Candidate Pack for
Director of People

Affinity Trust

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in Affinity Trust and in this opportunity to join us as our Director of People. It is a privilege to lead an organisation with such a strong legacy and such an exciting future. Affinity Trust has supported people for more than 30 years and today we work across England and Scotland, supporting more than 1,000 children and young people, adults and older people through a wide range of services.

We are a values-led organisation with a clear purpose: to support people to live the lives they choose. We also have ambitious plans for sustainable growth, strengthening quality, inclusion and organisational capability as we support more people in the years ahead.

We are entering a new chapter for Affinity Trust, with a clear focus on strengthening the capability, confidence and culture needed to support growth, performance and long-term sustainability. This is a broad and influential executive role, and we are looking for an experienced people leader who has worked at Executive level and who can shape and deliver a progressive People agenda, build strong relationships across the organisation and help create the conditions for colleagues to do their best work.

You may already be operating as a Director of People, Chief People Officer or equivalent executive leader in a large and complex organisation, or you may bring senior people leadership experience from a values-led, multi-site environment with the breadth, Board exposure and credibility to step quickly into this role.

Above all, I am looking for a leader who shares our values, brings pace, credibility and resilience, and is willing to be visible and connected across the organisation. This is not a role that can be done only from a distance - it requires someone who will listen, understand the reality of colleagues' experience, build trust with operational and corporate teams, and provide clear leadership, challenge and support at Executive and Board level.

I hope this pack gives you a sense of our ambition, our culture and the importance of this role. The Director of People will lead a wide-ranging agenda spanning recruitment, inclusion, people operations, learning and development, people partnering, internal communications and employee engagement. It is a role with significant influence over how we attract, develop, support and engage our colleagues, and how we continue to build a high-performing, collaborative and open culture with our values at the core.

If you share our ambition, our values and our belief in what is possible, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Kerry Dearden
Chief Executive

About us

Be Part of Something Extraordinary:

Affinity Trust is a national charity supporting children and young people, adults and older people with learning disabilities, autism and other support needs to live good lives. We work across England and Scotland and support more than 1,000 people through a wide range of services, including supported living, residential care, community-based support and specialist services for children and young people.

With operations spanning around 250 locations and partnerships with commissioners, housing providers and other stakeholders across multiple regions, we are a substantial, values-led organisation with real scale and complexity. People are at the heart of everything we do. Our values shape how we work every day: we listen, we learn, we build on strengths, we work together, we take responsibility and we have the courage to try new things.

We are also committed to co-production and to ensuring that the people we support help shape our services and our future. For an incoming Director of People, joining an organisation where people leadership, organisational performance and workforce investment decisions must all remain closely connected to quality, lived experience and the outcomes that matter most.

About the Role

We are looking for a strategic, visible and values-led Director of People who can lead a broad and influential People agenda across Affinity Trust. Reporting to the Chief Executive, you will provide strong leadership across recruitment, inclusion, people operations, learning and development, people partnering, internal communications and employee engagement. You will help create the conditions for colleagues to do their best work, while ensuring our People strategy, systems and services support quality, performance, growth and sustainability.

Affinity Trust is at an exciting point in its development. We have a clear strategic focus on quality, growth, inclusion, workforce capability and long-term sustainability, and we are strengthening the leadership, culture and systems needed to support more people in the years ahead. For candidates, this is an opportunity to join an organisation with strong social purpose, real operational complexity and a genuine commitment to improving lives through high-quality, person-centred support. This role will be central to shaping our culture, strengthening leadership capability, improving colleague experience and ensuring that our people practices are inclusive, effective and aligned with our values. Most importantly, you will help us realise our guiding belief: that with the right support, anything is possible.

Why Join Us

This is an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the future of Affinity Trust at a time of ambition and change. You will join an organisation with a clear purpose, strong values and a commitment to delivering high-quality support, and play a key role in ensuring we attract, develop, support and engage the colleagues who make that possible every day.

If you are motivated by purposeful leadership and want to use your people, culture and organisational development expertise to help shape a stronger, more inclusive and more sustainable future, we would be pleased to hear from you. This is a chance to lead a wide-ranging People agenda, strengthen organisational capability and increase our impact for children, young people and adults.

Our Purpose

Supporting people to live their life, their way.

Our Values

- People are at the heart of everything we do – We listen, we learn, we build on strengths.
- We work together – We are one team. We value people's strengths and differences.
- We give our best – We do what matters. Good days and bad, we take responsibility.
- We have courage – We try new things. We are creative, adaptable, and always moving forward.

This isn't just another leadership role - it's a chance to be part of something truly meaningful, at a time of growth and momentum. If you're a compassionate, courageous leader ready to shape the future of social care, we'd love to hear from you.



Making Independence Possible

At Affinity Trust we create opportunities for people to lead their best lives.
Everything we do is rooted in the belief that with the right support, people with learning disabilities and autism can live full, rich, and meaningful lives — lives where they are in control and wherever possible we empower them to make their own choices, pursue their goals, and participate fully in their communities.

As our new Director of People, you will play a central role in the development of Affinity Trust's future. Here's how we're already making a difference: To learn more about the support we provide — and how you could be part of it — please **click here.**

Supported Living: Empowering Choice, Building Lives

Supported living gives people the freedom to live in their own homes and stay connected to their communities with flexible support designed entirely around them.

We work in close partnership with each person to create a personalised support plan, which is regularly reviewed together with the individual and the key people in their life, ensuring the support evolves as their goals and circumstances change.

We go far beyond support and care. We empower people to make decisions, pursue ambitions, and build real, lasting independence. Our teams work closely with individuals and those who matter most to them, co-creating personalised plans that adapt as goals evolve. It's about giving people control, confidence, and connection.

Community-Based Support: Living Fully Together

We support people to develop the skills and confidence to live life to the fullest.
Whether it's managing daily routines, discovering new interests, making friends, or joining in with local life - our community-based support helps people explore what independence means to them.

This isn't just support - it's partnership, encouragement, and belief in each person's potential.

Residential Care: Quality, Not Quantity

We operate a small number of high-quality residential care homes, each supporting no more than six people. These homes provide warm, inclusive environments where people with complex needs can feel safe, respected, and supported to live their lives, their way.

Children and Young People's: Creating Brighter Futures

Established in 2018, the Children and Young People's Division is growing fast and making a powerful impact. We offer two specialist support arrangements:

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
Working with children and young people with complex needs, PBS helps reduce behaviours that challenge and enhance quality of life, all while aiming to prevent hospital or residential placements. Each practitioner works intensively with 1–2 young people over 24 months, creating personalised strategies that truly make a difference. These support pathways are currently available in Bradford, Wakefield, Greater Manchester/Lancashire, Gloucestershire, and Bristol.

Keyworking
Our Keyworkers coordinate holistic, person-centred support for up to 10 children and young people at a time, ensuring that no young person falls through the gaps. From preventing hospital admissions to amplifying young voices, this support is all about building strong networks of care. Currently delivered in Derbyshire, it's already changing lives and we're just getting started.

Looking ahead, the division has ambitious plans to expand its PBS and Keyworking footprint and to develop new initiatives.

This is the moment to join Affinity Trust and help us build on a proud legacy — while boldly shaping the future of support and inclusion. With innovation, heart, and strong operational leadership, we know we can do even more.

And with you on board, we will.



Our people - a strong foundation, an exciting future

Affinity Trust is in a position of real strength and we're building from solid ground following a few years of significant investment in digital transformation. At the close of 2026/27, we finished the year around breakeven following investments and with a healthy cash balance.

As we move through 2026/27, we are meeting our budget commitments and managing sector headwinds well and have identified opportunities for growth and efficiency. We continue to enable strategic investments in what matters most:

- The majority of all our colleagues are already paid above the National Living Wage and we continue to enhance pay and recognition for our incredible Support Workers
- We continue to improve induction and management development programmes to grow the next generation of inclusive, values-driven leaders
- Continued investment in quality assurance by growing our quality team

We're proud to be in the fourth year of our 2023–2028 organisational strategy, and even prouder of what we've achieved so far. Highlights include:

- Establishing a national co-production group with the people we support
- Completed the roll out of new Digital IT systems that empower our teams and streamline how we work
- Maintaining strong CQC and Care Inspectorate ratings across our registered provision
- Expanding our reach by securing new contracts and welcoming more people into our support
- Unveiling our new organisational values and visual identity, reflecting who we are and what we stand for

This is an exciting moment in Affinity Trust's journey — with strong leadership, financial stability, and a clear strategic direction, we are poised for meaningful, sustainable growth.

And to view our most recent annual report, please click **here**.



Our Strategic Aims 2023-28

We are in the fourth year of our five year Strategic Plan, which sets forth how we will continue to develop as an innovative provider of high-quality person centred support.

While working through the enormous challenges faced by the social care sector over the past few years, we have also undertaken a comprehensive review of all our systems and processes. This Transformation Programme has included the digitalisation of major systems for Operations, Rostering, HR and Finance resulting in an operating platform which will drive improvements to the delivery of support while creating a better working environment for our staff.

The challenges presented by the economy, the labour market and the underfunding of social care will continue to have an impact, as we look to deliver our strategy, but we are in a strong position to overcome these challenges and take the Affinity Trust forward with the people we support at the heart of all that we do.

Our five core aims below are the pillars of our strategy and will shape everything we do over the next five years:



Enable people to live great lives

- ✓ We will provide person-centred support driven by choice and opportunity for everyone, with regulator ratings of GOOD or better in both England and Scotland.
- ✓ Our technology will enable evidence of great outcomes for people we support.



Support more people to live at home

- ✓ We will help people to transition from hospital back into the community.
- ✓ We will increase the number of people living in their own home in communities of their choice.



Be a workplace where our people will grow and develop

- ✓ As part of our core values we will continue to be an inclusive and diverse workplace, and recruit more managers with protected characteristics.
- ✓ Through our investments in technology we will improve our employee experience.
- ✓ We will focus on the health and wellbeing of our people and provide continued development opportunities.



Actively partner, collaborate and

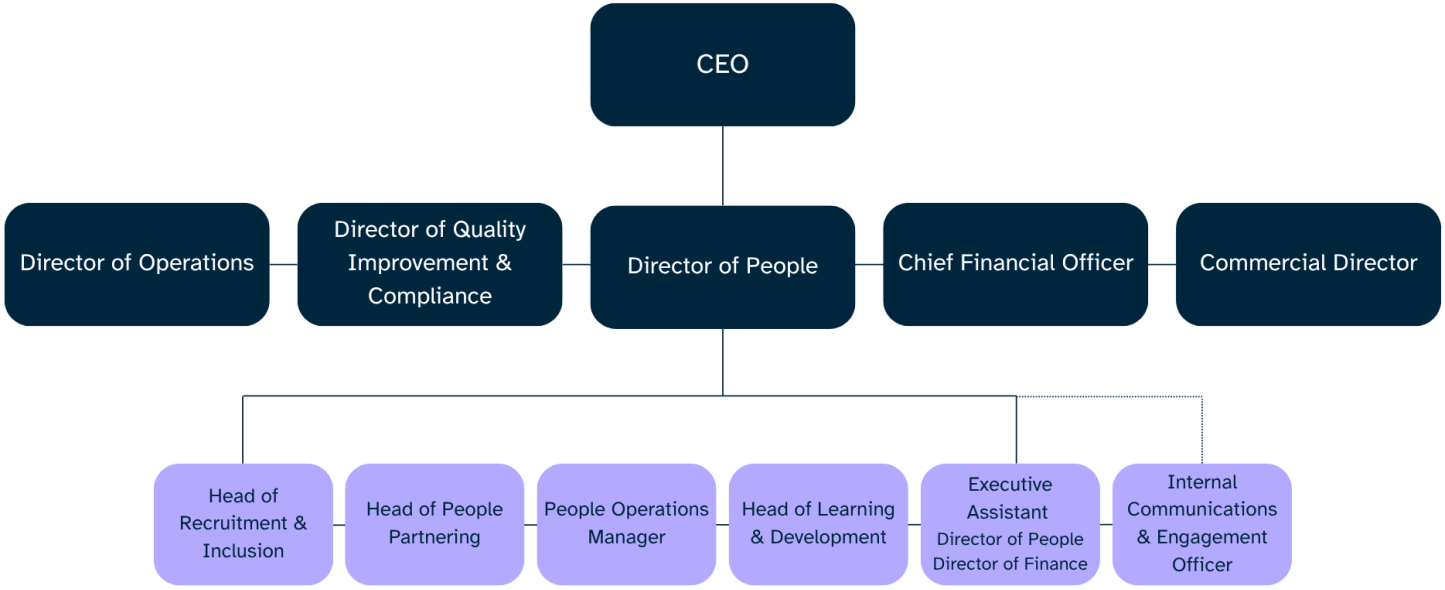
- ✓ We will be a collaborative and useful part for evolving health systems, local authorities and other providers to improve outcomes for people we support.
- ✓ We will advocate alongside the people we support and their families to transform social care policy and practice.

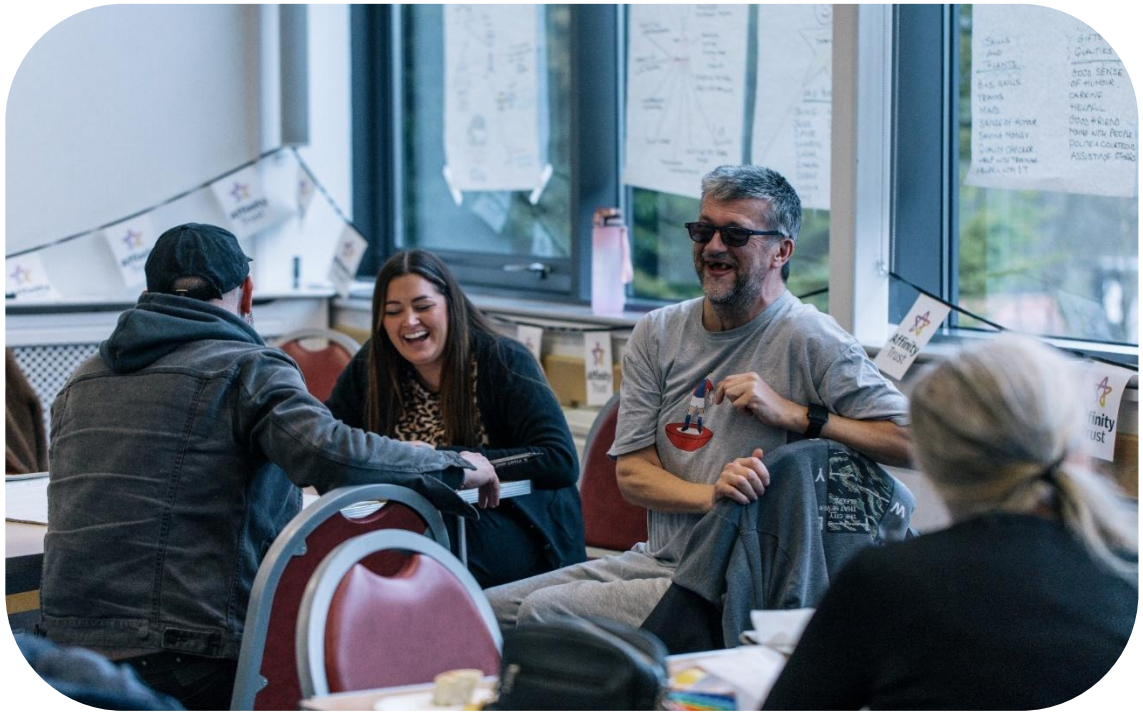


Be financially fit to meet our ambitions

- ✓ We will ensure financial sustainability and healthy reserves enabling us to continue to grow, innovate and invest to improve the lives of people we support.
- ✓ We will continue to find more efficient ways of working, making every pound count.

Our Executive Team and People Leadership Team





Job Description

Job title:

Director of People

Reports to:

Chief Executive

Responsible for:

Recruitment, Inclusion, People Operations, Learning and Development, People Partnering and Employee Engagement

Role Purpose

The Director of People will be a visible leader responsible for the People agenda within Affinity Trust. Providing strong leadership of the People function which includes People Business Partnering, Learning and Development, Recruitment, Inclusion, People Operations.

This role will lead the development and execution of People strategies, supporting a high-performance, collaborative, diverse and open culture with our values at the core.

The role also provides strategic leadership for employee engagement and is an Executive Member of the People Committee and Board.

Main responsibilities

Strategic Development & Performance Monitoring

- Work closely with the CEO and the senior leadership team to develop and implement the organisation strategic goals.
- Ensure that People strategies and People systems enable Affinity Trust to be recognised as a leading and progressive provider.
- Lead the development and implementation of People plans that offer an efficient, seamless and engaging experience to colleagues enabling them to focus on encouraging the people we support to live their lives, their way.
- Lead on organisation design and development to ensure the organisation is able to meet the challenges of delivering on it's strategies whilst remaining agile, relevant and efficient.
- Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) and people data to assess the overall health of the workforce and work in collaboration with stakeholders to support corrective action where necessary.
- Horizon scan both internally and externally to ensure we identify future workforce requirements that supports the organisation to grow whilst attracting, developing and retaining valued colleagues.
- Lead strategic workforce planning to ensure Affinity Trust has the capacity, capability and flexibility to meet current and future service needs.
- Keep ahead of our legal and regulatory employment requirements.
- Prepare and present reports to senior leadership and the board on People performance, including areas for improvement, areas to celebrate and identifying areas of risk, along with appropriate mitigation.

Governance and Reporting

- Provide regular reports and updates to the Executive Team, Board of Trustees and relevant committees on people-related performance, risks, opportunities and progress against the People Strategy.
- Ensure all activities under the remit of the Director of People comply with relevant employment legislation, regulatory requirements, guidance and recognised best practice.
- Provide people oversight on major organisational change, growth, tenders and TUPE activity, ensuring effective risk management, colleague engagement and alignment with organisational values.
- Provide oversight of complex employee relations matters, ensuring fair, legally compliant and values-led resolution of organisational risk, investigations and senior casework.
- Develop and report on KPIs related to workforce performance, culture, inclusion, engagement, wellbeing, recruitment, retention, learning and development, demonstrating impact and identifying areas for improvement.
- Ensure effective use of people systems and data to support decision-making, compliance, workforce insight and a positive colleague experience.

Job Description

Leadership

Lead and manage the delivery of people related services, including:

- A recruitment function that is cost effective, innovative and able to meet the challenges of recruiting into the Social Care sector.
- Recruitment and onboarding practices that are values-based, inclusive and aligned with safer recruitment requirements.
- An L&D function that inspires and supports existing colleagues to develop new skills and grow, while working with recruitment to attract new talent into the sector.
- Leadership development programmes at Executive and manager level, working in partnership with the Executive Team to build leadership capability, strengthen accountability and support a consistent leadership culture.
- A People Partnering and HR function that supports the organisation's culture and acts as a trusted advisor to managers.
- A People Operations team that drives compliance with our policies, best practice, continuous improvement, effective use of people systems and efficient, colleague-focused processes.
- Strategies that support colleague wellbeing and an inclusive, diverse culture.
- Inclusive people practices that promote equity, diversity andinclusion to develop a culture where people can thrive.
- Strategic leadership for internal communications and employee engagement, working collaboratively with the Commercial Director to ensure colleagues are well informed, connected and engaged with Affinity Trust's purpose, values and priorities.
- Approaches to colleague voice, Trade Union involvement, pay and reward that support engagement, fairness, retention and affordability.

Team Management & Development

- Lead, mentor, and develop the People teams to ensure they meet performance targets and maintain a high level of colleague engagement and development.
- Foster a positive, values-driven culture that focuses on the development of our colleagues.
- Develop and maintain a culture which encourages all colleagues to hold positive aspirations for the people they support and work creatively to achieve these, regardless of their role in the organisation.
- Ensure effective communication across teams and encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop and maintain strong relationships with key internal and external stakeholders,
- Act as a representative of the organisation at meetings, conferences, and forums related to the Children, Young People, and Adult Social Care sectors.



Person Specification

Values

Demonstrates organisational values:

People at the heart of everything we do

We listen, we learn, we build on strengths.

We give our best

What we do matters. Good days and bad, we take responsibility.

We work together

We are one team and value people's strengths and differences. We are open and trusting with each other.

We have courage

We try new things. We are creative and adaptive.

Skills and Abilities

- **Effective communication skills** (oral and written) in a range of different circumstances including presenting complex information to stakeholders at all levels including Trustee Board and Committee (or equivalent).
- **Ability to build and maintain strategic relationships** both internally and externally, ensuring alignment with organisational goals
- **Demonstrated strategic leadership and people management skills** – experience in motivating, empowering and developing teams to achieve objectives.
- **Strong financial and commercial acumen** - Ability to oversee and manage large budgets, implement cost control measures, and drive efficiencies.
- **Analytical mindset** - Ability to interpret complex data and make informed decisions based on insights and trends.
- **Risk management expertise** - Proactively identifying and mitigating risks, resolving complex challenges independently when necessary.
- **Resilience and adaptability** - Capable of remaining effective and positive under pressure and adapting to changing environments.
- **Systems literate** – Proficient in using various management systems and technologies to support people decision making.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in HR, Business, Psychology or relevant degree
- **CIPD qualified** (FCIPD preferred) with evidence of ongoing professional development
- **Full driving licence** and own vehicle with regular travel for operational requirements and meetings
- Desirable: Further management qualifications and coaching qualifications

Experience

- Respected people leader with a proven ability to make a substantive contribution and improvement to culture and workforce development
- Minimum of 8+ years Board leadership experience at Executive Level in an organisation of equivalent scale, complexity and geography
- Trusted advisor to the CEO and Executive team
- Coach and mentor to own team, peers and other Colleagues
- Up to date knowledge of employment legislation.
- Proven track-record in implementing structural and culture change Practice of embedding HR practices that drive people and performance excellence
- Budget and resource management experience – Demonstrated ability to oversee budgets and allocate resources effectively.
- Experience of overseeing TUPE transfers following successful tenders, including people-related due diligence, consultation, communications and smooth onboarding of transferring colleagues.
- Experience of developing and delivering leadership development programmes for Executive and manager populations, working collaboratively with senior leaders to build capability and improve organisational performance.

Other

- Professional role model – committed to being an ambassador for the organisation, its values and behaviours
- Willingness to work flexibly – Ability to travel, attend meetings and work overnight when required
- Committed to personal development - Dedicated to ongoing learning and improving professional capabilities.

Terms of Appointment

Salary
The salary for this role is £108,000 plus car allowance

Location
Hybrid with at least 2 days per week in the office in Thame with regular nationwide travel. The Executive Team also meets fortnightly in Thame.

Pension
Up to 6% employer contribution where the employee contributes 3% or 8% where the employee contributes 4% and above via salary sacrifice.

Annual leave
38 days annual leave (including bank holidays).

Additional benefits
Life insurance, blue light discounts, more rewards and benefits can be viewed **here**.



How to Apply

We're delighted that you're considering this opportunity to join Affinity Trust at such an inspiring and forward-looking moment in our journey. If you're passionate about making a real difference, driven by purpose, and ready to help shape the future of support for adults, children and young people with learning disabilities and autism, we would love to hear from you.

To apply, please email follow the instructions in the online job listing. You will be asked to submit the following:

- Your CV
- A supporting statement (maximum two sides) outlining why this role is the right next step for you, and how your experience aligns with the knowledge and criteria set out in the person specification.

As part of this application process, we ask that you complete the Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form. This information is used for monitoring purposes only, remaining fully confidential and will not form part of the selection process.

If you have any questions or require any further information please contact: JoinOurLeadership@affinitytrust.org

We look forward to receiving your application and learning more about what you can bring to this important leadership role at Affinity Trust.

Date	**Action**
28th September	Closing Date
14th-16th October	Engagement session, informal conversation with Kerry Dearden, People we Support Panel, assessments
19th October	Presentation and Panel Interview

*This Timetable is indicative and subject to change



AffinityTrust