

Action for M.E. Information and Support Officer Application Pack



Thank you for considering joining Action for M.E.

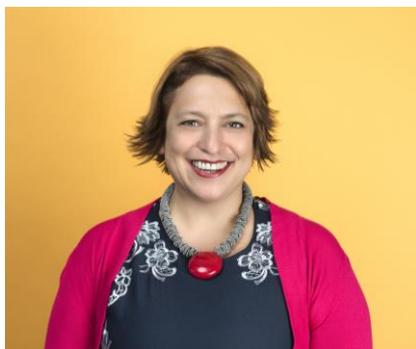
I joined Action for M.E. in September 2012 and am delighted to be working with a staff and volunteer team and Board of Trustees who are passionate, dedicated and determined.

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 summary

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|------------------------|--|
| Job title | Information and Support Officer |
| Responsible to | Information and Support Senior Practitioner |
| Responsible for | N/A |
| Salary | £19,200 per annum, pro rata (£9,600 actual) |
| Hours of work | Part-time (17.5 hours per week) |
| Annual leave | 30 days + 8 bank holidays per year; pro rata |
| Office Base | Keynsham Office or home-based |

Job purpose

The purpose of this role is to provide a holistic, effective and efficient Information and Support Service to adults and children affected by M.E., via phone and email.

Key duties

1. Deliver Action for M.E.'s Information and Support Service

- Creating and maintaining a supportive and professional relationship with children, young people and adults approaching the charity for help, by demonstrating empathy and an understanding of how M.E. can affect people's lives, and by managing clients' expectations and ensuring commitments to them are met.
- Offering emotional support via active, empathic listening, including to people in significant distress.
- Providing information and support on a wide range of issues in areas such as welfare benefits, health and social care, and including on sensitive and confidential matters, in a way that is tailored and appropriate to the individual.
- Working with the client to understand their needs and wishes, empowering them to make informed choices and to take action to achieve their self-identified goals.
- Offering single, one-off pieces of advocacy; taking one action with an external agency on behalf of a client.
- Addressing isolation by connecting clients to other people with M.E., for example via our online forums, our members' magazine, and local M.E. support groups.
- Keep case notes that are appropriate, clear, up-to-date and in line with our policy and procedure
- Referring internally to other Action for M.E. services where appropriate; and signposting to other external sources of support.
- Working flexibly and collaboratively within the team to provide a resilient and responsive service.

- Collecting data on outputs and outcomes as well as case studies in order to demonstrate the impact of the service; to collect and collate feedback and data on efficiency in order to support continual improvement.
- Ensuring that internal and external communications are consistent with Action for M.E.'s brand and position on key issues.

2. Other duties

- Supporting volunteers where appropriate
- Contribute to managing outgoing mail, if possible.
- To attend Action for M.E. meetings and courses as required.
- To work co-operatively within the Action for M.E. team structure.
- To work within the charity's policies and procedures, including safeguarding and data protection.
- Keeping up-to-date with best practice and comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, working within the organisation's policies and procedures and ensure that good practice is observed.
- To maintain a high level of confidentiality at all times.
- Positively promote the work and activities of Action for M.E. at all times.
- Undertake any other reasonable activity in line with the responsibilities of the post as requested by the Senior Practitioner, Chief Executive or any member of the Management Team.

Person specification

Qualifications

Educated to A level standard or equivalent experience in a similar role is preferred, however no one specific qualification is required.

Experience and Knowledge

- Experience of working in a service providing at least one of the following to individuals (including via telephone and email): information, advice, support or advocacy; or, if not, proven transferable skills.
- An understanding of the impact of a fluctuating, invisible condition such as M.E.
- Demonstrable experience of working in a person-centred, needs-led way.
- Experience of working or volunteering in at least one of the following areas: health, social care, carers/family support, employment, education, financial inclusion or welfare benefits.
- Experience of working with people in distress.
- An understanding of using outcomes to demonstrate the impact of our work.
- Knowledge of MS Office including Outlook, Word and Excel.

Skills and Behaviours

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

- An ability to understand, analyze and make effective use of data across all of our work.
- Ability to multi-task, prioritise and effectively manage a varied workload with competing priorities in a flexible and tenacious manner.
- Strong team player and also able to work on own initiative.
- Ability to give and receive constructive feedback, remaining solution-focused.
- Demonstrable ability to work within our organisational values.
- Ability to identify options available, signpost appropriately and contribute to the development of internal and external resources.
- Strong interpersonal skills including motivating, negotiating, influencing and networking with colleagues and other professionals, to build strong internal and external relationships.

Attitudes

- Integrity
- Empathy
- Resilience
- Openness
- Compassionate
- Perseverance

Key Competencies

- Effective communicator
- Solution-focused
- Inquisitive
- Results-driven
- Diligent and meticulous

Application timetable

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| Deadline for applications | 9am Monday 29 November |
| Short list meeting | Monday 29 November |
| Interviews (to be held via Zoom) | Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 December |

How to apply

To apply, please follow the below link to our application form via Google Forms:

<https://forms.gle/JXcek65KJkBwTEJL8>

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

Email: recruitment@actionforme.org.uk

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.



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.