

Executive Pay Policy

1 Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to both Ambitious about Autism (AaA) the national charity for children and young people with autism and Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (AaAST) a multi academy trust that runs and supports the development of new special schools to enable children and young people with autism to learn, thrive and achieve.

We provide services, raise awareness and understanding, and campaign for change.

Through TreeHouse School, Ambitious College and The Rise School we offer specialist education and support. Our ambition is to make the ordinary possible for more children and young people with autism.

To deliver this goal it is essential that we have leaders who bring professional expertise, significant leadership experience and strong capability to deliver our objectives. AaA/AaAST has adopted a clear and transparent policy that not only ensures the selection and retention of high calibre leaders but also ensures our donors, supporters, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and public recognise the importance of accountability in all aspects of our work including the determination of pay and benefits of the senior team. This policy will form part of AaA/AaAST's overall staff total reward, Pay and Benefits Policy.

This policy applies to the Chief Executive (who is also the Accounting Officer of AaAST) and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Reference is made to the recommendations from the 2014 inquiry into executive pay by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Executive Pay guidance published by the National Governance Association (NGA) in 2019.

This policy includes our approach to pay for our ELT, how pay is determined and reviewed and the relative impact on pay across the organisation.

These points form the basis of our senior pay statement, which includes the publishing of our Chief Executive's salary and can be found on AaA/AaAST websites.

Who is involved in the process?

The Board of Trustees of AaA and AaAST are responsible for defining the Executive Pay policy and deciding on the salaries of the Chief Executive, and the Executive Leadership Team. The Board delegates this responsibility to the Remuneration Committee of AaA and AaAST. This Committee is chaired by a trustee. The role of the Chair is to oversee the proper administration of the Executive Pay policy, review the evaluation of ELT (including the Chief Executive) performance and recommend changes to executive pay. The committee meets at least once a year with the Chief Executive and the Director of People attending in an advisory and non decision-making capacity.

2 The Process

The funds are invested in educating children and young people with autism, increasing awareness and understanding of autism, influencing change and in supporting the charity's people, resources, systems and processes to achieve these objectives effectively and efficiently.

It is essential that we are able to attract and retain people with the right values, experience, knowledge and skills required to lead. Having a competitive reward offering is one of the many ways in which the charity can secure the very best people to achieve our ambitious targets support children and young people with autism. It is our aim to achieve this through fair salaries for talented people and this will define our approach to pay.

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To successfully recruit and retain a high calibre ELT, it is essential that the salary and benefits offered are competitive in the relevant market. The market sector used for making this assessment will depend on the relevant area of profession the ELT member is recruited from and the value of the level of skills, knowledge and experience required performing in the role. This can range from the not for profit sector, such as other charities of similar size and complexity, to the public sector (for example for roles in education) or commercial sector (for roles such as finance, HR or IT).

Whilst the charity does not seek to compete on salary terms with the commercial sector, it does need to know what the comparator salaries are for those roles in commercial roles and the pay differentials should candidates wish to move from these sectors.

3 Principles

Our approach to pay is underpinned by the following principle:

To pay a fair salary and reward package to attract and retain skilled and expert senior leaders for AaA/AaAST. Salaries and benefits should be competitive within the charity, education and public sectors, proportionate to the complexity of each role and responsibility and in line with our objectives and affordable.

To achieve this, the Executive Pay policy aims to follow a robust evidenced-based process and:

- take account of pay in similar organisations in the UK charity and public sectors market but not to compete on salaries with the private sector;
- monitor charity sector salary trends through surveys produced by providers such as XpertHR, Croner and ACEVO; Education and Skills Funding Agency Academy Schools Financial benchmarking reports; and, where necessary, commission external benchmarking exercises;
- ensure performance is reviewed and reported to the Remuneration Committee on an annual basis;
- apply performance related pay elements only where required by the relevant market sector;
- mirror national standards for professional groups, such as Headteachers;
- take account of Academies Financial Handbook;
- take account of the difference between ELT pay and the lowest paid roles, as well as median and average pay for the organisation.

4 Publication of salary information

The pay bands for those earning over £60,000 are published each year in the consolidated AaA/AaAST Annual Report & Accounts. In addition, a summary of this policy and the current salary of the Chief Executive/Accounting Officer is available on the AaA and AaAST websites. Further disclosure of names and individual salaries is not available as it is not felt to be in the interests of our beneficiaries and supporters.

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