



Appointment of a Chair Candidate Information

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Introduction Letter

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of the Support after Suicide Partnership (SASP).

As the Executive Lead of the SASP and someone who has been involved for years, I cannot tell you what an honour it is to be part of the incredible network that works to SASP's vision that 'everyone bereaved or affected by suicide is offered timely and appropriate support'.

We're a special interest group of the National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA) and we are hosted by Samaritans.

In 2018, there were 6,859 suicides in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Around 135 people are impacted by each suicide; affecting up to 810,000 people a year.

The SASP was founded in 2013 in response to the lack of support for family and friends when someone dies by suicide. We have humble beginnings – a bereaved father brought a small group of organisations together to bring about change. We have grown to a UK wide network of over 70 members and supporters. We were founded in 2013 to bring together national and local organisations that are involved in delivering suicide bereavement support across the UK and to address the need for formal, multi-agency, proactive suicide bereavement support.

The successful applicant for the Chair role will join SASP at a critical time. Our 2020-2024 strategy is in full swing and we are well on the way to implementing suicide bereavement support services in every area of England, commissioned by NHS England. Now is a time to raise awareness for the need for sustainable support beyond 2024, secure SASP's future, and grow our income generation.

We are working in a rapidly changing sector, and our new Chair will lead from the front, helping SASP to evolve to be sustainable longer-term, ensuring we innovate in areas like digital communications and fundraising.

The Chair will work alongside an experienced Executive Lead, and a small team, as well as directors of Samaritans. The SASP network and external environment in which we operate is increasingly complex and challenging. Cuts to government funding and individual donations have put extra pressure on the bereavement sector. The grieving rituals people rely on to say goodbye have been significantly disrupted by the pandemic, and many are faced with a devastating loss, and little closure.

A Chair with the right skills, experience, knowledge and networks, able to influence key external stakeholders to help deliver our strategic objectives, and engage compellingly with our community of Members, is pivotal to our future success. Our Chair will also be instrumental in ensuring we are trusted and recognised externally and internally as a fundamentally well run, managed and governed organisation. Please find included in this pack a more detailed role description for our Chair role. I hope you feel inspired to consider working with us, and if you feel you bring the skills to be our next Chair, we will be delighted to receive an application from you.

Thank you once again,

Fergus Crow
Acting Chair

Sarah Bates
Executive Lead

About the Support after Suicide Partnership

The SASP is the UK's network for organisations who support people bereaved or affected by suicide. We have over 80 Members in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Channel Islands. We are governed by Samaritans, and draw our policies and employment from them. We have a Leadership Team (LT) who help the Executive Lead set the strategic direction to achieve our Vision, and who ensure that SASP's work is in line with our Business Plan, and governance agreement.

We are on a mission to ensure every area of the country has excellent, local bereavement support services, which offer timely and appropriate support to anyone impacted by suicide. We campaign to make suicide bereavement support a sustainable, long term national and local priority, and we work with our nationwide network of members and partners to achieve our vision.

We are strong because of our incredible members. We add value to our members' by providing information and resources, as well as opportunities to share good practice and be involved in our work. We work closely together to achieve our vision, which is supported by a [compelling case](#). We are all working to set the global standard for suicide bereavement support. We are doing this in four areas, which are summarised below and a copy of our 2020 Business Plan is [here](#).

Increasing the capacity of local suicide bereavement support

We work closely with NHS England on their Long Term Plan to ensure that every area of England has a proactive suicide bereavement support service by 2024. This means that people are offered support within 72 hours of a death by suicide. We have been appointed to provide implementation support for this ambitious programme and have developed a [Central Hub](#), which provides information, resources and support for current services and new ones over the coming years.

Setting the standard for responses to a death by suicide

We are on a mission to continue to be an organisation at the forefront of good practice, current thinking, and excellence. Our members are seen as key parts of healthcare in their communities, and we support services to reach a high national standard. We are working to build partnerships with major employers, to ensure that infrastructure in the UK is fit-for-purpose to provide or signpost to appropriate support, and there is a universally appropriate response to people bereaved by suicide.

We are a strong Membership Organisation

We are constantly working to improve and increase what we can offer our members. At the beginning of 2021, we hired a full-time Membership and Communications Officer, to oversee all aspects of membership. We pride ourselves in being a well connected network of organisations, who meet throughout the year. In 2021, we will welcome 3 members to our Leadership Team who have been elected by the membership, for the first time. We are also working on an ambitious programme to support organisations who are affected by suicide in a broader sense, such as those who offer support for isolation, and LGBTQ+ charities.

We have strong values of communication, connection, appreciation, and vitality.

We pride ourselves on a strong culture of innovation and recognise the importance of agility and strategic implementation to help achieve our objectives. Over the next few months, we plan to complete our first Leadership Team Elections for Members, begin to support the next areas who will receive funding to build suicide bereavement support services, and update Help is at Hand, the leading resource for those bereaved by suicide. Finally, we will work with PHE and others to implement real time surveillance across England, and support our members as we emerge from lockdown.

Chair Role Description

The Chair represents Members and their beneficiaries. The Chair provides strong, dynamic leadership to the Leadership Team. The Chair supports the Executive Lead, the development and implementation of a sustainable strategy, and ensures SASP is positively engaged and influential with a wide range of stakeholders. The Chair is responsible for our hosting relationship with Samaritans, and that we operate within our objectives. We have outlined the role below.

Strategy and Leadership Team

Chair meetings and agree their frequency and agendas with the Executive Lead, and SASP team, ensuring that decisions taken by the LT are in the best interests of the SASP and are implemented.

Ensure delivery of SASP's mission and business plan, working with the Executive Lead and LT.

Be responsible and accountable for the financial health of the SASP and mitigate financial risks.

Be the responsible person to ensure our work and decisions by the LT are in line with governance and agreements with our hosts, Samaritans; and ensure the LT is coordinated, effective and aligns with organisational strategy.

Lead discussions on the appointment of Patrons to the SASP.

Be a figurehead and combined voice for our Members at external meetings and events.

Relationships

Provide ongoing guidance and support to the Executive Lead, building an effective working relationship, while respecting executive responsibility.

As the responsible person for the hosting arrangement, work with Samaritans' to ensure that the SASP Team have opportunities for professional development and appropriate external professional support.

Maintain regular communication with the Executive Lead's line manager

Ensure SASP's position and sustainable future

Advocate for and represent SASP and its members, through relationships with stakeholders and mental health and bereavement influencers in politics, business and public and third sectors, and at external events.

Maintain a strong external focus, ensuring that SASP is aware of, and able to respond to, issues related to rapidly changing external environments, including Covid19, policies and contraction in public sector funding.

Work with the Executive Lead to ensure strategy and delivery mitigates identified external risks, and that major risks are reviewed and managed, particularly with large or complex projects.

Support income generation activities, including developing new networks, strengthening existing networks and meeting existing and potential financial donors as required.

Develop new networks that allow us to reach new and more diverse beneficiaries and audiences

Help to ensure our reputation, ethics and values are safeguarded

Person Specification

Ideally, candidates will bring as many of the following skills and experience as possible:

- A track record of leadership and chairing; the ability to chair meetings with decision making
- Significant experience in a leadership role in an organisation of national reach and complexity
- Experience of working or volunteering in the charity sector, particularly with networks
- Experience with small organisations, or start up organisations or businesses
- Demonstrable experience of providing guidance to senior management in a small team
- Experience in working collaboratively in developing the strategy and monitoring the performance of an organisation and delivering an ambitious agenda of organisational change.
- Demonstrated ability to ensure beneficiaries (or customers) are at the heart of a strategic plan.
- Commercial acumen and a broad understanding of charity finance issues.
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and bring people together
- A reasonable understanding of digital tools and technology, and their importance for campaigning
- Ability to deal simultaneously with multiple and complex issues
- The ability to recognise the differing requirements of a wide range of stakeholders and to discern the appropriate responses to them.

Personal style and qualities that the ideal candidate will bring:

- A profound commitment to the values of the Support after Suicide Partnership
- An understanding of what it's like to be bereaved by suicide, and what support someone might need
- Characterful and memorable; you should be able to hold your own in a room of impressive people
- Energy and ability to enthuse
- Collaborative and approachable, calm in the face of complex situations
- Inclusive style, we believe everyone should be offered support
- Resilience and a robust outlook on life
- A commitment to ensuring that our members are at the heart of all discussion, planning and deliver
- Strong communication skills, ability to engage with stakeholders at every level
- Comfortable acting as an external face and ambassador for Support after Suicide Partnership
- Tact, diplomacy and confidentiality
- Strong independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively and imaginatively
- Drive to make a big difference through SASP's work. We are determined!

Terms of Appointment

Appointment and timescales

The term of office is three years at first, and will then be reviewed by the Leadership Team and Executive Lead.

Location, time commitment and expenses

This role is home-based.

This post is voluntary and unpaid but all out of pocket expenses related to the role will be reimbursed in line with Samaritans' (and therefore SASP's) expenses policy.

The role may involve some travel to London, our office in Ewell and within the UK.

As a minimum, attendance is required at four Leadership meetings each year, three – four Members' Meetings a year, and may include other strategic and policy meetings.

We also expect the role will require around 2 days a month to effectively Chair the SASP.

Additionally, you may be asked to represent SASP at external events, in parliament, and at national meetings.

Recruitment and selection process

Recruitment of the Chair of the Support after Suicide Partnership is by open competition.

Applications will be reviewed to determine that at each stage in the process, the candidates who are successful most closely meet the essence of the person criteria, qualities and experience for the role.

References will be requested and taken up.

You must be over 18 to apply.

We actively and warmly encourage applications from anyone who feels they would be an asset to our work, and could be Chair of the Support after Suicide Partnership.

How to Apply

Please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter no longer than 2 sides of A4 to apply@supportaftersuicide.org.uk.

The closing date for new applications is 31st March 2021.

Initial interviews will be held throughout April, and we hope to appoint by early summer 2021.