



The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

making a difference to the lives of people with severe learning disabilities

Chief Executive Officer Recruitment Pack

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair

01. About the CBF

- Who we are
- Our vision
- Our mission

02. Who we support and why it is important

- What is a severe learning disability?
- What is challenging behaviour
- The impact of challenging behaviour

03. What we do and how we do it

- The CBF approach to support
- The history of the CBF
- Team Structure
- What we do:
 - Information and support
 - Strategic influencing
 - Sharing best practice

04. Our achievements

05. Why work for us

06. The Role

- Job description
- Core competencies (person specification)
- Role details
- Recruitment timetable

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you for your interest in the role of CEO at the Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF). I am delighted that you are considering applying.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation was set up in 1997 by Vivien Cooper OBE, the parent of a child with severe learning disabilities who displayed a range of challenging behaviours. At the time, there was no support for families like Viv's and no adequate provision to support her son – other than almost three hundred miles away!

27 years later, CBF is still the only charity focussed specifically on people with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges. We have grown from those early days to become a small charity with a big impact far beyond our size; we are very high profile in our field, well-connected with and well-respected by government, policy makers, commissioners and funders.

Crucially, families remain at the heart of our work. It is their experiences that shape everything we do; from the direct support we provide through our family advice service, to the training we deliver for commissioners and providers, through to the rich evidence base we bring from working with families to challenge the system and to “speak truth to power”.

We have achieved great things with Viv at the helm and we are now looking for a new CEO as Viv moves to a very well-deserved retirement. We are excited about our next chapter and the opportunity to drive real transformation for people who display challenging behaviour and their families by holding government and policy makers to account and by continuing to provide the trusted, practical support and advice which many families tell us is a lifeline. The CBF is in a good position with a skilled and committed staff team and an engaged board of trustees. Together, we are passionate about continuing to make a difference to the lives of people with severe learning disabilities and their families as we move into the next phase of our development.

This pack includes lots more information about the work of the CBF, details of the role, who we are looking for and how to apply. I really hope it inspires you to want to lead a truly groundbreaking organisation that transforms lives every day.



Diane Lightfoot
Chair of Trustees

01. ABOUT THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR FOUNDATION (CBF)

Who we are

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF) is a registered charity which exists to improve the quality of life of people (children, young people and adults) with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges and the families who support them.

Our vision is for all people with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges, to have the right support and opportunities to live full and active lives.

Our mission is to make a difference to the lives of people with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges and their families by:

- Championing their rights
- Providing specialist timely information and support
- Raising awareness and understanding
- Promoting and sharing best practice

02. Who we support and why is it important

We are the only UK charity focussed specifically on the needs of people with a severe learning disability whose behaviours challenges, their families and those who care for them.

What is a severe learning disability?

A severe learning disability is lifelong. A person with a severe learning disability:

- Has a limited ability to communicate
- Requires help with daily living skills
- Has a significantly reduced ability to learn new skills

What is challenging behaviour?

Challenging behaviour is not a diagnosis. The term was designed to emphasise “that such behaviour represents challenges to services rather than problems that individuals with learning disabilities in some way carry around with them”.

There is a formal definition of challenging behaviour – it is behaviour that puts the safety of the person or others at significant risk and limits or denies access to ordinary community facilities. [See here for further information](#)

The impact of challenging behaviour

Challenging behaviour can have a significant detrimental impact, not only on the individual with learning disabilities themselves, but also to family and friends caring for that person. Families report that in addition to this, they are trying to understand and navigate a complex, disjointed education, health and social system to access and co-ordinate timely support and services.

As Professor Peter McGill put it: “For parents... the over-riding sense is of their being isolated, excluded and left to get on with a task which is too difficult or beyond the expertise of qualified professionals.”

03. WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT

The CBF approach to support

The CBF starts with families. It is families who provide the long-term love, support and advocacy for their relative – commonly with little information or support. In addition to the challenges of supporting their relative, they have to navigate through complex and often unhelpful systems that should be there to support them to access information, support and services to meet their relative's needs. The CBF is there to support them in that journey.

The CBF adopts a person-centred, human rights approach to support:

“People whose behaviour challenges have the same needs as everyone else, in addition to special needs for help to overcome the problems their behaviour presents. They do not surrender their needs for personal relationships, for growth and development or for anything else because their behaviour presents a challenge to services. They have the same human rights as everyone else.”

– Mansell 2, 2007

The aim of the CBF is not to provide a long-term substitute for support that should be provided by statutory services. We aim to influence the system and society so that they work effectively and sustainably for this group of people – so they get the right support, in the right place, at the right time. Our ultimate aim is to not exist because we are no longer needed, and this shapes all that we do.

The history of the CBF

The CBF was founded in 1997 by Vivien Cooper, the parent of a son with severe learning disabilities who displays challenging behaviour, because of her own family's experiences. The CBF started with nothing other than a strong belief that “the system” could be better organised and focussed on delivering the required support in true partnership with families. Understanding the issues from a family perspective has shaped everything we do – we have always been, and always will be – focussed on the delivery of good outcomes for individuals and their families. Taking a careful, thought-through, strategic approach has enabled the CBF to grow its support and influence and build an excellent reputation with the families it supports and other stakeholders, including at a national level.

The CBF now reaches thousands of families and employs a dedicated and committed staff team, mostly based at our small office in Chatham.

Vivien has been involved in the CBF since our inception and our CEO since 2012 and is now planning a well-deserved retirement. With a strong staff team, a stable and effective board and with well managed income and expenditure all in place, the CBF is in a strong position, and we are now seeking an exceptional individual to lead the organisation through the next phase of its development.

“The CBF aims to be a force for good – its only reason for being is to improve the lives and circumstances of people with severe learning disabilities who display challenging behaviour and their families who support them.

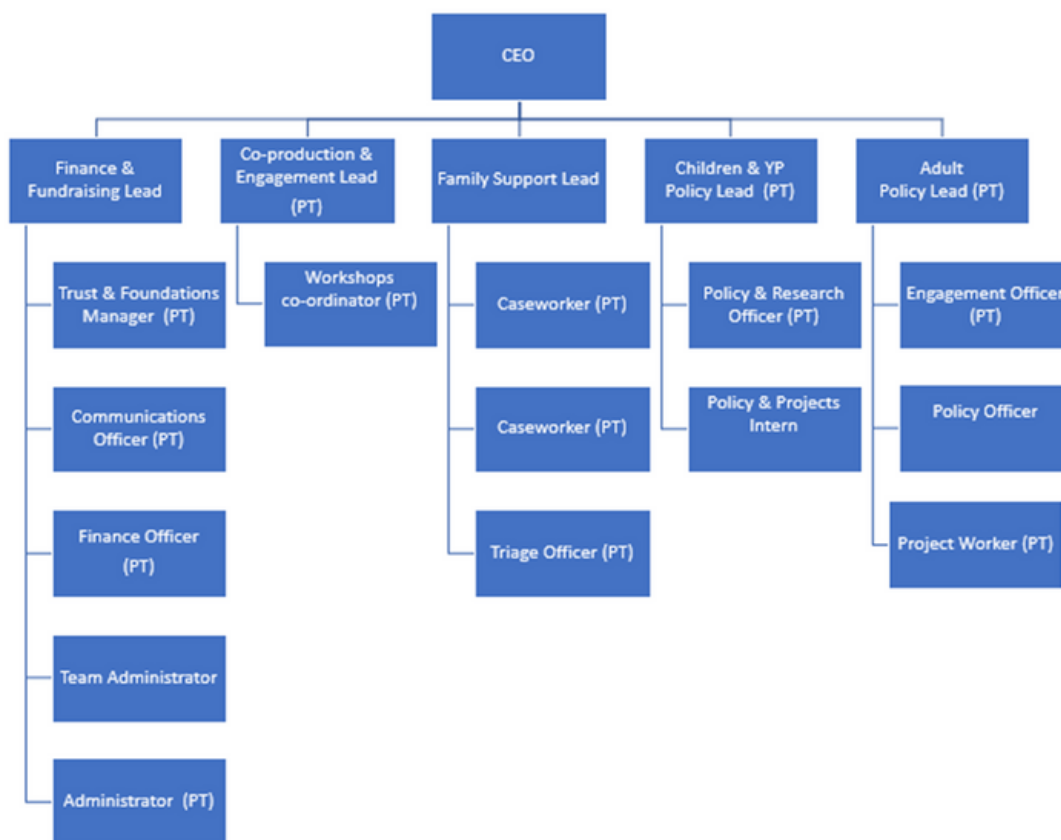
A great deal is known about who is likely to display challenging behaviour, a great deal is known about why, and a great deal is known about how to support individuals with those needs. The challenge is to make the system utilise that knowledge and deliver support and services that meet the needs of this group so that they can achieve the lives they want and have a right to. As a small charity we cannot achieve this on our own and so a core principle of our work is to develop and sustain partnerships with individuals and organisations to increase and amplify our spheres of influence for greater impact.

The CBF’s small team of employees and volunteers are committed to those aims, outraged at the injustices in the system, and work hard, with limited resources, to make progress and maximise our impact. The CBF is this staff team, who work together and support each other and who are crucial to the CBF’s success. Our work is wide-ranging – this is deliberate as we reflect and negotiate all of the challenges that families face. We take a holistic lifelong approach: we work with education, health and social care, all of the legal and regulatory frameworks and all the professionals who have a role to play in supporting this group of individuals and families. This is an example of our broader approach – it may be administratively and financially easier to organise our work differently, but this is not what families need from us. Our focus is always listening to families and asking, “from a family perspective what would help make a difference?” not “what would be more convenient for the organisation?”. Holding this approach is key.

At the CBF we are always looking ahead- where do we want to be? What do we want to achieve? As we plan for the future, it is now time for a new CEO. We see this as a positive step, a new opportunity to build on what has been achieved so far. It is a brilliant opportunity to really make a difference, to work with an experienced and dedicated staff team, amazing family carers and with other individuals and organisations to drive change.”

- Vivien Cooper OBE

TEAM STRUCTURE



*PT = Part Time

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Diane Lightfoot - Chair

Dr David Allen - Chair Designate

Sophie Cooper

James Dodd - Vice Chair

Dr Nick Gore

Karen Jankulak

Clare Million - Honorary Treasurer & Company Secretary

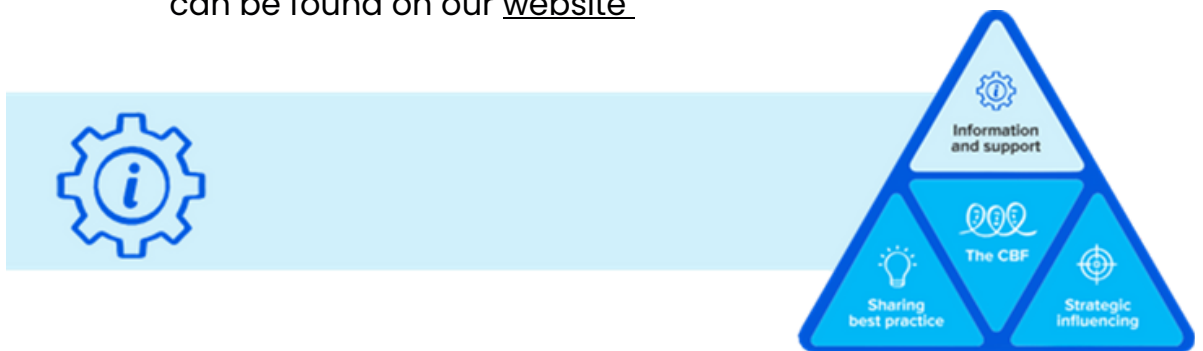
Alex Rook

Kate Sanger

Our objectives are to ensure that with good support each individual is able to live a happy, active life in their community with access to healthcare, employment, leisure and education, as well as a fulfilling family life. Our focus is enabling people to exercise their rights to participate in ordinary life opportunities through a proper understanding of their behaviour and access to appropriate support.

To meet these objectives, we have identified and prioritised three interconnected main areas of need: 'information and support', 'strategic influencing' and 'sharing best practice', as described below.

Lived experiences gathered from our information and support service drives our strategic influencing work which interconnects with sharing best practice. We build on, refine and enhance our work in these three areas as they have shown to be effective. More information about the work of the charity can be found on our [website](#)



Information and Support

Our family support service offers a range of free, confidential, and expert resources to families including support delivered through:

- our telephone helpline
- ongoing in-depth casework
- email information
- printed and filmed resources on a range of topics
- website information
- peer support networks including 'listening ear' calls with trained family carers, email networks, closed Facebook group and online carer catchups.

"The support the CBF have given me over the years has been second to none. I really don't know how I would have coped without your continuous support with all the battles that I've been put up against" (family carer)



Strategic Influencing

Our strategic influencing work is informed by families' lived experience, gathered through our family support team, and uses examples of evidence-based best practice.

This work focusses on ensuring all parts of a complex system work well and deliver good outcomes for people with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges, and their families.

Our strategic influencing work requires an understanding of the holistic context of a system that is often organisationally disjointed and fragmented. See below in 'achievements' for some examples.



Sharing Best Practice

Sharing best practice is embedded in our strategic influencing work and in our information and support. Best practice provides evidence that it is entirely possible to deliver the right support in the right place at the right time.

Sharing, modelling and actively promoting best practice on the ground runs through all our work. We do this through our family support casework and resources, strategic influencing work, and family carer and professional email networks, as well as through specific projects involving local authorities, government departments, and other partners.

04. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

While we're small, we have a huge impact.

We have changed the lives of individuals and their families through practical, solution focussed information and advocacy, including facilitating peer support to reduce feelings of isolation and exclusion. We empower families through our specialist information and resources including our range of workshops to further equip them with the knowledge they need to challenge the system and get the right support in the right place at the right time.

We have raised the profile of this client group because when they are hidden, they are more likely to have a poor quality of life and be at risk of abuse and poor practice.

We have brought individuals and organisations together to work collaboratively, taking a holistic lifelong approach to both the individual and the system, working with individuals and families, support providers, researchers, lawyers, policy makers, other charities, regulators and anyone else invested in supporting this group.

Below are some examples of this:

Through our family support casework, we have enabled individuals with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges to get the support they need (and have a right to), to lead fulfilling lives.

"My concerns were ignored by professionals until I got in touch with the CBF. If it wasn't for the help of CBF, I wouldn't know how to help my son and his quality of life would have significantly declined." (family carer)

We have raised the profile of this group of individuals and their families across government, policy and practice and have maintained this profile to hold people accountable and uphold their human rights by:

- Working in partnership to highlight the issues for people with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges and campaign for change at national, and local level. Recent work includes calling for a reform of the Mental Health Act to ensure individuals with learning disabilities are not detained inappropriately and work to ensure that there is a Transforming Care programme in place that will deliver good outcomes.
- Promoting and facilitating engagement of family carers in research projects over many years which has resulted in their inclusion in major research projects and influenced the direction and focus of the research.
- Working closely with families and people with learning disabilities to gather their input into what is needed and how this can be achieved ([see here](#)). Recent work includes highlighting and demonstrating that people with learning disabilities with the most complex needs (who may not always be consulted with as it can be deemed as being too 'difficult'), can and should be contributing their experiences, preferences and views to feed into issues that are relevant to them ([see here](#))

Following campaigning ([see here](#)) by the CBF and others, the UK Government has committed to introduce a legal duty for schools to record restraint and report its use to parent carers.

We have brought individuals with lived experience together with senior stakeholders through establishing and maintaining a multi-stakeholder [Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group](#) (CB-NSG). This group jointly identifies actions to drive change at a national, local and organisational level which spans all ages and across all parts of the system.

For more information please see our latest [annual report](#)

05. Why work for us?

You will lead a vibrant charity that.....

- offers significant, practical support to families in crisis, through online resources and via our helpline, advocacy and case work
- consistently impacts on national policy and good practice
- uniquely represents the views and needs of families supporting relatives with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour
- is hugely respected by professionals, provider organisations, national bodies and government – but constructively challenges when needed as a critical friend
- has a long and successful record of attracting funding
- gets things done!

You can

- make a real difference to people's lives – including to some of the most marginalised, unseen and unheard people in our society
- focus on making the system work for families whose relatives have severe learning disabilities and display behaviour that challenges
- lead a small established team of staff and volunteers who have a huge amount of knowledge, skills and commitment- and who work together as a supportive and friendly team
- increase the impact of the CBF's work by working collaboratively - the CBF is relatively small, but its impact is mighty
- do what is right for individuals, not just what is easy, quick or convenient.
- drive real and lasting change

You will need to be:

- ✓ *Confident in your knowledge and experience*
- ✓ *Determined & persistent*
- ✓ *Strategic*
- ✓ *Solution focussed*
- ✓ *Adaptable*
- ✓ *Diplomatic, persuasive and assertive*
- ✓ *Resilient & committed*

06. THE ROLE

We are seeking an exceptional CEO to replace our retiring founder and CEO.

The successful candidate will either be a family carer with personal experience of living with and caring for someone with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges and/ or someone with significant career experience that enables them to understand and empathise with the experiences that such families face.

The person we appoint will:

- have empathy with the families we support, with deep understanding of the challenges they face, ideally gained through being a family carer themselves and/ or very substantial direct experience of working with family carers
- have genuine commitment to working first and foremost for the families and their relatives
- understand and share the values and working principles of CBF and be committed to our mission
- have excellent leadership skills with the ability to steer CBF through this transition, and continue to deliver excellent services across the three interconnected strands of our work

The CEO is accountable to the Board of Trustees and will work with the Chair of Trustees as their main point of contact. The postholder will also receive clinical supervision and opportunities for peer support. The CEO will work with, support and be supported by an experienced Senior Management Team.

The CEO role is currently a full-time role based in Chatham, Kent, but CBF wants to be flexible in order to attract the right applicants. We are therefore keen to hear from people who meet the requirements, including those who may want a hybrid working arrangement. The job does require travel, particularly to London but also across the country to attend meetings, conferences and events.

Role description

Purpose of role: to work with the Board of Trustees to lead and manage the CBF to ensure it continues to deliver its mission and strategic aims across the three closely interconnected stands of work, focussed on outcomes for individuals and their families.

Key areas of responsibility:

1. Ensuring that the CBF focus remains on improving the lives of people with severe learning disabilities who display challenging behaviour, and their families – and that the work of the charity reflects and is channelled to address the range of issues those families encounter.

Working in partnership with the Trustees and Senior Management Team (SMT) to lead the delivery of the vision and to develop a strategy which will enable the CBF to deliver its charitable objectives across the three work strands:

- a. supporting, equipping, and empowering families through our individual information and support work and collating their experience to identify and evidence the need for systemic change.
 - b. ensuring that learning from (a) informs our strategic influencing work to drive change nationally.
 - c. Sharing evidence based, best practice and research findings to promote the development of support and services (at both local and national levels) that meet individual needs and deliver good outcomes, i.e. what is possible, not trying to fit people into what is currently available.
2. Having overall responsibility for prioritising and delivering the strategic plan of the CBF, ensuring that: the core values of the CBF are upheld; a family carer perspective is embedded in all the CBF's work; complexities and specialist issues are recognised and addressed.
 3. Managing and supporting the SMT and having oversight of the management, supervision and development of all staff and volunteers; ensuring that there is an inclusive and supportive culture of quality, engagement and team working across the CBF.
 4. Working with key influencers nationally to raise the profile of people with a severe learning disability whose behaviour is described as challenging.
 5. Representing the CBF at a national level, developing and maintaining good relationships with key policy makers and other influential agencies and stakeholders in order to influence national, regional and local policy and practice; in particular leading and chairing the Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group through its steering group, ensuring that the work of the CBF is co-ordinated with and influences the national strategy group and speaking at events.
 6. Taking overall responsibility for the financial health and sustainability of the organisation, identifying new funding opportunities, ensuring income is sufficient to cover costs and reserves are sufficient to meet the CBF's needs.
 7. Ensuring that the CBF messaging and communications are accurate and consistent.
 8. Providing written and verbal progress reports to the Board and ensuring they are fully informed on key issues; preparing the Annual Report.
 9. Direct contribution to some project and research work.
 10. Carrying out other appropriate duties as determined by the Board.

Core Competencies

1. Empathy with the families we support and a deep understanding of the challenges they face combined with a commitment to learn from the lived experience of families, staff, and volunteers; a genuine commitment to working first and foremost for families and their relatives and doing what is right for them. (Essential)
2. Empathy with and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by people with severe learning disabilities who behaviour challenges. (Essential)
3. Lived experience as or professional experience working with family carers or people with learning disabilities. (Essential)
4. Understanding of the values of the CBF; commitment to the mission; ambitious for the CBF and the families we work with; committed to effective outcomes and working with integrity. (Essential)
5. Knowledge of the education, health and social care system (children and adults), the legal and regulatory frameworks and the voluntary sector, and experience of interacting with some or all of these. (Essential)
6. Knowledge and understanding of the Human Rights Act. (Essential)
- 7.a. Understanding and knowledge of evidence-based practice, collaborative working and co-production. (Essential)
- 7.b. Experience of collaborative working and co-production. (Desirable)
8. Excellent leadership skills (essential) to:
 - a. steer the CBF through this transition, whilst we continue to deliver excellent services across the three interconnected strands of our work
 - b. continue to lead and drive change at a national level
9. A strategic thinker, with a solution focussed approach; able to manage conflicting agendas and perspectives. (Essential)
10. An effective communicator on paper and in person; able to initiate, facilitate, collaborate and nurture long term strategic partnerships and relationships with a range of stakeholders including policy makers, commissioners and funders. (Essential)
11. Flexible and organised with the financial and business acumen to run a small charity with a national reputation for excellence. (Essential)
12. Experience of securing funding – contract funding or securing grants from trusts and foundations. (Desirable)

13. Able to challenge constructively and assertively, speak truth to power and co-produce solutions. (Essential)
14. Excellent people management skills, with a proven ability to manage and motivate teams (staff and volunteers) to maximise their potential. (Essential)
15. Determination, and resilience to keep going in the face of setbacks and to cope with the emotional demands of the role. (Essential)

Role details

- Title of post: Chief Executive Officer
- Reporting to: CBF Board of Trustees
- Hours: 5 days a week (37 ½ hours); negotiable
- Based at: CBF office, Chatham, Kent (with some home/hybrid working potentially possible by negotiation)
- Annual leave – 25 days plus public holidays
- Salary: up to £65k
- Pension: Matched 5%

Recruitment timetable:

If you would like an informal chat about this role, then please contact: helen@theCBF.org.uk/ 01634 838739 to arrange a call.

Closing date for applications – **Monday 19th February (9am)**

First interviews – **Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th March**

Second interviews – **Monday 18th March**

To apply for the role, please email helen@theCBF.org.uk with the subject 'CEO Application'. You should include your CV and a covering letter (maximum of two A4 sides) explaining why you are applying, how you meet the core competencies for the role, and what in particular you would bring to our charity.