

Chair candidate pack

Introduction from the Chief Executives

Firstly, thank you for your interest in working with Birthrights! If you are interested in centering anti-oppression in your work, value justice for all and are committed to working in community to transform experiences and outcomes of maternity care for all women and birthing people please read on.

Birthrights was founded in 2013 with the understanding that at the heart of the poor experiences and outcomes of maternity care for so many, is a consistent failure to listen to the voices of women and birthing people and a complete disregard for their fundamental human rights. Our work has never been more urgent.

Over ten years Birthrights has grown from a tiny volunteer-led organisation to the UK's leading authority on the human rights of women and birthing people during their pregnancy and birth.

We have delivered information and advice to thousands of women and birthing people; delivered training across multiple hospital trusts to build understanding of and confidence in delivering rights-respecting care; and published our Race Inquiry report *Systemic Racism, not Broken Bodies*, which uncovered experiences behind the stark disparities in maternal outcomes for Black and Brown women and birthing people.

We started as new CEOs of Birthrights in January 2023. Over the past year we have focused on strengthening our foundations,

including developing a new strategic framework for the next 10 years.

As we look forward to the decade ahead, Birthrights is in a strong position to work collaboratively towards long term, systemic change that empowers women and birthing people and the frontline professionals seeking to deliver person-centred care.

It's a really exciting time to be joining the Birthrights team. We are buzzing with energy and ideas on how we can translate our strategic framework into reality and address the entrenched inequalities in maternal healthcare in all our work, whilst carving out the time to really care for ourselves and each other.

We are seeking a Chair who can help support and challenge us on that journey. We hope that you will consider applying, even if you feel you do not meet all the criteria of the job description.

Shanthi Guneseckera and Janaki Mahadevan
Co-CEOs, Birthrights



Who we are looking for

To ensure we are properly equipped to reach more people, influence culture and practice and drive systemic change we are looking for a Chair who can provide guidance and challenge to the co-CEOs and support the Board of trustees to collectively use their skills and experience to support the future ambitions of our charity. If this is something you're interested in being part of, please read on!

Birthrights understands that to contribute to the reproductive and birth justice movements we must understand and demonstrate practical application of anti-oppressive and liberation thinking. We are committed to working towards becoming an anti-oppression, transformative organisation. We are investing in training for our staff team and Board in recognition of this commitment and creating the space and time for reflection and challenge as we move towards this goal.

This pack contains information about Birthrights, what it's like to work with us, more about the role and how to apply.

“Thought-provoking doesn't really cover it, left me totally rethinking my practice and my interactions with women.”

– Midwife, Chesterfield Royal



About Birthrights

In the UK and around the world, women and birthing people are standing up and fighting for reproductive justice and against the erosion of their reproductive rights. Birth justice is a core part of that reproductive justice movement.

Birth justice exists when women and birthing people have the right to give birth with whom, where, when and however they choose and when laws, policies and practice enables all women and birthing people to access those rights. These rights exist in international human rights law and UK laws, but access to exercising these rights is under threat in the UK for all women and birthing people and is particularly restricted for the most marginalised.

Our vision is of a world where women and birthing people can access safe maternity care that fully respects their right to bodily autonomy and self-agency, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

Our mission is to champion the rights of women and birthing people during pregnancy and birth across the UK.

Birthrights is the leading authority on the fundamental human rights of women and birthing people during pregnancy and birth and our work has never been more urgent.

Our work is critical to not only transforming the experiences and outcomes for individuals, but also in shifting wider policy, practice and systems. We do this by empowering and supporting women and birthing people, training healthcare professionals, holding systems and institutions to account and making visible the diverse experiences of maternity care.

We believe

pregnancy and birth
should above all be about
your body, your birth, your
rights.



Our Work

Information and Advice

Our email service, information resources and in-person sessions provide advice to empower women and birthing people and their supporters through pregnancy and birth to understand and act on their rights.

Training

We deliver training to catalyse improvements in NHS practice and culture by working to ensure those managing and delivering care have a strong understanding of rights-respecting care and how this is critical to safe care.

Through training we also seek to empower birth workers, peer supporters and community advocates to champion the rights of women and birthing people.

Policy and campaigns

We work collectively to transform experiences and outcomes for individuals and shift policy, practice and systems towards birth justice.

We seek to work in community to uplift the voices and experiences of the most marginalised communities.



In May 2022, we published [Systemic Racism, not Broken Bodies](#), laying bare the systemic racism within maternity care.

About the role

Birthrights UK is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees, which consists of up to 10 members from across a range of professional and life experiences.

Birthrights is seeking a new Chair to lead its Board of Trustees to fulfil their responsibilities supporting the strategic direction and overall governance of the organisation. This is an exciting opportunity to help drive the success of a growing charity that has established itself as the leading authority on the human rights of women and birthing people during pregnancy and birth in the UK.

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide support and leadership to the Chief Executives and ensure Birthrights is run in accordance with the collective decisions of trustees and the charity's Articles of Association.
- Work to build a supportive team culture at Board level which enables each trustee to draw from their experience, skills and networks for the benefit of Birthrights.
- Welcome, induct and support new trustees and ensure they feel equipped and safe to contribute fully to the discussions and decision-making.
- Work with the Trustees and CEOs to build wider networks that support our strategic aims and funding needs.
- Undertake the leadership role in ensuring the Board of trustees fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of Birthrights and facilitates well-rounded and carefully considered strategic decision-making.
- Work in partnership with the Chief Executives to optimise the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Birthrights staff team.

About the role

Accountabilities:

The Board is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of Birthrights and is accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including :

- beneficiaries,
 - funders,
 - the Charity Commission.
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- Trustees must pay close attention to the governing document
 - Charities are accountable to the public, to be open and accountable for their actions and inactions.
 - Trustees should consider the wider implications of the decisions they make, and to communicate widely the formal reasons behind such decisions or actions, and
 - Above all else, they must adhere to any legal and regulatory requirements applicable to Birthrights's activities.



Person specification

We are looking for someone who values justice for all women and birthing people. An interest in Birthrights' work and approach are essential as well as an ambitious outlook for Birthrights' future. The individual will be an experienced leader and relationship builder, able to develop and ensure the Board works effectively as a collective and provides appropriate support and constructive challenge to support the organisation to meet its strategic objectives.

Experience:

- Experience and success in leading groups of people in a professional or community capacity to achieve results.
- An ability to network, engage and resonate with people from different social and professional backgrounds.
- Significant experience of managing, motivating, and developing people.
- Experience of effectively chairing discussions
- An understanding of UK charity governance
- Experience of working in or with small charities is desirable.

Skills and abilities:

- Exceptional leadership skills; able to cultivate effective collaboration and manage a multidisciplinary group of people.
- Effective communicator: able to articulate Birthrights' vision and engage and inspire others both within the organisation and externally.
- Highly effective relationship and alliance building abilities. Comfortable managing discussions centred around justice, discrimination and oppression
- Sound judgement with high capacity for self-reflection.
- Capacity to support both Board and Executive development.

Attributes:

- A strong personal commitment to social justice and addressing and dismantling multiple forms of oppression. Committed to centering racial justice and taking an intentional approach to creating impact.
- Dynamic leadership style that guides and inspires the Board and Executive to fulfil their respective responsibilities. An inclusive and facilitative approach that ensures that all voices are heard.
- Collaborative approach with excellent interpersonal skills.
- A strong personal commitment to Birthright's vision and mission.

Additional information

Time commitment

The Board meets at least four times per year. Alongside other ad-hoc responsibilities we anticipate the time commitment to be at least one and a half days each month.

Conflict of interest

All candidates will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest. This will be examined to see if an actual conflict exists.

Terms of appointment

This post is for an initial term of up to three years, which may be extended for one further term of three years.

Location

Meetings may be in-person, virtual or hybrid.

Remuneration

The position is unpaid, although Birthrights UK reimburses travel costs and other direct expenses incurred.



“I felt empowered and ready to stand up for the birth I deserve”.

— service user

Our recruitment principles

Birthrights prides itself on respectful and inclusive recruitment practices, and it is important that we follow these practices in recruitment to all positions at Birthrights. These include:

- Always letting candidates know the outcome of their application, even if they are unsuccessful.
- Sharing information about the role and organisation in different formats (e.g. recruitment packs, videos, drop-in sessions).
- Encouraging applications in formats that enable candidates to shine (e.g. written, video, audio).
- Giving candidates at least a week's notice ahead of interview.
- Sharing interview questions with candidates in advance.
- Providing feedback to all candidates who have been offered an interview.

We welcome applications from individuals from communities who have experienced and continue to experience multiple forms of oppression, including those from racially minoritised, LGBTQI+, Deaf and disabled, migrant and neurodiverse communities.

We are committed to minimising barriers people may have through the application process, which is why we commit to paying for care and childcare whilst you're attending an interview and making any reasonable adjustments that you may require.

If there is anything else you're concerned about or think we could support with, please let us know.

“When we set out, human rights weren't part of the conversation in maternity care, but our work has changed that and made a real difference to the lives of women and birthing people.”

Elizabeth Prochaska,
Birthrights Co-founder



How to apply

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by **12:00pm (midday)** on **22nd April 2024**.

- A CV setting out your career history, responsibilities in each of your roles and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum 2 sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application and will be assessed as part of your full application.
- Details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.

Please send your application to: careers@birthrights.org.uk

If you have further questions after reading this pack, please email careers@birthrights.org.uk.

**Birthrights champions
the fundamental
human rights of
women and birthing
people during
pregnancy and birth
across the UK.**

