



# CHAIR RECRUITMENT PACK

December 2024



# WELCOME FROM OUR FOUNDER AND OUTGOING CHAIR

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Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of Trustees of Parenting Mental Health.

Parenting Mental Health, or PMH as it is better known to the parents and carers we support, is a charity of unusual dimensions and ambition, and we are seeking an extraordinary individual to guide its strategic direction while remaining aligned with our values and origin story.

I started PMH as a digital community in 2016, following my daughter's mental health decline, because I wanted to support and connect with others and reduce the shame and isolation of this experience. When I applied for charitable status in 2019, it was because I believed the cause of parenting a child with poor mental health deserved to be represented and championed by a charity, and that stands true today.

Parenting Mental Health exists to improve the experience of parenting a child with a mental health issue and we now support and upskill over 45,000 parents through our 24/7 digital communities, programs and information. We aim to help 1 million parents by 2026.

As a volunteer led organisation, we are fuelled by the time, commitment, and connection to PMH of our volunteer team. Lived experience, peer support and our values of non-judgement, compassion, and community are key to how we act and what we do, and making a difference is at the heart of our actions.

This is a really exciting time in our story. As I step into the President's role, there is an opportunity for an experienced Chair to come and lead our board development, governance, and sustainability, while envisioning the future of this highly regarded, impactful and innovative charity.

If you're looking for a dynamic and unusual challenge, then PMH could be the place for you. The role isn't only about running a board. It's about bringing your emotional intelligence to a multi-faceted experience; having the capacity to respect and appreciate the lived experience of our volunteers and staff, no matter what the external demands are; and standing by our origin story and how the values and experiences of it bring hope, comfort, and change to thousands of parents.

You'll be interested in how we can take new and different pathways to meet the evolving questions of being a digital-first organisation, as well as having an entrepreneurial, innovative perspective on the opportunities and challenges we, and the parents we serve, face.

Most of all, you'll want to support the organisation to continue to make a positive impact in the world, and to make a difference to families who are often overlooked, marginalised, and judged.

If you have genuine empathy for this extraordinary, life changing experience; the time, values, and skills to help Parenting Mental Health continue its vital work; and if something in this speaks to you, please get in touch. I am available if you would like an informal chat.

**Suzanne Alderson**





## WHO WE ARE

PMH is one of the few charities in the UK that specifically helps parents who are supporting a child with mental health challenges and whose needs and impact for positive change are all too often overlooked. In most cases support is focused on the child and parents are left isolated, unaware of what the best approach is and have to try and cope on their own. The impact on families can be devastating. Friendships, social activities, work, school and family relationships can be disrupted. All energy is focused on the one child with their siblings often feeling neglected. For parents, realising that their child is struggling with their mental health, that they might be experiencing anxiety and depression, be suicidal, self-harming or have an eating disorder, is incredibly difficult to come to terms with and accept and they feel totally out of control. They often blame themselves for the struggles their child is enduring. It is the start of an emotional roller coaster, with many finding it hard to cope having nobody to turn to for help and support.

PMH was founded by Suzanne Alderson who through her own experience of supporting her daughter Issy through depression, anxiety and suicide attempts, witnessed first-hand the total lack of support available for parents and decided to do something about it. In 2016 she set up a Facebook group aimed at addressing this gap in support and now the charity has flourished into an online community with over 45,000 members from across the world. Our charity offers 24/7 care, support and information to parents. We enable parents to connect with other parents in similar situations. PMH is very much user-led with feedback from members shaping our service moving forward. Lived experience is key to what we do as are our volunteers, who are instrumental in what we do. Our current support includes our safe, judgement free Facebook community with a variety of sub-groups to reduce isolation, programmes, online support groups, as well as respite care. The work we do equips parents to deal with and cope more effectively with their situation, provides access to free resources, enables more appropriate support, better help for their child and improved mental health within the family.

While we are not a lobbying charity, we have connections to government and the NHS.



# WHY ARE WE HERE?

Over the last 3 years there have been deeply negative impacts on mental health, with a wide variety of societal factors including the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and global uncertainty all playing a part. In 2022, 1 in 6 children aged 7-16 years and 1 in 4 of young people aged 17- 24 years had a probable mental disorder\*. A huge increase from 1 in 9 in 2017. And of those children 2/3 do not have access to treatment on the NHS\*\*.

When there is no NHS support, the responsibility for care rests with the parent.

## Our Vision

We will reach, support and skill 1 million parents through their child's mental health issue by 2026

## Our Mission

We're here to improve the experience of parenting a child with any mental health issue

## Our Values

Compassion, Non-Judgement, Community





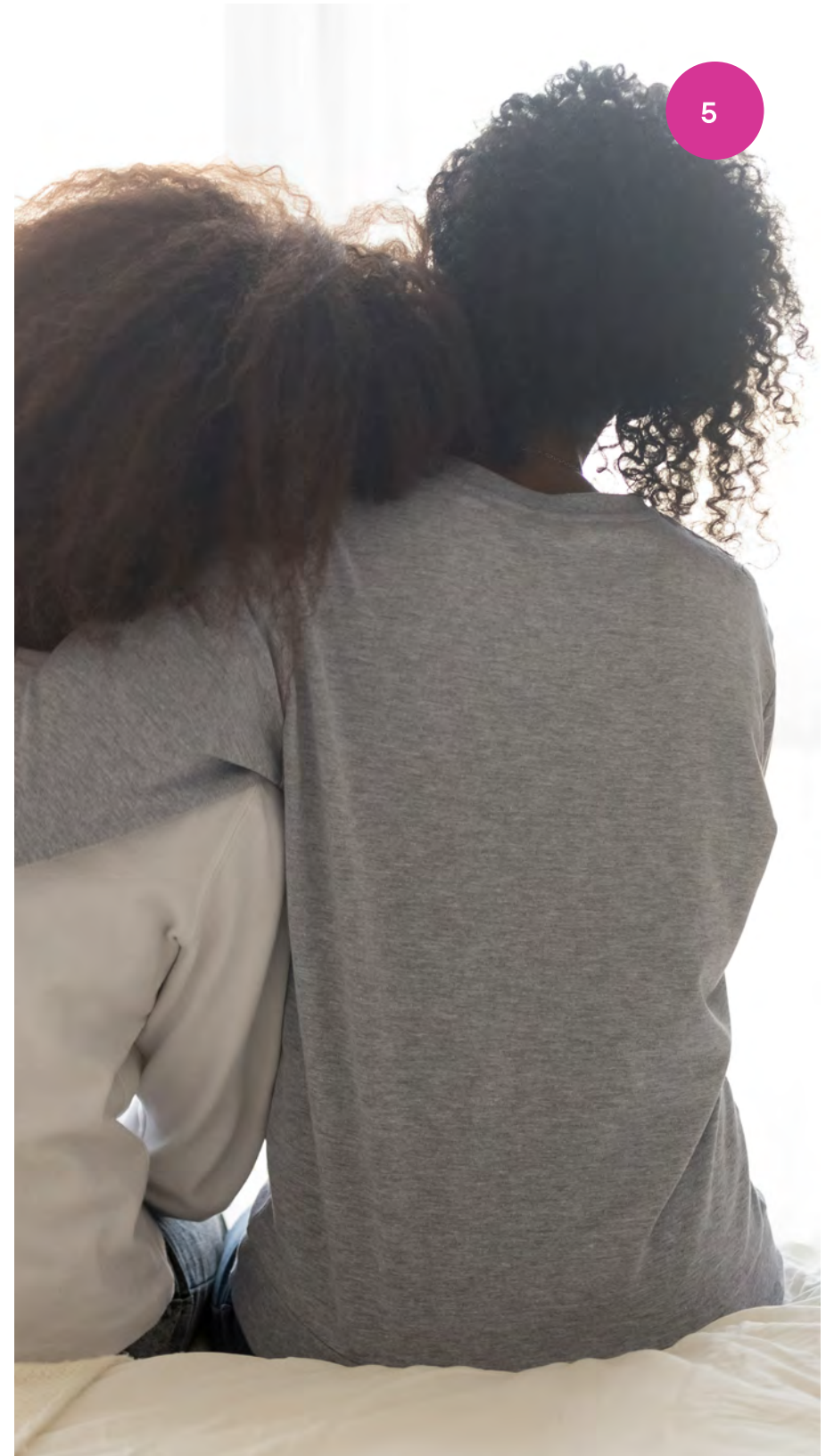
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## Preferred:

- Lived experience of parenting a child with poor mental health
- Technology, digital, and/or online community experience

## Essential:

- A passion for the aims of Parenting Mental Health and the energy and skill to balance connection to the founding principles with a sustainable, impactful future focused approach
- Belief in the power of the parent to effect change in their family
- Commitment to lived experience working and to developing deeper knowledge, process, and potential of our volunteers
- Collaborative in approach
- A proven track record of leadership in either the voluntary, public or commercial sectors
- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation
- Successful track record of achievement through their career
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Significant experience of chairing meetings, events, committees or boards
- Recognising and leveraging the strengths of the collective, ensuring all voices are heard and guiding decision making when there isn't a consensus
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders
- A commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Enthusiasm for the potential of digital peer support for social impact
- Understanding of the challenges and opportunities of working with volunteers
- Experience of change management



# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Time commitment: 2 days per month

The board meets quarterly, with one annual strategy day. The Chair is expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and with the President, and represent the charity where required.

The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

The Chair will serve a 3-year term to be eligible for reappointment for one additional term.





## HOW TO APPLY

If you are passionate about joining Parenting Mental Health and believe you have the skills and experience we are looking for, please apply with the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A supporting statement of no more than 2 sides of A4, detailing why you would like to be considered, your relevant experience and expertise and what you think you can bring to the role.

All applications are being handled by our recruitment partner, Trustees Unlimited (part of the Russam group).

All applications should be sent to [applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk](mailto:applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk) with your full name and Parenting Mental Health in the subject heading.

If you have any difficulty uploading your application or if you would like to have an informal and confidential discussion about the role, alternatively please contact Melissa Baxter:

[melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk](mailto:melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk) | 07789 985 229

Closing date for applications: Monday 20th January 2025

Interview with Parenting Mental Health: 30th / 31st January 2025

