



NNECL

Recruitment Pack

Operations and
Communications Officer

This pack contains the following sections:

About the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL)

How to apply for this role

A copy of the job description and person specification

A copy of our Equal Opportunities Policy

About NNECL

NNECL is a national charity registered with the Charities Commission (1180793). We work with education practitioners and care system professionals to transform the progression of young people from care, estranged or sanctuary seeking backgrounds into and through further and higher education.

Since 2013 our work has been supporting, connecting, and empowering our community with whom we share our overarching ambition, for more young people with care backgrounds to consider, access and flourish through apprenticeships, further and higher education into fulfilling careers which will sustain them for life.

Our lived experience gives us a unique opportunity to help policymakers understand how frameworks impact in real life and to build trust with the care experienced community.

Our vision is a society where children and young people with care backgrounds are empowered to achieve their full educational potential. Our mission is to create educational environments where young people from care, estranged or sanctuary seeking backgrounds thrive.

Why we exist

- 14% of young people with care backgrounds go to university vs 47% of the wider population
- Once at university the drop-out rate for our learners is unacceptably high – 36% vs 6% of their peers
- Estranged students and those seeking sanctuary face similar barriers and challenges
- At the current rate of progress, it will take 107 years to achieve post-16 educational parity

Our strategic objectives focus our work

Inform	Contributing to the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, research and useful information about care experienced learners
Connect	Providing networking opportunities for member organisations and engagement with key stakeholders
Support	Supporting and developing evidence-based effective practice
Champion	Championing the work of our member organisations through advocacy and communications
Sustain	Ensuring the future sustainability of our organisation

Our members

NNECL is the leading voice for professionals working with students from care and estranged backgrounds. We have 100 organisations in active membership across universities, colleges, foster agencies, local authority leaving care teams, virtual schools and charities. Members include University of Portsmouth, The Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), University of Kent, Capstone Foster Care, Newcastle College and many more. Over 300 individual practitioners are supported via these organisations enabling us to reach a community of more than 800 dynamic professionals who participate in our events and benefit from our regular policy and positive practice updates. Our professionals include those working in Widening Access Teams and Local Authorities who support student with care experience to be successful in their studies and their careers after they graduate.

Our staff and volunteers

We are led by an experienced Board of Trustees who our small but ambitious team and twelve consultant Quality Mark assessors. We are one of the few organisations in this space to have a director with lived care experience. Our Programmes Manager, also care experienced, brings to NNECL extensive working knowledge of widening participation across the higher education sector. We are committed to continually developing staff and volunteer skills through training and peer support. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to suggest new ideas and revisit existing services and activities in our desire to be led by the needs of the care experienced community.

About working at NNECL

We are a fully remote organisation. We use the co-working space at London South Bank University for our monthly together days. Our registered address is also at LSBU.

We provide Team Members with the IT kit needed to work remotely and pay a home working allowance.

We are proud to be an accredited Living Wage employer. This means we are committed to ensuring every member of staff will always earn the real Living Wage, not just the minimum wage.

We offer generous annual leave, 25 days (full time equivalent) (plus Bank Holidays) and we close for a period over Christmas and New Year.

We are willing to consider any reasonable request for flexible working from the start.

Employees are automatically enrolled in the Nest pension scheme with an employer contribution of 3% and an employee contribution of 5%.

How to apply

Please send the following information by email to info@nnecl.org with the reference **Operations and Communications Officer Application** in the subject line:

- A short CV (no more than 2 sides of A4) including details of two referees who can speak to your employment skills and experience, one of whom should be your current or most recent employer (they will not be contacted until after job offer);
- A supporting statement (no more than 2 sides of A4) specifying how you meet the points contained within the person specification and key responsibilities and why you would like to work for NNECL; and
- Our EDI monitoring form (this information will be used for statistical purposes only and will not be seen by those involved in the selection process).

If, after exploring our website nnecl.org you would like to speak informally to our Executive Director, or have any questions about the role or the application process, please email info@nnecl.org

Recruitment timeline

1. The deadline for applications is 5.00pm on Friday 13 December 2024
2. First interviews will be held on Teams w/c 6 January 2025
3. Candidates invited to second interview will undertake a competency test w/c 13 January 2025 – this will be online
4. Second interviews will be held in person during w/c 13 January 2025, at our co-working space at The Clarence Centre, London South Bank University, 6 St George's Circus, London, SE1 0AP

Inclusivity

NNECL is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where every individual, regardless of background, feels valued and empowered to contribute. We recognise care experience as a protected characteristic and celebrate diversity as a catalyst for innovation and growth and are committed to creating a workplace thriving on varied perspectives and mutual respect. For us, safeguarding is everyone's business, and all our staff and volunteers are expected to observe professional standards of behaviour and conduct their work in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

Job Description and Person Specification: Operations and Communications Officer

Salary	£27,100 (FTE)
Hours	30 hours per week over 4 days
Contract	Permanent
Location	Flexible, must work from our London workspace at least once a month, usually on a Tuesday for our 'together' day and you will be required to attend in person meetings and awareness raising events.

Person Specification

We are seeking a committed and experienced Operations and Communications Officer to provide effective operational support to work closely with our Executive Director to ensure our small charity runs smoothly and efficiently. You will be pivotal in managing day to day administrative tasks, helping with our external communications and providing support to deliver our strategic objectives. This multifaceted role will cover NNECL's work broadly, from governance and trustee matters to processing invoices and supporting our communications and engagement activity. As our Operations and Communications Officer, you will have foresight, adaptability and the ability to handle a range of tasks that drive forward our mission while ensuring our day-to-day operations are flawlessly executed. This varied lynchpin role won't suit you if you have limited work experience, like each week to look the same, don't enjoy following organisational processes, want a large organisation with close supervision, or need to know every detail of the job upfront.

Key Responsibilities

Operations

- Be the first point of contact for incoming calls and emails and redirecting as needed, in a professional manner
- Assist with the smooth running of day-to-day accounts including, collating and filing invoices, end of month coding and liaising with our external accounts as and when needed
- Follow the charity's financial procedures when carrying out any finance tasks
- Ensure the charity's policies are maintained and filed correctly

Membership

- Support the Programmes Manager onboarding of new members
- Lead on the development of our Student Voices Network
- Work with the Executive Director to attract new members
- Execute strong data quality and input data meticulously into our CRM

Communications

- Maintain the NNECL website to ensure all content is updated and correct as and when required
- Set up and manage NNECL webinars from conception to completion
- Promote the charities work nationally across multiple outlets including social media
- Contribute content ideas and create copy for social media content, articles, blogs, and a quarterly newsletter for volunteers and supporters
- Assist in the marketing of the organisation and its activities

Governance

- Provide admin support to meetings of the Board of Trustees and National Strategy Group, including circulation of papers and drafting of minutes
- Accurately minute board meetings and subcommittees
- Support the information management of the organisation ensuring correct access restrictions and efficient document filing on SharePoint

About you

As a member of our small but mighty organisation you will play a crucial role of maintaining quality, efficiency and control across NNECL. To be considered for this role, you will be highly organised with meticulous attention to detail and a committed approach to serving customers and stakeholders. With an ability to work efficiently and independently and the initiative to take things forward within an agreed scope, you are comfortable in your communications and interactions with colleagues and external stakeholders. You enjoy working on multiple tasks and activities at the same time, using or developing systems to prioritise tasks. You will have gained a good level of experience already in roles focused on project administration and communication with customers or stakeholders, ideally in a charity or membership organisation.

Experience, Knowledge and Attributes

- High standard of numeracy and analytical skills
- Attention to detail and ability to maintain accuracy under pressure
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Strong intercultural competence and ability to build relationships across borders.
- Experience working in a support/administrative role, ideally in a charity, professional or membership organisation, or research/knowledge organisation
- Confidence in communications with colleagues, customers and external partners, displaying professionalism and right level of tact and awareness of others
- Good time management and ability to efficiently organise and deliver multiple tasks simultaneously
- Able to work independently, including in a remote work environment, and to ask for clarification/direction when needed
- Collegial and able to thrive in a dynamic work environment while supporting multiple colleagues
- Confidence using IT systems, familiarity with virtual meeting tools (e.g. MS Teams), use of Excel databases and proficiency in MS Office

Additionally desirable

- Comfortable in providing support in public speaking situations (e.g. webinars, workshops etc)
- Experience in monitoring and evaluating projects
- Knowledge of children's social care in the UK or widening participation in post-16 education
- Experience of working with QuickBooks and Canva

Equal Opportunities Policy

The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. This is an abridged version of the full policy contained in our Staff Handbook.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. NNECL, in providing services and/or facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation

In addition, NNECL recognises care experience as a protected characteristic.

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - leave for parents
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

Our commitments

NNECL commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Agreement to follow this policy

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with the NNECL Board and National Strategy Group Co-Chairs.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in our Staff Handbook. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Recruitment

Our recruitment practices aim to attract applicants with the knowledge, skills and experience required for the job role, irrespective of an applicant's background. A diverse staff team supports us to better understand the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders.

We may therefore take positive action to improve our diversity amongst our volunteers or staff. We will also ask interviewees whether any adjustments are needed to participate in the selection process. These are examples of how we aim for equality within recruitment.

Equal opportunities in employment

We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Person specifications will avoid any unnecessary requirements (those unrelated to effective performance) that may otherwise have deterred applicants.

We will base decisions on objective criteria. We will make reasonable adjustments in recruitment as well as in day-to-day employment.

Service users, suppliers and others

We will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using or seeking to use the services we provide. If you are bullied or harassed by a service user, suppliers, contractor, visitor or others, or if you witness someone else being bullied or harassed, you are asked to report this to your manager who will take appropriate action.

Your responsibilities

All staff are responsible for supporting the organisation in meeting its commitment and avoiding unlawful discrimination. If you experience a level of discomfort or disagreement with something that happens when you are at work, you are encouraged to bring it to the attention of a manager or someone in authority.

We take any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a grievance.