



CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Mental
health
research



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in becoming the new Chief Executive of MQ.

One in four of us experience mental illness each year, 75% of mental health conditions start before people reach the age of 18 and people with severe mental illnesses die up to 10 years earlier than the general population. Yet little is known about mental health and mental illness and there is a vital need for us to discover more about mental illness so that we can transform the lives of people worldwide.

Through funding much needed scientific research, MQ strives to create a world where mental illness is better understood, diagnosed, treated and, maybe someday, prevented. Research is the first step towards making that a reality. By studying how and why mental health conditions occur, we can speed diagnosis, improve the search for better treatments and even find ways to prevent mental illness.

Following the sudden loss of our inspirational chief executive Lea Milligan in April 2024, we appointed a permanent replacement who started in January 2025, but has now left to pursue other interests. There is an experienced interim CEO in place and the team is stable and motivated. We are now seeking a new chief executive to lead our charity. This is a complex and multifaceted strategic role with income generation and partnership working at its heart. We are an award-winning charity with an ambitious board and team all focused on driving a step change in our understanding of mental ill health. Everything we do is centred on delivering outstanding outcomes for people across the globe.

You will lead a talented team and we will be looking to you to grow MQ in scale and impact. You will bring a strong track record in income generation and in building collaborations which bring diverse teams together to tackle complex issues. MQ has generated in excess of £3M in income in each of the last three calendar years, and our ambition is to raise over £10m pa in the next five years. The majority of our income is from trusts and foundations and major donors, and you will build on this, diversifying our income streams and building a sustainable footing so we can continue to fund world class life changing research.

Comfortable operating across a broad stakeholder community including funders, the scientific community, the media and policy makers, you will be an outstanding communicator and an entrepreneurial thinker able to spot opportunities to deliver impact. We fund pioneering, evidence-based research and you will be intellectually robust, an innovative and ambitious leader, able to demonstrate your ability to use evidence and data to inform your decisions.

If this excites you and you are highly motivated to transform our understanding of mental health and make a truly global impact on society, we'd love to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Dr Shahzad Malik,
Chair MQ – Mental health research



ABOUT MQ

Researchers have made extraordinary advances in treating many physical health conditions. But we have lagged behind in treating mental illnesses – even though these conditions will affect 1 in 4 of us. For those who seek help, it can take years to get a diagnosis, let alone find a treatment that works. Millions of people are left struggling, simply because our society has drastically underfunded mental health research.

That's why MQ is taking a different approach.

By connecting a community of supporters with a world-class network of international scientists, we can bring real change to millions of people affected by mental illness.

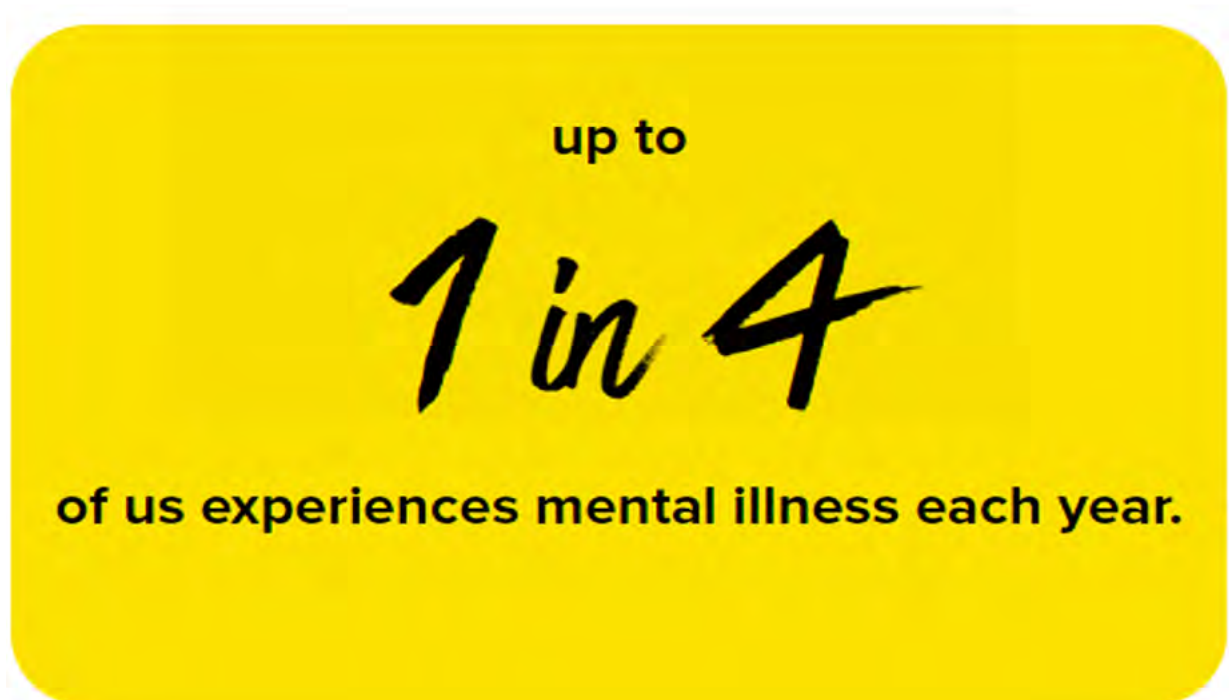
MQ's mission is to bring researchers and the public together to fund mental health research more quickly.

Together with supporters and a global network of scientists, MQ works to create a world where mental illness is understood, effectively treated and ultimately prevented. Funnelling much needed support into mental health research programmes at the world's top universities, where mental illness is meticulously studied to gain a better understanding of it, gives us our best chance for more effective treatments, faster diagnoses and better care for everyone suffering with a mental illness.

As the only UK fundraising charity focused solely on mental health research, MQ occupies a unique and important position. Following a one-off investment of £20 million from Wellcome in 2011, MQ is now established as a world-class funder of medical research. In the last 10 years MQ has funded £30M of research worldwide. In 2019 a sister organisation, MQ Foundation (MQF), was established in New York.

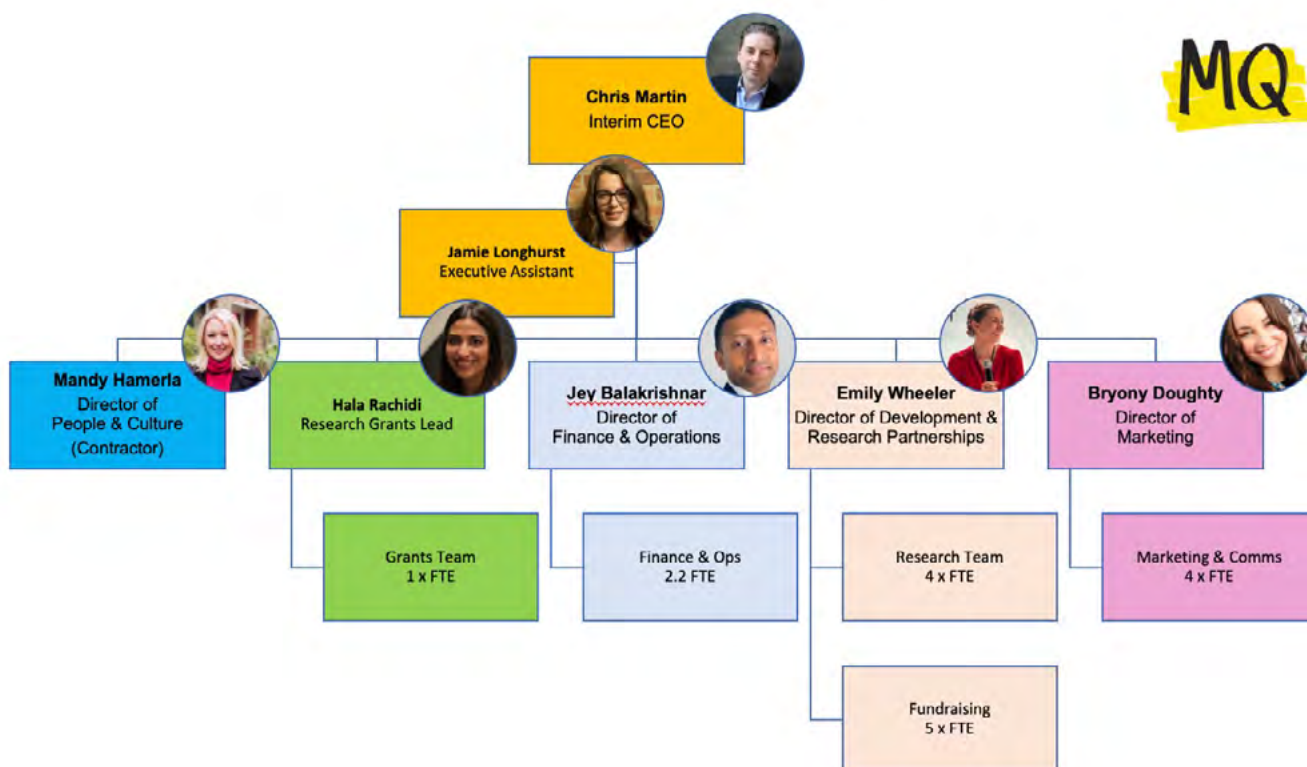
We champion and fund world-class research to transform the lives of everyone affected by a mental health condition. Between 2020-2025, we have honed our focus on the areas we believe are most vital and where we can have the greatest impact.

See our 5-year strategy update [here](#) and our 2024 Annual Report [here](#).



ORGANISATION CHART

Our multi-award winning work is led by an outstanding team. Our structure is below



ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Chief Executive Officer

Reports to: Chair of Trustees, Dr Shahzad Malik

Direct reports: Director Research Partnerships & Development, Director of Operations, Head of Comms & Marketing, Research Grants Lead

THE OPPORTUNITY

There now exists a truly exciting opportunity to further fulfil MQ's potential and accelerate its growth. In leading MQ to fulfil this potential, our incoming CEO will draw on a strong set of assets, capabilities and opportunities, including:

- A passionate and committed staff team of 25 FTEs.
- An engaged and inspiring Chair and Board of Trustees who are committed to growing MQ into a powerful force in mental health research.
- A world-class Research Committee and grant awarding panels, with the reach and ability to fund the brightest and best international researchers.
- Receptiveness to our message amongst public and stakeholders, who believe mental health is one of the prevailing issues of our times.
- A commitment to invest in growing MQ's capacity across mass, corporate, community, trust and foundation and major donor fundraising.
- Robust governance and internal infrastructure across IT systems, grants management and accounting.
- Just over £30m invested in research that is already yielding insights and impact across a range of mental health conditions.
- A culture of agility and innovation; a vehicle for new ideas and catalytic investments.

THE GOAL

MQ is seeking a leader who will:

- Develop and implement a 5-year plan to grow annual fundraised income from £3M to £10M supported by an ambitious investment in our income-generating capacity.
- Build an organisational infrastructure and culture capable of achieving this growth, assuming ultimate line management responsibility for a growing team.
- Inspire and engage successfully across staff, Trustees, major donors and funding partners to grow MQ's reach, influence and impact.
- Maintain MQ's reputation for funding mental health research of the highest international quality and impact.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Reporting to the Trustees, the CEO is responsible for the delivery of MQ's strategic objectives. They will oversee all aspects of MQ's activities, providing inspirational leadership and direction to staff and supporting the Board of Trustees and its sub-committees.

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Strategy and operational delivery

- To lead the development of MQ's strategy and its implementation through measurable objectives and robust business plans.
- To support the Board of Trustees and other committees in their effective governance of MQ, providing advice and implementing changes as required.
- To support Trustee recruitment, induction and development.
- To lead the evaluation of performance against MQ's objectives and the effectiveness of our operations.
- To oversee all MQ activities and outputs, providing quality assurance of reports, statements, publications, grant making processes and other programmes.
- To ensure all MQ team efforts are carefully integrated.
- To identify strategic risks and opportunities, taking responsibility for leading associated changes.
- To ensure that MQ complies with best practice in all areas of operation including fundraising, grant making, data protection, equality and diversity, safeguarding, health and safety.
- To coordinate a working group of MQ and MQF Trustees as they explore best practices for governance and operations as the two organisations grow over the near, mid, and long term.

Fundraising, resources and management

- To seek out, develop and nurture beneficial partnerships with supporters, donors, other charities and strategic partners, overseeing the production of appropriate bids and funding proposals.
- To ensure MQ's assets are used efficiently, effectively and to best advantage and that MQ's administration is run effectively.
- To ensure that MQ's finances are managed in accordance with best practice and that proper safeguards are maintained.
- To liaise with the Board and Director of Operations to lead the implementation of MQ's financial plans, agreeing budgets, formulating income generation strategies and overseeing all fundraising activities.
- To continue to develop MQ as a charity that is dynamic and fit for purpose, with structures, systems and staff who deliver first class results.
- To build a highly effective staff through inspiring leadership and oversight of successful recruitment and management processes.

Representation

- To serve as a public voice of MQ, promoting the aims and interests of MQ to external stakeholders and the public.
- To lead efforts to raise awareness of the MQ brand, including the integrated portfolio of research, fundraising and communication activities.
- To maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders in government, parliament, charities, funders, universities, industry, professional bodies and other organisations which contribute to the achievement of MQ's mission.
- To oversee MQ's traditional and social media presence and the conduct of all correspondence.
- To maintain clear channels of communication with all those involved in MQ's work, including grant holders, donors, supporters and beneficiaries.

Provide other support to the MQ and MQF Team as and when required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Significant experience of fundraising or marketing at a senior level and/or acted in a senior charity fundraising role with experience across a broad portfolio of income streams including Trusts and Foundations, High Net Worth individuals, corporate and public income generation.
- Strategic leader with experience of managing growth and impact, building teams and organisational infrastructure management.
- Experience of successful team management and the ability to develop colleagues across different functional specialties.
- Experience of developing successful relationships and working with a Chair and/or Board members and recognises what good governance looks like.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- High EQ as well as IQ – ability to listen and inspire others
- Strong financial acumen, budget management and operational planning skills.
- Ability to foster strong and effective partnerships within the sector and beyond.
- Exceptional communication skills with the ability to engage with and influence a wide range of audiences and stakeholders including government, the media, partners, and able to represent MQ at conferences and events.
- Demonstrable ability to embed the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion for colleagues and partners.

STYLES AND BEHAVIOURS

- **Communicative and compassionate Leader.** Is comfortable and confident with leadership, internal and external. Able to create “followership” amongst colleagues, peers, donors and wider stakeholders. Able to motivate, encourage and support others to achieve goals. Promotes a learning culture where people feel confident to take risks/admit mistakes and still be supported.
- **Collegiate and collaborative.** Understands the basis and dynamics of charity governance and fosters a sense of collegiality and shared responsibility amongst Trustees, CEO, staff and stakeholders.
- **Growth / Goal focused.** Motivated by creating, building, growing and tangible objectives. De-motivated by “steady state”.
- **Resilient / tenacious.** Able continue towards an objective in the face of challenges. Able to learn, adapt and iterate to overcome obstacles.
- **Entrepreneurial.** Comfortable with a measured degree of personal and professional risk. Able to take responsibility and “own” decisions made.
- **Motivated by personal impact.** Puts a high value on their ability to affect a positive impact on others.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

SALARY

The salary for this role is c.£130,000. per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

LOCATION

MQ, 6 Honduras Street, London, EC1Y 0TH

PENSION

MQ makes contributions of 5% and employees make contributions of 3%. Our pension scheme is administered by Aegon and you will receive a letter from them after your first few weeks at MQ. You can choose to send the pension benefit to a scheme of your choosing if you wish. You can also choose to opt out all together from the scheme. If you would like to discuss, please speak to the Head of Finance & Operations.

ANNUAL LEAVE

28 days per annum plus closed between Christmas and New Year.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Wellbeing Allowance

Once you have successfully completed your probation period, we provide an allowance of up to £1,200 per annum for you to spend on a wellness activity.

Cycle to work scheme and season ticket loan

Once you have successfully completed your probation period, we provide an allowance of up to £1,200 per annum for you to spend on a wellness activity.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees and their families have access to a 24-hour confidential advice and support line, you will be given the EAP leaflet when you join MQ and there are spare copies in the stationary cupboard.

Counselling

If you should need counselling, please ask your manager to refer you via the Employee Assistance Programme as our subscription includes several free face-to-face counselling sessions. (We have found this means you will receive support more quickly than if you ask for it yourself through the helpline). You can also use your wellness allowance to purchase counselling privately.

HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Erin Fuller erin.fuller@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/mq-mhr-ceo/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Friday 19th September 2025

Preliminary interviews: w/c 6th October 2025

Final Panel interviews: w/c 3rd November 2025

