



PANS PANDAS UK
awareness support education



In Conversation With **Emma Bracegirdle** PANS PANDAS UK Fundraising Lead

We had the privilege of interviewing Emma to learn more about her role as fundraiser for PANS PANDAS UK. We spoke with Emma about her previous experiences in fundraising, the main responsibilities in her current role, and to hear more about some of the amazing fundraising campaigns she has been involved in.

First of all, please can you tell me about your professional background and any previous experiences in fundraising?

I began my career in fundraising about 15 years ago. Before then, I had been working in restaurant management and volunteering in charities in my spare time. My first charity job was in a wonderful small charity called SASH based in York. I started off as a community fundraiser and then as the team grew, I specialised more in individual giving and communications.

When I left SASH after 5 years, I started doing freelance work for small charities – many of which haven't had a fundraiser in position before. I have had the pleasure of working with a wide range of amazing charities. About two years ago, I started to work with PANS PANDAS UK and have absolutely loved it!



Written by Daniel Hindle

Daniel is currently in his second year, studying History at the University of Birmingham and is undertaking an internship with PANS PANDAS UK.



What specifically motivated you to work with PANS PANDAS UK?

When I start working with a charity, it is important to me that I know that the money I raise will make a difference. It became clear very quickly that PANS PANDAS UK was the kind of charity that had big ambitions for change and how needed this change is. We are a lifeline for families going through hell. I knew that I could help these families by raising awareness and money to be able to facilitate change.

What are your main responsibilities within your current role at PANS PANDAS UK? What does your position involve and what are the different types of fundraising campaigns that take place?

My main responsibility is to raise funds so that we can help more families. This can be through campaigns or awareness raising. I also support the amazing people who fundraise for the charity and making sure that anyone who donates knows how grateful we are and the difference their gift will make.

Have you found it challenging to raise money for a condition that so few people are aware of? How did you overcome these challenges?

The families are the biggest advocates and champions for fundraising, which makes it much easier to raise money, despite the conditions being relatively unknown. I think anyone connected to someone with PANS or PANDAS can understand how much vital change and support is needed. So, asking them to donate to make this happen doesn't feel like a challenge; it is more of a need.

“ As soon as I started to talk to families and the team at PANS PANDAS UK, I was blown away by the resilience they have and the commitment to help one another. ”

What are some of the most successful fundraising campaigns you have been a part of whilst working for PANS PANDAS UK and what made them successful?

Our most successful campaign so far has been our 'Challenge for PANS PANDAS UK.' This was where we asked the community and corporate supporters to take on a challenge in July to help families affected by PANS and PANDAS. We had over 50 incredible people taking on a range of challenges including shaving their heads, abseiling, running and a sponsored silence.



They raised over £57K which just blew us all away! I think it was so successful because people could choose their own challenge and when and how they did it. This meant people who can't always do something physical or make a long-term commitment, could also get involved. I am really excited about next year!

“ I think our Challenge for PANS PANDAS UK 2024 campaign will be even better than this years! This is because it is inclusive and raises awareness beyond our community. ”

Raising £57k is astonishing! Can you give us some insight into the Big Give Christmas Challenge and the role that you are going to play in again, raising an incredible amount of money?

Vicky and I worked on the application for the Big Give and secured the funding to be eligible for matched funding. During November 28th and December 5th, any donations made via The Big Give to PANS PANDAS UK will be doubled!! We are aiming to raise a huge £15K, which will be used to help families this winter. There will be lots more information coming soon but for now, we are asking if any families would like to share their story as part of the campaign to email me emma.bracegirdle@panspandasuk.org. We are also asking anyone who is planning a fundraiser before November 28th, to hold on to the money before then, so that it can be doubled. One donation, twice the impact!

That's great to hear. How have you handled the emotional challenges that may arise when working with children and families affected by PANS PANDAS UK?

I haven't been directly affected by PANS or PANDAS myself but I am a mum to three girls. As a parent, I can't even imagine what it must be like to watch your child change over night and to have to battle for help. I have found myself cuddling my girls tighter after speaking with families, but it is a huge motivation to keep raising funds to make sure no one has to face it alone.

“ It is a privilege to work with such a dedicated and caring team. The families are at the centre of everything we do and that is not something that happens at every charity I have worked with. It is very inspiring to be part of PANS PANDAS UK and to see how the community come together to help one another. ”

What advice would you give to anyone who was looking to fundraise for PANS PANDAS UK and what are the different ways in which they can do it?

Do something that is fun, community building or challenging. Make sure that you share the reason why you are fundraising for PANS PANDAS UK and the impact the money raised will make. Anyone wanting to fundraise can do it by holding an event, getting your school or work involved, taking on a challenge, leaving a gift in a will or by donating.

Whatever you decide to do, please know that it is so so so appreciated and that every penny really does make a difference!

