

## ***Changing Faces***

### **Job Description: School Specialist (job-share - 0.7 wte)**

The School Specialist will be responsible for supporting children and young people who have facial (and other) disfigurements, their families and school staff who work with them.

S/he will work within the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) team.

### **Background to the School Specialist's work**

*Changing Faces'* mission is to work for a better and fairer future for people who have disfigurements to their face or body from birth, accident or disease, and their families. It is the UK's leading disfigurement charity, based in London and with offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The charity's annual income is c.£1.3 million and it has a 30-strong team of specialists – counsellors, teachers, trainers, policy and communication experts.

**The charity aims to support and represent people with disfigurements in the UK and around the world to achieve their full potential, receive excellent health, education and employment opportunities and be fully included in their society.**

Our focus is on the psychological and social impact of disfigurement on the life of anyone who experiences it – and we are committed to enabling everyone, whether or not they have a disfigurement, to face it with confidence. In today's increasingly appearance-conscious world, our ethos is that it is perfectly OK to look 'different' – and indeed, anyone who does has every right to be accepted, supported and included in all aspects of life.

We have three Programmes:

1. **CARING**: our Adult Service and Children and Young People's Service teams build the self-esteem and self-confidence of children, young people and adults (and their families) who contact the charity to meet the challenges they face
2. **ACTING AS A CATALYST**: Our Professional Advisory team informs and trains professionals in health and social care, education and in the workplace to promote improved psycho-social care, inclusive schools and colleges and prejudice-free employment and customer services for people with disfigurements
3. **CAMPAIGNING**: Our Campaigns and Communications team works with the general public, the media and cultural opinion-formers to promote face equality principles and bring about changes in attitudes and behaviours that limit the life prospects of people with disfigurements

Our UK Network of Officers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and shortly in the England regions, contribute to and support all aspects of the charity's work, and all our work is supported by our Fundraising and Operational Support teams.

The Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) is managed by a Head, Helen Smith (0.8 wte), and presently consists of two Child and Young People's Specialists (1.4 wte between them), a Young People's Participation Specialist, (0.6 wte) and this School Specialist role. The team provides a high-quality service for children and young people, families, support groups and organisations, teachers and health professionals throughout the UK.

The School Specialist will work closely with the education team in the Professional Advisory team - Policy Adviser, Training Adviser and Secondary School Educationalist.

Those roles include informing educational policy and working with teaching staff on best practice in schools where there may not be an individual with a disfigurement known to staff.

The Adult Service is managed by a Head (1.0 wte), and currently consists of two other Adult Specialists in a job share (1.2 wte in total) and the National Information and Advice Worker (1.0 wte). It is supported by our Training Adviser in Employment. The Adult Service team provides a high-quality service for individuals with disfigurements, their family, friends and others (including employers) and professionals in statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

Our work is guided and informed by our Young People's Council, which is a participatory group of 14-25 year olds that meets four to six times each year. They help us to develop our services for children and young people (such as our website for young people [www.iface.org.uk](http://www.iface.org.uk)), have a collective voice to help the public understand what it is like to grow up with a disfigurement and are involved in wider issues within the organisation (for example, they are part of interview panels for CYPS staff).

## Job Description

The *Changing Faces* School Specialist will aim to enhance the experience of children and young people who have disfigurements and other conditions affecting appearance in UK schools, and promote understanding of the issues so that all children and young people learn inclusive attitudes and behaviours. The School Specialist will work closely with other members of the CYPS team on school-related client work, general CYPS work and in developing or co-facilitating workshops, training days and giving talks to support groups and school staff.

Specifically, the School Specialist's responsibilities will be:

### 1. Direct work with individual children, young people their families and professionals

- To provide an effective and responsive service for children, young people and their families and education professionals who contact *Changing Faces* regarding issues in school. This will include work with school staff by telephone, in writing and in person, and observations of peer interactions in school.
- To play a full part on the CYPS rota and provide an effective and responsive service for children, young people, their families and professionals who contact *Changing Faces* (by phone, email or letter) for the first time. This includes offering general advice, information and resources, and referring clients to the specialist counsellors where necessary.
- To co-facilitate and/or project manage workshops for children, young people and their families
- To work with and advise condition-specific support groups about psychological and social issues affecting individual children and young people who have a visible difference, including delivering talks.
- To liaise with our Young People's Council (YPC) members where appropriate on specific projects
- To devise new material relating to school issues for the *Changing Faces* website [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk) and our young people's website [www.iface.org.uk](http://www.iface.org.uk)

### 2. Work to enhance the skills of teachers and educational professionals

- To play an active role, with our Training Adviser in Education, in the planning and delivery of training days for education professionals.

- To ensure that our Teachers' Guides are kept up to date and available on the website and in hard copy
- To liaise and work with our Policy and Training Advisers in Education where necessary on projects such as writing articles.

### 3. Evaluation and Research

- To monitor, review and evaluate *Changing Faces*' work in schools.
- To keep abreast of developments in similar or parallel fields of work and to adapt any insights or methods in the interests of our clients
- To participate fully in meetings of *Changing Faces*' School Network, a small advisory panel for our education work

On occasion the School Specialist may be required to do media work, write articles, present their work at conferences or give talks to wider audiences.

*Changing Faces* believes that individual clinical supervision is essential for all Specialists, which is conducted by our Clinical Supervisor.

## Person Specification

It is expected that the Specialist will demonstrate the following characteristics:

### Professional

#### Essential

- Education background including Qualified Teacher Status
- Recent classroom experience (within the last 2-3 years) or if in an alternative educational post, evidence to show you are up to date with current teaching methods, policy etc
- Experience of working with multi-disciplinary teams
- Group work experience outside the classroom
- Understanding of the voluntary sector
- Experience of providing support, information or advice

#### Desirable

- Experience of providing support, information or advice by telephone or email, preferably in a voluntary sector context
- Understanding of and interest in child development
- Experience of working with children and young people who have disabilities, and with their families

### Personal

#### Essential

- Excellent team player
- Ability to work independently on own initiative
- Understanding of and empathy with the social model of disability
- Ability to empathise with clients
- Working knowledge of health and social care services that children and young people may receive
- Enjoyment of working with children, young people, families
- Proficient computer skills (Microsoft Office essential; knowledge of Lotus Notes would be an advantage)

#### Desirable

- Personal or family experience of disfigurement would be an advantage

## Accountability

The School Specialist is accountable to the Head of Children and Young People's Service.

## Salary and terms of employment

The role is a job share, 0.7 wte (3½ days per week). The salary is on Changing Faces Grade E which starts at £25,500; pro rata for 0.7 wte is £17,850.

The employment will be based on: normal hours of work (37 hours basic) based in London, 25 days holiday, a pension contribution for those with the charity longer than 2 years, and standard sickness and absence conditions. The appointment will be subject to our usual 6-month probationary period.

The Specialist will be based at the charity's HQ, the Squire Centre, 33-37 University Street, London WC1E 6JN. S/he can expect some travelling, possible evening work (of up to 2-3 evenings a month) and some weekend work (approx 4-6 per year) may be required, for which Time Off In Lieu can be taken.

## Application procedure

Applicants should complete the Application Form and return it together with their CV by **12 noon on Wednesday 2nd December 2009**. Short-listing will be carried out by assessing how candidates meet the criteria listed in the Person Specification.

Two Referees should be named but will be contacted only with applicants' explicit consent, after any interview.

Short-listed candidates will be notified on **Monday 7th December**. Please ensure you have included a contact telephone number for that day on your Application Form.

Interviews will be held on **Thursday 10th December** at Changing Faces' offices, The Squire Centre, 33-37 University Street, London WC1E 6JN. We will attempt to be flexible in the case of holidays.

*Changing Faces* is striving to be an Equal Opportunities employer. Because of our limited resources, *Changing Faces* cannot undertake correspondence or telephone discussions about this post.

## Disclosure Information for Job Applicants

As *Changing Faces* meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment in relevant roles will be subject to a criminal record check, an "Enhanced Disclosure", from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions.

A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. All Disclosure information will be used fairly. When *Changing Faces* seeks a Disclosure, you should be aware that you are able to obtain a copy of the Criminal Records Bureau's Code of Practice from our offices. We have a written security policy covering the correct handling and safekeeping of Disclosure information.

October 2009

### Appendix: The *Changing Faces* approach

*Changing Faces* has pioneered a new approach to the psycho-social rehabilitation of anyone with a disfigurement that aims to promote their self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and quality of life. We see this “disfigurement life-skills package” as being a vital complement to surgery and other medical interventions.

The Client Service as a whole delivers this disfigurement life-skills package which, in essence, enables children, young people and their parents to acquire **the life-skills to enjoy a positive and fulfilling life with a disfigurement**. The package tackles the effects that disfigurement can have on self-esteem (“can I/my child ever have a successful life looking like this?”) and self-confidence (“how can I/my child deal with staring, curiosity, names and make friends?”). It has three goals:

1. to cultivate the mental conviction everyday that looking ‘different’ is OK
2. to promote ‘feel good’ in a society which equates feeling good with looking good
3. to teach the skills to deal with other people’s reactions to his/her disfigurement.

Historically, until *Changing Faces* started in 1992, people with disfigurements had to develop these life-skills largely by trial and error – and if other factors were favourable (eg: a very supportive family), some people managed to acquire them. The *Changing Faces* disfigurement life-skills package can be tailored to anyone’s needs. It can be delivered by professionals or acquired through self-help effort – and can be described by the acronym FACES (although it is relevant for people with disfigurements to their bodies as well):

<b>F – FINDING OUT</b>	People/parents need to know and understand (and be able to explain to others) about their condition and the treatments available so they can make informed decisions. <i>Changing Faces</i> facilitates this ‘finding out’ by acting as a reliable signpost to valid sources of information (though we do not provide detailed, personal medical advice).
<b>A – ATTITUDE</b>	It can be hard to have a positive outlook about the future when events are very challenging. Disfigurement life-skills programmes promote robust self-talk (“I can do this”) – <i>Changing Faces</i> often hears from our clients that having a determined attitude is the most important thing. Our team also encourages people to challenge their aesthetic attitude to appearance and to appreciate people in their wholeness.
<b>C – COUNSELLING</b>	People often want to find ways to express and resolve their feelings about what they and their family are going through. These may be feelings of anger, sadness and bereavement, fear and loneliness, guilt and anxiety about the future. <i>Changing Faces</i> enables this through empathetic listening and emotional support.
<b>E – EXCHANGING</b>	People can find it difficult to realise that they are not alone. <i>Changing Faces</i> can put people in touch with others who’ve “been there” to exchange information and ideas. This may involve signposting them to a relevant condition-specific support group or encouraging them to join a workshop or regional day/event or use our exchanger scheme for families and individuals.
<b>S – SOCIAL SKILLS</b>	Our extensive experience and a large research literature confirms that social interaction difficulties lie at the root of many of the psychological problems experienced by children and adults with disfigurements. People can be very self-conscious and socially anxious. With support and coaching, however, they can learn a range of strategies to handle the many reactions to their disfigurement from strangers, friends and family. <i>Changing Faces</i> has developed the teaching of these strategies in many formats for all age-groups and for people with different conditions too.

The impact of the *Changing Faces* package on those who have experienced it has been thoroughly evaluated by an independent research project based at the University of the West of England. This indicates that significant gains in self-confidence and reductions in social anxiety result from the intervention. Ongoing evaluation of our service confirms that clients value what we offer. We intend to continue to develop our services always underpinned by thorough evidence and evaluation.