



Welcome

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Action for Children.

We have been providing vital support to children, young people and families across the UK for over 150 years.

We are proud of the services we provide that range from loving homes for children in care, support to help keep families together, youth employability programmes, support for young carers, and fostering. You can read more about our national and local services later on in this document.

Our chair of Audit & Risk Committee is approaching the end of his second term and will be stepping down as a trustee with the Board's oversight of risk in a strong place. For example, work on the development of our risk appetite has recently concluded and our risk management processes are well established. We are looking for a new chair of our Audit & Risk Committee to lead the support and challenge of the executive as we embed that work across the organisation and to play an important role within the wider Board as the Board goes through a period of change with a new Chair and other new trustees.



At Action for Children, we are dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive, and authentic workplace. We want to take deliberate and purposeful action to ensure equal opportunity to all groups in society and for Action for Children and we welcome applications from a broad range of backgrounds. We are actively anti-racist and we require our trustees to champion this stance alongside us.

You will be joining a dedicated team of people who care deeply about the difference our organisation makes to some of the most vulnerable children throughout the UK.

In return you will have the opportunity to be part of an exceptional team of Trustees from every corner of the UK who already bring with them a wide range of skills, experience and networks. Most important to you will be the sense of fulfilment we can offer, by deploying your skills and experience to the benefit of the children who need it most.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Liz Bell
Chair of Governance, People and
Remuneration Committee



Who we are

For over 150 years, Action for Children has stood alongside children, young people and families throughout the UK in life's most difficult moments. We believe that every child deserves a safe, happy childhood and the strongest possible foundation to thrive.

Driven by love, we step in when vulnerable children and young people face challenges such as poverty, abuse, or neglect - providing urgent protection and practical support. We also work proactively - offering early intervention, resilience-building and prevention programmes that aim to stop problems before they escalate.

Our vision is clear: **every child and young person has a safe and happy childhood, and the foundations they need to thrive.**

To deliver this, we operate a broad range of services across the UK - from nurseries and children's centres to foster care, residential homes, youth mentoring and specialist support for young people facing homelessness, disability, or family breakdown. We believe in giving children and young people a voice - listening closely to their experiences and using their insights to campaign for lasting change in policy, services and society.

Because childhood is precious and we know we don't have long to get it right. Year after year, we are relentless in our mission: **to stand by children and families when they need us most, and to drive the systemic change needed so that those out of reach today are within reach tomorrow.**



Our strategy for more

safe and happy childhoods



Our vision

Every child and young person in the country has a safe and happy childhood and the foundations they need to thrive.



Our Mission

We take action to change the childhoods of those who need help to thrive. Giving vulnerable children and young people the protection and practical help they urgently need and tirelessly campaigning for lasting change.



Our strategic goals

We've set seven goals to help us create more safe and happy childhoods. They're rooted in our commitment to putting the voices of children and young people at the heart of our work and driven by diversity and inclusion in everything we do.



What we'll do for children, young people and families

Our four core service areas



Family support

Supporting families to make sure children and young people get the best start in life.



Children in care

Caring for children and young people to give them a safe, stable and loving home.



Disabled children

Supporting disabled children, young people and their families.



Mental health and wellbeing

Building children and young people's emotional resilience to help them overcome challenges.

1

Grow our services to help more children and young people

2

Increase the impact of our work with children and young people

3

Influence policy decisions to improve the lives of children and young people

How we'll achieve it



Attract, develop and retain brilliant staff and volunteers



Inspire greater support for our vision and mission



Increase our financial contribution from fundraising, nurseries and childcare



Deliver best value for children and young people by improving efficiency



In 2024/25, we took action for

551,400



children, young people and
families across the UK.



Together we helped:



484,650

children, young people and
families through our family
support services.



5,141

children, young people, their
families and carers through our
services supporting children in
or at risk of going into care.



50,869

children and young people
(and their families) with their
mental health and wellbeing.



10,740

disabled children,
young people and
their families.

Our Impact

Every child should grow up
safe and happy. We offer
support to help them thrive
– and step in to help when
times get tough

We work to improve the lives
of children, young people,
and families in the UK. We
do this by building solid
foundations and spotting
problems early.

This means parenting
classes, nurseries, and
children's centres. It's
providing breaks for young
carers, and extra help for
disabled children. It's
supporting young people at
risk of homelessness.

We bring mental health
workshops to schools. We're
there for parents who need
advice and support to
children at risk of criminal

exploitation. We find foster
homes for children in need
of a loving family. And we
campaign for lasting change.

We are a vital lifeline for
children and families.
We've been helping children
for more than 150 years.
Today, we have 342
services across the UK, in
local communities, in schools
and online.

In 2024/25, we
helped 551,400 children,
young people and families.
This included 484,650
families through our family
support services.

Our services

We provide **342** services in local communities across the UK, in schools and online. And we work across four main service areas.

Family support

Supporting families to make sure children and young people get the best start in life through:

66 children's centres and family hubs.

56 family support services.

1 online service (Parent Talk).

35 Spring nurseries and out of school clubs.

12 young carers' services.

6 early intervention services for children and young people who are criminally exploited.

23 support services for young people, including youth justice, youth employment and youth support.

Disabled children and young people

Supporting disabled children, young people and their families through:

52 residential and community short breaks services.

16 homes for disabled children and young people.

3 fostering short breaks.

Children in care

Caring for children and young people to give them a safe, stable and loving home through:

15 youth housing support services.

12 fostering services.

16 children's homes*

1 children's rights and independent visitor service.

1 residential school.

1 online service (Big Welcome).

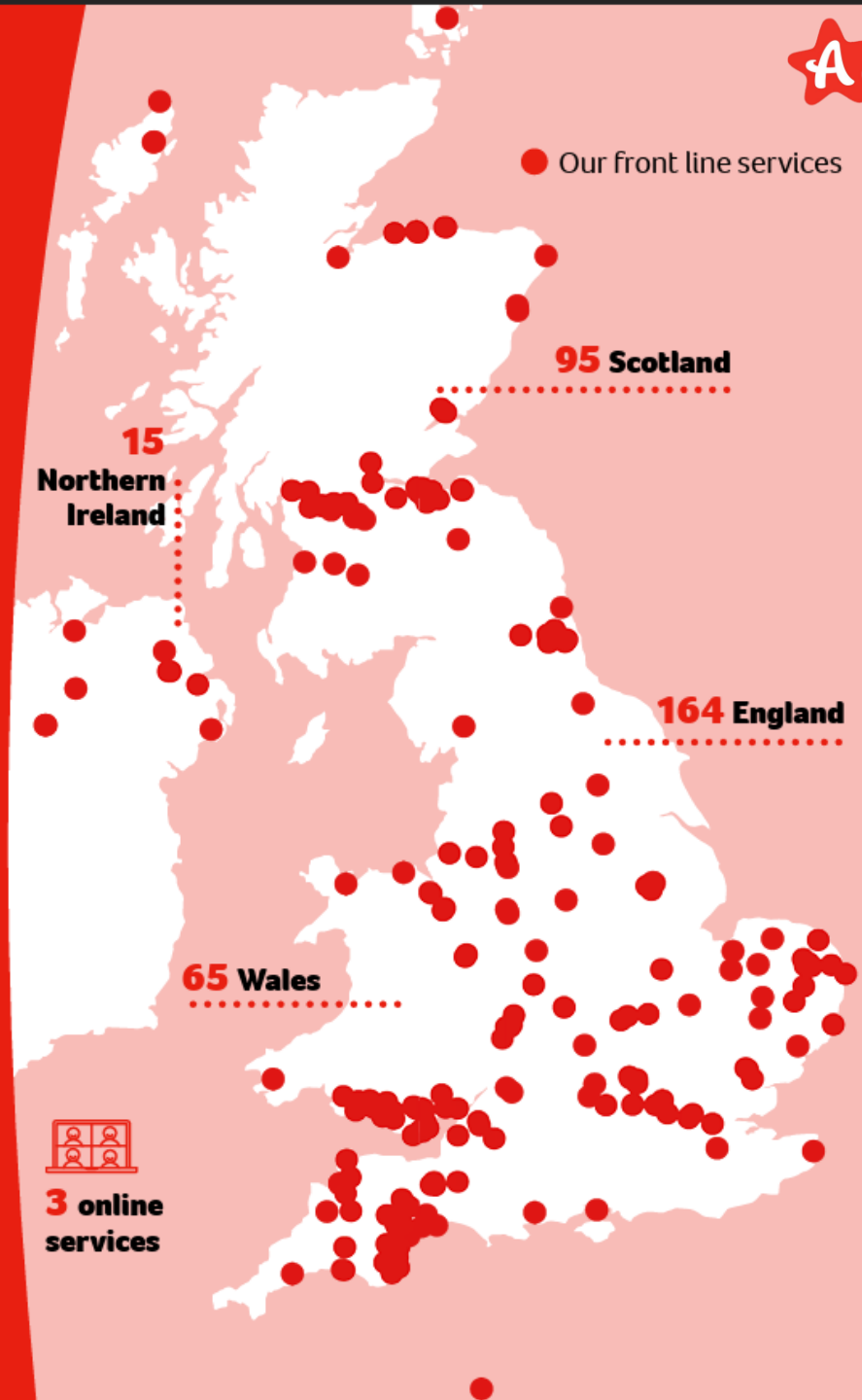
Mental health and wellbeing

Building children and young people's emotional resilience to help them overcome challenges through:

25 mental health support services.

1 online service (Sidekick).

**Our 16 children's homes include five homes for young people at Headlands school. Previously we counted these homes as one service at Headlands, but as they are regulated as individual homes that offer the same loving care as our other long-term homes, we're now counting them as individual services.*





Role Purpose



All our Trustees play a pivotal role in applying their skills, experience, expertise and networks to represent Action for Children and to ensure that it has a secure future, robust governance, and is positively engaged with a very wide range of national stakeholders. Chairing the Audit & Risk Committee brings additional responsibility and we are looking for an individual who can lead that committee collegiately, drawing on the strength of all its members (both trustees and non-trustees), and who can build strong 'sideways' relationships with the chairs of our other key committees, particularly our Finance and Children's Services Committees.

Candidates are likely to find pages 43-46 of last year's annual report helpful in understanding our approach to risk management.

The Board has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day management of Action for Children to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for leading the Leadership Team and for making and implementing operational decisions.

The six main duties of a Trustee are to:

- ☐ Ensure your charity is carrying out its purpose for the public benefit
- ☐ Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- ☐ Act in your charity's best interests
- ☐ Ensure your charity is accountable
- ☐ Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- ☐ Act with reasonable care and skill

Acting in the charity's best interests, you will work constructively with other Trustees and the Leadership Team to:

- ☐ Achieve and maintain excellent standards of governance
- ☐ Develop the organisational strategy and ensure our purpose and objectives are achieved
- ☐ Ensure that Action for Children is managed and controlled appropriately and maintains its financial sustainability
- ☐ Demonstrate that Action for Children is accountable to its funders and stakeholders
- ☐ Ensure that Action for Children operates within the requirements of the law, regulations, its funders and best practice standards

Person Specification

We aim to have a diverse and inclusive Board of Trustees, the importance of which is set out in the Charity Governance Code, and we welcome people with diverse backgrounds and lived experience.

- ❑ Commitment to Action for Children, its vision and purpose with the interest and ability to understand the work undertaken by the organisation.
- ❑ Shares Action for Children's values and ethos.
- ❑ Empathy with the agendas impacting children and their families, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- ❑ An active champion of diversity and inclusion.
- ❑ A strategic thinker who can align day-to-day decisions with the big picture.
- ❑ An excellent communicator with an ability to connect and engage with a wide range of people.
- ❑ Comfortable with challenge and debate and able to encourage that in others whilst fostering a collaborative board environment.
- ❑ Trusted, compassionate and empathetic.
- ❑ Commitment to selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- ❑ Willingness, appetite and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to the role.
- ❑ Strategic leadership experience
- ❑ Deep understanding and expertise in audit, risk and maintaining an effective control environment within a large complex organisation.
- ❑ The ability to chair an Audit & Risk Committee whose work extends to the charity's full breadth of activities, whilst working alongside the chairs of our Finance and Children's Services Committees.





Further information and application process



Time Commitment

Trustees are asked to prepare for and attend quarterly Board Meetings which are currently mainly held in person except for two which are held on-line.

One of these, currently in December, is extended to be a **two-day, in-person residential Away Day**, which includes strategic planning sessions, and we hold an additional one day in-person strategy meeting.

The successful candidate may also be asked to join one of the other Board committees, to become a director of one of our main subsidiaries (Action for Children Developments Ltd, Out of School Scotland Ltd or Action for Children Services Ltd) or to chair one of our four National Advisory Committees which correspond to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Trustees are also encouraged to represent the organisation at events and take opportunities to **visit Action for Children services** to experience activities first-hand.

Overall, we estimate the annual time commitment to be **12–15 days per year** though it can be higher initially as you get to know the charity.

This is a **voluntary position**, with reasonable expenses reimbursed. The term of office is **three years**, with the possibility of re-election for **one or two additional terms**.

Process and timeline

- **Application Deadline:** Please provide us with a CV and supporting statement outlining your suitability and desire to be a trustee of Action for Children by **Friday 14 August**.
- **Interviews with Trustee Panel and Youth Panel** will, provisionally, take place in **w/c 24 and 31 August**.

Ideally the preferred candidate will be appointed in time to observe the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee on **10 September**.

If you would like to learn more about the role as part of considering whether to apply we will try to arrange that.

Prior to appointment clear DBS and PVG checks will be needed and we will take references in the usual way.

Email:

AfCGovernance@actionforchildren.org.uk