



**Women
in Prison**

Trustee Recruitment Pack

Contents

Welcome from Women in Prison CEO	3
A letter from the Board Chair.....	4
About Women in Prison.....	5
How do our Trustees Work?.....	6
Who are we looking for?	6
What support do we provide you?	7
Role Description	8
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement - Our Principal Commitments.....	11
How to apply	11



Welcome from Women in Prison CEO

Dear Applicant,



I am thrilled that you are interested in becoming a trustee of Women in Prison (WIP). Our trustees are so committed, enthusiastic and dedicated to seeing an end to the harmful imprisonment of women, you would be joining a wonderful group of people. We are proud of the diversity of our trustee board, and we were really pleased to win a Charity Governance Award in 2023 for the diversity of our board.

Women in Prison is the main national charity focused on women in the criminal justice sector, and our influencing and campaigning voices are substantial. We are a women led organisation that exists to work with women who are at risk of, or are, being harmed by the systems that are meant to protect us.

At Women in Prison, we are passionate, ambitious and grounded in the reality of women's lives. We are proud of our roots as a feminist grassroots organisation, and we have grown from strength to strength since the 1980s delivering services to women and campaigning for change – do see our [digital timeline](#) for more information. Our vision of a society that no longer accepts the structural inequalities that lead women and girls into the criminal justice system guides us in all we do – women should not be imprisoned because they have been systematically let down and oppressed.

This is a very exciting time at Women in Prison. where we are in the second year of implementing our five-year strategy, *Together in Power*. This strategy roots us in our deep history of bold and radical action and guides us for the next 5 years on a path to dramatically reduce the harm experienced by women in the criminal justice system.

Our commitment to this strategy is to be bold, ambitious and relentless in driving change. It is about women being at the centre of change, and a call to action for our partners and allies to join us in solidarity to transform systems that harm women. Through 3 goals that are our north stars, we will build collective voice to increase awareness and influence systems to change to create a future where justice is rooted in equality; we will work deeply with women to coproduce transformative programmes that address structural inequalities and we will power up our organisation so that we are sustainable, with a diversity of funding and deep expertise and knowledge in a team steeped in living our values.

If you would like to play a part in shaping and delivering this vision and strategy, we would love to hear from you. Our Board currently comprises 12 trustees, and with some members reaching the end of their terms over the coming year, we are particularly keen to hear from candidates with expertise in Communications/Campaigns and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) with an abolitionist understanding.

However, if these are not your specific areas of expertise but you have other governance skills and experience to contribute, we would still strongly encourage you to apply.

We welcome applications from anyone with lived or learnt experience of the criminal justice system.

I very much look forward to meeting you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sonya', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Sonya Ruparel, Chief Executive
Women in Prison**



A letter from the Board Chair

Dear Potential Trustee,

As Chair of the board of Trustees, I have witnessed first-hand the tremendous impact our board members make in shaping the future of Women in Prison (WIP) and I can assure you that serving as a trustee on our board is a truly rewarding experience.



The Board of Trustees serves as the guiding force behind our strategic direction, ensuring that WIP remain steadfast in our mission to support women impacted by the criminal justice system. By becoming part of our board, you will have the opportunity to influence our strategic decisions, oversee our governance, and contribute to our growth and continued success.

Being a trustee offers a unique platform for personal and professional growth. Our board provides you with a chance to work alongside a diverse group of passionate women, all committed to advancing the goals of WIP. Everyone brings a wealth of experience from various backgrounds, which allows for vibrant discussions, innovative ideas, and the chance to learn from one another. Together, we can make a substantial difference in the lives of those we serve and create a lasting impact on our wider community.

By applying to become part of our board, you could become an integral part of a dynamic team that is committed to making a meaningful difference for women. We value diversity and encourage applications from individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. We are looking for new trustees to join our board and specifically for individuals who have expertise in **Communication/Campaign and EDI**. Your unique skills and perspectives could greatly contribute to delivering our vision for Women in Prison.

To take the first step in joining our board, I kindly request you submit a cover letter no more than one page and a CV by Friday 20 November 2026. Please follow the application instructions outlined in the 'How to Apply' section of this recruitment pack.

Our selection process will include an initial review of CVs, an informal conversation with the Women in Prison CEO in early December 2026, followed by interviews with shortlisted candidates in the first week of January 2027. We anticipate finalising our decision and inducting the new trustee/s by the first week of February 2027. The new trustee/s will be welcomed to join our Board meeting on the 17 March 2027.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juli Browne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Juli Browne
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Women in Prison



About Women in Prison

Women in Prison (WIP) was born out of the anger that our founder – Chris Tchaikovsky – felt about what she experienced and saw when imprisoned in HMP Holloway in the 1980s.

During Chris's time in prison, a woman died after setting fire to her own cell. Chris saw that the specific needs of women in prison and the damaging effect prison sentences were having on women scarcely figured in public or political discourse. So, in 1983, alongside international criminologist Pat Carlen, Chris founded Women in Prison, pushed hard to expose the scandal of women's imprisonment and campaigned for change.

Our founders wanted to increase awareness of the lives behind the women in our prisons, and the impact of poverty and abuse on women's lives. In Chris's own words:

“Taking the most hurt people out of society and punishing them in order to teach them how to live within society is, at best, futile. Whatever else a prisoner knows, she knows everything there is to know about punishment because that is exactly what she has grown up with. Whether it is childhood sexual abuse, indifference, neglect; punishment is most familiar to her.”

In the early 1990s, the organisation was able to expand its remit beyond campaigning to deliver direct support to women affected by the criminal justice system. WIP's initial focus on prison in-reach services was then expanded to support women in the community following their release. Chris, sadly, passed away in 2002. Despite the loss of our visionary founder, Women in Prison works to carry on Chris's legacy.

Today, WIP is a national charity dedicated to making a difference to the lives of women affected by the criminal justice system. We campaign for a new system of justice - one that addresses the root causes of offending (including homelessness, substance use, mental ill health and experiences of poverty, trauma and abuse). Our women's centres in Manchester and London and the services we provide in communities and prisons deliver holistic, women-centred support to enable those whom we work with to address the complex challenges they face.

We want to persuade decision-makers to radically reduce the women's prison population, by demonstrating how a focus on human rights, social justice, health and investment in specialist community support services, including women's centres, enables women to move forward with their lives. We do this by:

- Leading inspiring, passionate campaigns to replace the current system, and to radically reduce the number of women in prison, thereby freeing resources for investment in community support services, including women's centres.
- Delivering high quality, trauma-informed, independent advocacy services for women, in communities and prisons, which focuses on early intervention, health and holistic provision as part of a 'whole system' multi-agency response.
- Offering a platform for women's voices which builds women's confidence and self-belief, strengthening an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and provides opportunities to speak 'truth to power' to bring about real change

Here is a link to our most recent [annual report](#)



How do our Trustees Work?

Trustees work in partnership with the leadership team of Women in Prison, setting the strategic direction and holding the team to account. We are a team of feminist leaders who collaborate and support each other.

Trustees meet quarterly for the main board meeting which. Some trustees are also members of our subcommittee meetings that meet quarterly in advance of the main board. We also invite members to the sub committees who are not formal board members. The sub committees are Finance, Fundraising, Audit and Risk committee and Nominations, Remuneration and Culture committee.

Currently our subcommittee meetings are held during working hours, and our main Board meets between 5 and 7 in the evening, every other board meeting is held in person in London. We hold one Board Away day each year during the working week. We expect trustees to come to board meetings well prepared having read the papers that are sent in advance and to offer support to the leadership team and Chair outside of Board meetings as appropriate.

Who are we looking for?

As part of our succession planning, the Nominations, Remuneration and Culture Committee has reviewed the skills and expertise currently represented on our Board. With some trustees reaching the end of their terms, we are seeking to strengthen the Board by recruiting new trustees whose experience aligns with our most pressing organisational priorities.

We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates with expertise in communications / public relations /digital / Campaigns, as well as those with a strong background in equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We are also keen to attract individuals who share and can champion our abolitionist values.

When applying, please indicate which of these areas of experience best reflects the skills and perspectives you would bring to the Board. If you bring different expertise that you believe will bring value to our organization, please do talk to these.

We are proud of the diversity of the board, and we are keen to strengthen the diversity of the board so that we continue to represent the diversity of women disproportionately affected the criminal justice system.



What support do we provide you?

Women in Prison will offer you the following:

- Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed such as your transport to and from board meetings and any childcare costs incurred to attend an interview or board meeting.
- Any reasonable adjustments you may need to participate fully as a member of the board, should you, for example, have any physical or mental health needs.
- An induction period when you join the board, with the option to 'buddy up' with a current board member while you learn the ropes. We will also make efforts to include you in staff training on specialist topics to ensure you are comfortable in your understanding of WIP's work and can develop your own skills.
- All trustees are given the opportunity to visit projects, prisons and Women's Centres, to meet women who use our services and staff to better understand the work we do.
- Trustees may be offered opportunities to represent the charity at events, awards and conferences.
- Work in a committed and passionate organisation that is achieving results.
- The opportunity to learn new skills, gain different experiences and develop your professional life.
- Opportunities to work alongside a group of committed and supportive women, meet a very diverse range of people and contribute to positive change.



Role Description

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that Women in Prison achieves its strategy. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity.

- Ensure that the organisation pursues its stated charitable objects as defined in the Articles of Association, by establishing a clear vision, set of values and strategy, and ensuring that there is a common understanding of these by trustees, staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure that operational plans and budgets support the vision and strategy.
- Ensure there is regular review of the external environment for changes that might affect the organisation (political, financial, demographic, competitive, partnerships, alliances).
- Ensure that the organisation complies with the Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- Follow proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive.
- Hold the chief executive to account for the management and administration of the charity.
- Give serious consideration to procuring external professional advice on any matter that presents a material risk to the charity that is beyond the established risk management process, or where the trustees could be perceived to be in breach of their duties.
- Ensure that the organisation acts in accordance with employment law and exercises a duty of care to its employees.
- Ensure that the major risks to the organisation are regularly identified and reviewed and that systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.
- Ensure that the organisation has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects, and reflects the diversity of its stakeholders.
- Ensure that the board regularly reviews the governance structure and its own performance.
- Ensure that the board regularly reviews its own training needs and creates an expectation of continuous professional development throughout the organisation.
- Ensure that trustees have an agreed code of conduct and comply with it, and that there are mechanisms for the removal of trustees who do not abide by the principles stated therein

Board members have collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals.



Duties:

- Support and provide advice on Women in Prison' purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Approve operational strategies and policies and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee Women in Prisons' financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Review and approve Women in Prisons' financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to Women in Prisons' CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority.
- Keep abreast of changes in Women in Prison's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of Women in Prisons' own governance. Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect Women in Prisons' interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third-party interests.

What we are looking for

We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our board.

Personal skills and qualities

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision of a society which no longer accepts the structural inequalities that lead women and girls into contact with the criminal justice system.
- Willingness to lead according to our values **Women in Prison Values**



Terms of appointment

Trustees are appointed for a three-year term of office, renewable for one additional three-year term. In special circumstances, trustees may be approved for a third consecutive three-year term, serving a maximum of nine years.

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Time commitment

- Meetings:** Attend four 2-hour Board meetings annually (two remote, two in-person in London) and quarterly 30-minute catch-ups with the Chair of the Board of Trustees as well as the CEO.
- Awayday:** Participate in one full-day, in-person Awayday each year.
- Subcommittees:** Some trustees are expected to attend subcommittee meetings, which occur prior to the Board meetings. Currently, there are two subcommittees: Finance, Fundraising, Audit, and Risk; and Nominations, Remuneration, and Culture.

Visit [our website](#) to learn more about our work and impact.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement - Our Principal Commitments

Women in Prison (WIP) is committed to building and valuing diverse teams and taking positive action to promote equality and challenge unfair and unlawful discrimination. We recognise that women may experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on their sex and additional, real or perceived characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion, sexual orientation, social-economic background, immigration status, caring responsibilities, spent convictions or trade union membership.

WIP works to tackle discrimination and the structural inequalities women experience. We are committed to embedding diversity and inclusion in all areas of our work, including recruitment, and aim to reflect the diversity and excellence of the women that we work with. We actively encourage applications from women from a variety of backgrounds, and with a range of skills and experiences. We are particularly interested to hear from women from Black, Asian and minoritised communities and women with lived experience of the criminal justice system who are underrepresented in leadership positions in our sector.

How to apply

Please [apply here](#) with your CV and a cover letter (no more than one page)

If you would like an informal conversation about the role before deciding whether to formally apply, please contact Sonya Ruparel at sonya.ruparel@wipuk.org. You can also listen to a video recording of what it is like to be a trustee: [Meet the Chair and CEO: Insights into Trusteeship at Women in Prison](#)

Closing date: 20 November 2026

