



HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Job Information Pack

April 2025

AWARE NI is the depression charity for Northern Ireland

T: 02890 357 820 (BELFAST) / 02871 260 602 (DERRY/LONDONDERRY)

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland with NIC100561 Company No. N.I. 30447

[AWARE-NI.ORG](https://www.aware-ni.org)



CONTENTS

WELCOME	3
OUR STORY	4
OUR SERVICES	5
OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES	6
OUR STRATEGY	7
OUR FINANCES	8
HOW WE'RE ORGANISED	9
JOB DESCRIPTION	10
PERSON SPECIFICATION	14
WHAT WE OFFER YOU	17
HOW TO APPLY	18

WELCOME

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Operations at AWARE NI. As Northern Ireland's leading charity supporting those affected by depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, AWARE NI is committed to delivering high-quality services that make a real difference. This is a pivotal leadership role, responsible for shaping and delivering our strategic vision alongside the Senior Management Team.

The Head of Operations will oversee the development and management of our services, ensuring sustainability through effective grants, contracts, and partnerships. They will also drive innovation in funding and business opportunities, lead on external partnerships, contribute to government strategy groups, and play a key role in our lobbying and campaigning efforts.

With a focus on research, evaluation, and quality assurance, the successful candidate will help ensure our services remain effective, impactful, and aligned with best practices. Additionally, they will work closely with the Fundraising team to identify opportunities for targeted support and oversee safeguarding across the organisation.

We are keen to recruit and develop people who are passionate, positive and enthusiastic about their role within the organisation and about supporting people affected by depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. In this application pack, you can find out more about becoming part of team AWARE.

We are a user-led organisation which prizes our volunteers and partners and seeks to work to the highest standards. We believe AWARE NI is a great place to work.



I would like to thank you for your interest in joining Team AWARE, and we look forward to receiving your application.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Karen Collins
Chief Executive



OUR STORY

AWARE is the depression charity for Northern Ireland.



AWARE NI was established in Derry/Londonderry in 1996. We are the only charity in Northern Ireland dedicated exclusively to raising awareness of depression as a serious mental health illness and enabling people with depression or bipolar to access support to help them with their condition.

We now have two offices; one in Derry/Londonderry and a second in Belfast

AWARE NI was founded by people with personal experience of bipolar disorder and depression, of the negative impact this has on people's lives, and of the lack of understanding and support available in the community at that time. They were driven by a passion to ensure that others did not suffer as they did. This user-led ethos remains a key driver of AWARE NI's work, and the majority of our volunteers and staff bring to the organisation the unique insight of personal experience.

At AWARE NI, we believe that the people who use our services should have a say in how they are developed and delivered, so we employ people with experience of depression at every level in the organisation, including the Board of Trustees.





OUR SERVICES

AWARE NI provides a wide range of interventions for individuals and groups, so we've just listed some of the key ones here. You'll find a lot more information on our website at aware-ni.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

AWARE NI has an established network of **25 peer support groups** in rural and urban areas across the country, which are run by our trained volunteers. Support groups welcome people with depression and bipolar disorder as well as carers for people with the illness. In-person and online options are available.

EDUCATION & TRAINING SERVICES

AWARE NI delivers mental health and well-being programmes into communities, schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. These programmes include our suite of **Mood Matters** programmes, **Living Life to the Full**, **Mental Health First Aid** and **Mindfulness**. We offer a range of resources tailored to the particular mental health challenges faced by children and young people. Some of these involve engaging directly with schools, as well as providing pathways for individuals.

OUTREACH

We attend outreach events and host public talks throughout the year to raise awareness of mental ill-health and promote our services.

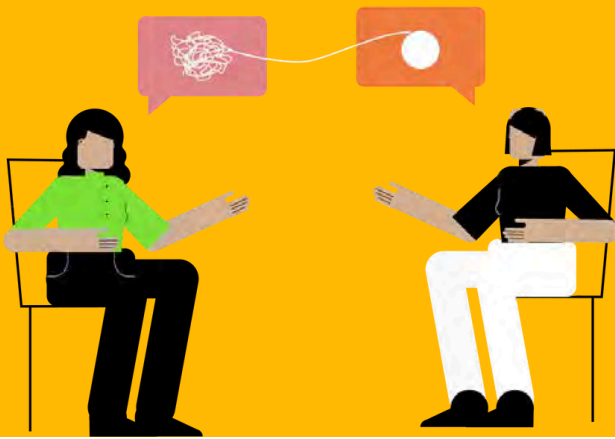
INTERACTIVE PHONE, WEBSITE & EMAIL SERVICE

Aimed at those directly affected, or those that care for them, these **email & phone services** offer support and information about issues relating to depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. We actively listen to any concerns or questions a service user might have and identify the most appropriate options for them at that time, informing him or her of appropriate, alternative services available within AWARE and externally.

INFORMATION BOOKLETS & FACTSHEETS

Our services are supported by carefully designed guidance delivered in printed booklets, factsheets, and made available online. These valuable resources are tailored to individual groups, carers, volunteers and fundraisers including sector-leading **fundraising kits**.





OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

Our Vision is for a future where everyone can openly discuss their mental health, access services appropriate to their needs, and develop the skills and knowledge to maintain positive mental health.

OUR VALUES

Our Values are that, above all else, we value our service users. We will treat everyone with dignity, respect and compassion. We are transparent in all our work and accountable to our stakeholders.

▪ **Dignity, respect and empathy:**

We will treat each other and our service users with dignity, respect and empathy.

▪ **Integrity, professionalism and transparency:**

We are committed to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty and openness in all aspects of our work.

▪ **Innovation and excellence:**

We are committed to providing high-quality services and to being innovative for the benefit of people using our services.

▪ **Equality, diversity and inclusivity:**

We are committed to championing equality, diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our organisation through an intersectional lens.

OUR MISSION

- To promote emotional health and wellbeing.
- To help people build resilience and maintain positive mental health at every stage of their life journey.
- To ensure that individuals living with depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder are aware of and have access to appropriate support.
- To advocate for policies that facilitate access to appropriate support across Northern Ireland.

HOW DO WE EMBODY OUR VALUES?

- We will respect everyone we come into contact with.
- We will listen non-judgmentally.
- We will be positive, polite and professional in our dealings with people.
- We will do what we say we will do.
- We will foster a culture that is caring and compassionate.
- We will lead by example.



OUR STRATEGY

[You can click here to download a pdf version of our 2024-2029 strategy, but we've included our key aims from it on this page.](#)

Strategic Aim 1

CONNECTION

Enhance peer support, innovate services, and advocate for mental health in schools and workplaces.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain and expand community-based peer support services and groups to facilitate social connections and provide peer support opportunities for individuals living with low mood, depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.
2. Innovate service delivery methods to better serve diverse populations through both in-person and online platforms.
3. Improve the organisation's online offerings to provide accessible and user-friendly resources and support for individuals seeking help and support assistance.
4. Enhance education and training programmes by integrating personal experiences and evidence-based research to design more engaging, effective, and equitable programmes.
5. Advocate for inclusion of mental health education in school curriculum to promote awareness and understanding from a young age.
6. Collaborate with employers to create supportive environments conducive to mental well-being, particularly for individuals experiencing low mood, depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.

Strategic Aim 2

CHANGE

Foster knowledge partnerships, advocate tailored mental health policy, reduce stigma, and initiate impactful research for societal change.

OBJECTIVES

1. Engage partners to facilitate knowledge sharing, generate innovative ideas, and collectively address emerging mental health issues and needs.
2. Identify and execute campaigning and policy activities tailored to address the specific needs of local communities across Northern Ireland, ensuring that the challenges faced by individuals with depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder remain prominent on the public and political agenda.
3. Commitment to address stigma and improve societal understanding of anxiety, depression and bi-polar by realistic and destigmatising portrayals of these issues.
4. Design research initiatives to provide AWARE NI with both a platform and comprehensive data, enabling the organisation to actively influence policy, societal dynamics, and instigate meaningful change.

Strategic Aim 3

COMMUNITY

Engage the public in mental health advocacy, communicate strategically with stakeholders, and promote diversity and wellbeing among staff and volunteers.

OBJECTIVES

1. Empower volunteers and the public to advocate for mental health by adopting tailored communication and interactive platforms to inform, engage and inspire meaningful involvement.
2. Empower volunteers and the public to advocate for mental health by adopting tailored communication and interactive platforms to inform, engage and inspire meaningful involvement.
3. Build a diverse workforce and foster an inclusive organisational culture while providing comprehensive well-being support to staff and volunteers.

Strategic Aim 4

FINANCE & FUNDRAISING

Create a robust financial plan, innovate fundraising methods, and boost revenue through diverse events, engagement, and partnerships for lasting stability.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a strategic financial stability plan and implement measures to ensure long-term sustainability.
2. Identify and develop new models of income generation to deliver support services, education, and training based on the evolving needs of the target population.
3. Enhance financial performance by broadening the sources of income, thereby increasing overall revenue. This involves exploring and implementing various avenues for generating funds beyond traditional methods.

FINANCES

You can review our Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet in our latest annual accounts to March 2024 at a glance below, and click on the links at the bottom to access the last three years' annual accounts.

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Endowment funds Designated 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and legacies	3	762,124	-	419,292	1,181,416	728,121
Charitable activities	4	130,665	-	480,923	611,588	553,085
Investments	5	2,080	-	-	2,080	254
Total income		894,869	-	900,215	1,795,084	1,281,460
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	6	354,399	-	-	354,399	370,290
Charitable activities	7	221,814	212,098	921,115	1,355,027	1,322,814
Total expenditure		576,213	212,098	921,115	1,709,426	1,693,104
Net income/(expenditure)		318,656	(212,098)	(20,900)	85,658	(411,644)
Transfers between funds		(544,008)	544,008	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(225,352)	331,910	(20,900)	85,658	(411,644)
Reconciliation of funds:						
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		732,512	102,271	20,900	855,683	1,267,327
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		507,160	434,181	-	941,341	855,683

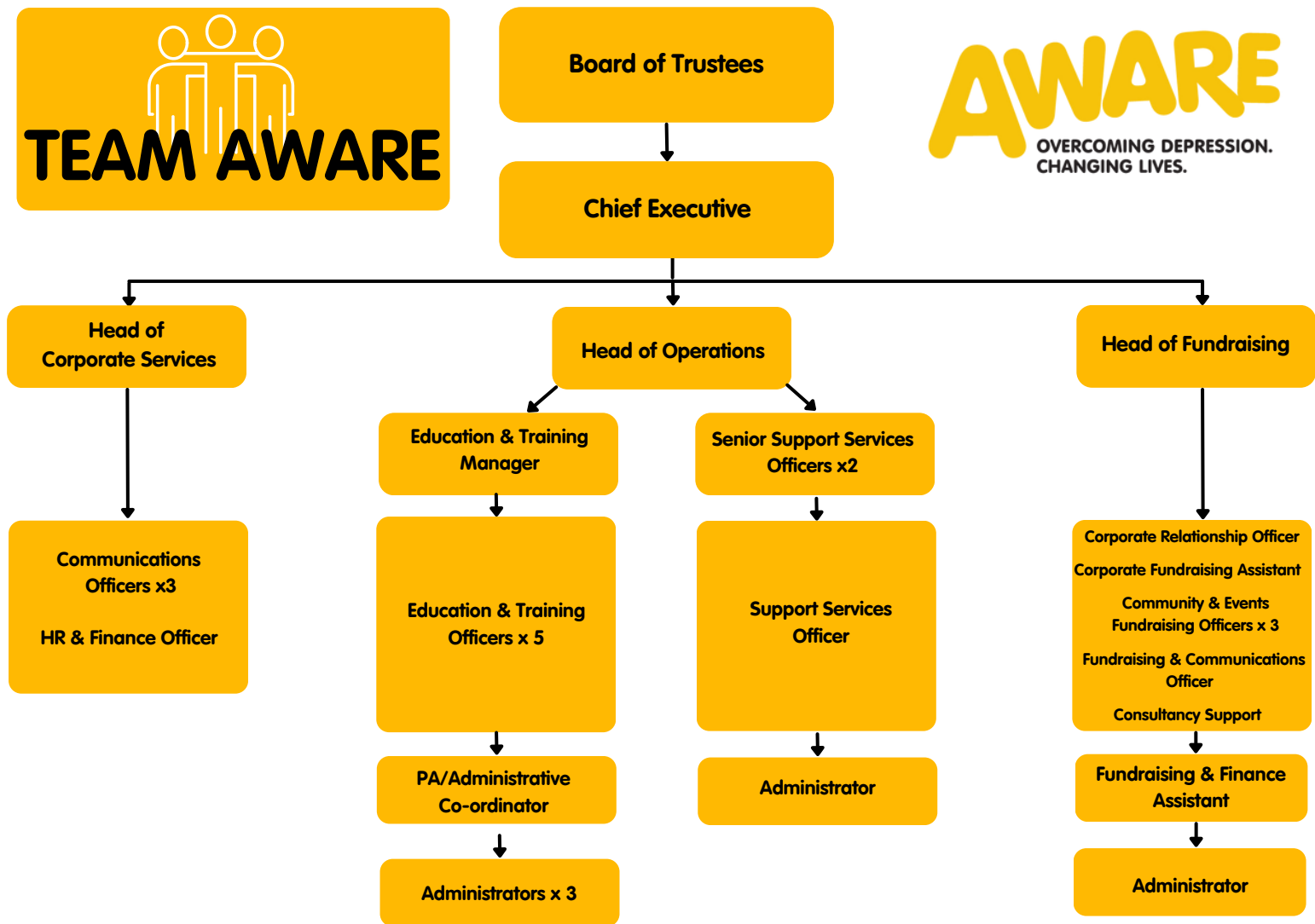
	Notes	2024 £		2023 £	
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		26,637		33,326
Current assets					
Debtors	13	113,530		93,442	
Cash at bank and in hand		927,603		786,019	
		1,041,133		879,461	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(126,429)		(57,104)	
Net current assets			914,704		822,357
Total assets less current liabilities			941,341		855,683
Net assets excluding pension liability			941,341		855,683
The funds of the Charity					
Designated funds			434,181		102,271
Restricted income funds	15		-		20,900
Unrestricted funds			507,160		732,512
			941,341		855,683

[2021/22 Accounts](#)

[2022/23 Accounts](#)

[2023/24 Accounts](#)

HOW WE'RE ORGANISED



JOB DESCRIPTION

Head of Operations

Location: Belfast or Derry Office (with hybrid working options available)

Reports to: Chief Executive

Direct Reports: Education & Training Manager, Support Services Senior Officers

Duration of contract: Full-time Permanent

Hours per week: 35 (Flexible working arrangements, including job sharing and compressed hours, will be considered.)

Salary: Circa £45,000 p.a plus employer pension contribution

Please note if there is more than one suitable candidate we will establish a waiting list for any similar posts which may become available in the next 12 months.

Job Purpose

As a key member of the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Head of Operations will play a critical role in leading and developing AWARE's services, contributing significantly to its strategic direction and overall success. This role involves overseeing AWARE's operational functions and actively engaging in governmental strategy steering groups and partnerships with stakeholders. The post holder is expected to bring creativity and innovation to service delivery, embracing opportunities to implement new and effective approaches. Working collaboratively within the SMT, the Head of Operations will facilitate cross-departmental coordination and ensure the seamless functioning of AWARE's operations.

This role will lead on:

- Setting strategy with the SMT for the delivery and development of AWARE services
- contribution to government strategy steering groups
- overseeing the management and development of existing grants, contracts and service-level agreements
- development of new funding/ business opportunities and partnership initiatives
- Leading on the establishment and maintenance of key external partnerships and alliances
- Working collaboratively with the Fundraising team to identify opportunities for targeted fundraising and other appropriate staff
- Development of our lobbying and campaigning strategy
- Research, evaluation and quality assurance
- Taking responsibility for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the organisation's service delivery plans in liaison with other members of SMT.
- Lead on Keeping Children & Adults Safe

This key position will provide leadership across the organisation, to motivate, develop and encourage a culture that is consistent with AWARE's values and ways of working. In collaboration with other Senior Managers, this role will foster a climate of cooperation to enhance the potential and impact of AWARE.

The post holder will lead the team to deliver excellence, putting in place quality measures to be implemented across the staff and volunteers and seeking opportunities to improve and expand delivery and standards.

Key Responsibilities

Corporate and Strategic Leadership

- Contribute to the strategic and corporate direction of the organisation by playing an active role in the Senior Management Team.
- Report directly to the Chief Executive and contribute to Board of Director meetings as required.
- Represent AWARE on government strategy steering groups.
- Monitor, evaluate and review service practices to ensure AWARE is working to the highest standards.
- Act as the lead on clinical governance initiatives.
- Take on new designated leads in service or business activity in negotiation with the Chief Executive, ensuring alignment with the overall role.

Service Delivery and Development

- Develop the strategy for the development and delivery of AWARE's services with input from service managers and senior officers.
- Ensure that the delivery of AWARE's programmes is to the highest standard.
- Ensure that AWARE complies with statutory funders' standards, legislative requirements, and internal policies.
- Establish and maintain appropriate performance measures and indicators to evidence operational achievements.
- Oversee the preparation of reports on performance as required.
- Work with SMT to ensure programme delivery is funded sustainably, including contributing to funding applications when required.
- Ensure AWARE maintains a high profile in external business and partnership activities with Health and Social Care agencies, public bodies, and voluntary sector organisations.
- Be available to support out-of-hours crisis situations as required (led by Service Manager/Senior Officers).

Contract Development and Management

- Ensure regular meetings and reviews with funders, external regulators, and statutory/voluntary partners.
- Seek and pursue new contact opportunities while developing existing ones in line with AWARE's core business.
- Oversee the maintenance of contracts, grants, and service level agreements (e.g., adult mental health, Promoting Mental Health, and Suicide Strategy funding streams).
- Lead or assist in preparing tenders, procurement, and grant applications.

Representation and External Networking

- Maximise opportunities to increase AWARE's profile and reputation, seeking networking and influencing opportunities.
- Develop collaborative working relationships with the mental health and wider voluntary sector.
- Proactively enhance AWARE's profile with local political representatives, councils, health trusts, and others.
- Ensure strategic relationships with key external agencies are developed and maintained.
- Take an identified lead for liaison with key external agencies and stakeholder forums.
- Play a key role in working with strategic partners to pursue potential funding opportunities.
- Collaborate with statutory and voluntary organisations to develop new initiatives.
- Initiate new contacts and forums as needed and contribute to existing planning and partnership forums.

Quality Assurance, Evaluation, and Research

- Assist in developing robust quality assurance procedures to meet AWARE's requirements and contract specifications.
- Lead the planning and evaluation of services, overseeing the implementation of performance/quality management systems, including data collection and presentation.
- Stay updated on emerging research and best practices to inform evidence-based service development and delivery.
- Lead research initiatives, including commissioning external research when necessary.

People & Performance Management

- Lead, manage, and motivate service managers while delegating appropriately.
- Ensure open communication channels and proper information flow within the organisation.
- Ensure adherence to HR policies and procedures.
- Set and monitor performance targets for direct reports, addressing underperformance when necessary.
- Ensure robust resource management processes are in place.
- Participate in the recruitment, selection, and retention of staff and volunteers as required.
- Take responsibility for personal professional development.

- Provide ongoing support and supervision to staff, including performance reviews, appraisals, and training needs assessments.
- Oversee the performance management of service managers.

Financial & Risk Management

- Work with the CEO and Head of Corporate Services to establish annual budgets and manage the departmental budget efficiently.
- Periodically review expenditures against the agreed budget and ensure adherence.
- Engage in the risk management process concerning AWARE's Services.

Other Duties

- Maintain confidentiality at all times, only sharing information as necessary and in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection regulations.
- Be aware of and comply with the organisation's objectives, policies, and regulations.
- Promote the aims and objectives of AWARE.
- Commit to and work within AWARE's code of conduct, mission, values, and objectives.

The above list is not exclusive or exhaustive, and the post holder will be required to undertake extra duties as may reasonably be expected within the scope and grading of the post. All staff are required to be professional, cooperative and flexible in line with the needs of the post and the organisation. This is a regional post which requires travel throughout N.I. Occasional evening and weekend work, including staying away from home, may also be a feature.

The Candidate

Our ideal candidate for this post will:

- Be passionate about developing mental health services in Northern Ireland.
- Be a confident and knowledgeable communicator at a strategic level.
- Have experience in the development and delivery of mental health programmes focused on prevention, early intervention, and recovery (a professional mental health background may be advantageous).
- Possess strong networking skills and the ability to form strategic alliances across the community/voluntary sector and statutory agencies (a community development background may be advantageous).
- Have a broad knowledge of common mental health conditions.
- Be knowledgeable about the current relevant policy framework.
- Be self-motivated with a strong ability to plan their own work.
- Be capable of initiating and developing relationships.
- Be an effective people manager.
- Be a leader who contributes positively to the senior management team.
- Be a flexible, inspiring, and supportive colleague.
- Display empathy and sensitivity in communications with staff, volunteers, service users, and the general public.

The above list is not exclusive or exhaustive, and the post holder will be required to undertake extra duties as may reasonably be expected within the scope and grading of the post. All staff are required to be professional, cooperative and flexible in line with the needs of the post and the organisation. This is a regional post which requires travel throughout N.I. Occasional evening and weekend work, including staying away from home, may also be a feature.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Qualifications

Essential

- A third level qualification OR five years experience in a similar field

Desirable

- A qualification in Mental Health/Mental Health Promotion (e.g., professional mental health nursing, mental health social work, clinical psychology, mental health occupational therapy, or health promotion).
- A recognised teaching or training qualification (e.g. TQUK Award in Education and Training, Certificate in Education, or equivalent).

2. Experience

Essential

- Three years experience in the development, promotion, management, and evaluation of mental health/health/education programmes.
- Two years experience in policy, government engagement, or influencing.
- A proven track record in developing and delivering a successful mental health programme delivery strategy.
- Two years experience in leading and managing a diverse team to achieve agreed objectives.
- Two years experience in identifying funding sources and liaising with funders to maximise funding potential.
- Experience in setting and managing a significant budget (over £100,000) and reporting to funders.

Desirable

- Experience in providing training to a range of organisations/ workplaces in the community, voluntary, statutory, and private sectors.

3. Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

Essential

- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively with a broad range of people and forge strong working relationships.
- Ability to manage and motivate staff to deliver excellent performance.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, with confidence to represent the organisation publicly.
- Strong planning, coordinating, and networking skills.
- Ability to prioritise and meet competing deadlines in a busy working environment.
- Excellent attention to detail
- Comprehensive knowledge of mental health/mental illness, including evidence-based approaches to promoting good mental health, signs and symptoms of mental illness, and sources of help.
- Understanding of the wider community, voluntary, and statutory sectors in Northern Ireland and their roles in promoting mental health.

Desirable

- Knowledge of IT-based training programmes within workplace and community settings.
- Understanding of self-help strategies for promoting good mental health, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness concepts.

4. Personal Style and Behaviour

Essential

- A flexible, inspiring and supportive colleague
- Self-motivated with a strong ability to plan their own work.
- Commitment to the values, policies, procedures, and standards of conduct of the organisation.
- Willingness to undertake relevant on-the-job and external training as required.
- Commitment to the work of the organisation.
- Open-minded, non-judgemental, and willing to challenge personal attitudes.
- Ability to empathise with service users regardless of race, gender, age, religion, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.
- High level of drive and personal motivation to achieve results.
- Enthusiasm and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and capitalise on new opportunities.

5. Other

Essential

- Willingness to work flexibly including evening and weekend work.
- Willingness to travel across the region and further afield, including ROI and the UK if required.
- Access to a car or other means of transport to fulfil the travel requirements of the role.



WHAT WE OFFER YOU

We want to take care of our staff and value their contribution.

As a community-based charity AWARE can offer employees:

- A competitive salary
- 25 holiday days (increasing to 28 days with service) + 11 statutory days
- Travel mileage
- Pension contribution
- Laptop and mobile phone provision (if appropriate)
- Support and supervision to excel in your role
- Staff team building away days
- A comprehensive induction programme
- Team meetings
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme
- Reasonable paid time off to attend appointments

We seek to be a family friendly employer. We recognise the challenges of balancing your work and personal life and this can be a particular challenge if you have a young family or caring responsibilities. Our policies have been agreed to seek to give flexibility where possible and to offer compassion and sensitivity.

Key to this we would highlight that in the case of an advertised full-time post we will be happy to consider requests for job shares. In some cases compressed hours or reduced hours contracts may be possible. For part-time roles there may be an opportunity for some flexibility on the hours/days of work. All requests seek to balance the needs of the organisation and of individual staff.



HOW TO APPLY

Complete the online application form by **4pm on 2nd May 2025**, describing how you meet the criteria listed below. We will use this to shortlist interview candidates. We reserve the right to interview only those candidates who best demonstrate how they meet the criteria.

Interviews will be due to take place on **15th & 16th May 2025**. Please let us know if you have any difficulties with this timeline.

Shortlisting Criteria

To apply for this role, you **MUST** have:

1. A third-level qualification OR five years' experience in a relevant field.
2. Three years' experience in the development, promotion, management, and evaluation of mental health, health, or education programmes.
3. Two years' experience in:
 - Policy, government engagement, or influencing.
 - Leading and managing a diverse team to achieve objectives.
 - Identifying funding sources and liaising with funders.
4. Experience in managing a budget over £100,000 and reporting to funders.

If invited to interview, you will need to:

- Demonstrate how you meet the rest of the essential criteria (found in the person specification in this pack), including but not limited to:
 - Strong leadership and people management skills.
 - Excellent communication, networking, and stakeholder engagement abilities.
 - Knowledge of mental health services, policy frameworks, and quality assurance.
 - Ability to prioritise workloads, meet deadlines, and manage competing demands.
- If applicable, demonstrate how you meet the desirable criteria (found in the person specification in this pack), including but not limited to:
 - Relevant Mental Health Promotion or Teaching/Training qualification.
 - Experience in providing training to various sectors.
 - Knowledge of CBT, Mindfulness, and IT-based training programmes.

We might be required to assess against desirable criteria to differentiate candidates.

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the application form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Disability

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, a person is disabled if they have, or have had "a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact us so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

Equal Opportunities

AWARE is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Please address any enquiries relating to the advertised position and your submission to:

**Linda Wade
HR & Finance Officer
AWARE NI
Email: linda@aware-ni.org**

www.aware-ni.org



BELFAST OFFICE : 40-44 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GG

DERRY/LONDONDERRY OFFICE : 2 Crawford Square, Londonderry/Derry, BT48 7HR

AWARE Defeat Depression, known as AWARE. Company No: NI 30447.

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: NIC100561.