

DIRECTOR OF MENCAP NORTHERN IRELAND INFORMATION PACK



mencap

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Welcome

Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in the role of Director of Mencap Northern Ireland.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead an organisation that plays a critical role in the lives of people with learning disability in Northern Ireland and their families. Mencap has a proud history of working alongside people with a learning disability, campaigning and lobbying for better legislation and working in partnership with individuals, communities, and public sector agencies to secure a better future for all those we support.

We continue to evolve and are ambitious to do more with and for people with learning disabilities. The Director of Mencap Northern Ireland will lead the regional operation as set out in the Mencap 2030 strategy. As well as leading operations in Northern Ireland the Director will be part of a Senior Leadership team responsible for driving strategic process across all nations and all parts of the strategy'

The role is high profile, and the successful candidate will represent the organisation externally and be comfortable dealing with high level, senior decision-makers and stakeholders. They will be able to work as peers as part of a team across the UK but also capable of working with autonomy in Northern Ireland.

A natural, results-focused and business-minded leader, they will be able to manage a diverse range of people and resources to deliver excellence in service provision and sustainability.

We've covered off some of the information we think you'll need in this pack, but our website at mencap.org.uk has lots more, including about our work in Northern Ireland.

We are working with our Northern Ireland recruitment partners, Engage, on this search and selection and they will be happy to answer queries about the role in the first instance.

This is a unique opportunity for a proven and effective individual to make a real difference to people with learning disabilities and the people who are important to them. If you think you have the experience and skills for this important position, we very much look forward to hearing from you

Alison Pike

**Executive Director Inclusive
Communities & Partnerships**



Who we are

In 1946 the mother of a child with a learning disability, Judy Fryd, wrote to a magazine asking other parents of children with learning disabilities to get in touch with her. She was flooded with replies about their experiences and how much they needed support but were not receiving any. This pioneering woman went on to set up an organisation which would later become known as Mencap.

Mencap has gone on to lead the way in providing support, services and championing change for people with a learning disability and their families. Whilst the world has changed a lot since 1946, people with a learning disability still face inequality and prejudice in 2026 and continue to need our support.

We're proud of what we have achieved but today we are needed more than ever to challenge the injustices people with a learning disability face. We need big changes which is why we have big ambitions. By the time we reach our 100th anniversary in 2046 we want to look back on a period of historic progress for people with a learning disability.



What we do

Mencap supports people with a learning disability, along with their families and carers, ensuring their rights and needs are recognised and championed across the UK. At the core of its work is delivering high-quality, person-centred services that help individuals live fulfilling lives. These include supported living, spec, personal support, early years programmes, employment initiatives and youth and community inclusion, all tailored to each person's abilities, goals and preferences. We have a role in direct delivery, partnership working, research and insight and policy and system change. These include supported living, residential care, personal support, early years programmes, employment initiatives and short breaks, all tailored to each person's abilities, goals and preferences.



The charity also provides trusted advice and information to help people navigate complex issues such as health, social care, benefits, housing and safeguarding. Through its Learning Disability Helpline and accessible easy-read resources, Mencap ensures reliable guidance for anyone who needs support.

Campaigning is central to Mencap's mission. Working alongside people with lived experience, it challenges inequality, influences policy and tackles barriers in health, education, employment and social care. Guided by a long term strategy, Mencap is committed to expanding support, strengthening communities and driving lasting, systemic change. -term strategy, Mencap is committed to expanding support, strengthening communities and driving lasting, systemic change.

In **Northern Ireland**, Mencap NI supports over 2,000 people with a learning disability, families/carers and professionals across Northern Ireland each year through the provision of direct services, training, and engagement with 21 Network Partners. Mencap



Mencap NI is unique in its role in Mencap supporting people throughout the life stages; from our flagship nursery and pre-school in Belfast through childhood and transition and into adulthood and old age.

Alongside people with lived experience, the charity actively influences decision-makers to improve policy and practice within several strategic priority areas. These include health and social care; Special Educational Needs; Safeguarding / Child Protection /Youth/ Adults; employment; and Supported Living. In doing so, we are represented on a number of government advisory groups, and work in coalition with partner organisations across all sectors. The work delivered across NI contributes to our wider Mencap 2030 strategy and the post holder is an important leader within the organisation to drive change so that 1.5million people with a learning disability across the UK can live life to the full.



Our strategy



People with a learning disability live their lives to the full

We support people with a learning disability to succeed in the things that matter to them.

We campaign for a fairer society. We work with families and partners to build inclusive communities. We deliver services individuals need to live their lives to the full.

These are our values:



We are **passionate** about making the world a better place



We are **positive** in our work and with each other



We are **brave** we challenge and try new things



We are **kind** to everyone



We are **inclusive** of everyone

We will:

GOAL 1



Provide excellent person-centred services and grow our areas of specialism

GOAL 2



Work with communities and our network groups so that people with a learning disability are included and less lonely

GOAL 3



Break down barriers to equality by increasing awareness and understanding of learning disability and changing policies

GOAL 4



Create a culture of belonging where everyone feels welcome and can achieve our goals

GOAL 5



Run Mencap well so that we have the resources, technology, systems and processes to deliver our strategy

By 2030, we will offer more support to more people in a wider variety of ways, centred around these lifestages:

- Around birth and early years
- School-age
- Becoming an adult
- During adulthood
- As people grow old

We expect to see the following impact across the five year period:

- Year 1: Strength** - improved quality and strong financial foundations
- Year 2: Growth** - more support for people with care and training
- Year 3: Breadth** - a wider range of specialist services
- Year 4: Reach** - expansion of our community programmes
- Year 5: Society** - a greater understanding of learning disability

However, we will make progress on all five goals every year and are looking for emerging opportunities.

We will measure the success of our strategy through our strategic result measures, our i-statements and achieving our shifts.

Financials

Below is a snapshot of our latest published UK-wide income and expenditure statement, to 31 March 2025. If you're reading online, you can access the complete accounts for the last three years by clicking on the links below.

For the current 2025/26 financial year the Northern Ireland budget comprises £11.8m of income and £11.3m of expenditure (of which £9.9m is staff-costs related). The budget for next financial year at review stage but is expected to be at a similar level to the current year.

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2025 Funds £'000	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 Funds £'000
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2, 27	11,912	5,571	17,483	9,560	1,105	10,665
Charitable activities	3, 27	213,857	5,791	219,648	204,235	3,945	208,180
Other trading activities	4	4,720	-	4,720	4,800	-	4,800
Investments	5	761	98	859	590	124	714
Rental income	6	895	-	895	537	-	537
Gain on disposal of fixed assets		752	-	752	3,131	-	3,131
Total		232,897	11,460	244,357	222,853	5,174	228,027
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	7	4,066	208	4,274	3,306	44	3,350
Trading Costs of Subsidiaries	7	4,549	8	4,557	3,641	3	3,644
Charitable activities	7	218,425	8,099	226,524	211,873	7,177	219,050
Total		227,040	8,315	235,355	218,820	7,224	226,044
Net gains on investments	14	162	73	235	844	287	1,131
Net income		6,019	3,218	9,237	4,877	(1,763)	3,114
Transfers between funds	23	2,305	(2,305)	-	(437)	437	-
Other recognised gains / (losses)							
Actuarial gains / (losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	24	2,563	-	2,563	(6,958)	-	(6,958)
Net movement in funds		10,887	913	11,800	(2,518)	(1,326)	(3,844)
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		25,292	11,301	36,593	27,810	12,627	40,437
Total funds carried forward		36,179	12,214	48,393	25,292	11,301	36,593

Annual Report
March 2025

Annual Report
March 2024

Annual Report
March 2023

Meet the team

The Director of Mencap Northern Ireland reports into the Executive Director of Inclusive Communities and Partnerships and makes up a leadership team of colleagues across Wales, Northern Ireland and England. The Executive Director reports into the Chief Executive.

The staff headcount in Northern Ireland stands at 321, and the Director of Mencap Northern Ireland currently has eight direct reports.



Jon Sparkes OBE

Chief Executive Officer

Jon is an experienced leader in the charity sector, having previously worked as Chief Executive at UNICEF UK, Crisis UK and Scope. Following an earlier career as a successful

commercial human resources and organisational development director in an international technology business, he brings a breadth of valuable *experience*, with a strong track record of growing scale and impact at major UK charities.

Jon also has notable experience in non-executive positions for charities and social enterprises, including SeeAbility, Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) and the Centre for Homelessness Impact.

Jon is currently a Trustee at St Petrocs, the homelessness charity.

Alison Pike

Executive Director Inclusive Communities & Partnerships

Ali's career started in the east of London as a secondary school teacher on the Teach First programme. After 3 years of teaching and some extensive travelling in central and south America she dabbled in the private sector working as a management consultant for Deloitte.



In 2010 she ventured into the charity sector and hasn't looked back! Since then she has developed a keen interest in *community* inclusion: she is enthusiastic about people having the agency, connections and support they need to be able to live, work, socialise and really enjoy life to the full in the community they call home.



Director of Mencap Northern Ireland

About the Team and the Role

Reports to Executive Director Inclusive Communities & Partnerships

Contract Type Permanent

Location Belfast

Salary £89,151 + 5% employer pension contribution

Holiday entitlement 22 days a year plus 10 statutory holidays

Hours 37.5 hours per week with flexible working available

Purpose of the role: To ensure that Mencap activities across Northern Ireland have a positive impact on the lives of people with a learning disability and their family carers. To be a key part of the wider leadership team driving strategic and operational progress across the UK.

Mencap NI supports 2,000+ people with a learning disability, families/carers and professionals across Northern Ireland each year through the provision of direct services, training, and engagement with 21 Network Partners – affiliated local community organisations. Alongside people with lived experience, we actively influence decision-makers to improve policy and practice within several strategic priority areas. These include health and social care; Special Educational Needs; Safeguarding / Child Protection /Youth/ Adults; employment; and Supported Living. In doing so, we are represented on a number of government advisory groups, and work in coalition with partner organisations across all sectors. The work delivered

across NI contributes to our wider Mencap 2030 strategy and the post holder is an important leader within the organisation to drive change so that 1.5million people with a learning disability across the UK can live life to the full.

Our current services include:

Children's services

Each year Mencap Children's Centre delivers an early development programme for 52 children aged 2–3yrs in partnership with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. A team of 14 staff support the work in the centre along with Belfast Trust therapists. The centre also runs a summer scheme programme for 120 children and young people aged 3 to 18 years. Since 2023 the team has delivered a Pre School to 8children per year. The Pre school is funded by the Education Authority and must adhere to relevant education regulation and standards.

Family support

The family support team consists of three staff who offer a programme of intervention informed and guided by parents and carers, supporting 160 families each year. Centre and community-based programmes are available to families within the Greater Belfast area and the Western Trust. An 8-week evidence informed Early Positive Approaches to Support (E-PAtS) programme is delivered alongside parents trained as family facilitators.

Youth services

The youth work team consists of 23 staff and volunteers, and delivers a range of programmes each year for over 220 young people aged 14-25 across the Belfast, Fermanagh & Omagh and L/Derry areas. The service is externally funded through SEUPB (Peace Plus) and the Education Authority, and includes programmes which support personal and social development needs;

Youth forums which empower young people to participate in influencing activities; and youth clubs.

Employment service

We provide our employment service across all 5 Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland supporting around 350 people at any time. The majority of this is funded via public match funding from the Trusts and UKSPF . We also provide the Workable project through a partnership with other employment service providers.

Personal support & housing

We are currently supporting 90 people who have their own tenancy across 46 properties within the South Eastern, Southern and Western Trusts supported by approximately 250 staff. These services are funded via direct commissioning from the Health Trust (HSCT) or jointly commissioned by the Health Trust and the Supporting People programme. . We are in the process of developing specialist support services for people with more complex high support needs to support people to move out of. This is a flagship piece of work that will help us to develop a blueprint for developing these services across the UK.

The post holder will be a key figurehead for Mencap in Northern Ireland, they will lead the Mencap brand, vision and values across the nation. They will raise the profile of the work that we do so that people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland live happy and healthy lives. They will ensure the work of Northern Ireland is visible within the wider organisation and they will develop positive working relationships with colleagues within the 3 nation Inclusive Communities and Partnerships Directorate as well as cross Mencap to ensure effective leadership, sharing of good practice and progress towards our Mencap 2030 goals.

The Director in Northern Ireland will lead on both the strategic development and operational leadership of day to day delivery. They will hold their team accountable against priorities agreed in Mencap 2030 and will report back to Executive and Board of Trustees as and when required.

In Northern Ireland they will be the lead contact point for local stakeholder engagement. They will work with the assembly, MLA's and other key decision and policy makers in Northern Ireland to inform strategic development and position Mencap as a key stakeholder and provider of services. They will make sure all the right processes and ways of working are in place across Northern Ireland to support the delivery of all activity. This will include developing leadership, delivering on organisational KPIs, achieving impact, managing finance and contract performance and driving quality in line with both Mencap's standards and local regulation and funder requirements.

A key part of the role will involve managing the flagship Mencap Centre so that it provides a flourishing and supportive environment for our Early Years provision, pre school, youth services, colleagues and wider communities. The Mencap Centre is a flagship Mencap building and the post holder will be required to ensure the asset is maintained at all times in line with Health and Safety and other regulations, as well as ensuring it is sustainable and a resource that we maximise for the furthering of our charitable objects.

In addition, we also have an active fundraising approach in Northern Ireland and we are always seeking to engage with the local communities to ensure that we have participation and support for our events and initiatives.

Key responsibilities of the role

I will work to improve the lives of people with a learning disability, their families and carers and have strong relationships stretching across local communities and parents, families, other third sector organisations and the political system in Northern Ireland. I will build on and strengthen these relationships, whilst extending our reach through partnerships and collaborations with many other organisations and individuals.

I will create an environment whereby our direct services and community activities will flourish.

I am part of the Inclusive Communities and Partnership team and as such will work closely with colleagues across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure cooperation and learning across all three nations. I will lead jointly.

I will work openly with our network partners across Northern Ireland to ensure their stories & lived experience are heard by decision makers at local, national and UK level.

I will follow and apply Mencap's policies and procedures.

I will effectively utilise Mencap's IT systems.

I will adhere to Mencap's budgetary protocols.

I will uphold Mencap's terms and conditions of employment and best practice.

I will apply Mencap's standard KPI monitoring arrangements.

I will demonstrate and encourage others to live the Mencap values.

I will collaborate with Mencap's internal and external communications departments.

Leadership

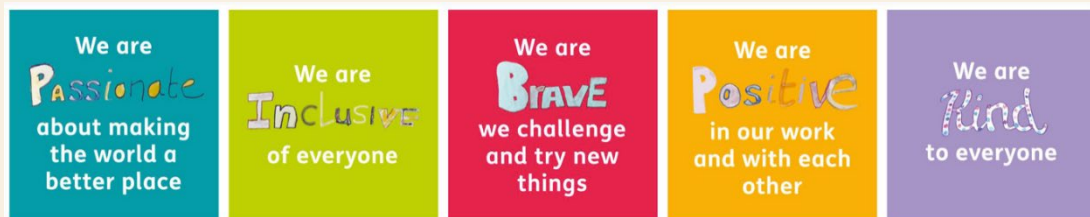
Effective leadership is the key to the success of Mencap. We have developed a leadership approach that we call 'Our Leadership Way'.

Our leaders are able to demonstrate that they have the potential to excel within all elements of the Our Leadership Way framework. Our leaders demonstrate a genuine passion for Mencap and will represent our core values at all times. As a

champion of Our Leadership Way you will apply our leadership code to all aspects of your daily working; committed to upholding professional standards within Mencap, you will approach all aspects of your role in an enthusiastic and positive manner. You will also be expected to:

- engage in our appraisal process and ensure all your team members participate fully in this, offering support where needed; and
- promote and engage with our talent programme ensuring high performers are offered specific support and opportunity to pursue their career development in Mencap as far as possible.

Our values



You will role model our five values in all your work activities and also ensure your team displays these values in their everyday work.



What you will bring to the role

In addition to the things above, we expect our employees to:

- be positive about working for us and to demonstrate this to all the people they come into contact with
- work well with all of their colleagues
- take responsibility for their own development

Personal qualities	Essential/Desirable
A strong communicator, both verbally and in writing	E
A people person with the enthusiasm and experience to lead people and build positive relationships	E
Motivated to learn new things	E
Aims high – achieves in the workplace actively seeking to do things better and continuously strives for performance improvement	E
Professional and public credibility – ability to speak confidently at public events and represent the organisation appropriately	E
Emotional resilience: able to remain calm when others may be agitated or anxious	E
Skills/competence requirements	Essential/Desirable
Ability to drive excellence in delivery and quality assurance	E
Ability to identify commercial and community development opportunities	E
Ability to balance commercial and Community development initiatives	E
Effective data analysis and management	E

Effective interpersonal, negotiation and co-ordination skills with internal & external audiences	E
Building positive wide-ranging relationships and partnerships across multiple and diverse organisations	E
Plan, monitor, evaluate and deliver successful projects and campaigns	E
Change management with the ability to drive change and lead the team through change	E
Judgement in difficult and complex scenarios	E
Strong ability to troubleshoot complex issues	E
Excellent people skills – kind and compassionate while holding people to account. Inclusive leadership	E
Excellent planning and prioritising skills	E
Experience	Essential/Desirable
Experience of managing a range of different types of services	D
Experience of regulatory and contractual compliance	D
Experience of developing, delivering and monitoring effective plans	E
Experience of working with people with a learning disability and / or their families/carers	E
Experience of establishing effective partnerships and networks with a range of individuals and organisations	E
Experience of managing multiple budgets and resources	E
Experience of managing and leading people (remote and regionally based), including developing individuals and teams, recruitment and workforce planning	E
A deep understanding of the Mencap family, ideally experienced through direct contact/experience of working within the wider Mencap network	D

Knowledge	Essential/Desirable
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Strong understanding of learning disability	E
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Implications of legislation/social policy relating to learning disability, disability health & social care, charity law and governance	E
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Qualifications	Essential/Desirable
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Managerial qualification	D
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Other requirements	Essential/Desirable
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Due to geographical spread, applicants are required either to drive or have access to transport	E
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Ability to work flexible hours in accordance with the needs of the post. This will include occasional weekend work, overnight stays, and includes extensive national travel	E
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E = Essential

D = Desirable

Please note: This job description is not intended to be exhaustive. Duties and responsibilities may evolve over time to reflect the needs of the organisation and the role.





“This isn’t just a job - it’s a chance to help change the lives of people with a learning disability and their families. If you’re passionate about making a difference, join Mencap in building a more inclusive future.”

Mencap and our Commitment to Safeguarding

Mencap is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Successful applicants will be subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including references and, where applicable, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.



Contracted employee benefits

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones reaching up and interlocking to form a heart shape. The hands are positioned around the central text.

**At Mencap,
we are more than
an employer and
you're more than
just an
employee**

Key benefits

- At least 32 days paid holiday including bank holidays (pro rata)
- Mencap sick pay after successful probation
- Paid compassionate, bereavement and dependents leave
- Enhanced paid parental leave
- Choice of pension schemes – membership includes life assurance
- Holiday buying options

Recognising what you do

- Peer to peer thank yous
- Monthly awards for individuals and teams
- Long service awards
- 'Refer a friend' bonus

Helping your money go further

- Interest-free tech and travel loans
- Access to financial wellbeing services
- Retail, cinema and other leisure discounts
- Blue light card access

Feel valued and included

- We are a values based employer committed to equity
- We want all colleagues to feel safe, included and that they belong at Mencap
- Our colleague network groups support those that identify with them
- Reasonable adjustments and workplace passports

Investing in your development

- Comprehensive induction programme
- Digital and in-person learning
- Opportunity to gain professional qualifications
- Regular one-to-ones and reviews

Focus on wellbeing

- Free access to 24/7 counselling and advice
- Free access to virtual GP clinic
- Mental health first aiders
- Discounted gym membership

Recruitment Process

Please forward a **CV, maximum three A4 sides** together with a completed **Supplementary Questions form** available from www.engageexec.co.uk, ensuring you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with from the recruitment timetable. You will also be asked to submit a separate fair Equal Monitoring form (see below).

The deadline is **Noon on Friday 6 March 2026** Applications should be made by email to: apply@engageexec.co.uk

Contact Patrick Minne on 07792 509003 if you have any queries about the role or the application process.

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the CV and Form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring including Criminal Convictions Disclosure information requirements in a separate document. These will not be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Disability

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act a person is disabled if they have, or have had, “a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact Patrick Minne so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

Equal Opportunities

Mencap is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

By submitting an application for this position, you are consenting for your personal information to be processed and used for the duration of this recruitment campaign.

Timeline

CV, Supplementary Questions and Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions forms to be submitted **Noon, Friday 6 March 2026**

First Interviews **Thursday 12 and Friday 13 March 2026**

Second Interviews and assessment **Thursday 19 and Friday 20 March 2026**

Optional Final Interviews and assessment **TBC**



Enquiries *unrelated* to this recruitment can be addressed to:

Mencap NI

Mencap Centre
5 School Road
Newtownbreda
Belfast
BT8 6BT

Tel: 028 9069 1351

Email: infoni@mentcap.org.uk

Charity number 222377 (England and Wales); SC041079 (Scotland)

Please address any enquiries relating to the advertised position, and your submission, to Mencap's recruitment partners in Northern Ireland:

Patrick Minne



Tel: 07792 509003

Email: patrick@co3.org.uk

www.engageexec.co.uk

