



Welcome from Chair

Thank you for your interest in joining our Trustee Board at Childhood First.

We are an established provider of therapeutic residential care for children who have experienced severe emotional trauma and the way we work is using a therapeutic model grounded in a systemic family therapy model in which we train all care staff to deliver fully therapeutic experience for the children in our care.



Henrietta Hughes OBE

Supporting the executive to deliver our five year strategy of quality improvement in our services requires of our trustees a special level of interest and empathy in the work. It also requires trustees who can bring specialist skills to an already high performing Board. In particular we are seeking leaders who have experience in one or more of the following:

- Social care practices in an organisation of comparable size and scale. In particular your insights into **safeguarding**.
- Sheltered housing, leaving care or charity **finance** experience, ideally in a large residential or care setting
- Community **networking** and effective long-term friends engagement in Kent and separately in Norfolk.

If this sounds like the Board for you, we'd love to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'H Hughes'.

Henrietta Hughes OBE

Our story

The charity's origins can be traced to 1919, with the foundation of Park House, a Training School for Jewish Boys in Middlesex. In 1947 the school relocated to Peper Harow House in Surrey, evolving in the early 1970s into a pioneering therapeutic community for troubled adolescents, which established the therapeutic values for which the charity is now renowned.

Thornby Hall established in 1986 and closed in 2017 and Peper Harow severely damaged by fire in 1990 closed in 1993. Since then five therapeutic communities and a school have been created across Kent and Norfolk where we provide a full wrap around therapeutic service for the children as well as outreach initiatives of various kinds.

Our values

We have five core values that encompass everything we are looking to achieve for the children and young people in our care and provide the guidelines for how we provide our services.



Our vision, mission and approach

Our **Vision** is to be the leading provider of therapeutic care, education and treatment for children and young people who have experienced early childhood trauma.

Our **Mission** is to transform the lives of children and young people who suffer severe emotional and psychological difficulties, so they can relate well to others and fulfil their potential.

Our **Approach** is a form of psychotherapeutic group living and learning modelled on healthy relationships, adapted to the developmental needs of children and young people suffering early childhood trauma. We call this Integrated Systemic Therapy (iST).

How we work

Whilst all charities are special, I believe that Childhood First, as one rooted in a particular set of values, developed and handed down through several generations, has at its heart a mission and a vision of how the world could be a better place.

Childhood First has a distinguished history over a century of supporting children and young people whose lives require a very particular type of help and support.

Our values are above all social and developed through different influences; residential therapeutic communities, education and above all psychotherapy's relational understanding of how mind and emotions develop, in all their complexity, both conscious and unconscious.

We recognise the interdependence of everyone who works within Childhood First, and those who work alongside us. We value authenticity, however hard the truths it uncovers. We persevere and hold onto hope for our children and young people until they are able to hope for themselves.

Our trustees, past, present and future have all been drawn to its vision, mission and values. Because we work with profound emotional experiences, we require trustees who believe in our understanding that all behaviour is a communication, and that the psychotherapeutic approach we employ requires us to be able to hold onto uncertainty and sometimes high levels of risk. If this feels like you, then please apply to be part of our board of trustees. Thank you.



Gary Yexley
Chief Executive

Role descriptions and person specifications

The particular skills we are seeking are outlined below. For further details please refer to the role descriptions provided with the advert

- **Safeguarding** and social care practices in an organisation of comparable size and scale.
- **Sheltered housing, leaving care or charity finance** experience, ideally in a large residential or care setting.
- **Community networking** and effective long-term friends engagement in Kent and separately in Norfolk.

Terms of appointment

Trustee positions are offered on a voluntary basis with travel and out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed.

Time commitment

Each year, our Trustees are expected to attend four regular board meetings, from 5 to 7 pm in Central London. In addition, Trustees would attend potentially four meetings of any sub-committee of which they are a member. Further time is required for reading of papers before meetings.

You would also receive invitations to various Childhood First events in the communities, which are optional but strongly encouraged to help better understand the work and feel a connection to the charity.

We are particularly cognisant of the need to be flexible in the demands we make of Trustee colleagues. Each year there is an opportunity to meet with the Chair for mutual feedback and to discuss ways in which Trustees might wish to develop their roles.

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. For more information about the role, please visit our website: <https://www.childhoodfirst.org.uk/chfcareers/board-trustees/>

If you have questions about the role and would like an informal conversation before applying please email Gary Yexley at g.yexley@childhoodfirst.org.uk.

To make an application please send:

- A CV of no more than two sides to jobs@childhoodfirst.org.uk with the following information.
- A supporting statement of no more than one side that explains why you are interested in joining our Board of Trustees and the experiences and qualities you believe you can bring to be successful in post.

Please tell us if there are any dates during the selection process (outlined below) when you would not be available to participate.

If you have a disability and identify any barriers in the job description or person specification, please tell us.

Please note that successful applicants will be asked to provide details of professional referees and will need to complete an Enhanced DBS check.

Closing date: Tuesday 30th July 2024

The first board meeting for appointed candidates will be Tuesday 17th September 2024 in Central London.