

# PDA Society

## People & Operations Lead

## Information Pack



15 hours a week from home at £16 an hour.

Hours may be worked flexibly over 3-5 days a week - however there will be an expectation that urgent HR queries are responded to the same working day. We expect urgent queries to be rare.

20 days annual leave plus 8 bank holidays (pro-rated for part-time)

3% employers contribution to pension

Truly flexible working in an organisation that understands and values neurodivergence and carers responsibilities.

Closing date for applications: Friday 1st December

Interviews: Wednesday 13th December

Start date - as soon as possible from January 9th onwards



# Welcome

Hello,

Thank you for looking at this pack and for your interest in becoming part of our team. This role is really important. PDA people are amongst the most misunderstood and excluded groups in society today so taking care of our team so they can reach more people and support them to understand PDA is essential to making better lives possible.

The vast majority of our team are either carers of PDA people or are themselves a PDA person. We offer the most genuinely flexible working I have ever come across – with team members delivering incredible outcomes in a way that allows us to thrive in our home lives as well as at work. We have high expectations for the quality of the work we all do, and we don't believe that is at all in conflict with our team members being trusted to manage their own time and workload.

This new role of People & Operations Lead is designed to ensure that our team continue to be connected, informed and supported as we grow and change. Success looks like making it as easy and enjoyable as possible for everyone to make their contribution without sacrificing the quality of service we offer.

We need someone who is confident communicating to the organisation as a whole, and one-on-one when people need support. Who is adaptable, both strategic and detail orientated and who is excited to turn their hands to a variety of things. As this is a wide ranging role we don't expect any candidate to have experience of every point on the person spec, but we would want you to show us how you'd grow your skills to fulfil the role.

Crucially we want you to care, to care about our fantastic team, to care about the difference we are trying to make as a charity, and about your contribution to that. In exchange you'll get to work with a friendly, supportive and can do team, who will be committed to seeing you thrive.

Looking forward to reading your application.

**Elizabeth (Ed) Archer**

CEO PDA Society



# About PDA and PDA Society

PDA is most commonly described as a profile on the autism spectrum.

This means that people with PDA are autistic, and may have differences in social interaction, communication and sensory processing, and some restrictive or repetitive behaviours. In addition PDA people will have a fear response to demands, and use social strategies to avoid them. The cluster of traits common to autistic people with PDA is known as a PDA profile.

Demand avoidance is not uncommon in autistic people; however, most demand avoidant autistic people do not fit a PDA profile. Whilst their behaviours might seem similar on the surface, the approaches needed for PDA autistic people and other demand avoidant autistic people can be different. Conventional strategies, such as consistent routine and structure, firm boundaries, or rewards and consequences, are not only ineffective with PDA, but can actually make things worse.

We do this in four ways:

- By raising awareness of PDA and providing high quality trustworthy information about it.
- By training parents and professionals so that they better understand PDA people and what works in offering support that is helpful.
- By offering tailored support to families through our enquiry line service which is entirely staffed by trained people who 'get it', either because they are a PDA person themselves or because they are a parent carer of a PDA person.
- By supporting PDA people and those that care about them to build mutually supporting safe connections and act collectively to influence change in their own lives and in Society as a whole.

Underpinning all of this is our commitment to research and using evidence to influence better understanding, better support and better outcomes for PDA people in the future.

Last year we directly supported more than 4,500 people through our training and enquiry line. 750,000 people accessed information on our site. This year we expect that number to rise to a million.

PDA people deserve better understanding and support today – joining our team puts you on the frontline of providing that.



# Context for role

PDA Society is a small charity that has an impact much larger than our balance sheet would suggest is possible.

We moved to having a paid staff team less than two years ago, which is a huge change in our obligations to our team. The first few years of growing an employee team are a hugely challenging time for a new charity – but it is also exciting as it allows us to focus on exactly what we want to be as we grow.

Going forward our whole team will need support to make sure:

- our policies and procedures are clear, sensible, understood and consistently worked within
- our roles are well defined and we know what we're all up to
- our pay and benefits are fair, equitable and sustainable for the organisation
- our systems and technology help the team do their jobs efficiently and safely
- our board of trustees get the information they need to be able to take strategic decisions for the organisation
- and any change is managed in a way that is as fair and safe as possible for the whole team

This role will work closely with the CEO and the Trustee Lead for HR on implementing the strategic direction we jointly set to support our team to thrive. We are keen that the post holder acts as an advisor to us and proactively identifies problems and suggests solutions.

We want to be THE best workplace for PDA people and their loved ones as well as the most impactful charity in our work. This role is key in getting us there.

PDA Society understands the positive contribution a team from differing backgrounds and experiences bring to an organisation. We actively encourage applications from people with experiences not currently represented in our team. We want the recruitment process for this job to be a positive one. If there are things you need to make the process accessible to you, please let us know - we'll do our very best to accommodate you.



# What are we looking for?

**We are looking for someone with the experience and capabilities to undertake the following**

**Managing our HR systems and processes** - building the teams confidence in knowing what to expect of themselves, each other and the organisation. Encouraging self-sufficient use of our HR portal (Breathe) to streamline HR activity. Ensuring records are up to date, accurate and only accessible to people with a legitimate need. Ensuring we are fair to the employees, self-employed contractors and volunteers in our team.

**Supporting managers to build high performing, happy teams** - offering advice, coaching and where needed direct support in managing change, performance issues and any other HR queries managers may have. Supporting managers to consider and meet the training and development needs of their teams.

**Managing and updating our suite of policies** - ensuring our policies are legally compliant, usable and fair. Working cross organisationally on updating policies so they meet teams needs and leading on building assurance systems so we know the team understand and are working within policies.

**Operational system management** - leading our work deciding on what organisational systems (including digital programmes such as office suite) we use, and how we roll out use in a way that is safe for individuals and the organisation. This includes making recommendations as to where we need to commission external expertise and managing those relationships where we do so.

**Internal communications** - ensuring the team have regular opportunities to plan and reflect together. Sharing information across the organisation as needed both formally and informally.

**Acting as clerk to the board** - supporting the CEO and Chair in arranging board and committee meetings, preparing and disseminating papers, minuting and following up actions.

# Key skills and experience

## Key Skills and Experience

Experience or qualifications in HR, particularly in supporting staff or volunteers to understand and work within a policy framework

Ability to undertake detailed work including agreeing contract details, remuneration agreements, minuting and following up actions from meetings and proofing documents for usability

Ability to research and understand if our policies are legally compliant, and update them when necessary

An ability to understand what information needs sharing and with whom, and to do so in a timely manner

Ability to think through processes from initiation to evaluation, support people to understand their roles and obligations and how they sit alongside other roles in the organisation

Experience evaluating and implementing systems and managing contractors

Ability to clearly explain complex ideas. A trustworthy, friendly and warm communicator

Confidence communicating at board level, preparing and disseminating papers

Experience coaching and supporting managers in all aspects of managing a team

Ability to assess risks, and use your judgement to suggest solutions to problems

Digitally competent and able to build competence and confidence in others

# Application process - how to apply

The application process is broken down into two stages. If you have any questions about the role, or process or need additional guidance to complete this application, please contact [admin@pdasociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@pdasociety.org.uk).

## Stage 1

Please send a **copy of our application form to [admin@pdasociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@pdasociety.org.uk)**. Please also attach a word document which covers the skills and experience you have that will allow you to undertake the **6 core elements of the role** as described on page 5. This outline should be no longer than 3 sides of A4.

We have tried not to specify where you will have gained this experience because we would like to see applications from anyone who has the ability to do this job. Page 6 is a list of things that might indicate you have the capabilities for the role, it might be helpful to reference when you are writing. You do not need a university degree for this role. So if you can show that you are able to do the job by referencing experiences you've had in previous jobs, your personal life, through volunteering or working collaboratively in an informal way with friends and neighbours, then please tell us about that.

This role involves being able to convey complex information in a simple and accessible and comprehensive manner. We will use both the content and presentation of this document to shortlist applicants.

## How we shortlist

We score applications without initially looking at your application form, this means that we can't make a judgement of you based on your address, or qualifications you don't consider relevant enough to include in your outline response. With this in mind, it's really important that if there is something you think we need to know to be able to shortlist you that you write it in your outline response even if you've already put it on your application form. We also won't know your name unless you choose to include it.

The word document describing your capacity to fulfil the 6 core elements of the role is by far the most important part of the application. We use a score sheet to fairly shortlist applicants. Basically, we score against each core element separately.

# Application process- how to apply

The best way to ensure your application scores well is to use the star technique. STAR stands for:

**S**ituation (what was happening)

**T**ask (what you were supposed to do)

**A**ction (what you did)

**R**esult (what was the result)

This shows us that you don't just know the theory of how to achieve something, but that you have experienced it and are able to express how effective (or challenging) it was.

We want you to answer the questions authentically and in a way that explains to us that you can do the job well. If you haven't done exactly the thing we are asking for, but think you've demonstrated the skills you'd need somewhere else in your life mention that too. You don't just have to think about work experience - anything you've done across your life counts.

Two people will independently and without discussion score your application. Then once this is done, they will meet to discuss and aggregate their scoring. The application forms of the highest-scoring candidates will then be reviewed, and additional points will be awarded for accuracy of the form completed as this is an essential skill within this role. Normally the highest-scoring candidates will be invited to the second stage with a maximum of 5 candidates being invited.

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If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to Stage 2.

If you are not shortlisted you will receive an email which outlines how many applicants there were for the role and what made shortlisted candidates stand out. As a small organisation we do not have capacity to give individualised feedback to every applicant - but hope that the overview reflects how grateful we are for the time invested in applications, and is useful to you in future job seeking.



# Application process- the interview

## Stage 2 - Interviews

If you are invited for interview, you will also be asked if there are any adjustments you would like us to make, to give you the best possible chance to do well. We are motivated to see you at your best so please let us know how we can support you to be as comfortable as possible in the next stage. The interviews will take place online.

You will be sent a briefing about what the interview will look like and who will be there. You will also be sent two short tasks in advance of the interview which will help us understand the practical skills you'll bring to the role.

We know that many applicants will have caring responsibilities. We will try to be flexible in arranging interviews for times that work around these. If you need further flexibility/adjustments, please do ask.

We hope to be able to decide on who we would like to appoint after the first interview, however if there are several excellent candidates you may be invited to attend a second online interview prior to a decision being made and further details will be supplied at that time.

# Contact us

[www.pdasociety.org.uk](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk)

[admin@pdasociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@pdasociety.org.uk)

The PDA Society is a charity registered in England and Wales

Charity number: 1165038

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