

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECRUITMENT PACK

Trustee with Mental Health Experience

February 2024



Invitation from the Chair of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I'd like to welcome you to Connection Support. Our staff members and volunteers work alongside people to overcome significant life challenges, with the mission of solving homelessness and achieving independence. Becoming a Trustee offers an exciting and rewarding opportunity to play a pivotal role in our future.



We are currently recruiting for a new Trustee to join our Board who is committed to helping us deliver on our mission and shares our values. In particular, we're looking for candidates with expertise or lived experience in mental health to strengthen our Board. This is an exciting time for Connection Support, having finalised our ambitious strategy until 2027 and we have already delivered on many of these targets and objectives. Connection Support is keen to grow its services and reach to support more people, whilst building an infrastructure to align with the considerable growth we have achieved in recent years.

The Board comprises of incredibly talented and inspiring people with backgrounds spanning the public and private sector, bringing strong business acumen and extensive specialist knowledge. Nonetheless, we are actively seeking to increase the diversity of our Board and would particularly welcome applications from people who have lived experience of homelessness, from minority ethnic backgrounds, all gender groups and/or with a disability.

The Connection Support Board meets every two months. However, there are Finance and Development subgroups that meet between Board meetings, and opportunities to contribute towards these as well.

If you are interested in making an application and wish to find out more, please feel free to email me, Richard Allman, at rallm@btinternet.com or our Chief Executive Officer, Chris Keating at chriskeating@connectionsupport.org.uk to arrange an informal discussion. We look forward to receiving your application and hopefully welcoming you to our friendly Team here at Connection Support.

About Connection Support

Connection Support was established 28 years ago in Oxford to provide floating support to residents who were at risk of homelessness. Nowadays our support reaches across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Milton Keynes. We support 5,000 clients per year, employ 200 staff, and have over 150 active volunteers, and our annual turnover has grown to £8m.

We exist to help people to change their lives by providing a range of specialist support services. Our support covers homelessness and housing, mental health, family support, young peoples' support, and refugee resettlement.

At Connection Support, our team of staff members and volunteers work alongside people to overcome life's challenges. We do this through our values of empowerment, collaboration, compassion and taking a personalised approach in all aspects of our work. Our approach focuses on the individual and aims to help people take control of their situation by building confidence, exploring resources and developing skills. So that people who are facing significant challenges can overcome them, achieve independence, live safe and fulfilling lives and be active and valued members of the communities in which they live.

We provide flexible and co-created strength-based support and advice to a range of young people, adults and families. Please take a look at the following links to get a flavour of the wide range of support services provided in each area: [Oxfordshire](#), [Buckinghamshire](#) and [Milton Keynes](#). Our team have extensive knowledge in areas such as housing law, welfare benefits, debts and budgeting, health issues, rights and responsibilities, social care, advocacy and activities that increase health and wellbeing.

We hugely value partnerships and working together with other agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for people. Over 28 years we have built trusted and positive relationships with statutory and voluntary services, charities and community groups across our area.

OUR IMPACT

Supported

5,394

clients through our various services
(FY22/23)

Empowered

1,319

people to develop the skills to no longer need our support

Answered

13,325

calls from people looking for support & guidance

Mission, Vision, and Values

The whole team at Connection Support have recently been on a journey to review and refresh our mission, vision, and values; to remind ourselves why we do what we do, the direction we are taking as an organisation, and who we're going to be along the way.

Mission

We work alongside people to overcome life's challenges – we do this to achieve our ultimate goal of solving homelessness and achieving independence.

Vision

- We empower people to change their lives for the better, positively impacting on local communities.
- We are a trustworthy, innovative organisation with good governance and are able to take positive risks.
- We integrate learning and development into everything we do.
- We develop and deliver a broad range of initiatives to empower as many people as we can to live fulfilling and independent lives.
- We gain the trust placed in us by the people we work with, the communities we are part of and those who fund us.

Values

Our values are not just how we work alongside our clients, but how we work with one another, our partners, and our stakeholders.

Empowering – we enable people to find their strengths and develop resilience.

Collaborative – we involve, challenge and advocate.

Compassionate – we connect with people and don't give up.

Personalised – we believe in finding creative, individual solutions with everybody.

Our Trustees

Connection Support is overseen by a Board of Directors, who are also charity Trustees. [Our Trustees](#) have a diverse range of skills and experience to help shape our strategy.

We are committed to becoming a more diverse and inclusive Board to help widen perspectives and better reflect the diversity in our staff and client groups. Trustees are appointed for a three-year period, in the first instance, but are eligible for re-election after that time. Every two years the Board reviews the skills mix, and in light of this, we are currently recruiting for a Trustee with experience in mental health support.

What do Trustees do?

As a Trustee, you will play an important role, in providing leadership and direction including taking forward the 2024-2027 strategic plan and demonstrating a commitment to the financial health and viability of the organisation. All our Trustees have legal responsibility for the management and administration of Connection Support, in accordance with the roles and responsibilities of [charity trustees](#).

The anticipated time commitment for a Trustee is up to a day a month, and covers:

- Preparing for and attending evening board meetings every two months (normally at our Oxford office).
- Getting involved with one of our sub-committees.
- Attending staff-board meetings.
- Helping to support our Senior Leadership Team by providing specific expertise that is relevant to our day-to-day work.
- Trustee positions are not remunerated but travel and subsistence expenses are reimbursed.

Who are we looking for?

Connection Support is seeking a Trustee with lived experience and/or skills and expertise in Mental Health services. Our Mental Health service continue to grow as the need in society grows. And we continue to have impactful services across a range of geographies and need, and this role will support our successful, expanding operations and our strategic priorities in this area of our work. Of equal importance to the skills below, our ideal Trustee will be passionate and motivated by the impact they can have by being part of Connection Support, and their personal values will align with ours.

YOU

MOTIVATED

PASSIONATE

VALUES

IMPACT

The Trustee will support the CEO and wider senior team with advice and guidance specifically related to:

- Managing existing projects.
- Maintaining good relationships with relevant agencies and potential partners.
- Advising on requirements when considering bids and contracts regarding Mental Health Services.
- Guiding the board on addressing societal needs and advising on potential strategies that support Connection Support to grow in the sector.
- Identifying ways in which Connection Support can engage key stakeholders to grow our reputation and services in this area.

Our ideal Trustee will have the following specific expertise:

- Experience of the Mental Health Act, as a service user, volunteer or employee.
- A strong and robust reputation that would raise no doubts in the minds of stakeholders, funders or clients.
- Strong and well-developed networks in the Mental Health sector.
- Knowledge or awareness of the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act.
- An instinctive, informed and up to date knowledge of the key issues impacting the Mental Health sector and policy - perhaps even as a 'thought leader'.
- Expert, up-to-date knowledge of youth services legislation, policy and practice.
- Experience in applying relevant policy and procedures.

They will also have the ability to:

- Build positive, successful professional relationships and networks with individuals, organisations and agencies.
- Listen and identify issues and or concerns.
- Find creative solutions to achieve outcomes for clients.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Manage risks effectively.
- Represent the organisation in different forums.
- A sound and well-developed appreciation of governance, and an ability to judge how to manage effectively the boundaries between non-executive and executive roles.
- An understanding and respect for how a Board sets the right 'tone' for an organisation, through appropriate leadership, maturity, style of contribution and personal behaviour.

Additional Information

Previous experience

Previous board/Trustee experience is not necessary as we provide a full induction, and we pair each new Trustee with an experienced mentor. A number of training opportunities are circulated to Board members.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in all our services and workplaces. To enhance the diversity of our Board we welcome applications from people who have lived experience of homelessness, from minority ethnic backgrounds, all gender groups and/or with a disability.



Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expect all Trustees, staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We carefully screen all Trustees - all applicants will be expected to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service check and attend training.



How to Apply

If you are interested in applying, please submit the following documents **by Thursday 28th March at 10.00am to recruitment@connectionsupport.org.uk**

- A cover letter (maximum two pages) outlining your motivation to join Connection Support, your suitability for the role, and how your skills match the description outlined above.
- A CV setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements.
- Two professional references (only contacted with prior consent).

Interviews dates to be confirmed.

If you are interested in finding out more about the opportunity and would like to discuss the role informally, please email our Chief Executive, **Chris Keating**, at chriskeating@connectionsupport.org.uk or our Chair of Trustees, Richard Allman, at rallm@btinternet.com

To find out more about Connection Support, please [visit our website](#).

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Charity number: 1049740

Company number: 3072719

