

Active Autism Alliance Project Lead Recruitment Pack

About Us

When I joined Autism Action, I went through the same thought process that anyone applying for a new role goes through, and the one that you will be going through right now. I spoke to family and friends and thought about the future. I asked myself a series of questions about my values and ambitions and how they aligned with the charity and role I was applying to. I hope that this recruitment pack helps you answer those questions.

As Chief Executive at Autism Action it's important to me that anyone interested in a role at the charity shares our ambition – to remove the barriers and stigma that autistic people face every single day of their lives. Our small but passionate and driven charity exists to make a big difference, through funding and commissioning world-leading research, delivering projects which directly impact the lives of autistic people, and campaigning to achieve change. As a small team every person in our charity can make a real and unique contribution. We value the different perspectives that employing people of all neurotypes brings, and we believe in creating a work environment that brings out the best in everyone and gives each member of our team a great experience. We work hard but we do it because we know the scale of the challenge that autistic people and their families face.

We have big plans and need people to join us who will be inspired and inspirational, full of energy and ideas, who will enrich our team and our efforts to make a big difference for autistic people.

I hope like me you find the answers to your questions, that you find our work and mission motivating and that we are a good match for one another. We look forward to your application.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom Purser".

Tom Purser
Chief Executive
Autism Action



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Job Description

Job Title: Active Autism Alliance Project Lead.

Contract Term: Fixed-term, 24 months with possibility of extension to 5 years subject to future funding.

Salary: £35,000 - £42,000 a year dependent on skills and experience. This will be discussed and agreed with the successful applicant. The role is full-time, but part-time hours (4 days per week) will be considered. Please state your preference when applying.

Location: Hybrid working, attendance at the Cambridge Office (Byron House, Cambridge Business Park CB4 0WZ) a minimum of two days a week.

Reporting to: Tracey Parsons, Director of Programmes.

Closing date: Midnight on Sunday 11th January 2026.

Inclusive recruitment and employment

We are committed to being inclusive in all we do, including when we recruit new staff. We welcome applications from anybody who believes they have the skills and experience outlined in this pack. We actively encourage applications from candidates who are neurodivergent (such as autistic people or those with dyscalculia), LGBTQIA+, identify as being disabled and/or are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

As part of this commitment, we want your recruitment experience to be positive. Please contact us to request any adjustments you need for the application or interview process. Disclosure of disability or requests for reasonable adjustments will not impact the selection process.

We have worked with autistic people and inclusive recruitment specialists to develop our job description and recruitment pack templates, as well as our hiring processes. In particular, we will avoid vague statements such as 'excellent communication skills' and will instead describe what needs to be achieved and be open to different ways of achieving it. However, there is always more to learn, so if you have suggestions for improvement, please let us know.



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Once in post, we have a process in place to identify requirements for reasonable adjustments and will offer them proactively where required.

Overall purpose of the role

Autistic people experience persistent barriers to participating in sport, physical activity and community leisure. Autism Action is working with a wide set of partners to change this.

We are leading an exciting new project to lay the foundations for the long-term transformation of the sport, physical activity and community leisure sector. Sport and physical activity are a major contributor to long term physical and mental health and yet autistic people consistently meet barriers to accessing them.

We have formed a ground-breaking alliance with the aim of transforming the sport & physical activity sector for autistic people, to welcome and support them at all levels, from 'having a go' to elite competition, whether or not they also have higher support needs such as learning disabilities.

Our mission is to break down barriers to inclusion and to increase participation for autistic people, particularly those who are less active and most in need.

We will do this with a transformational 5 year programme of work, split into two phases. Our alliance is led by Autism Action, Activity Alliance and Access Sport, and the project will be co-produced with the autism community. The alliance blends experience, expertise and scalability both within and beyond sport, covering inclusive community sport, disability sport, specialists in autism, neurodiversity and learning disabilities, NGBs (National Governing Bodies), the fitness and leisure sector, the health sector and research experts.

It includes National Governing Bodies British Cycling and the England and Wales Cricket Board, StreetGames, leading leisure provider Parkwood Leisure, Neurodiverse Sport, Sporting Equals, the National Academy for Social Prescribing, the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University and leading wellbeing research specialists State of Life.

The proposed 5-year programme of work has been informed by a period of extensive consultation, mapping, and planning, and will be co-produced with the autism community to ensure the best chance of success. Phase 1 involves the establishment of a strong evidence base and engagement with NGBs, clubs, locally trusted organisations, leisure centres and social prescribing networks. Initiatives will



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be designed with autistic people and their parents and carers to overcome specific barriers, and tested ready for confident roll-out in phase 2.

Phase 1 of the programme has been funded for two years by Sport England and the Active Autism Alliance Project Lead will lead and manage the delivery of this.

Main duties and responsibilities

Successfully plan, project manage and deliver the autism and sport project to achieve its agreed outcomes within the two-year funded period including, but not limited to:

- Project planning and management
- Managing relationships with project partners at a variety of levels, up to CEO
- Communication and coordination with partners and other associated groups
- Planning and organisation of programme of meetings
- Coordination of activities as per the project plan, including comms planning and community engagement
- Work with our Community Engagement Lead to plan and deliver accessible, well-designed and effective community engagement activities to shape the project
- Risk monitoring, measurement and reporting
- Project and progress reporting and assurance
- Finance management and invoicing
- Develop and prepare the second phase of the programme, supporting work to secure full funding
- Any other governance, management and assurance activities necessary to meet Sport England requirements



Person Specification (Who are we looking for?)

Essential

Qualifications

While there are no specific essential qualifications, the successful candidate will need to demonstrate that they have relevant experience in project or programme management.

Experience

- Knowledge of and/or personal interest in autism.
- A strong understanding of the sport and physical activity sector.
- Experience in building strong relationships, managing expectations and engaging confidently with a range of stakeholders.
- Financially literate with an ability to manage budgets.
- Experience of writing reports and evaluations, with the ability to summarise findings and make recommendations, particularly progress reports.
- Experience of managing challenging situations or conflicting demands, and supporting expression of all viewpoints, regardless of personal beliefs.

Skills

- Ability to collaborate with colleagues, contribute to discussions and help with any tasks needed to support the team.
- Ability to work under pressure, manage time and prioritise workload effectively.
- Confident communicator, able to share ideas clearly in writing, presentations and speaking to different audiences.
- Project or programme management skills, including the ability to plan, organise and deliver projects on time and to a high standard, with a strong focus on detail and accuracy.
- Ability to tailor communication with a range of different people in a variety of different roles.
- Organisational skills, including ability to manage your own time and multiple priorities to achieve high-quality outcomes.
- High level of accuracy and attention to detail.
- Demonstrate an awareness of, and commitment to, inclusion, equality and diversity.
- A good working knowledge of MS Office 365 and ability and willingness to learn new IT systems (with support/training where needed).



Desirable

Qualifications

- Formal project management training or qualification

Experience (please still apply even if you don't have these)

- A strong understanding of the barriers that may affect disabled children and young people from participating in sport.
- Experience of working with underserved communities, particularly disabled people.
- Experience of working for a charity or 'sport for development' organisation.
- Experience of remote and/or hybrid working.

Skills

- Ability to use basic project management software, such as Microsoft Planner

We are aware that the skills required for this role may be interpreted differently by different people. Our selection process will focus on the desired outcomes, and we are open to different ways of achieving them.

Selection Process

Step 1

To apply, please send your CV (maximum 3 pages) and a cover letter (no more than 500 words) detailing how you match the job description and person specification for this role to info@autismaction.org.uk by midnight on Sunday 11th January 2026.

Due to the skills required for the role, only written applications will be accepted on this occasion.

Step 2

We will evaluate applications based on how well they match the job description and person specification and invite those with the strongest applications to interview. Disclosure of disability or requests for reasonable adjustments will not impact the selection process

We expect to notify all applicants of the outcome of their application within 2 weeks of the closing date.



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Step 3

First interviews will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams (support is available if you're unfamiliar with Teams). Interviews are expected to be held in the second half of January 2026. If invited to interview, the interview questions, tasks, and the names and photos of the interview panel will be provided in advance. You'll also have the opportunity to request any adjustments needed for the interview process.

Step 4

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a second, face to face interview in Cambridge (Byron House, Cambridge Business Park CB4 0WZ). Interviews are expected to be held in the second half of January 2026. Interview questions, tasks, and the names and photos of the interview panel will be provided in advance. You'll also have the opportunity to request any adjustments needed for the interview process.

Step 5

We expect to notify all candidates of the outcome of their application within a week of the second interviews.

