



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)

16 Melville Terrace | Stirling | FK8 2NE

t 01786 475 140

e: info@cosca.org.uk w: www.cosca.org.uk

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)

Vacancy

Chief Executive

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

SALARY:	£ 60,834 - £63,592 (SJC 49-51pts)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	COSCA Board
HOURS:	Full time (35 hours per week)
ANNUAL LEAVE:	25 days plus 9 public holidays per annum
PENSION:	6% of salary contributed by COSCA to pension
BASED AT:	COSCA's office in Stirling

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) is Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy, with its Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care. COSCA champions the exceptional value of counselling and psychotherapy to Scottish society.

Full-time national roles rarely emerge and are highly sought after in our high performing team. Our current Chief Executive is stepping down after 25 successful years of leadership, creating an important opportunity for the right candidate to deliver our ambitious plan for Scotland to be '*A listening, caring society that values people's wellbeing*'. We welcome applications from candidates with the drive and compassion to fulfil this vital leadership role.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced individual to lead the delivery of the COSCA Development Plan. You will join a highly motivated staff team with a clear purpose and a national profile.

COSCA is an established national membership professional body with individual and organisational members that aims to advance and support all forms of counselling, psychotherapy, and the use of counselling skills.

Based in Stirling with a small staff team of six (2 full time and 4 part time), we have a wide range of panels, committees, sessional workers and external suppliers of services. Around 40 volunteers, including those on the COSCA Board, play a vital and valued role in our work and are involved in a wide range of national and local roles.

Role Responsibilities

The Postholder will be accountable to the COSCA Board. There will be 7 key areas of responsibility. The Chief Executive's responsibilities are:

1. Strategic Leadership

- Provide visible leadership for COSCA, championing our vision, objectives and ambition as Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy
- Work with the Board to ensure that COSCA is well governed, financially sustainable and positioned to maximise its impact over the coming years
- Lead the delivery and evaluation of the COSCA Development Plan to ensure our vision is translated into clear priorities, plans and measurable outcomes

2. Policy influence and Public Profile

- Work collaboratively to build awareness and understanding of counselling and psychotherapy and their value across Scotland
- Build and sustain trusted relationships with the Scottish Government, public bodies, partners and decision-makers to strengthen COSCA's influence on policy and practice.
- Represent COSCA publicly and with credibility across media, policy, professional and public forums.

3. Engagement

- Continue to ensure that meaningful opportunities are created for members of COSCA, volunteers, the public and stakeholders to inform the organisation's services, policy positions, influencing and public voice.

- Build strong and trusted relationships with COSCA members, volunteers and the wider community.
- Champion inclusive practice across the organisation and in COSCA's external work.

4. Financial sustainability and income generation

- Lead the organisation's approach to long-term financial sustainability and income diversification.
- Protect and grow existing income while identifying and developing new opportunities across appropriate income streams.
- Build and sustain strong relationships with funders, donors, partners and supporters.

5. Organisational leadership and people

- —Lead, support and motivate COSCA's staff team and volunteers to continue the organisation's embedded culture of inclusiveness, creativity and high performance.
- Ensure appropriate people policies, systems and practices are in place.
- Recognise the nature of leading a small organisation and be willing to work directly across operational priorities where required.

6. Governance, risk and compliance

- Ensure COSCA complies with all relevant legal, regulatory, statutory and contractual requirements, including those of OSCR and Companies House.
- Maintain an effective corporate governance framework, including risk management, internal control and financial reporting.
- Support the Board in maintaining the highest standards of transparency, accountability and ethical leadership.

7. Impact, evidence and learning

- Ensure COSCA can demonstrate the difference its work makes for people accessing counselling and psychotherapy.
- Use evidence and data to inform organisational decision-making and priorities.

- Oversee the measurement and reporting of organisational performance and impact.

Main Specific Areas of Responsibility

The Chief Executive will:

- provide managerial support for COSCA's Board, Corporate Affairs Group, Ethics Committee, National Counselling Agencies Meetings, standing policy groups, and ad hoc groups
- prepare Board papers, attend Board meetings and manage the drafting and distributing of draft minutes of Board meetings
- manage the organisation of COSCA conferences, seminars, and training events and attend and contribute to COSCA meetings and events as appropriate, including the AGM and Annual Ethics Event
- arrange and lead COSCA staff meetings
- maintain and update the policies and procedures in the COSCA Staff Handbook, the COSCA Conditions of Service and the Board Induction Handbook
- provide regular line management support, advice, supervision and annual appraisal to the Development Officers, Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Course Validation Secretary and Finance Officer
- manage COSCA's compliance with company and charitable legislation, regulations, and requirements, including OSCR, Companies House, the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care and the Scottish Government
- prepare forecast budget and manage COSCA's finances within the budgets agreed by the Board
- work under COSCA's Counter Fraud Policy in relation to making payments on COSCA's behalf
- submit applications to outside bodies for funds, make contact with Parliamentary Ministers, government officials, and business and charitable trusts from whom it is intended to seek funding
- apply annually to PSA to renew its accreditation of the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists
- prepare the narrative sections of the annual trustees report and work with COSCA's accountancy firm on the completion of the above report
- review annually COSCA's Development Plan and submit it to Board for approval
- manage the COSCA office and equipment to ensure a safe working environment
- undertake other duties appropriate to the grade as required

Authority:

The Chief Executive is expected to work on their own initiative within COSCA's overall policies, aims and objectives as set out by the Board and as contained within COSCA's Annual Development Plans.

Accountability:

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board of COSCA.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Chief Executive will have the following:

Essential Experience Required:

- Significant senior leadership experience and personal accountability for the delivery of some or all of an organisation's objectives and the management of staff and budgets, with evidence of developing and delivering strategy and translating ambition into organisational results.
- Strong financial acumen, including experience of budgetary oversight, financial planning, sustainability and making sound decisions about organisational resources. Experience of generating and diversifying income, and developing strong relationships with funders, partners, donors or other sources of investment.
- A strong personal commitment to inclusion, equity and social justice.
- A track record of leading, developing and motivating people, building positive organisational cultures and successfully leading through change.
- A strong understanding of effective governance, organisational risk and accountability, with experience of working constructively with a Board or equivalent governing body.
- Evidence of building effective relationships and partnerships with senior stakeholders and influencing beyond organisational boundaries.
- An excellent communicator with the confidence and credibility to represent COSCA publicly, communicate complex issues clearly and build support for the organisation's purpose.
- Good working knowledge of IT, using Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, social media, online meeting platforms such as Zoom or Teams, and AI.
- Awareness of professional ethics and experience of advising others on ethical decision making in a professional setting and handling complaints

- Experience of evidencing external organisational standards similar to those included in the Accredited Registers Scheme run by the Professional Standard Authority for Health and Social Care

Desirable Experience:

- Proven interest in counselling and psychotherapy or a related discipline.
- Experience of work on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Experience of influencing public policy or practice.
- Knowledge of the Scottish policy and public-service environment.
- Experience within the third sector, public or purpose-led sectors.
- Experience of working with or alongside staff and volunteers to shape organisational strategy or services.
- A full current car driving licence and access to a car for use at COSCA events and external meetings.
- Current membership of an appropriate professional body.

Education

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Trained /skilled in the use of IT

Skills

- Presentational skills
- Communication - high level, written and oral
- Representational skills
- Some experience of media relations
- Interpersonal skills
- Fund-raising skills

Additional information

This is a hands-on role within a small, ambitious national professional body. The successful candidate will be comfortable taking responsibility for the overall leadership of the charity while working collaboratively with a supportive Board, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, members and partners.

Application notes

To apply: Vacancies/COSCA on website. www.cosca.org.uk

Closing date for applications: Sunday 15th November 2026 at midnight.

Interviews will be held in Stirling on Thursday 3rd December 2026.

Location: Based in Stirling at the COSCA office with travel across Scotland. The successful candidate will be expected to travel around Scotland as the work of the post requires.

Conditions:

The post is full time (35 hours per week). COSCA conditions of service apply. The salary is £60,834 - £63,592 (SJC 49-51)

Annual Leave:

The annual leave period is from April to March.

The post holder will be entitled to 25 days plus 9 public holidays, 5 of which are fixed - 25 and 26 December, 1 and 2 January and Easter Monday – in a full year.

The office is also normally closed between Christmas and New Year. These are given as additional holidays.

6% contributory pension available.

Brian Magee
Chief Executive
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
October 2026