal staff structure we also work with a number of associates on various projects to help us expand our capacity as required.

The role

The primary purpose of the Chief Executive's role is to lead and manage the effective running of the charity and the successful delivery of our five-year strategy and our broader charitable aims.

Over recent years, National Voices has become highly influential and demand for our services has grown significantly. We now face a challenge around how we harness this increased demand effectively and organise ourselves to ensure we use every project to deliver on our current strategy. This also means putting the process in place to ensure that we can deliver multiple large contracts simultaneously and consistently, while continuing to deliver for members and staying true to our values.

The next Chief Executive will therefore need to lead the continued evolution of National Voices' operating model. This means strengthening collaboration across teams, embedding shared ownership and accountability, and ensuring that our systems, planning processes and ways of working support an organisation where colleagues at all levels can contribute, lead and thrive.

The key dimensions of the role are:

- Providing inspirational, inclusive and values-led leadership that supports staff, members and Lived Experience Partners to contribute their best work.
- Creating and modelling the culture required for National Voices to achieve its mission, ensuring that inclusion, co-production, learning and accountability shape how decisions are made at every level of the organisation.
- Strengthening our operating model so that we can deliver complex, multi-year programmes consistently, sustainably and to a high standard.
- Sustaining our growth by continuing to diversify our income and build our reserves.
- Putting members and people with Lived Experience at the heart of what we do, creating meaningful opportunities for them to shape our priorities and contribute actively to our work.
- Acting as a credible and influential leader for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in health and care.
- Representing the organisation on national stages and with key stakeholders in support of our influencing goals.

Key responsibilities strategy and purpose

Strategy and purpose

- Lead the organisation in delivering our current five-year strategy - ensuring that National Voices continues to focus on reducing inequalities, transferring power to people and communities, and shifting the measures of success in health and care.
- Ensure the charity is structured, organised and resourced to meet its charitable objectives.
- Preserve and strengthen the qualities that make National Voices distinctive: our commitment to inclusion, collaboration, co-production, member voice and the leadership of people with Lived Experience.

Leading and managing the organisation

- Take the lead in setting the organisational culture, building an environment where staff, members and Lived Experience Partners feel trusted, valued, supported and able to contribute their best work.
- Lead the continued evolution of National Voices' operating model, embedding collaborative ways of working, shared leadership and clear accountability.
- Work closely with the Senior Management Team to ensure that we have effective financial management and reporting systems in place.
- Oversee the production of annual operational plans and budgets in conjunction with the SMT, and continually monitor resource and capacity pressures.
- Ensure we have robust programme management and quality assurance processes to support consistent delivery of high-quality work.
- Ensure our underlying operational systems are effective, compliant and fit for purpose, including IT, data processing and information governance.
- Demonstrate a clear and consistent commitment to staff wellbeing, ensuring that National Voices' growth and delivery ambitions are supported by sustainable ways of working.

Governance

- Work closely with the Chair and Trustees to agree annual business plans, and ensure the Board has the information, insight and assurance it needs to govern effectively.
- This should include providing the Board with clear KPIs to report progress to the Board, particularly on fundraising, project delivery, staff wellbeing and the charity's impact.

- Lead on overseeing and reporting on risk management.
- Lead on production of the annual impact report.

Income generation and financial management

- Oversee the organisation's income growth and funding pipeline, working closely with the Director of Evidence and Impact, and the rest of the staff team, to ensure we develop credible bids for commissioned work and grants.
- Continue to diversify our income sources, with a focus on multi-year funding opportunities to help build sustainable growth.
- Ensure that no funder compromise our independence as an organisation, our values or good reputation.
- Work very closely with the Director of Finance and Operations to monitor expenditure and ensure the charity remains financially sound and resilient for the long-term.

Membership

- Ensure that National Voices understands its members and the issues they care about.
- Work closely with system stakeholders to ensure National Voices is well placed to advocate for member views on issues of strategic importance.
- Create meaningful opportunities for members to influence National Voices' priorities and contribute actively to our work.
- Showcase the insight, expertise and leadership of our members and the communities they support.
- Work closely with the membership group to ensure our member charities remain satisfied and that we maximise member retention.
- Seek to grow and diversify our membership further, in particular to fill any gaps we might have or communities missing from our coalition.

Influence

- Build and maintain trusted relationships right across national and local government, the NHS, the social care sector and the wider VCSE.
- Represent National Voices on national platforms, in the media and in key engagements with system leaders e.g. Government Ministers and senior NHS leaders.
- Capture evidence of our influence and impact and ensure this is celebrated through effective external and internal communications.

People, culture and capability

- Create and model the culture required for National Voices to achieve its mission.

- Ensure that inclusion, co-production, learning and accountability shape how decisions are made across the organisation.
- Build a culture of trust, shared ownership and constructive challenge.
- Empower people at all levels to lead, influence and take ownership, while maintaining clarity of decision-making and accountability.
- Support strong collaboration across teams, ensuring that colleagues can work together effectively across projects, functions and priorities.
- Maintain a consistent focus on staff engagement, wellbeing and development.
- Work with the People and Business Partner to support staff development, engagement and learning.
- Support SMT and other direct reports with target-setting and monitoring, professional development opportunities and line management.

Person specification

We are looking for a superb communicator with a motivational and innovative leadership style who ideally will have experience of leading a charity through a high growth phase. They will be a versatile leader who can develop strong strategic plans, navigate the external environment and ensure successful delivery in a scalable and sustainable way.

They will have:

- Senior leadership experience in the health sector or in a non-profit organisation, with a strong understanding of the context in which National Voices operates.
- Detailed knowledge of the health and care system, including the NHS, Integrated Care Systems, arm's-length bodies and government.
- Senior leadership experience in complex, multi-stakeholder programme delivery in health, public services, consultancy, charity or non-profit settings.
- Demonstrated success in strengthening delivery capacity through effective programme management, governance, resourcing and quality assurance frameworks.
- Experience leading organisations or teams through growth and change while maintaining staff engagement, wellbeing and organisational values.
- Experience empowering people at all levels to lead, influence and take ownership, while maintaining clarity of decision-making and accountability.
- Proven ability to develop structures and ways of working that enable effective matrix management, cross-organisational collaboration and collective accountability.

- Financial stewardship experience, including forecasting, budgeting, pricing, margins, reserves and financial risk.
- Experience diversifying income or developing sustainable funding, commercial or commissioned work opportunities.
- Experience managing commissioner, funder or partner relationships.
- Successful experience navigating and influencing the political, policy or public service landscape.
- Demonstrated a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Desirable experience

- Experience of co-production, community engagement, qualitative or quantitative insight, or working directly with people with Lived Experience.
- Experience of membership proposition development, coalition building or community building.
- Experience integrating policy influence with high-quality delivery at scale.
- Experience working with or being accountable to a charity Board of Trustees.

Skills and attributes

- A deep commitment to National Voices' mission and values.
- A versatile leader who can shape strategy, navigate the external environment and ensure successful operational delivery.
- Strong self-awareness and emotional intelligence, with a leadership style characterised by curiosity, openness, reflection and a willingness to share power.
- A creative and strategic thinker with excellent analytical skills and the ability to identify practical solutions.
- A strong learner, able to quickly master the knowledge required for the role.
- Gravitas and credibility to work with stakeholders at the most senior levels.
- An engaging and persuasive communicator in writing, as a public speaker and with the media.
- The ability to connect with and influence people at all levels and from all walks of life.
- Strong people leadership skills, able to support a small team where individuals hold high levels of responsibility.
- The ability to plan and execute work to time and budget, sometimes under pressure, with energy, strong organisational skills and self-motivation.

Application and recruitment process

Please complete a CV and a separate supporting statement that explains, with evidence, how you meet the criteria in the person specification.

Your supporting statement should also respond to the following question:

“As CEO of National Voices, what would your top three priorities be in your first year as Chief Executive? Why have you identified these particular priorities?”

Your supporting statement must be no more than two sides of A4.

Please include the names and contact details for two references, who will not be contacted unless you are successful in your application.

Please submit your application and completed diversity and equal opportunity monitoring form through CharityJob. If you require an alternative way to apply or any reasonable adjustments, please contact Laura Reed at laura.reed@nationalvoices.org.uk.

The deadline for applications is **5.00pm Sunday 20th September**.

Final interviews will be scheduled for the week of 12th October. There will be an engagement session with the staff team and some of our members / lived experience partners held online, and an in person interview with the Chair of the Board and other Trustees on the 14th October 2026. You will be given at least a week's notice if we wish to interview you.

If you would like an informal conversation with the Chair please contact laura.reed@nationalvoices.org.uk.

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