



## **Candidate Information Booklet**

**[Ref: CEO/03/22]**

# **Chief Executive Officer Middletown Centre for Autism (Permanent Full Time)**

Completed applications must be returned to

**MCACErecruitment@allenpeoplesolutions.co.uk**

By no later than

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 12 noon**

## **Communication with Applicants**

All communications, so far as possible, will be issued electronically. You should therefore check your email account to make sure that you do not miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Please note all communication in respect of this position will come from and should be directed to our third-party consultancy, Allen People Solutions, who have been appointed to manage this vacancy on our behalf - [MCACEOrecruitment@allenpeoplesolutions.co.uk](mailto:MCACEOrecruitment@allenpeoplesolutions.co.uk).

### **Key timetable**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Advert close date</b>	<b>Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 12 noon</b>
<b>Panel Shortlisting</b>	<b>Monday 4 April 2022</b>
<b>Psychometric Personality Profile</b>	<b>Successfully shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete an online assessment from Tuesday 5 April 2022</b>
<b>Interviews and unseen presentation</b>	<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022</b>

Applicants are advised that they must be available to attend on the above dates for interview if successfully shortlisted. No other dates are planned to be scheduled. However, please note that the panel reserve the right to alter or amend the timetable due to applicant numbers or unforeseen circumstances.

Please advise our appointed consultancy, Allen People Solutions, should any reasonable adjustments be required in relation to the application or selection process as may be reasonably required.

Please note applications received after the stipulated close date and time will not be considered. Please refer to the section entitled Recruitment and Selection Process later in this booklet for more detailed information about the overall process.

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## **Chairperson's Welcome**

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to look at the application pack for the post of Chief Executive of Middletown Centre of Autism.

This represents an opportunity for you to consider a rewarding career through joining an innovative and successful organisation, which is providing highly valued education services to the autism community throughout the island of Ireland. You will find more details of the Centre's work and role in the field of education throughout Ireland on our website at [www.middletownautism.com](http://www.middletownautism.com).

If you believe that you have the skills, we are looking for and you thrive on challenge then I encourage you to apply.

**Rosemary Steen  
Chairperson  
Middletown Centre for Autism**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **About Middletown Centre for Autism**

Middletown Centre for Autism, located in County Armagh, is a cross border organisation jointly funded by the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Education (Ireland).

The purpose of the Centre is to support the promotion of excellence in the development and coordination of education services to children and young people with autism across the island of Ireland. Although it is not a statutory North/ South implementation body, the Middletown Centre is under the purview of The North South Ministerial Council.

The Centre was established in March 2007 under the Companies (NI) Orders 1986 to 1990 as a company limited by guarantee. In 2012 it was classified by the then Department of Finance and Personnel as a non-departmental public body (NDPD) analogous to a non-commercial semi-state body in Ireland.

The Board of Directors comprises 5 nominees each from the Departments of Education in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Further information can be found at [www.middletownautism.com](http://www.middletownautism.com).

### **The Centre's Remit**

The remit is to improve and enrich the educational opportunities for children and young people with autism, to provide support, advice, guidance and training to their parents and the professionals who work with them.

The Centre offers specialist, second tier autism support services that are currently providing school and home-based support in Northern Ireland and Ireland as well as an extensive training programme aimed at parents and school staff in both jurisdictions.

The work is underpinned by the latest research and the Centre's own Research Department undertakes studies and disseminates information on evidence based educational developments in autism.

The Centre's work is subject to regular inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), NI and the Department of Education Ireland Inspectorate. The inspections carried out in 2012 and 2016 concluded that;

*"In the work inspected, the quality of the provision is evaluated by the inspectors as outstanding. The Centre is meeting very effectively the needs of the young people, their peers, parents and professionals and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained improvement.... The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The senior management team and the board of directors have provided leadership of very high quality to further improve services since the last inspection."*

An independent evaluation by Professor Richard Mills, AT- Autism in 2021 found that:

*"The Centre can be proud of its achievements and the high levels of satisfaction achieved across the extensive range of its services."*

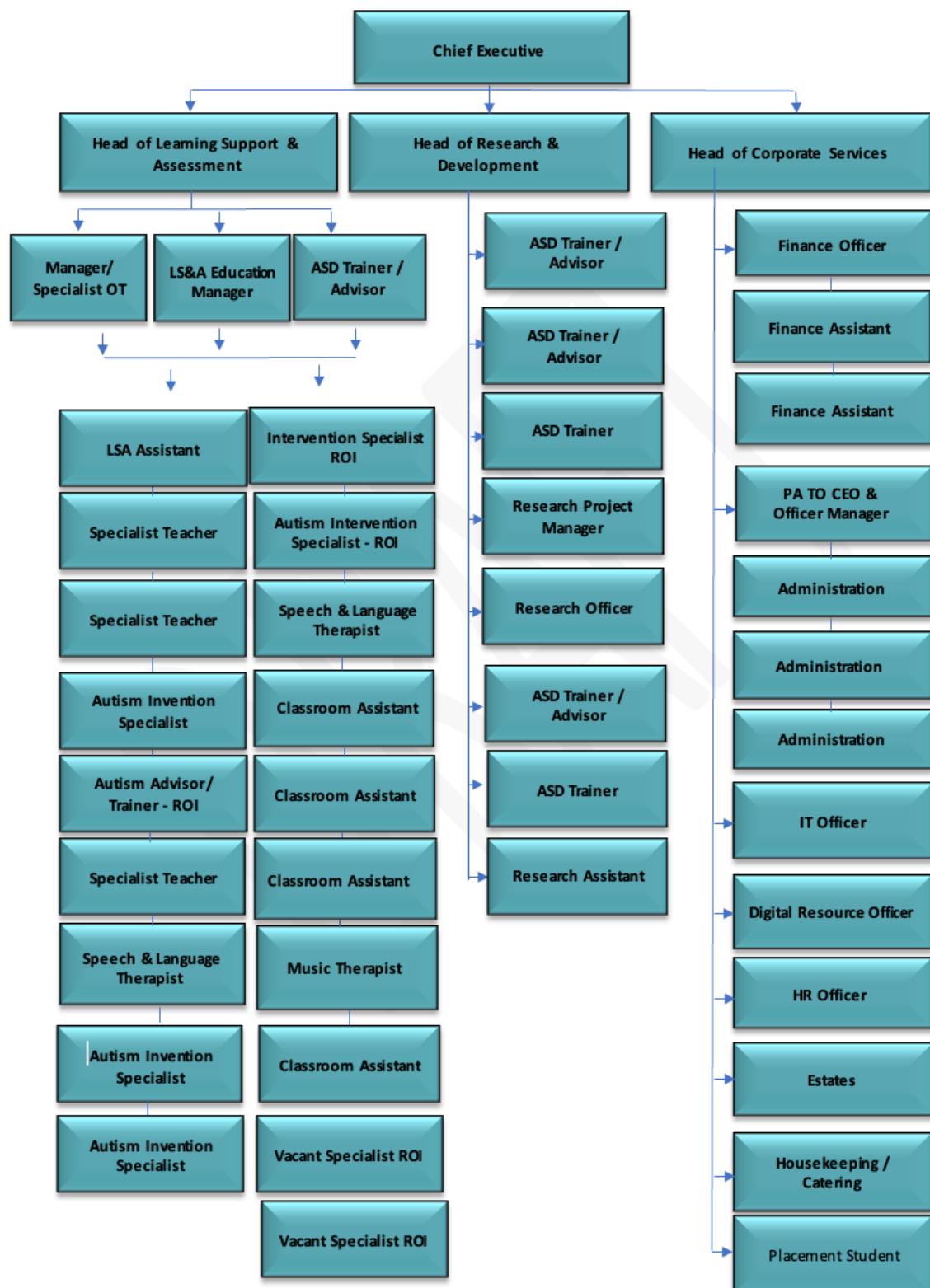
In April 2021 as part of World Autism Awareness Day the Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion, Josepha Madigan TD said

*"in the last 14 years the Centre has become recognised across the island and internationally as a centre of excellence whose services and supports have enhanced the lives of autistic children through the delivery of specialist education services. The Centre is an excellent example of cross border cooperation"*

Also, in April 2021 as part of World Autism Awareness Day the Minister for Education, Peter Weir MLA noted:

*"I would like to take this opportunity to commend the staff of Middletown Centre for Autism for their dedication over the past 14 years; the Centre is a joint North South initiative & throughout the pandemic Middletown has delivered innovative responses to meet the challenge of providing services by moving services online they have been able to continue their valuable work including one to one support, family interventions, professional and parental training and webinars. I want to thank MCA for the vital support they provide to children and young people with autism."*

# Organisational Chart – Middletown Centre for Autism – February 2022



## **The Successful Candidate**

The Board of the Centre is seeking a Chief Executive who can provide the visionary leadership to maintain and build on the Centre's high level of achievement and success to keep this dynamic organisation at the forefront of innovation in delivering high quality support to children and young people with autism, their families and the professionals who work with them.

The Centre develops innovative evidence-based approaches to the provision of services for children and young people with autism and provides expert, research-based guidance and advice to policymakers and education providers in both jurisdictions.

The staff of the Centre provide support to schools and parents as a second-tier service where specialist intensive intervention is required to effect improvements in education and life skills for individual children and young people. This support is delivered on an individual and whole school basis and integrates education-based and therapeutic health interventions through a trans disciplinary, multi-agency approach to learning. The Centre staff also work in partnership with existing statutory and voluntary organisations. A far-reaching training programme is delivered face to face and online, for schools, parents and a range of professionals offers opportunities to develop knowledge and skills on effective practice. Training events regularly feature renowned presenters in the field of autism. In a unique cyclical approach, all these services are underpinned by evidence-based research which informs the continuous development of best practice.

The Centre has applied its expertise to develop a third level qualification in autism studies in conjunction with the University of Limerick and Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

The Centre is recognised as a leading source of advice to policy makers in both Departments of Education on the island of Ireland and has acquired an international reputation as a respected innovator with a unique depth and breadth of expertise in the field of autism.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Chief Executive, Middletown Centre for Autism Limited

**Reporting to:** Board of Directors

**Location:** Middletown, Co Armagh, Northern Ireland

### **Job Purpose:**

Middletown Centre for Autism ('the Centre') is a recognised centre of excellence throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland in the provision of education services to children and young people with autism. The Chief Executive will develop, maintain and further evolve the Centre as a learning, support and assessment service for children and young persons; a research centre with world-wide recognition; and as a training service for children and young people, parents, schools, teachers and other professionals.

The Board of the Centre has overall responsibility for leading the Centre and delivering its vision, in conjunction with its sponsoring Departments, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Education (Ireland). The Board delegates responsibility for management of day-to-day operations to the Chief Executive who has the authority to carry out these responsibilities in accordance with the direction of the Board. The Chief Executive provides advice and assistance to the Board as it carries out its governance role and attends all Board meetings. The Chief Executive is the designated Accounting Officer by both Departments.

The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing the strategic vision and direction of the Centre and for ensuring that agreed objectives and targets, as outlined in the corporate and business plans, are met. As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the highest level of financial probity and compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and Department of Education (Ireland) guidance and all other relevant public sector governance procedures in both jurisdictions.

### **Key Accountabilities and Areas of Responsibility**

#### **1. Strategic Leadership and Operational Delivery**

- Work with the Board to develop and maintain the vision and Board-approved strategic and operational plans of the Centre.
- Identify for the Board's attention the key strategic challenges for the Centre, at local, national and international levels and suitable means by which the Centre can meet these challenges effectively.
- Develop the annual business and operational plans, to include annual targets consistent with the overall strategic plan, for approval by the Board and the Departments.
- Promote the role of the Centre, with a defined culture and ethos based on the pursuit of excellence and innovative, outcomes-based approaches in supporting children and young people with autism, their parents and educators, and reflect the strategic approaches of both Departments of Education, local and statutory agencies.
- Provide visionary leadership to engage, manage and motivate staff in line with the values of the Centre and ensure that these are consistently applied across the organisation.

- Ensure effective delivery of services provided by the Centre, including person to person interactions, group presentations, digital communications and written materials.

## **2. Governance of the Business and Financial Management**

- Ensure that public sector corporate governance standards and related processes are instituted, monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Be accountable for the delivery of the objectives within the business and operational plans, and ensuring the proper monitoring and analysis of performance at all levels.
- Act as the Accounting Officer for the Centre with full accountability for the annual budget of approximately £2.6m per annum, including capital expenditure, ensuring the highest levels of probity; ensure timely and accurate monthly financial reporting to the Board and in the Centre's published annual financial accounts.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable legislation and best practice relating to the conduct of the business of the Centre and develop and maintain the policies of the Centre accordingly.
- Be accountable for ongoing development of the Centre's evaluation process to ensure cost effective and efficient delivery and analysis of the expected outputs and outcomes.
- Act in the role of Principal Officer for Ombudsman Cases in NI only.

## **3. Risk Management and Internal Control**

- Ensure that the risk management framework is maintained in compliance with the risk management policy of the Centre.
- Ensure that internal controls are in place and are regularly monitored to ensure that all significant business risks are minimised in line with the risk appetite of the Centre.
- Ensure that internal risk management reporting is carried out in compliance with the risk management policy of the Centre.
- Be responsible for the ongoing development and maintenance of the risk management policy of the Centre.
- Provide oversight to ensure the implementation of all Health, Safety and safeguarding policies and procedures across all areas of work to ensure legal requirements are met and a healthy, safe and productive work environment maintained at all times.

## **4. Communication and Influencing**

- Cultivate good working relationships with senior officers in the sponsoring Departments.
- Keep the sponsoring Departments fully appraised, as required, of the Centre's key business and operational issues, subject to protocols agreed with the Chair and Board of Directors of the Centre.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills and proficient knowledge of autism when providing advice, guidance and analysis at all levels and demonstrate persuasive reasoning and negotiating skills to enable higher-level decisions to be made.
- Consult with key stakeholders, to understand and inform their views, in the development of innovative procedures and concepts within the strategic direction of the Centre and on potential research areas.

- Promote effective communication strategies with parents, children, young people, schools, teachers, and other relevant professionals, in both the statutory and voluntary sectors, to ensure the Centre is fulfilling its remit in relation to children's and young people's education needs.
- As the public face of the Centre, ensure its credibility is maintained and enhanced, locally, nationally and internationally, through engagement with stakeholders in external meetings, attendance at or presentation to conferences and through the media (press, radio, television, online and via social media).
- Ensure the 'Public Interest' dimension is fully considered and represented within the overall context of Centre.

## **5. Human Resource Management**

- Ensure proper Human Resource processes and procedures are in place that comply with current legislation and best practice.
- Ensure the Centre has the appropriate management and team structures in place, which provide clarity in relation to roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and maintain a high-performance culture.
- Ensure the Centre has appropriate performance appraisal processes in place, reflecting the various disciplines within the Centre.
- Ensure adequate human resources are in place to deliver quality services across the Centre's operations and ensure appropriate levels of investment in the continuing professional development of staff.
- Lead the Centre's Senior Management Team and other staff, through clear communication of the vision to maintain a culture of excellence.
- Ensure adherence to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the Centre's work.

NB The above is given as a broad range of duties and responsibilities and is not intended as a complete description of all tasks. The post holder will be required to undertake any other reasonable duties within competence as and when required.

## **THE ROLE OF THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER**

The Chief Executive's role will be designated as the Accounting Officer for both jurisdictions.

The Chief Executive of the Centre shall be the Accounting Officer responsible for the efficient and effective administration of the Centre. With regard to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Accounting Officer shall be designated by the DE Accounting Officer (the Permanent Secretary) and shall report to him/her in accordance with established procedures. With regard to the Oireachtas, the Minister for Education (Ireland) designates the Chief Executive as the Centre's Accounting Officer.

The Accounting Officer of the Centre is responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which he/she has charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of the Centre.

The Chief Executive is answerable to the Board of Directors for the Centre's use of any resources made available to it. Ultimate responsibility for the Company and its activities rests with the Board of Directors in accordance with Northern Ireland Company Law.

### **The Chief Executive's role as Principal Officer for Ombudsman Cases**

The Chief Executive of the Centre is the Principal Officer for handling cases involving the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. As Principal Officer, he/she shall inform the Permanent Secretary of DE of any complaints about the Centre accepted by the Ombudsman for investigation, and about the Centre's proposed response to any subsequent recommendations from the Ombudsman.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Job Title:** Chief Executive, Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd

**Reporting to:** Board of Directors

**Location:** Middletown, Co Armagh, Northern Ireland

Please note the onus is on the candidate to demonstrate and evidence in their application form to what extent they meet each of the essential criteria for the job. Desirable criteria may be applied to further shortlist candidates if a large number of applications are received. The selection panel reserves the right to shortlist for assessment and interview only those candidates that it believes best meet the selection criteria.

### **Essential Criteria:**

Applicants must demonstrate, in their application, that they meet, by the closing date, the following criteria:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree or an equivalent or higher qualification<sup>1</sup> in Business, Social Care or Health, Psychology or Education.
2. Evidence of significant<sup>2</sup> senior management experience of directly leading and managing a team of people and resources within a public, private, or third sector organisation.
3. Evidence of experience of successfully leading and managing change within an organisation.
4. Evidence of significant<sup>2</sup> experience of planning and managing budgets (at least £1m).
5. Demonstrable awareness of the challenges facing the field of Autism/neuro diversity, relevant to the education of children and young people in the North and South of Ireland.
6. Willingness to be subject to Enhanced Disclosure checks in both jurisdictions.
7. Access to a form of transport to meet the requirements of the post.

### **Desirable Criteria:**

Should it be necessary to further shortlist applicants to go forward to interview, the following desirable criteria will be applied in the order listed:

1. Evidence of significant experience<sup>2</sup> of overseeing and /or working with service users to enable them to access and benefit from publicly provided services within the Health, Education, or Social Care sectors, or other welfare related service area.
2. Hold a postgraduate qualification in the field of Special Educational Needs or equivalent.
3. Demonstrable experience of reporting to a Board and /or having served on a Board.

**Note: Applicants should read the footnotes below in relation to the essential and desirable criteria and ensure that these dimensions are addressed in their application form responses.**

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<sup>1</sup> A bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher qualification is defined as being Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 6 or an equivalent or higher-level qualification. The onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate the equivalency.

<sup>2</sup> Significant experience is defined as having both **breadth and depth** of experience at **senior management/leadership** level over a period of **2 or more years**.

### **Essential Competencies:**

The candidate must be able to demonstrate competency in each of the following areas, with relevant examples, which will be tested through the interview and selection process:

#### **1. Strategic Thinking and Planning**

- Demonstrated ability to think strategically in the development, implementation and delivery of business planning processes, objectives and policies and remain flexible in response to a changing and challenging environment
- Strong, well developed planning and organisational skills to ensure clear performance measures, targets and timescales are established for the achievement of results consistent with the aims and objectives of the Centre
- Demonstrates a capacity for logical and creative thinking to find well-judged and innovative solutions based on a sound analyse of the substantial issues to enable evidence based decision making to complex problems
- Maximises research to inform evidence-based decision making whilst balancing risk

#### **2. Governance of the Business, Delivering Results, Financial Management, Risk and Reporting**

- Ability to set business objectives, develop strategic and, which focus on outcomes, delivery of strategic goals and allocation of resources
- Demonstrates a track record of achieving results against formally agreed targets, through well-developed planning and organisational skills; establishing clear performance measures, targets and timescales for the achievement of results consistent with the aims and objectives of the Centre
- Strong financial acumen, with an ability to manage all resources effectively, including financial, human, IT, and other fixed assets and experience of reviewing and presenting quality financial and other reports at executive and Board levels
- Demonstrates a good understanding of the public sector corporate governance framework and the legislative requirements of the sector or equivalent
- Has a sound understanding of the management of business risks and the necessity for internal controls with a capacity to ensure that all business risks are identified and managed in line with the risk management policy of the Centre and are minimised in line with the risk appetite of the Centre

#### **3. Leadership and Managing People**

- Ability to provide effective leadership and management to motivate and develop people to achieve high performance
- Demonstrated ability to translate and communicate corporate objectives and set clear direction and realistic expectation aligned to the delivery of strategic goals and outcomes
- Ability to develop and coach the team to develop their capability in line with Centre needs including by providing constructive feedback and monitoring outcomes to ensure success
- Consistently champions the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and role models the values and principles of equity and integrity aligned to the 7 principles of public life in all areas of organisational planning, operation and implementation

- Ability to effectively lead and manage change to keep all stakeholder engaged and involved in line with a changing landscape.

#### **4. Effective Communication and Partnership working**

- Exhibits highly effective oral, written and presentational skills with track record of presenting reports and papers at Board level (or equivalent) and adapts style to the needs of different audiences.
- Develops and maintains a positive image of the organisation, acting as an excellent ambassador and promoting a culture based on leveraging a client centric approach to service users.
- Able to seek and recognise diverse inputs from a range of stakeholders and translate these into new opportunities to connect constructively and effectively to provide new opportunities for service users.
- Ability to build and maintain strong networks and positive working relationships with people locally, nationally and internationally to influence and develop mutually beneficial ventures.

## KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

It is anticipated that the successful candidate will take up post by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

### Length of Contract

This is a permanent post dependent upon satisfactory completion of a probationary period of nine months. If the post-holder does not maintain the required standard of performance, conduct or attendance during this period of probation, Middletown Centre for Autism reserves the right to extend the probationary period or to terminate the contract of employment during or at the end of the probationary period.

### The rewards package for the post

The Centre is offering a substantial rewards package for this post.

The salary range for the post is currently £65,282 to £70,676 (subject to review). In addition to salary, the Centre will also contribute to a pension scheme if the postholder opts in to the Centre's pension scheme (please see below).

The starting salary will normally be the minimum of the pay scale for this grade. A starting salary higher than the scale minimum will only be considered where there are clearly justifiable business reasons.

The Scheme of Conditions of Service of National Joint Council for Local Authorities Services (NJC) shall apply to this post and the salary is reviewed annually in line with national UK public sector pay agreements.

A travel and subsistence scheme is also offered by the Centre which the post holder can avail of in connection with the performance of official business.

### Pension Scheme

The Centre offers all employees the opportunity to join a pension scheme. The two principal schemes offered are the Teachers' Superannuation Scheme (TSS) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Officer's Superannuation Committee Scheme (NILGOSC). Employees may alternatively continue with an existing pension arrangement, into which the Centre will contribute.

Current contribution rates are as follows, and are subject to change:

	Current Employer Contribution Rate	Current Employee Contribution Rate
TSS <sup>Note 1</sup>	25.1%	11.3%
NILGOSC <sup>Note 2</sup>	19.5%	8.5%
Other Personal Pension Arrangement <sup>Note 2</sup>	19.5%	8.5%

**Note 1** - To be eligible for the TSS, employees must be an existing GTCNI registered teacher.

**Note 2** - Non GTCNI registered employees would join one of these two scheme options. By way of illustration, at the starting salary for this post, this would equate to an annual employer's contribution of £12,730 and an employee contribution of £5,549.

## **Annual Leave**

The post attracts 30 days per year annual leave. In addition, there is normally a further 12 public and statutory holidays in any leave year.

The leave year extends from 1 April in one year to 31 March the following year. As a new entrant, you will be entitled to leave proportionate to the completed months of service during your first year of entry.

## **Hours**

This is a full-time role. The normal hours of work are 37 per week. However, the post-holder will be required to work the necessary hours to successfully carry out the duties of the job. This may include occasional evening and weekend work and overnight stays.

## **Working Time Regulations 1998**

Due to the nature of this position, you may be required, on occasion, to work such additional hours over and above standard hours as may be necessary to fulfil the duties of the post.

No overtime payment will be made for this work, as it is considered commensurate with your role.

It is a condition of this employment that you agree to work such additional hours which may result in the total working hours exceeding 48 in any given week as and when necessary. However, under the Working Time Regulations, you are not required to work more than an **average of 48 hours a week over a 17-week period**. You may choose to opt out and agree to work more than the 48-hour average weekly limit. If you wish to opt out, you must complete and return the organisations Opt Out Agreement Form.

You have the right to bring this opt out agreement to an end by giving 3 months' written notice to that effect.

## **Location**

The Chief Executive is based at the Middletown Centre for Autism, Middletown, County Armagh.

Travel will be required on occasion across Ireland and on occasion further afield in order to deliver the full range of duties and responsibilities of the role. The successful candidate must have a driving licence and access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.

## **Contract**

Please note that this information pack is intended only to provide an overview of key terms and conditions of employment. A contract of employment containing full terms and conditions will be issued to the successful candidate.

## **Pre-appointment Checks**

The offer is conditional on completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks which are:

- Provision of proof of eligibility to work in the UK and Ireland
- Provision of original birth certificate
- AccessNI screening / Tusla checks
- Pre-employment health screening
- Receipt of two references one of which must include your most recent / current employer.
- Provision of documentary evidence of qualifications as listed in the essential and/or desirable criteria

### **The Public Service**

All public office-holders have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality. The Seven Principles of Public Life (set out below) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, NDPBs, and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The Principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

- **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** - Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Equality of Opportunity**

Middletown Centre for Autism is committed to equality of opportunity and all applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit. Middletown Centre for Autism welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of belief, gender, disability, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

### **Submission of Completed Applications**

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Pack before completing an application.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications by email wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or received via email.

Completed application forms must be submitted by the date and time advised at the front of this pack and to the email address as advised.

Applications can also be submitted by post or hand delivery to Allen People Solutions, 1b Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FQ.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the form is received by the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Applications must bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery and the closing date may be missed.

Candidates are reminded that the application form must be fully completed. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Faxed applications will not be accepted. CVs, letters or any other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms. Additional information received after the closing date will not be considered.

It is therefore essential that applicants indicate on their application form how and to what extent their qualifications, skills and experience are relevant to the selection criteria outlined.

Any candidates who are experiencing difficulties completing their application form because of a disability or who have any queries regarding the recruitment process should contact Allen People Solutions at the email address provided above.

Middletown Centre for Autism reserves the right to shortlist for assessment and interview only those candidates that it believes best meet the selection criteria.

### **Guidance for Applicants**

The post is open to any individual who meets the essential criteria set out in this information pack. The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

It is therefore imperative that all applicants demonstrate on their application form how and to what extent they meet these criteria. If you do not provide sufficient detail, including any appropriate dates needed to meet the requirements, your application will not be shortlisted. Only those whose responses meet the highest standard expected for this role will be shortlisted.

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Do not use acronyms or complex technical detail. Write for the reader who may not know your job or organisation.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write “I” statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel are interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team.
- Only the employment history and selection criteria sections will be made available to the panel.
- In preparing your application form you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

Situation – briefly outline the situation;

Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve?

Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution?

and

Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn?

#### **Changes in personal circumstances**

Please ensure Allen People Solutions are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

#### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

**You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification.** The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables Middletown Centre for Autism to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

## **Selection Process**

### **1. Initial Screening**

All applications received by the closing date will initially be screened by our appointed external consultancy, Allen People Solutions to check they have been properly completed. Any applications which have not been properly completed will be deemed invalid.

### **2. Shortlisting**

The selection panel will meet to review the completed application forms in relation to the essential criteria. Only those applicants who fully and clearly demonstrate on their application form how they meet each of the essential criteria will be shortlisted. The selection panel reserves the right to apply the desirable criteria in the order specified to reduce the pool of candidates to a manageable number for interview stage.

### **3. Independent Assessment**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete a behavioural psychometric assessment. This assessment can be completed online and the reports will be managed by a licenced independent licensed practitioner within Allen People Solutions, the external consultancy appointed. Feedback will be available on request.

### **4. Interview and Assessment**

Candidates successful in the previous stages will be invited to a panel interview in relation to the selection criteria and competencies as set out in this document, as well as an unseen presentation.

Subject to Covid-19 restrictions, it is expected that this will be a face-to-face interview based on the selection criteria. Candidates will be advised otherwise if required.

Please note that it is our policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring photographic identification – passport or driving licence to confirm identity.

### **5. Guide to Competency Based Interviews**

A Competency Based Selection Process is designed to help you to present relevant evidence in order that decision makers can evaluate how well you ‘fit’ the requirements of a particular role. Relevant evidence is usually, but not exclusively, drawn from your work experience and the way in which you have accomplished a range of activities or projects. The information you provide will be evaluated against specific skills and competencies required for effective performance in the role. Throughout the process you need to give enough detail so that panel members can tell what you actually did and, importantly, how you did it. They will not assume that you demonstrate a skill at the right level just because of your current role, length of experience or educational qualifications. These do not give enough evidence about how you accomplished relevant tasks.

For example, if a question is about your approach to decision making, you need to do more than describe your current role and list important decisions you have made. You will need to describe how you reached relevant decisions.

Some guidelines for presenting yourself well are given below:-

- **Give specific examples** - most questions will ask you to describe an example of when you have demonstrated a skill: try to do this concisely but with enough detail so that the panel will be clear about what you actually did. This detail might include information about timescales, the number of people involved, budgets etc.
- **Give a range of examples across the interview** – if possible, base your answers on different situations or challenges you faced rather than rely on just one experience. This helps the panel to evaluate how you tackle different challenges and not just your behaviour in a ‘one off’ situation. However, one example can be used to demonstrate competence in a number of areas.
- **Be concrete rather than theoretical** – a clear description of how you actually behaved in a particular situation (and why) is of much more use to the panel than a vague or general description of what you consider to be desirable attributes.

## **6. The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA)**

The post for which you are applying is governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Before appointing anyone to such a post, it is imperative for the relevant check to be carried out by Access NI or the Garda Vetting Office, as appropriate. This check is to make sure those individuals who might be a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not appointed.

The check will indicate if you have a criminal record or if your name is included on the DHSSPS Disqualification from Working with Children List or included on the DE List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List. Any information received will be treated confidentially and will be discussed with candidates before a final decision is reached. After the decision is made the information will be destroyed.

## **7 Feedback**

Middletown Centre for Autism is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. All requests for feedback are welcome.