



# Application Pack

*Embrace. Empower. Educate.*

Role:	Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Hours:	Full Time (32 hours per week over 4 days)
Salary:	£62 to £67.5K (depending on experience)
Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

We are committed to ensuring an accessible and inclusive recruitment process. If you would prefer to apply using an alternative format - such as a video application or another method that better suits your needs, please contact [recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk](mailto:recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk). We will be happy to support you and make suitable adjustments.

[Mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://Mermaidsuk.org.uk)

Recruitment enquiries: [recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk](mailto:recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk)

This job description is in Arial size 12 font. Should you require this description to be sent in a larger size or read out to you, please contact 0800 801 0400 or email [info@mermaidsuk.org](mailto:info@mermaidsuk.org)

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## A little bit about us...

'We use 'trans' as an umbrella term for people that are binary trans, non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender or of other non-cisgender genders, including those of non-Western origin.'

## The Charity

Mermaids has been supporting trans children, young people, and their families since 1995. Mermaids has evolved into one of the UK's leading LGBTQ+ charities, empowering thousands of people with its secure online communities, local community groups, helpline services, web resources, events, training, policy and stakeholder engagement and residential weekends.

We also seek to educate and inform wider society on gender identity by helping professionals accommodate and reassure gender diverse young people. Over the years, we've seen many changes in the language and understanding surrounding gender issues, but one thing remains the same: trans children deserve the freedom and confidence to explore their gender identity wherever their journey takes them, free from fear, isolation and discrimination.

## What You Can Expect

In supporting our mission to create lasting, positive change for trans people, now and for generations to come, you will receive our full support to thrive in your role. This includes comprehensive training, opportunities for professional development, a contributory pension, generous holiday entitlement, access to external supervision, and a range of additional benefits.

## Message from the CEO

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Operating Officer with Mermaids. This is a truly exciting time to join the charity; there's no other organisation like Mermaids. Whatever you do here you will be supporting our work to achieve our mission and make positive change for transgender, non-binary, gender diverse children and young people for generations to come. Given the challenges facing young transgender people on numerous fronts, it is more important than ever for the charity to step up.



If you want to be involved in one of the most significant civil rights movements of our time, then this is where you need to be. Over the last year, we have worked hard to stabilise and improve our financial position and deliver strong financial management and the role of COO is crucial in continuing this.

I joined the organisation as Chief Executive Officer in November 2025, bringing with me a long-standing commitment to youth advocacy and inclusive leadership. Supporting trans, non-binary and gender-diverse young people is central to my work. Throughout my career, I have championed policies that promote safety, dignity and equal access to opportunities, and I continue to listen closely to the communities we serve to ensure their experiences guide our direction. I am dedicated to fostering a culture of respect, belonging, and meaningful change for all young people.

If you have the passion and drive to help us achieve our vision. I look forward to hearing from you and, hopefully, joining us soon.

Yours,  
Jo Hardy  
CEO

# Role Profile

## Chief Operating Officer

As the Chief Operating Officer (COO), you will play a critical role in shaping the operational future of Mermaids. Working closely with the CEO and wider team, you will lead the development and delivery of robust finance, people, income generation and operational strategies that ensure we are well equipped to meet the needs of the communities we exist to serve. Mermaids is a charity with deep meaning and purpose for our beneficiaries, and the work we do has never been more important.

We are looking for someone with a track record of delivering meaningful transformation across finance and operational functions, ideally in a charity or values-driven setting. You will bring a collaborative and strategic mindset, with the ability to lead teams through change while maintaining focus on care, impact and accountability.

Mermaids is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from those with lived experiences (directly or indirectly) and/or close ties to the LGBTQ+ community. We actively support and encourage people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to join us and shape what we do. We are particularly keen to receive applications from BPOC (black and people of colour) and/or disabled and trans candidates.

### Key Objectives

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is a key member of the senior leadership team, responsible for overseeing the operational and financial management of the charity.

As a Chartered Accountant, the COO will bring strong financial expertise and strategic insight to ensure the charity's resources are efficiently and effectively used to deliver its mission. This includes managing the day-to-day operations, ensuring financial health and compliance, driving operational efficiency, and working closely with the CEO and Board to implement the charity's strategic vision.

## Key Responsibilities

### Financial Management

- Lead the budgeting process and develop annual budgets in collaboration with the CEO and management team.
- Monitor financial performance against budget and provide monthly management accounts and reports to the CEO and Board.
- Manage cash flow, ensuring the charity has sufficient funds to operate and respond to any variances.
- Oversee financial compliance with and adherence to Charity Commission regulations, HMRC and Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Liaise with auditors to coordinate the production of annual accounts and audit processes.
- Oversee financial systems and controls, including implementing clear processes for procurement, expenses and fraud prevention.

### People and Culture

- Lead the development of organisational people & culture strategy and be accountable for its implementation.
- Coordinate staff, volunteer and trustee training and organisational development, ensuring compliance with policies, procedures and best practices.
- Continue work to embed a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion across the organisation, as well as a focus on accessibility.
- Work to define and drive trans-centred leadership across the organisation, including ensuring that the organisation is a trans-positive, supportive employer.
- Line manage key operational staff including finance and operations, fundraising, training and people and culture teams.
- Supporting Mermaid's focus on ensuring safeguarding is every member of staff's responsibility and that the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures are embedded in organisational culture.

## Governance

- Provide operational and financial insight into strategic planning and delivery.
- Prepare board papers and attend trustee meetings, supporting the CEO to ensure that governance arrangements are in place.
- Oversee risk management processes including risk register, health & safety, insurance and crisis planning.

## Income Generation – Fundraising

- Oversee the development and implementation of fundraising and training delivery strategies, with accountability for their delivery.
- Oversee financial aspects of grants including reporting, restricted funding compliance and budget realignment.
- Ensure forecasts and pipelines are kept up to date and reflect current expectations based on organisational and external factors
- Support funding applications.

## Operational Management

- Deputise for the CEO as appropriate.
- Oversee all aspects of Finance, HR, IT, Fundraising and administration, ensuring processes are efficient and offer effective support to staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Manage contracts and suppliers, ensuring compliance and value for money.
- Act as the organisation's Data Protection Officer and Responsible Person for Health and Safety.
- Oversee the organisation's policies and procedures and ensure they are regularly audited and remain up to date.

# Person Specification

## Chief Operating Officer

**E = Essential**

**D = Desirable**

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	
E	Qualified accountant (or equivalent experience), with a solid understanding of charity specific regulations and frameworks.
E	A team-oriented, inclusive leader who promotes a supportive and engaging work environment.
E	Strong verbal and written communication skills, able to communicate complex operational and financial information to diverse audiences, including the Board, staff and external stakeholders.
E	Strong ability to think and act strategically while managing day-to-day operations, ensuring alignment between the charity's strategic goals and operational practices.
E	Proven experience in financial planning, budgeting, and reporting, with a track record of managing budgets and ensuring financial sustainability and compliance.
E	Significant experience in a senior operational leadership role, with a proven ability to manage and oversee diverse operational functions (e.g., finance, HR, IT) within a charity or non-profit setting.

E	Expertise in ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, policies, and procedures, particularly in the charity sector.
E	Proven experience in leading, managing, and developing a senior team, fostering a collaborative, high-performance culture.
D	Previous experience in organisations focused on vulnerable or marginalised communities.
D	Previous experience of delivering cultural & organisational change programmes.

## Key terms

**Place of Work:** We operate as a fully remote organisation; this role is home-based with occasional travel for in-person meetings.

**Contract Type:** Subject to 6 months' probation, this is a full time permanent position, with a 4 day working week (32 hours).

We are happy to discuss and explore flexible options and job share opportunities.

**Salary:** £62k to £67.5k depending on experience.

**Annual Leave:** The full-time core holiday entitlement is 26.5 working days.

**Pension:** Mermaids will contribute 6% of salary to the Mermaids pension scheme, 2% will be automatically taken from your salary as the employee contribution unless you choose to opt out.

**Benefits:** All staff members receive the following benefits:

- 4-day week (32 hours for full time staff members)
- Remote working
- Increased annual leave based on length of service (an additional 1 day per year up to a maximum of 4 days)
- Bank holiday flexibility (can be worked if preferred)
- Christmas closure
- Birthday leave
- Access to a GP 24/7, an employee assistance programme and external supervisors
- Health cash plan (the ability to claim back medical and dental costs)

**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 one months' notice of termination and are required to give three months' notice of termination, which must be in writing.

# The selection process

## How to apply

Send your completed application form and CV to [recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk](mailto:recruit@mermaidsuk.org.uk) with Chief Operating Officer in the subject title.

Please include hyperlinks in the letter to relevant material and add all social media accounts to the body of the email.

Deadline for applications: The final day for applications to be sent to us is **9pm Monday 20 April 2026**. Please note that the charity reserves the right to offer the position to an individual before the deadline has lapsed, so we would recommend that you do not wait for the deadline to apply if you are interested in this role.

Interview dates: **Week commencing 27 April 2026**.

Start date for the role: subject to when you can start.

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 1 May 2026 then they should assume their application has not been successful on this occasion.

## Interview Process

The interview process will consist of two stages:

- Stage one:
  - Written task (scenario based) to be completed ahead of the interview
  - Interview on Teams (w/c 27 April 2026).
  
- Stage two:
  - Candidates will be asked to prepare a short presentation for this interview.
  - Second interview on Teams (w/c 4 May 2026).

We hope to be in a position to make an offer by 8 May 2026.

Offers are subject to references and background checks.

We'd like the COO to be in post by July but we can be flexible for the preferred candidate.

### **Safeguarding**

Mermaids is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and this is a responsibility that is shared by all members of staff and volunteers across the Charity. The successful candidate will be subject to reference requests, safer recruitment checks and will be required to pass a Basic or an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (criminal records) check.

### **Data Collection and Protection**

We treat personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with Data Protection legislation.