

## Mermaids Summary

Mermaids is the only UK-wide charity working to support thousands of transgender or gender non-conforming children, young people and their families. Mermaids overarching aim is to create a world where gender diverse children and young people can be themselves and thrive; to this end, our goal is to relieve the mental and emotional stress of all those aged 19 years and under who are gender variant, as well as to promote education and awareness. We offer information, support, friendship and shared experiences to young people and their families, as well as providing some local and national opportunities to meet others.

### Why is Mermaids needed?

Children and teens dealing with gender dysphoria and their families require support to cope with isolation, discrimination and prejudice. Gender variant young people are among the most vulnerable in the UK. **Almost half of transgender school pupils (45%) in the UK have attempted suicide;** 1 in 9 of those pupils have received death threats, 8 of 10 have self-harmed. They experience bullying, both physically and mentally, by their peers, adults, and even people in authority, such as teachers and local authority workers. Without adequate support, transgender young people are far more likely to drop out of school and are less likely to access higher education.

*'I would probably be dead if it wasn't for Mermaids. Being able to meet other trans people has been invaluable for me. Being able to talk about things that I couldn't discuss with anyone else and receiving positive messages, advice and feedback from admins and other members has also been invaluable'. – A young person.*

At a recent Mermaids residential weekend, we did a session with Stop Hate UK. We asked how many of the parents in the room were frightened for their children and what they face in the outside world. **They all raised their hands.** We then asked the gender diverse teens and young people in the room how many had been subjected to transphobic abuse. **They all raised their hands.**

With greater awareness of transgender issues across society, the number of young people and their families seeking support from Mermaids has seen explosive growth e.g. over the last three years, the number of emails and calls received, increased from 495 in 2013/14 to just under 4,000 in 2016/17.

### Mermaids' Services

Founded in 1995 by parents of gender-variant children and young people as a support group, the charity has grown to respond to need and provides a range of services.

[Helpline, email information and support service](#)

[Parents and teens online forums](#)

[Residential weekends and local support groups](#)

*'Meeting other young trans people through Mermaids has made all the difference to my F2M (female to male) son. Before we joined, he was extremely isolated and described himself as a 'freak'. Life began to look up for him when we joined Mermaids and he now has hope for the future'. – Parent of a young person.*

As well as these core services, Mermaids has increasingly worked to address misconceptions and advocated for the benefit of transgender young people and their families. Mermaids liaises with national and local media, to promote awareness and understanding, and tries to attend as many policy-making meetings as possible. Mermaids provides resources for families, young people and supporting professionals. Committee and staff members and volunteers attend Pride and other events, in addition to speaking at conferences nationwide. We also work closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Department of Education and Government Equalities Office.

### **Mermaids' Impact**

Mermaids recently surveyed parents and teenagers to understand what impact the charity has had on them; 78.79% and 86.36% respectively rated the impact as highly positive. We are often the first contact made regarding their or their child's gender variance. Most feel scared and alone, and may well have been dealing with prejudice and discrimination. Mermaids eases isolation and loneliness, and families and young people have access to others who are dealing with the issues they are facing, which gives immediate comfort and a sense of community. Mermaids helps trans children and teens and their families to have increased confidence and ability to cope. Young people and their families leave Mermaids' services empowered and educated with the tools needed to combat ongoing prejudice and discrimination.

Our work has been externally recognised through a number of awards. In 2016 alone, Mermaids received the following awards:

- Sparkle Charity of the Year
- Sparkle Diversity Champion of the Year for Mermaids CEO, Susie Green
- National Diversity Awards Charity of the Year
- Pink News Awards Charity of the Year
- Children and Young People Award Charity of the Year
- European Diversity Awards Charity of the Year

Our helpline also placed 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Helpline of the Year Award.

## **Mermaids Legal Support** Role Description

### **Purpose of the role**

As a growing charity Mermaids has been successful in raising awareness of the difficulties facing transgender children and young people, and campaigning for better education, treatment and acceptance of the same. The work that we do has expanded, and we now need an effective and skilled in house legal support person to provide guidance for families and young people facing discrimination and prejudice. As a part of the role, the successful candidate will also be expected to oversee and develop a legal framework for Mermaids to grow this offering, including developing a network of legal support, delivering training and keeping up to date with the latest legislation, working hand in hand with the CEO.

### **Scope of the Role**

- The Legal Advisor will be a qualified solicitor/barrister with expertise or a genuine interest in gender and trans legal issues
- Are up to date with current and relevant law and can provide a legally accurate FAQ section for the website
- Triage legal enquiries coming in through the Mermaids helpline
- Conduct case reviews from enquiries to consider options and actions that may be taken legally to support a child/family legal
- Develop a network of contacts in the relevant areas of law that impacts upon the trans+ community
- Develop a Mermaids Legal Accreditation scheme to other lawyers. (this would have to be Law Society/Bar Council approved)
- Develop teaching materials that would be used by the post holder to deliver legal workshops/seminars to law firms/Chambers that, after completion, would render them Mermaids accredited. (see above re Law Society and Bar Council)
- Build a national network of firms/Chambers to provide support for Mermaids service users
- Once a file has been referred to an accredited lawyer, providing support as necessary to quality assure the matter is being dealt with in a trans aware way
- Be a legally articulate contact for press and governmental enquiries
- Review and draft where there are gaps, Mermaids policies and procedures pertinent to the post, working strategically with the CEO and the Board.

### **Responsibilities and duties**

- Conduct the duties of the job description in accordance with the operational policies of Mermaids, including but not limited to the diversity policy and code of conduct.
- Maintain good working relations with staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.
- Contribute to the general administration and delivery of all Mermaids programmes, events and overall objectives
- Undertake any other reasonable duties as may be required

This is an outline role description and may be subject to change in consultation with the post holder.

## Mermaids Legal Support Person Specification

- Qualified solicitor/barrister with expertise or a genuine interest in gender and trans legal issues
- Excellent Policy development and management experience
- Proven ability to develop and deliver compelling content for training delivery, including identifying participant interests, and good practice
- Proficient with project management tools and techniques including budgeting, work planning, risk management and stakeholder engagement
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including telephone skills, including ability to proof-read content
- Strong team player with excellent interpersonal skills, able to relate appropriately to a wide range of people
- Experience of building relationships with external partners
- Experience of setting and managing complex budgets and providing regular and accessible reports on financial performance
- A good understanding of diversity, inclusion and equality issues – knowledge of transgender or gender diversity issues would be particularly welcome
- Excellent team working skills
- Committed to aims and objectives of Mermaids

## **Mermaids Legal Support** Key Terms and Conditions

### **Place of Work**

Suite 5 High Street House, 2 The High Street, Yeadon, Leeds, LS19 7PP for a weekly team meeting, with the option of home working for the remainder of the working week.

### **Working Week**

This is a 2 year post, subject to funder review after 12 months, as the post is part of a pilot project. If successful the position will be reviewed with the potential for a permanent position upon completion. Mermaids normal hours are Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5.30pm, however the demands of this post require a flexible approach to both timing and duration of the working day, with evening working to engage with service users when they're available.

Time off in lieu will be given.

### **Salary Scale**

The salary will be £36,000.00 to £38,000.00 dependent on experience. You will be paid monthly by credit transfer to your bank account on the 20th day of each month. Please be aware that this will be salary for the whole calendar month so that (assuming pay date may not be the last day of the month) some of your salary will be in arrears and a proportion will be in advance.

### **Annual Leave**

The core holiday entitlement is 28 working days per year for full time staff which includes 8 Public Holidays. These are: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day, late Spring holiday at the end of May, Late Summer holiday at the end of August, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The days taken as leave will be discretion with approval of the CEO.

### **Pension**

Mermaids will contribute up to 5% of salary to the Mermaids pension scheme.

### **Probation & notice**

The post is subject to a six month probationary period. During this period you will be entitled to receive, and are required to give, at least one weeks' notice of termination, which must be in writing. After successful completion of your probationary period you are entitled to receive, and are required to give, at least one months' notice of termination, which must be in writing.

**HOW TO APPLY:**

Send your CV to [recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk](mailto:recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk), accompanied by a **500 word** covering letter outlining what your employment would bring to the charity. Applications not in the specified format or submitted past the deadline will not be considered.

**Deadline for applications:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**Interview dates:** Interviews will take place by phone, second stage requires the submission of a short video, and then final selection will be to attend a face to face interview in Leeds at our premises.

**Start date for the role:** subject to notice period required, May/June 2018

Due to the high volume of applications that Mermaids receives per position we are unable to provide feedback on individual applications or answer questions from applicants. If applicants have not been contacted by the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 then they should assume their application has not been successful.

Mermaids is an equal opportunity employer.

Due to the nature of this role, the successful applicant will be required to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (criminal records) check.