PiP Pursuing Independent Paths



Chair Candidate Pack

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A letter from our Chair

I am delighted that you are thinking about joining our board at PiP. I hope this pack helps you understand our work, how we support our students to achieve their goals, and gives you the information you need to apply for the role of Chair of our Board of Trustees.

PiP works to support adults with learning disabilities and autism to achieve their potential, move towards independence, and live their best lives. We were established in 1983 by parents wanting more challenging and ambitious support for their children and can now celebrate over 40 years of impact. Our history is rich and varied; we have grown from 25 students a decade ago to over 100 beneficiaries per year today.

From our custom-adapted centre on Kensal Road where we moved in 2022, we run four key curriculum areas: Creative and Performing Arts; Employability, Health & Wellbeing, and Independent Living Skills. Alongside this work we run a number of services in the community including our Vocational Training Enterprises, the new Fruitful Cafe, Seedlings, Craftworks and Gig Buddies which supports adults with learning disabilities to access social events and make lasting friendships.

The organisation is led by the Chief Executive with deep sector experience, a skilled and settled management team, and a board of seven trustees with a diversity of experience and perspectives.

As we embark on the next exciting stage of our journey, we are looking for a new Chair to support PiP with our vision. PiP is a unique charity in impact, ambition, and heart and we are delighted that you may be considering this position. We are on a sound financial footing and are actively exploring new ways to support our students. As a charity we are well established and you will have good support structures in place as you get to grips with the role and our organisation.

I hope the following information on PIP captures your interest and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Terri Cash
Interim Chair

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Who we support and why:

At PiP, our focus is on teaching and learning life skills; so those we work with self-identify as PiP students. Ranging in age from 18 to 68, our average student is around 34 years old.

PiP students have a range of learning disabilities including Down's Syndrome, Fragile X, Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), dual diagnosis with mental health problems and/or physical health conditions such as Diabetes and Epilepsy.

PiP's team deliver person-centred support to each of our students to identify their strengths, interests and passions. We support them and their families & carers to maximise opportunities in their community through signposting and working in partnership with like-minded organisations.

Structural inequalities in society mean that people with learning disabilities are not always recognised for their skills and talents and given the opportunity to live independent lives. Our Board and staff team want to challenge that, making sure that every PiP student has a voice and can make their own choices about their own lives.

We are keen for our students to always have a voice, inside and outside of PiP. To support this, we run advocacy sessions and every week our students hold a student's meeting with their own agenda where they can express their views on PiP and ask about anything like new staff, our leisure programmes, or fundraising. Our Student Council is made up of student representatives who provide feedback to senior management and the Board.







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Who we are:

PiP is a charitable company limited by guarantee and it is regulated by the Charities Commissions and Companies House. The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also Directors and Members of the Company. PIP works in the Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster communities to support adults with learning disabilities and autism to achieve their potential, move towards independence and live their best lives.

With 32 staff and a Board of 7, we work to empower nearly 100 adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism every year to achieve their potential, move towards independence and live a life of their choice.

Our approach is student-led and each student's timetable is the result of a collaborative approach with students, families, and social workers. Student goals range from building friendships to exploring creativity and securing part-time work. Our students are referred by our Local Authority partners and with a waiting list of over 40 students we are confident we offer a top-tier service.

Financially we are stable with strong financial reserves, a turnover of 1.8 million, and an income mix circa 75% commissioned services and 25% philanthropic partnerships. From this position of strength, we plan to invest in our team and projects to expand our provision and secure more impact in our community.

Our Board

Each Board member serves for three years and is able to serve two terms. Our new Chair will be serving alongside the following trustees

Chair of Trustees (Interim): Terri Cash
Trustee: Alice Webb
Trustee: Gareth Spicer
Trustee: Joseph Lawrence
Trustee: Nicola Henry
Trustee: Thara Varghese Brooks
Trustee: Tommaso Lupo

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Why we need you:

PiP needs a Chair who shares our values and wants to see people with learning disabilities and autism get the best possible opportunities in life.

PiP's current Chair took on this interim role to give current trustees a chance to get to know PiP and recruit a permanent Chair. Today, as we recruit our new Chair, we're looking for a person with vision, leadership, and a strategic mindset to plan and oversee our next stage of development, considering questions like:

- How to diversify our offer to meet all the needs of those we support
- How to enhance student voice and co-production at PiP
- What new projects and services would reach more people in more communities.

What we're looking for

The Chair will provide leadership, setting the tone for decision-making and ensuring high standards, playing a key part in setting strategic direction, facilitating the focus on longer term objectives as well as short term delivery.

As Chair your primary responsibilities will include:

Governance

- Ensure our charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Ensure that PiP complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure the Board maintains effective oversight of safeguarding
- Work with the CEO to set an annual cycle of board meetings and agendas that reflect the requirements of the organisation and its trustees
- Chair and facilitate board meetings to ensure discussions reach a clear conclusion and that decisions taken at Board are implemented
- Lead the Board in the performance of its roles and scrutiny of PiP's work.
- Enable trustees to fully engage with their role, Board sessions, and the organisation's work.

Strategy and Oversight

- Ensure that PiP has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction
- Oversee PiP's strategic development and implementation
- Oversee the financial management & performance of the organisation
- Ensure that the student voice is central to and represented throughout PiP's strategy, policies and operations

Leadership

- Provide leadership for the organisation
- Develop the Board as a cohesive team through effective induction, development, regular reviews of skills and effectiveness and planning for trustee selection.
- Provide constructive challenge to the CEO and lead their objective setting and appraisal on behalf of the Board
- Provide leadership and support to the CEO including meeting regularly to discuss current issues.

What's in it for you?

You will be joining a friendly, skilled board and you will gain immense satisfaction from a role in which you will steward our mission to combat social inequalities and their effect on people with learning disabilities. Your involvement will mean we can ensure that every PiP student has a voice and can make their own choices about their lives.

The Trustees have overall control of the governance of PiP. They are ultimately responsible for the charity, although the day-to-day running of it is delegated to the Senior Management Team. As chair you will lead the Board, oversee our strategic work, and provide a vital governance function.

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Time commitment

Board meetings take place between 4-6 times per year for normally two hours in the early evening at our centre on 306 Kensal Road. Papers are sent out in advance and are regarded as pre-read for meeting purposes. There is also a Finance Sub Committee which the Chair usually attends.

Working groups are set up from time to time, currently covering risk management and strategic development. The successful candidate would need to be able to devote about a day per month on average which could be remote or in-person.

Beyond this, the commitment is flexible with a standing invite to all events including showcases, sports tournaments and parents/carers evenings.

The position is voluntary, unpaid, and non-executive. Reasonable expenses such as travel will be paid.

How to apply

We recommend a first step of discussing the role with Denise Largin, CEO at PiP. Please e-mail DeniseL@piponline.org.uk to arrange a visit, learn more about our work and our future plans. We expect to interview in the weeks beginning the 30th November and 7th December.

Your formal application should include your CV and a covering letter outlining your interest in the role and why you believe you are a strong fit for PiP. The covering letter should be no longer than two pages. Please submit all applications by email to Denise at DeniseL@piponline.org.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you to our centre and introducing you to our students, staff, and fellow trustees.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience and Knowledge	Essential	Desirable
Experience of being a trustee on a charity board	x	
Experience of chairing a board or a committee, for example as chair, vice chair or committee chair	x	
Experience of oversight of strategy development and implementation	x	
The ability to understand and scrutinise the financial management of the organisation	x	
Understanding of charity and local authority funding		x
Skills and Abilities	**Essential**	**Desirable**
Strong leadership skills, with the ability to think strategically and creatively	x	
Good communication skills with the ability to inform and engage a wide range of audiences	x	
The ability to lead the Board and nurture productive relationships with trustees and SMT	x	
An understanding of leadership, management and governance and the respective roles of the Chair, the Board and the Chief Executive	x	



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Skills and Abilities	Essential	Desirable
Experience of working or volunteering in the third sector/understanding of the needs and issues faced by a small-medium sized charity		x
An understanding of the importance of PiP's work and our person-centred approach to addressing inequalities for adults with learning disabilities	x	
A willingness to commit the necessary time to the development of PiP and to lead the Board	x	
An active commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion	x	



