

Action for M.E. Communications Manager Application Pack



Thank you for considering joining Action for M.E.

I joined Action for M.E. in September 2012 and am delighted to be working with a staff and volunteer team and Board of Trustees who are passionate, dedicated and determined.

Our 2016 – 2021 strategy, launched at our 2016 AGM and conference, sets out how we meet need now to improve the lives of people with M.E. while taking action to secure change for the future.

A small organisation that regularly punches above its weight, we are leading, with others, a growing community of supporters working to create real change on the scale so urgently needed at a local, national and international level.

In April 2017, we launched our Children's Services after joining forces with national children's charity, the Association of Young People with M.E. This provides an exciting opportunity to raise more money to reach more people and raise much needed awareness and understanding

I believe that Action for M.E. can, and will, make a major contribution to creating the change that is so desperately needed.



Sonya Chowdhury
Chief Executive

Our values

Shared values are held with high regard in our organisation and reflect how we seek to work with our supporters, partners and other key stakeholders. They reflect the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that we value in each other and underpin our whole approach and culture.



About us

Action for M.E. takes action to end the ignorance, injustice and neglect that people with M.E. face day-in, day-out.

The charity was founded by Sue Finlay in 1987 and since then has been working tirelessly to tackle the inequality experienced by people with M.E.

M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) is a chronic, neurological illness affecting an estimated 250,000 adults and children in the UK. It may be diagnosed as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS, or M.E./CFS).

People with M.E. experience severe, persistent fatigue associated with post-exertional malaise, the body's inability to recover after expending even small amounts of energy, leading to a flare-up in symptoms.

Even in its so-called mildest form, M.E. can have a significant impact on an individual's life, and not just on their health. A lack of understanding and awareness about M.E. means patients can experience disbelief, and even discrimination, from friends, family, health and social care professionals, employers and teachers.

Our vision

A world without M.E.

Our mission

Empowering people with M.E. to fulfil their potential and secure the care and support they need, while working towards a greater understanding of the illness and ultimately a cure.

Our people

President

Clare Francis MBE

Vice President

Martin Arber

Patrons

Lord David Puttnam CBE

Lord Melvyn Bragg

Julie Christie

Alan Cook CBE

Chair of Board of Trustees

Roger Siddle

Vice Chair

Alison Deeth

Board of Trustees

We are an organisation led by people affected by M.E. for people affected by M.E. We aim to have a minimum of 51% of our Trustees who have, or have had, M.E. themselves.

Our Trustees are unpaid and meet at least four times a year and many sit on one of our four sub-committees. Board meeting location alternates between London and Keynsham.

We have a staff team of 29 (22 FTE) and approximately 70 volunteers who support our work in a number of different ways.

Our head office is in Keynsham (between Bath and Bristol) and we also have a small number of staff and volunteers in Scotland and a staff member in East Midlands.

Our purpose is to end the ignorance, injustice and neglect experienced by people with M.E.

Children, young people and adults with M.E. are at the heart of everything we do. We asked and we listened, and have identified a number of challenges that continue to exist for people affected by M.E.

Everything we do over the next five years will be in service of achieving three goals, which we call our strategic touchstones.

By collaborating with those who share our vision and purpose, we make the most of the resources available to us.

Around 50% of our activities will directly focus on targeting information, improving support and reducing isolation to **IMPROVE** the lives of children, young people and adults with M.E.

To be as effective as possible, 30% of our activities will focus on facilitating more action, more influence and better understanding of M.E. to **INSPIRE** action at all levels; and 20% of our activities will be focused on bringing more research, more money and more people into the field to **INVEST** in change.



Job description

1. Job Summary

Job title	Communications Manager
Responsible to	Operations Director
Salary	£29,700 pro rata
Contract	One year fixed term post with possibility of extension
Hours of work	Full-time (35 hours per week). We will also consider part-time/job share and flexible working requests.
Annual leave	30 days pro rata + 8 bank holidays per year
Location	UK-based with travel to Bristol/Keynsham or Keynsham Office

2. Job Purpose

The purpose of this post is to provide leadership to the Communications and Marketing Team to help end the ignorance, injustice and neglect experienced by adults and children with M.E.

You will play a critical part in raising the profile of M.E. and the impact it has on people with the illness to increase awareness and understanding. Through raising the profile of the organisation and its work, you will help us better meet need and you will contribute to generating income to help us grow our work and reach more people.

3. Key Duties

3.1 Leadership & Management

- Work with beneficiaries to ensure that people with M.E. are at the heart of everything we do through meaningful engagement and participation to influence all aspects of service delivery.
- Develop and deliver the Communications & Marketing Strategy, ensuring the appropriate involvement of key stakeholders
- Support and lead the staff and volunteer team to implement the Communications & Marketing Strategy, raising the profile of M.E. and its impact on children and adults to develop better understanding and awareness.
- To raise the profile of the organisation and its work to enable the organisation to reach more people and better support need.

- Maintain a data-insight led approach to the communications work providing regular management information and key performance indicator reports.
- Work as a member of the senior management team.
- Line manage Communications and Marketing Team members, supporting them to set and achieve performance objectives through regular one to ones and 12-monthly appraisals.
- Responsibility for Communications budget and the relationship with providers of services required in the production of the charity's publications and delivery of the Communications Strategy.

3.2 Communications

- Act as first point of contact for the press and media and undertake interviews as required.
- Coordinate the charity's response to any crisis communications, including developing appropriate crisis management plans and working outside of office hours as required.
- Draft and issue press releases and media statement and ensure appropriate follow-up by telephoning journalists, contacting picture desks etc. as appropriate.
- Alongside the CEO and Operations Director, create and develop relationships with key press, media and communications stakeholders to enhance the charity's work.
- Oversee the production of the annual report, on budget, to schedule, taking overall editorial responsibility for content.
- Work with the Services Manager to support the production of the organisation's booklets, factsheets and other printed resources
- Support campaigns, including M.E. Awareness Month, through developing communication plans, press releases and case study placement.
- Oversee the ongoing development of our Online M.E. Centre and social media work.
- Fulfil the role of brand gateway keeper, ensuring all communications adhere to brand guidelines, house style and organisational tone.
- Contribute to the charity's policy and health work including supporting the All Party Parliamentary Group, Forward M.E., Disability Benefits Consortium and other consortia.

3.3 Working with others

- Work with the CEO, senior leadership team, trustees, communications and policy, membership, support and fundraising to ensure integrated communications across the organisation.
- Work collaboratively across the organisation with staff, volunteers and Trustees and outside of the organisation with key stakeholders to ensure income generation from relevant aspects of the Charity's work.

3.4 Other key accountabilities

- Ensure that all relevant service standards are met including compliance with best practice, legal and regulatory frameworks and internal standards.
- Ensure best value in all our work.

- Undertake any other duty within your ability and within reason, as may be required, from time-to-time, at the discretion of your line manager.
- Act as an advocate for the Charity and its work.

Person specification

Experience & Knowledge

- A minimum of two years' experience in a similar communications management role
- An understanding of M.E./CFS, the impact on people affected by it and associated current political, health, policy and social issues
- Experience of developing and delivering communications strategies & plans
- Experience of measuring impact related to communications work
- Demonstrable experience of managing staff and/or volunteers
- Experience of contributing to/managing the content and development of websites and social media communications channels
- Experience of engaging with press and/or media including writing press releases for local and national press and preparing media briefings
- Experience of planning, commissioning and editing editorial copy
- Experience of engaging with a range of key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, to develop and enhance an organisation's work
- Knowledge of data protection requirements relevant to the role
- A track record of delivering results
- Experience of building and nurturing relationships across all stakeholder groups including beneficiaries
- Experience of communications management within the voluntary sector (desirable)

Skills & Behaviours

- A great storyteller to further the strategic priorities and objectives of an organisation
- An ability to influence people at all levels in a clear, persuasive and tactful manner
- Excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills including a good telephone manner
- Ability to present to a wide audience
- Proven ability to motivate staff and to build and lead teams reflecting the organisational culture and values; a respectful, constructive and energetic style
- Ability to work methodically, managing and prioritising a varied workload
- Ability to use own initiative, work independently and to work well in a team
- Flexible and adaptable approach
- Strong MS Office skills including the ability to use Word, Excel, databases and web-related programmes and software

Attitudes

- Perseverance
- Integrity
- Openness
- Compassionate

- Entrepreneurial
- Courageous
- Resilient
- Collaborative

Key Competencies

- Leadership

Terms and conditions

Outlined below are some of the main terms and conditions of employment relevant to all employees of Action for M.E.

1. Notice

Temporary contracts have one-weeks' notice on either side in lieu of a probation period.

2. Annual leave

The hourly rate for temporary contracts includes an annual leave allowance.

3. Pension scheme

Action for M.E. operates a group pension scheme on an auto-enrolment basis. All employees will join the scheme on the completion of the probationary period unless they choose to opt-out. Action for M.E. will pay a pension contribution which is currently 4% of salary. Action for M.E. will not pay into a personal pension scheme

4. Salary payment

Salaries are paid in arrears on the last working day of each month, by direct credit transfer into a bank or building society.

5. Flexibility

Some posts may require working outside of normal office hours and travel to attend meetings and events within the UK, including occasional overnight stays.

Application timetable

Deadline for applications	Noon Monday 16 th August
Short list meeting	Tuesday 17 th August
Interviews (to be held over zoom)	Wednesday 25 th August

How to apply

To apply, please follow the below link to our application form via Google Forms:
<https://forms.gle/xHXRbZsNCtZWxEzb9>

For more information, or to submit an application, please contact Stacey Vincent at Action for M.E., 42 Temple Street, Keynsham BS31 1EH. Tel: 0117 927 9551.

Email: recruitment@actionforme.org.uk



Cover image shows, top left to right: Jake, Ian, Paul, Dan, Chris, Rich and Matt who ran and cycled the virtual length of America's Route 66 highway – 2,280 miles - to raise £4,500 for Action for M.E.; Christmas Angels knitted by our supporters to send to young people with the condition; the ME/CFS Priority Setting Partnership research project logo; Olivia, who has had M.E. for ten years, taking part in our 2021 #yearsinlockdown campaign.

Bottom left to right: Prof Chris Ponting, patient representative Andy Devereux-Cooke, Solve ME/CFS Chief Scientific Officer Dr Sadie Whittaker and Action for M.E. CEO Sonya Chowdhury at a webinar for DecodeME, the world's largest M.E. DNA study; the campaign banner for our Big Give Christmas Challenge; the cover of *InterAction*, our membership magazine, described by many readers as a lifeline.