



Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy



Chief Executive Officer Candidate Information Pack

October 2026



Eastside People

Building healthier relationships and transforming lives together

We are the UK's professional association for family and systemic psychotherapists and practitioners





Welcome from our Chair

Think Systemically. Lead Relationally. *Rooted in relationships. Ready for the future.*

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for considering becoming the next CEO of the Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy (AFSP).

I could begin with our professional standards, training, research, publications and conferences. All matter enormously. But the most fitting place to begin is with relationships.

For more than fifty years, AFSP has been shaped by a simple and powerful idea: none of us exists in isolation. Our lives are formed through relationships, families, communities, cultures and wider systems - and when relationships change, possibilities can change too.

Today, AFSP is the UK's leading professional association for family and systemic psychotherapists. We champion our professional community, uphold standards and support learning, research and connection. Behind all of this are people who care deeply about the profession. That is the community you would be joining.

Rooted in relationships. Ready for the future.

AFSP has a proud history stretching back to 1975. This appointment comes at an important moment, with conversations ahead about professional identity, training and standards, regulation, research, inclusion, workforce development, public engagement and technology. There is much to build on - and space to imagine.

We are looking for a relational leader.

Someone who understands that leadership happens between people: through trust, clarity, curiosity, challenge and shared endeavour. Someone who can listen carefully and act decisively; bring warmth without avoiding difficult conversations; and hold complexity while helping people find a way forward.

We want a CEO who knows that good governance and human warmth are not opposites; that clarity can be compassionate; and that healthy organisations are built through relationships and culture as well as strategy and, yes, the occasional spreadsheet.



Our next CEO will not be expected to arrive with all the answers. We hope they will arrive with curiosity, judgement, courage, humility - and some very good questions.

“Difference around the table changes the conversation.”

Our commitment to inclusion is reflected in our leadership. More than half of our Board of Trustees come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds, alongside diversity of age, career stage, professional experience, geography and perspective. For a systemic organisation, difference should not simply be represented around the table; it should enrich what happens around it.

The CEO will work closely with me as Chair and with our Board, staff, volunteers, members and partners. I see the Chair-CEO relationship as a partnership: distinct responsibilities, grounded in trust, honesty, thoughtful challenge and shared responsibility for the health of AFSP.

Come curious. Lead courageously. Stay relational.

Ultimately, AFSP's work reaches beyond the organisation itself: to families, young people and couples seeking change; professionals working in complex services; and students discovering new ways of understanding people, problems and possibilities.

I hope our next CEO will become genuinely excited about AFSP - while retaining enough perspective to tell us when something needs to change. I hope you will help us tell the story of our profession with confidence, deepen our connection with members and communities, and bring something we have not yet imagined.

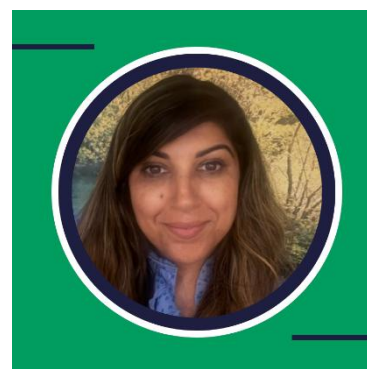
Because when somebody new enters a system, something changes.

What might become possible when we work together?

If our purpose resonates with you, and if you believe leadership can be both courageous and deeply human, I very much hope you will consider joining us for the next chapter of AFSP's story.

With warmth,

Parveen Kaur | Chair, Board of Trustees





About us

Who we are

[AFSP](#) (then AFT) was founded in 1975 and we celebrated our 50th anniversary during 2025. Membership numbers have grown as the profession has continued to develop.

Our members provide evidence-informed therapy to individuals, couples, families and organisations.

Family and Systemic Psychotherapist is a recognised and regulated profession in the UK. Therapists are usually required to have a core profession before training (e.g. mental health nurse, psychologist, social worker, etc). They are employed across the NHS (for both children and young people and adults), social care, schools, charities, and private practice (paid for by insurance or private individuals). Our members work with families, couples, individuals, groups, teams, and organisations. They also work with a wide range of presenting issues.

In their practice, members explore how patterns in relationships and the 'systems' around someone – including their family, workplace and community – influence their mental health. This systemic way of approaching therapy helps people communicate more clearly, understand patterns and strengthen connections. It helps people build better relationships.

Our diverse and passionate community of over 3,000 members also includes psychotherapy students and other health professionals interested in systemic practice.





What we do

Supporting our members

We support members across the four UK nations and maintain strong links with our partner organisations internationally.

We support our members with inspiring continuing professional development (CPD), including:

- Informative [webinars](#)
- An engaging [annual conference](#)
- [Context](#), our much-loved bi-monthly magazine
- [The Journal of Family Therapy](#), our peer-reviewed international journal
- We also help our members to [register and maintain registration with the UK Council for Psychotherapy \(UKCP\)](#), which acts as the regulator for the profession.

We support our members to work privately and independently, in NHS child and adult mental health services and for social care and third sector organisations.

Our [directory of qualified and UKCP-registered family and systemic psychotherapists and supervisors](#) helps people find the right therapist for them.

Accrediting courses

We also [accredit over 100 systemic psychotherapy courses in the UK](#), ensuring that they meet the highest professional standards. Our accreditation is seen as the hallmark of high-quality, professional family and systemic psychotherapy training.

Supporting and sharing research

Family and systemic psychotherapy is the recommended first-line treatment for many mental health difficulties, including eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and severe depression in adolescence. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance for the NHS includes over 600 guidelines which mention family therapy as an intervention.

We support and share research with members and the wider mental health services community which provides more [evidence of the impact of family and systemic psychotherapy](#).



We also share research on systemic ideas and reach professionals internationally, including those working in allied health professions, psychologists and doctors. This develops leaders who think systemically.

As the home of systemic thinking, we believe deeply in the power of family and systemic psychotherapy to transform lives.

The voice of the profession

We're the voice of the profession. We aim to influence policy-making within Government and decision-making in the NHS and statutory services so that as many people as possible can access life-changing family and systemic psychotherapy.

Our impact

Our strategy aims for 2025-26 were the following three key objectives:

1. Support professional development
2. Grow and strengthen the profession and our community
3. Celebrate and promote family and systemic psychotherapy

Achievements during the year against these three key objectives were as follows:

1. Support professional development

We delivered a high-quality programme of training, events and webinars and continued to publish our highly-regarded magazine Context and our Journal of Family Therapy.

2. Grow and strengthen the profession and our community

We represented the community and modality at external events and in key partnerships. We began work on our training standards review and EDI strategy and we modernised our internal and member facing electronic tools and systems.

3. Celebrate and promote family and systemic psychotherapy

We celebrated the Association's 50th anniversary and began work on a new website and brand, alongside contributing to discussions on the future regulation of psychotherapy.





Our mission & our people

Mission

The UK's professional home for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy, promoting excellence, developing standards and advancing systemic practice to improve relationships and transform lives.

Our people

Our current diverse Board of 10 are all members working within the profession in a variety of capacities. Our Board is highly engaged, deeply committed, and very supportive. Our Chair was re-elected for a further three-year term in June 2025. We hope to add lay members from different professional backgrounds to the Board soon following revision of the Articles and subject to member consultation and approval.

Our small, professional and excellent staff team of seven work in roles across operations, finance, publishing, professional affairs, communications and marketing, membership and administration. They are joined in the extended team by the editor of Context and the editor of the Journal of Family Therapy.

Our core work is supported by a wider array of committed, skilled and highly knowledgeable volunteers who lead and support our committees and other work.

There are significant opportunities to develop an outstanding culture that recognises, values, supports and grows both the team and our volunteers.

Our people will be strongly involved in this recruitment process, and candidates should anticipate meeting them and other stakeholders as part of our selection process.



Our commitment to diversity

As an organisation, we're committed to creating an environment that supports people from all walks of life. We believe that diversity in gender and gender identity, race, sexuality, disability, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and culture is a key strength. It's pivotal to creating a supportive environment for our staff, members and the public. We value diversity while rejecting division.

Addressing systemic racism

We recognise historic systemic and institutionalised racism within our society and how this legacy has a lasting impact on future generations of those affected by it.

We also recognise that systemic and institutional racism is still present within the UK today. We acknowledge the hurt and pain that marginalised communities have experienced, including members of AFSP.

We take our responsibility to address systemic racism, in all its forms, seriously.

We're also continuing to challenge other marginalising practices and subjugation in all their diverse forms, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and ageism, whenever these may occur.





The actions we're taking

- We're striving to provide equality in opportunities and ensure inclusivity within our organisational system. This includes, for example, embedding inclusivity in values, leadership and strategy. We also ensure the make-up of [our board and team](#) reflects the broad demographic of our membership.
- We strive to influence wider social and political issues, for example through our equality, diversity and inclusion groups that support practitioners' engagement with current issues of concern.
- We're exploring and learning together how to overcome issues, such as white privilege and unequal power, that exist across society.
- Through our various [committees](#), including diversity, equality and inclusion and ethics, our board of trustees and staff are continuously working to develop and promote anti-racist practices. For example, through our 'meet the board' sessions, there is opportunity to reflect, listen and address key concerns for our global majority members. Through these discussions we seek to include the lived experience and community knowledge of our membership group in our strategic planning.
- We're striving to make sure race, culture, social justice and equality have a continuous presence in clinical practice, supervision, teaching and training, on our website, in our publications and any online forums associated with AFSP.
- We're working to ensure there is more training, writing and guidance for family and systemic psychotherapists who may need support to decolonise their practices.

We're also an organisational member of the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and fully support their [diversity and equalities statement \(PDF, 214KB\)](#) and [racial injustice statement](#).

In addition, we encourage and appreciate feedback as we strive to ensure that AFSP is a safe and open space for all.





Our emerging strategic priorities

Following a fantastic and very positive recent away day in Birmingham, which engaged our board, team, and volunteers, we have together undertaken a thorough SWOT analysis and developed the following four emerging strategic priorities.

These are under further development and consultation within the organisation at present, with a view to the new permanent CEO taking them forward on arrival and developing delivery plans with clear objectives and projects to turn strategy into reality. While the precise wording may alter with feedback, these form a solid agreed baseline of where our needs and priorities lie at this time. Applicants should expect these priorities to drive the focus of this role through early days into maturity, but with a significant opportunity for the new CEO to input into direction, delivery and governance.

1. Build a stronger organisation
2. Improve communication and member engagement
3. Strengthen influence and promote the profession
4. Maintain excellence

Our finances

Turnover is circa £800k, with the main source of income being membership fees. Our reserves policy is to carry four to six months' operating costs, and we are currently well within this range.

There is a significant opportunity to increase income in the future from a wider range of sources, and an incoming CEO with a real focus on the business model, controlling costs and developing future income opportunities would be a significant plus.



An exciting time to join us as CEO

Our recent journey

The organisation has been and remains on a journey of change and professionalisation. Following a difficult recent period, the charity engaged the services of an Interim CEO through Interims for Impact who, since February 2026, has stabilised the team and operations and worked with the Board and team to strengthen organisational governance, leadership and management.

During this period, we've been taking a thorough look at how our charity is operating to make sure that we're in the strongest possible position for the future. This work has involved speaking with trustees, staff, committee chairs, volunteers, and a range of external partners, alongside reviewing our governance, finances, policies and day-to-day operations.

As well as keeping the charity running and supporting our ongoing work, this review has helped us identify both the many strengths we have to build on and the areas where we need to improve.

The review confirmed that the Association has many significant strengths. We have a passionate and highly committed community of volunteers, trustees and staff who care deeply about our mission and our members. There is a genuine willingness across the organisation to improve and develop, and we benefit from high-quality external support in areas such as HR, legal advice, finance and IT. Important foundations have already been strengthened, including systems, policies and most recently our website and digital presence.

At the same time, the review identified several areas where we need to improve if we are to build a stronger, more sustainable organisation. These include:

- Developing a clearer and more focused long-term strategy and shared direction.
- Strengthening governance, including reviewing our governing document (the Articles), policies and Board arrangements.
- Increasing opportunities for members to engage with and influence the charity.
- Improving communication and ensuring decisions are followed through consistently, while rebuilding trust following a difficult period.
- Building a stronger organisational culture based on shared values and behaviours.



- Supporting staff wellbeing, improving volunteer support and planning for leadership transition.
- Strengthening our financial resilience and ensuring we have the capacity needed to deliver our ambitions.

None of these findings diminishes the tremendous work already being delivered and the excellence present in many other areas of the Association's work. Instead, they provide a clear roadmap for making the organisation stronger for the future.

In June 2026, the Board of Trustees agreed a detailed action plan focused on several key areas:

- Creating a clear strategy, vision and shared values to guide future decisions.
- Modernising our governance arrangements, including reviewing our governing document and Board development.
- Developing better ways to listen to and involve members in shaping the charity.
- Improving communication across the organisation and strengthening our public voice.
- Investing in our people through clearer roles, improved support, training and wellbeing initiatives.
- Reviewing committee structures to ensure they are effective and sustainable.
- Strengthening financial planning and oversight.
- Continuing to tackle operational backlogs and improve day-to-day processes.
- Recruiting a permanent CEO with the appropriate skills, values and behaviours to lead the organisation into its next chapter; and delivering an excellent transition and induction process.

Significant progress has been made on the delivery of the action plan, with many changes either complete or significantly advanced, pending completion before the new CEO joins us.





Background to CEO role

The opportunity

The CEO will provide overall leadership to AFSP, working closely with the Chair and Board of Trustees to develop and deliver the charity's strategy, maximise impact for members and wider society and ensure long-term sustainability.

The successful candidate will inherit a respected organisation with a strong reputation in the field both nationally and internationally, a solid membership base, a committed and welcoming team, highly experienced and active volunteers, and a supportive Chair and Board. This role provides a fantastic opportunity for the postholder to make a significant impact, with huge opportunities ahead for organisational growth and development.

In leading our small charity, the CEO will need to be comfortable operating at both strategic and operational levels. It requires a leader who can set direction, build relationships and empower others – moving seamlessly between the big picture and operational detail while also being able to roll their sleeves up and lead from the front.

The person – their values, behaviours and leadership style - is as important to us as the experience and skills criteria. Every stage of our process will test both elements. If this entices and excites you, then please read on.

Supporting success

The Interim CEO is supporting the Board with this recruitment process and will be supporting the successful postholder through their transition and induction into the role to build upon the strong emerging foundations that have been laid, with a clear handover of work to be undertaken to continue the journey.

The Board and Interim CEO will work with the successful candidate to prepare a structured induction and handover into the role. The Board is keen to support the successful candidate with internal and external support to help ensure success in the role, and this will be mutually agreed once an appointment has been made.



Chief Executive Officer job description

Location	Home-based - flexible working hours and structure to be agreed with the postholder with at least monthly travel to our office in Warrington, Cheshire - reasonable travel expenses paid
Time Commitment	Three days a week (22.5 hours per week) – 0.6 FTE
Salary	£70,000 to £80,000 pro-rata (actual salary £42,000 to £48,000)
Contract	Permanent
Benefits	Employer pension contribution of 8%; 25 days' leave, 3-day Christmas closure & public holidays
Reports to	Chair of trustees
Responsible for	Senior leadership team (one member of staff currently)

Overall purpose of role

Initial priorities

The following key priorities in the first 12 months in post identify the purpose of this CEO role. They are likely to focus on:

- Relationships and rebuilding trust across the organisation
- Strategy – including operationalisation and governance
- Culture and behaviours – across the organisation and for the staff team
- Member engagement and clarifying the member offer
- Structures, capacity and ways of working to support the strategy
- Communications, voice, influence and promotion
- Income generation to support future ambitions

These priorities and key targets will be refined with the successful candidate and agreed with the Board as part of the CEO's objective setting process.





CEO responsibilities

1. Strategic leadership and impact

- Work with the Board, staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders to finalise and deliver a clear, ambitious, focused and achievable strategy.
- Lead the implementation of the charity's strategy and annual business plans, ensuring clear priorities, communication, ownership and measures. Actively facilitate and support the Board's governance and oversight of strategy delivery.
- Build and continue to develop a staffing, organisational and operations structure that aligns with and underpins the delivery of the agreed strategy.
- Keep the organisation focused on its charitable purpose and public benefit.
- Ensure that decisions are evidence-informed and that the charity learns from experience, data, member feedback and external developments.
- Identify opportunities for innovation, collaboration and growth where these are consistent with the charity's purpose and capacity.

2. Leadership style and organisational culture

- Provide visible, inspirational, professional, inclusive and values-led leadership to staff, members and volunteers.
- Create a culture in which people understand the charity's purpose, know what is expected of them and are supported to perform at their best.
- Recruit, develop, support and retain a capable and motivated team, ensuring effective management, supervision, appraisal and professional development.
- Promote equity, diversity and inclusion across the organisation and ensure that different perspectives are actively sought and heard.
- Lead with integrity, openness, compassion, resilience and accountability.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately supported with a strong and unwavering focus on wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Build and maintain a working environment which gets the most out of hybrid and remote working and maintains communication and connection.
- Build and develop clear communication and decision making channels.

3. Membership and stakeholder engagement

- Ensure that members and member needs are central to the charity's strategy, services and decision-making.





- Develop a compelling and sustainable membership offer that demonstrates clear value to existing and prospective members.
- Strengthen member recruitment, retention, engagement and satisfaction.
- Build constructive relationships with members, volunteers, partner organisations, funders and other stakeholders.
- Create appropriate opportunities for members and stakeholders to contribute their expertise, insight and lived experience.
- Ensure that the charity communicates effectively and consistently with its membership and wider audiences.

4. Income generation and financial sustainability

- Lead the development and implementation of a sustainable income strategy, appropriate to the charity's purpose and membership model.
- Oversee and maximise all income streams including membership, fundraising, grants, partnerships and trading.
- Identify opportunities to diversify income and reduce unnecessary financial risk.
- Ensure robust financial planning, budgeting, forecasting and monitoring.
- Maintain a clear understanding of the charity's financial position and ensure that the Board receives timely, accurate and meaningful financial information.
- Ensure that expenditure is effective and aligned with strategic priorities.

5. Governance, risk and compliance

- Work closely with the Chair and Board to ensure effective governance and a productive and positive relationship between trustees and staff.
- Provide the Board with the information, advice, support and challenge that it needs to discharge its responsibilities effectively.
- Work closely with the Board, and in particular the Chair, including meeting regularly, setting objectives and completing annual appraisals
- Ensure clear boundaries between governance and executive management, supported by an appropriate scheme of delegation.
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law, the Articles and all other relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Build and maintain working knowledge of the Charity Governance Code and sector developments.



- Maintain effective systems for risk management, internal controls, safeguarding, data protection, health and safety and other organisational policies.
- Support trustees in maintaining high standards of governance, assurance and accountability.

6. External leadership, influence and profile

- Act as a credible and compelling ambassador for AFSP, working alongside the Chair and Board to undertake commitments on behalf of members.
- Build effective relationships and strengthen the profession with relevant bodies, government, funders, partners, media and other influential stakeholders.
- Support the Chair to develop an expert reference or advisory group.
- Represent the charity effectively and pro-actively externally.
- Identify opportunities to influence policy, practice and public debate.
- Develop strategic partnerships and collaborations that increase AFSP's reach, influence and impact.
- Ensure that the charity's communications and public profile accurately reflect its values, purpose and achievements.

7. Board and trustee relationship

- Establish an open, respectful and trusting relationship with the Chair.
- Maintain regular communication with the Chair between Board meetings, ensuring that significant issues are raised promptly.
- Prepare high-quality reports and papers for the Board and ensure that trustees have access to quality external professional advice where required.
- Support the Board in developing its understanding of the charity's operating environment, performance, risks and opportunities.
- Work constructively with trustees while respecting the distinction between governance and executive responsibility.
- Support effective trustee induction, development and succession.

8. Organisational development

- Ensure that the charity's systems, processes and infrastructure are appropriate to its size, ambitions, strategy and resources.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness and use of technology.
- Ensure that the organisation has appropriate policies, controls and data.



- Lead organisational change sensitively and effectively.
- Ensure that the charity remains agile and responsive without compromising good governance, quality or sustainability.

9. Personal and professional development

- Develop own professional knowledge, networks, mentoring and understanding of key charity sector good practice, developments and regulatory requirements.
- Develop own knowledge and insight into the profession and needs of members.
- Establish a learning culture – leading this from the front with self-awareness of own knowledge and skills gaps and undertaking work to address them.

Who we're looking for

Essential skills and experience

- Demonstrable senior charity leadership experience, perhaps in a membership organisation or professional body, with evidence of turning strategy into clear operational priorities and delivering outcomes.
- Significant experience of leading development, improvement or change.
- Significant experience of leading and developing people, creating a positive culture and managing performance, perhaps in a remote and hybrid environment
- Experience of working directly with a charity Board of Trustees
- Experience of developing diverse income streams including earned income
- Experience of managing budgets, with strong financial literacy.
- Experience of developing and supporting good governance, assurance and risk management.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with evidence of building strong relationships and partnerships with diverse stakeholders and the ability to represent the charity.
- Experience of working with and supporting volunteers.
- Demonstrable commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Essential attributes

- A strong and genuine commitment and passion for our organisation, our members and our team and the work that they all do.



- A values-led, collaborative, empowering, visible, listening and inclusive leadership style.
- Credible, inspiring leader with a can-do and action-oriented mindset.
- Creative and entrepreneurial, able to identify and develop opportunities for income generation
- High emotional intelligence, integrity, self-awareness, judgement and resilience.
- Open to challenge, learning and constructive feedback.
- Independent, impartial, self-confident and assertive – with diplomacy and tact.
- Calm, resilient, proactive and methodical when dealing with uncertainty, competing priorities or difficult circumstances.
- Strategic thinker with sound judgement.
- Takes accountability, creates a learning culture and invites challenge, feedback and scrutiny.
- Keeps members and member needs front and centre in decision-making.
- Evident commitment to own personal and professional development.

Essential knowledge

- Working knowledge and practical understanding of the Charity Governance Code.
- Knowledge of the charity sector and the legal and regulatory environment in which UK charities operate.
- Knowledge of, or an interest in, family and systemic psychotherapy.

Desirable (but not essential)

- Experience of developing membership propositions, engagement, retention or growth.
- Experience of influencing policy or public debate.



Ready to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting Association of Family and Systemic Psychotherapy (AFSP) in the recruitment of this role. Please [click here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter **both in Word doc format**.

Please use the cover letter (max 2 pages) as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV and ensure that you cover the following:

- Why are you interested in the CEO role at AFSP?
- Having read the information pack, and addressing the criteria outlined in **Who we're looking for**, what relevant experience, skills and personal qualities would you bring to this role?

You are welcome to send your cover letter in writing, or as a video or audio clip, alongside your CV. Any video or audio submissions should be emailed to lucinda@eastsidepeople.org

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Lucinda Shaw to arrange a convenient time at lucinda@eastsidepeople.org. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential. If you have a disability or require reasonable adjustments during the application or interview process, please contact us so we can support you appropriately.

The closing date for applications is 2 November. Shortlisting interviews will take place shortly after and shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a short behavioural assessment during the week beginning **16 November**, followed by a first interview with AFSP on **20 November**. Final selected candidates will meet members of the team and wider organisation, complete a presentation, and have a final interview on **30 November**.



Finally

We recognise that AI can be a helpful tool, but please use it with care and ensure your application is accurate, personal, and genuinely reflects you. We do not use AI in our sifting or selection process - a human reviews every application!

If you know anyone else who might be interested, please do share this information pack with them.





Eastside People

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