



## ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT BRIEF 2022





**Dear Candidate,**

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive at Action for Stammering Children (ASC), this is a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate to join ASC having celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> year and supporting almost 100,000 children.

Over 150,000 children in the UK stammer and are often deeply frustrated by not being able to say what they want to, when they want to. Added to this, they are often mimicked, teased and bullied. They may be anxious, isolated and helpless. Their parents also feel powerless to help and desperately worried about what the future will hold. ASC is the leading charity of its kind in the UK. It supports these children and their families across the UK by funding expert assessment, therapy and training at the Michael Palin Centre in London – opened by Michael 33 years ago. It also supports outdoor adventure residentials for children who stammer which combine speech and language therapy, group work with thrilling physical challenges. Our strategy is informed by a brilliant Youth Panel made up of young people who stammer, and our work is supported by an inspiring group of ‘Stambassadors’ – adults who stammer in successful careers. We are also an enthusiastic supporter of research into stammering and new therapeutic approaches.

Thanks to our work, the lives of the children and their parents are transformed – they are empowered, resilient and able to fulfil their potential at school, at home, socially and in life. As such, the Charity really does have the power to change lives forever.

Last year, I was privileged to join this brilliant Charity as Chair of the Board of Trustees and have been immediately struck by everything we have achieved, generously supported by our Vice Presidents Michael Palin, Colin Firth, Ed Balls and many others. I have learnt how the charity has grown and developed but there is so much more to be done and I am hoping to hand over the reins of Chief Exec to someone with the passion and enthusiasm to change the lives of children and young people who stammer. My fellow Trustees are looking forward to working with the new Chief Exec to develop and execute the strategy that will take the Charity on the next phase of its remarkable journey.

Throughout this pack you will learn more about our story, our work and our passion. You will also find out more about the role as well as the skills and the qualities we are looking for in our next CEO. If you feel you have the experience, commitment and desire to lead our organisation, we would very much like to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Jane Roberts,  
Chair of Board of Trustees  
Action for Stammering Children



## ABOUT ACTION FOR STAMMERING CHILDREN

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Action for Stammering Children (ASC) commissions the delivery of specialist services that transform the lives of children and young people who stammer. We do this by working with the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London and by running residential courses in the North of England.

We are the charity which created and continues to support the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London. This internationally-recognised Centre runs the UK's largest specialist service exclusively dedicated to the assessment and treatment of children who stammer from across the UK. We also support projects aimed at boosting the confidence of young people who stammer and, through our inspirational Youth Panel, we make sure young people who stammer have a voice in the direction of our Charity.

Stammering is a severe communication disability which impairs social, emotional and educational development. Estimates suggest that 8% of children will stammer at some point and approximately 1% continue to stammer into adulthood. Stammering is more common in boys than in girls. It is characterised by repetitions, prolongations and blocking of sounds, and can be accompanied by feelings of isolation, frustration and embarrassment.

Stammering crosses all races, cultures, religions and social groups. It can conceal intellectual ability, affect educational choices and achievement, result in impaired communication skills and it frequently becomes a focus for teasing and bullying. In severe cases, it may significantly affect a young person's ability to achieve their potential and to make a full contribution to society as an adult.

ASC was the inspiration of the late Travers Reid, a successful businessman and a person who stammered, who was determined to help children who stammer throughout the UK. Travers founded the Charity, along with the late Dr Lena Rustin, an inspirational speech and language therapist. Following his appearance in *A Fish Called Wanda*, Michael became Vice President of the Charity and opened the Michael Palin Centre in 1993.

At the core of the Michael Palin Centre's work is the specialist assessment service for any child or young person in the UK, aged 2-18, who stammers. Both parents attend with their child where possible, so that the stammering problem can be fully assessed in the context of each individual family. Families are seen by two specialist therapists who spend a morning or afternoon with the child and their parents during which they can identify and fully understand the factors underlying the child's stammer. The assessment has been developed and refined over the last 30 years, and more recently has evolved to be able to offer the service online, ensuring that we could continue delivering our service through these difficult times. It is the cornerstone of each child's subsequent therapy and greatly increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

As well as supporting specialist assessments and therapy, the Charity also funds training of speech and language therapists and a programme of research. The training increases the understanding, skills and confidence of speech and language therapists to be able to work with children who stammer. The research programme aims to provide evidence of the efficacy of the therapy as well as



to develop understanding of the nature of stammering and we are funding a PhD looking at stammering and mental health.

Our Youth Panel is made up of young people who stammer and are keen to support the charity. They meet regularly as a group to work together on awareness raising projects and annually with the board to help shape our strategy. They have recently launched an online game which celebrates historic figures who stammered and regularly act as media spokespeople for the charity.

We have a group of 50 'Stambassadors' – adults, in successful careers, who stammer. These people have all filmed videos talking about their careers and their tips for success. They help to show young people who stammer that anything is possible and that their stammers need not hold them back. In 2019 we ran a careers evening with our 'Stambassadors' and we are currently running a mentoring programme for 11 young people who stammer and are at the beginning of their careers.

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION**

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### **Main duties**

- To provide visionary, strategic leadership for ASC, to review and to deliver ASC's strategy
- To bring innovation and new ideas to the charity
- To be the public face of the charity, ASC
- To provide operational and financial management within the governance framework and in accordance with the values of the charity
- To be responsible for fund-raising, diversifying income generation and the financial health of ASC
- To identify, build and maintain relationships with relevant partners and stakeholders
- To run day-to-day operations and manage effectively the small staff team
- To oversee communications.

### **Key Priorities**

- To work closely with the Chair and Board of Trustees to review and deliver ASC's strategy, vision and key goals and meet all targets set by the board
- To review and deliver the charity's business plan which aims to extend the reach and impact of ASC to help more children and young people across the UK who stammer



- To work with the board in fulfilling the charity's constitutional, regulatory and legal obligations and take appropriate steps to control and mitigate risks
- To take responsibility for the financial health of the charity, continuing to implement a strong income generation strategy and to expand the charity's fund-raising with a thorough knowledge of the funding environment
- To develop and maintain knowledge and understanding of the service delivered by the Michael Palin Centre to report on its service to relevant funders
- To maintain and build partnerships and develop innovative approaches to supporting children who stammer and their families across the UK
- To ensure ASC and its mission, reputation and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive way to relevant stakeholders within a framework of the charity's communications strategy
- Together with the Chair to draw up the agenda for board meetings, attend its meetings and oversee preparations and report on progress against strategy and key objectives, and to ensure compliance with high standards of charity governance
- To undertake any other duties as may be required by the Board of Trustees.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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- An understanding of the challenges facing children and young people who stammer and their families
- A track record of successful and innovative strategic leadership, strategy development and implementation
- Experience of fund-raising, income generation and diversification
- Experience of influencing and lobbying, policy development and initiatives and campaigning for social change
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to listen, inform, engage, and influence a range of decision makers, policy and opinion formers
- Experience of building, shaping, and motivating a staff team
- Financial acumen, with an appreciation of risk management
- Experience of developing, maintaining, and sustaining partnerships with key stakeholders
- An understanding of charity governance and experience of working effectively with a non-executive board.



### **How to apply**

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To apply to become Chief Exec of Action for Stammering Children please send a copy of your CV together with a supporting statement addressing the skills required in the person specification, maximum two sides of A4 to [roberjane@gmail.com](mailto:roberjane@gmail.com)

Please ensure that your application fully addresses the requirements for the role and explains why you would be an excellent fit for our Charity.