



Shaping Our Lives – Head of Operations Job Pack

We are grateful that you are considering applying for the role of Head of Operations. This pack contains all the information you need to apply for the role.

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Introduction – About Shaping Our Lives

Shaping Our Lives is embarking on an exciting period of growth and development. Having recently received a four-year grant through the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF), we will be focusing on renewing the role of Disabled people in the age of change, further solidifying our role as experts in the field of inclusion, and strengthening our current practices.

We are looking for an enthusiastic, self-motivated and experienced Head of Operations to help us lead on the development of a new four-year strategy, set organisational priorities, and support all staff to align their work to our organisation's overall strategy and priorities.

Shaping Our Lives is a user-led organisation that hosts a national network of user-led groups, service users and Disabled people. We are a non-profit making organisation chaired by Peter Beresford OBE (Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at Brunel University). The management board and National User Group are all Disabled people and / or from marginalised communities who are committed to inclusivity and diversity.

We specialise in user-led research and inclusive involvement practice, ensuring that diverse and excluded communities are represented in the policy making, planning, and delivery of health and social care services.

We work in an accessible and inclusive way and are committed to the equal involvement of people from marginalised and oppressed communities.

Our vision

A society in which everyone has equal life chances and support for independent living. A society which prioritises inclusion.

Our mission

We work with people, especially those facing the biggest barriers, to build better more inclusive services and support.

Our aims

- To promote best practice inclusive involvement of people who use health and social care services locally and nationally.
- To provide resources and research to support organisations and people who take part in engagement activities to have a meaningful and influential experience.
- To deliver inclusive involvement guidance, training and methods so health and social care providers can create better and more effective services for the people who use them.
- To ensure that the experiences of people who use health and social care services are considered by policy and planning personnel.
- To give a shared voice and provide a network to user-controlled organisations.
- To work in an equal and accessible manner so everyone can take part.

For more information, visit www.shapingourlives.org.uk.

Key Dates

- Closing date: Monday 13th July 2026 at 23:59
- Remote interview date: week(s) starting Monday 3rd August 2026 (although we can accommodate if necessary)

How to Apply

If you wish to apply for this role, please send us the completed **Applicant Details Form** and **Supporting Information Form** (in your preferred format) by 23:59 (midnight) on 13th July 2026 via email to: roxane@shapingourlives.org.uk with 'Recruitment – Head of Operations' in the subject line.

We would also like to ask you to complete the [Recruitment Diversity Monitoring Form](#), although this is optional. If the online form is not accessible to you, please get in touch so that we can provide it in an alternative format.

You can submit your Supporting Information Form in the following formats:

- In writing
- By making a video [in English or in British Sign Language (BSL)]
- By making an audio recording only

All information will be treated confidentially, and applications will be anonymised by our Recruitment and Access Coordinator.

We will not be considering formal CVs for this role.

Before applying, read the job description, the person specification, and information provided about Shaping Our Lives carefully.

We wanted to further emphasise the following in relation to the 'Personal Statement' section in the 'Supporting Information Form':

- Relate your skills, knowledge and experience to each of the person specification criteria as fully as possible.
- It is advised that you address each criterion point by point by providing example of work, experience, skills and knowledge where possible.
- Consider any paid or unpaid work you have done.
- Do not forget to include any voluntary experience or any skills and knowledge acquired through your lived experience or hobbies.

Due to access requirements of staff and the skill requirements for this job we are not accepting applications by post.

We aim to respond to all applications, whether successful or not. If you do not hear from us until the interview window, however, please assume your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion.

You must have the legal right to work in the UK to apply for this role. We cannot provide visa sponsorship.

Shaping Our Lives is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We encourage and welcome applications from people from marginalised and often excluded communities.

Thank you for your interest in Shaping Our Lives.

Accessibility

If you need support to apply, please contact our Recruitment and Access Coordinator via email at roxane@shapingourlives.org.uk or by telephone at 02080 885628.

Some examples of what you can ask for are:

- Help to write or format your application
- Support to understand the information in this document
- Request this document in an alternative format

Please let us know if you need support as soon as possible.

You can find further information about the steps we are taking to make our recruitment process inclusive and accessible [here](#).

The Use of Artificial Intelligence

A core pillar of our approach to recruitment is human-led decision-making. We endeavour to honour the time and effort you invest when applying for a role at Shaping Our Lives. We will not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to filter, rank, or reject applications.

We understand that you may choose to use AI-powered assistive technology or generative AI when filling out your application. However, we want to discourage overreliance on AI as, in many cases, applications can end up being generic and fail to showcase candidates' unique voices and experiences.

We ask that you think about how you may use AI tools as responsibly as possible and what value they will add. You can find further advice on AI use in the recruitment process and examples of what we consider to be acceptable and unacceptable uses in our statement on the use of AI [here](#).

Questions About the Role

If you have any questions about the organisation, what the job entails, or anything else along these lines, please get in touch with our Head of Projects via email at ana@shapingourlives.org.uk or by telephone at 07904 532939.

Job Description

1. General Information

Job Title: Head of Operations

Location: Home based with some travel

Salary: £40,000 per annum (£24,000 pro rata for 3 days per week / 21 hours per week)

Hours: 3 days per week / 21 hours per week (Monday to Friday)

Note: We work flexibly and are open to discussing working arrangements that enable you to thrive in the role.

Responsible to: Management Board (Directors)

Responsible for: liaising with Finance Officer and any staff (freelance or otherwise) taking on administrative work

Contract type: Permanent contract with 6-month probation period

Benefits: 3% employer contribution to pension (or as current legislation), 25 days annual leave plus 8 bank holidays (pro rata) and the HMRC tax-free working from home allowance (pro rata).

Note: Appointment is subject to satisfactory references, proof of right to work in the UK, and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

2. Purpose of the Job

The Head of Operations will lead on the internal running of the organisation, including its infrastructure and management. Their focus will be to ensure our governance, finance, systems, and processes are robust, compliant, and effective, with an emphasis on long-term impact and sustainability. They will enable the successful delivery of our projects by leading on our internal affairs and ensuring we operate efficiently.

The postholder will be actively collaborating with other staff members and our Management Board to ensure that external work aligns with our internal values and expectations, all whilst working to establish long-term sustainability for the organisation.

Understanding of inclusive working and knowledge of the operating conditions of a small user-led organisation would be an advantage.

As a small organisation, all our staff are sometimes required to work in other areas of our business (with appropriate support). We have an excellent reputation as a successful user-led organisation and are a supportive and friendly team.

The post holder will be home-based and may on rare occasions be asked to work on different days, in the evenings or at the weekend. The role may require some travel to attend meetings and events.

General Responsibilities

- a) You must be committed to working in an inclusive way and have an understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- b) You must follow our internal policies and procedures.
- c) To participate in regular supervision and undergo training if required.
- d) To attend and participate in remote and in-person meetings including internal meetings.
- e) To be able to work as part of a team and co-operate with other staff, the Management Board, and the National User Group.
- f) To be self-administrating and able to work independently.
- g) To show willingness to be involved in the wider work of Shaping Our Lives.
- h) To treat confidentially any information about user-led groups, members, service users, and staff that could be deemed as personal, private or sensitive.
- i) In addition, the post-holder may be required (with support) to undertake any other activities appropriate to their level of responsibility and accountability.

Main Responsibilities

1. Shape and Deliver Shaping Our Lives' Business Plan

- a) Lead on the development of a new four-year strategy, working closely with the Head of Projects and Management Board, ensuring Shaping Our Lives continues to evolve and develop in line with the sector we operate in.
- b) Ensure organisational priorities are clearly defined, realistic, and achievable, as well as directly aligned with delivery activities (particularly in relation to our NLCF priorities).
- c) Monitor and evaluate progress against our strategic objectives, including reporting to the Management Board and flagging and addressing any concerns.
- d) Support all staff to align the delivery and priorities of their work with the organisation's strategy, plans, and priorities.

2. Governance

- a) Ensure Directors and NUG are involved in decision-making in relation to governance arrangements.
- b) Support Directors and NUG to fulfil all governance requirements.
- c) Lead on the recruitment, induction, and training of new NUG members.
 - Provide ongoing support and facilitate two-way engagement from and for NUG members
 - Ensure that, collectively, the NUG influences the organisation's strategy and delivery of activities
 - Monitor and evaluate NUG input, and measure the effectiveness of the NUG
- d) Coordinate and complete administrative-related tasks for the Annual Business Meeting, Directors meetings, and any ad-hoc NUG meetings.
- e) Ensure legal and regulatory compliance (such as supporting the Finance Officer and accountants with reporting, creation of annual accounts).

- f) Maintain and, where necessary, build robust governance structures, ensuring our policies, procedures, and standards are up to date, including conducting regular reviews and keeping abreast of sector-wide developments.

3. Finance

- a) Work with the Finance Officer and accountants to ensure accurate budgets, financial reporting, and forecasts are conducted and completed as required.
- b) Approve and process various payments (such as involvement payments, expenses, subscriptions, etc.).
- c) Monitor and report on cashflow and financial sustainability.
- d) Manage contracts and supplier relationships (IT, website).
- e) Ensure the organisation's financial systems and controls are robust and appropriate in relation to the organisation's size and portfolio of projects and activities.

4. Effective Procedures

- a) Create and maintain an organisational risk overview.
- b) Ensure the organisation has effective digital systems, including secure data management (OneDrive, GDPR compliance, etc.).
- c) Hold regular internal reviews (both with staff and the National User Group) to reflect on learnings and improve ways of working.
- d) Maintain HR systems, records, and contracts.
- e) Coordinate recruitment, induction, and trainings (for both staff and National User Group members).
- f) Maintain and, where needed, develop systems to support effective project delivery (such as tracking and documentation tools).

5.Strategic Planning and Sustainability

- a) Lead on futureproofing our organisational sustainability, by establishing effective processes, practices, and procedures for the running of a small organisation (with support from staff and the Management Board).
- b) Develop and maintain systems for tracking income, projects, and organisational performance.
- c) Prepare internal reports to support our Management Board's decision-making, inclusive of structured information and analysis.
- d) Contribute to funding applications and proposals by preparing and providing overviews and summaries with organisational, financial, and operational input.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. Understanding of governance, financial oversight, and regulatory and organisational compliance.
2. Knowledge of co-production and inclusive involvement principles.
3. An understanding of the discrimination and exclusion experienced by marginalised or oppressed communities.

Experience:

1. At least two years' experience of successfully supporting the internal running of an organisation (paid or voluntary).
2. At least two years' experience of working in the fields of inclusion and involvement (paid or voluntary).
3. Experience of developing or improving organisational systems and processes.
4. Experience of completing monitoring and reporting requirements, such as for the leadership of an organisation.
5. Experience of supporting governance and regulatory compliance.
6. Experience of building strong relationships with various stakeholders (e.g., colleagues, board members, partners, funders, and service users), particularly those responsible for the running of the organisation.

Qualities and Skills:

1. Flexible and able to proactively plan and prioritise own workload to meet funder and organisation targets and tight deadlines.
2. Ability to produce accurate and accessible management and/or monitoring reports (financial and project).
3. A commitment to empower people from all communities to have a strong voice.
4. Excellent numeric competence and confident user of Excel spreadsheets (e.g., for preparing budgets).
5. Sound Information and Communications Technology (ICT) competence.
6. Comfortable with home working for an organisation that does not have offices.

Desirable criteria

1. Lived experience or a good understanding of the lived experience of being a Disabled person and/or a member of a marginalised or oppressed community.
2. Experience of working in the user-led sector and /or within user-led organisations.
3. Experience of making information, processes, and systems accessible for various audiences (such as staff and other stakeholders).