



# Trustee **Recruitment** **Pack** 2024

[solacewomensaid.org](https://solacewomensaid.org)  
@SolaceWomensAid

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# A note from our Chair and CEO

## Are you interested in joining our Board of Trustees?

We're looking for exceptional women to join our Board of Trustees. Solace is the largest domestic abuse and sexual violence charity in London supporting more than 20,000 women and girls each year through a range of services and we're looking for your expertise to work alongside us.

As with many VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) charities, at Solace we continue to navigate how to best support our service users within an increasingly underfunded sector and increasingly complex external pressures on both VAWG sector charities, our staff and volunteers and the women, children and non-binary people that we support. Despite these uncertain times, we continue in our mission to support survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

As we continue to see the long-term impact of Covid-19 on those experiencing domestic abuse, survivors are facing an increase in the cost of living and strained public services. We continue to call on Government and statutory services to ensure that survivors are able to access the services they need to reach safety and recover, including ensuring there is sustainable funding for the male violence against women and girls sector.

As a leadership team, we continue to build on our commitment and perseverance in promoting an inclusive and supportive environment for our staff and to embed a zero tolerance approach to racism and discrimination within the organisation. We are committed to this ongoing journey to improve our organisation - last year the board of trustees commissioned an independent culture review. We are now taking this work forward through a series of Solace Together workshops with our staff team that will call for reflection and build strong values and behaviours that guide our work with service users and our effective engagement as a unified workforce.

We continue to action and build on our Equity Diversity and Inclusion action plan and are actively working towards being an anti-racist organisation. Our four new inclusion networks led by and for staff provide safe spaces for staff as well as help inform our future progress in policies, consultation and communications responses.

The external environment remains challenging for the sector, with high staff turnover, recruitment challenges, and a lack of sustainable funding. But we are constantly inspired by the courage of the survivors we support, and will continue to grow and adapt our services so we can reach and support more women and children to safety. Together, we can make change that saves lives.

We're proud of the diversity we have worked at pace to achieve within our Board of Trustees and as one of our trustees, you will contribute to the appointment of a wide range of women from different cultures and communities to bring varied perspectives, skills and experiences to the leadership of the charity. Many of our trustees, staff and volunteers are themselves survivors of domestic and sexual violence and as such, are a vital resource.

We look forward to receiving your application. With best wishes,



**Priyanka Devani**  
Chair of Trustees



**Nahar Choudhury**  
Chief Executive

# About Solace

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At Solace, we have continued to reach more people than ever before, supporting 20,000 women, children, young people, and men across all our services every year. Being able to touch the lives of so many, be it in our core support services or through our prevention work, means that we have been able to live up to our vision to support more survivors, and at the same time, use the power of education and training to work towards ending violence.

## Vision

A world where everyone is able to live safe and independent lives which are free from gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation.

## Mission

Solace exists to end the harm done through gender-based violence. Our aim is to work to prevent violence and abuse as well as providing services to meet the individual needs of survivors particularly women and children. Our work is holistic and empowering, working alongside

## Values

Solace core values reflect our history and were developed in consultation with staff and service users.

## We are working to be:

- Survivor led, trauma informed and empowering
- Diverse, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory to create a fully inclusive environment for staff and service users.

## We are committed to:

- Social justice and human rights
- Service users having a central voice within the organisation
- Working in collaboration with other agencies
- Continuous improvement
- Being an intersectional feminist organisation

# Solace Services

Our mission is to give women and their children futures free from abuse and violence. We find creative and innovative ways to support thousands every year through:



Solace offers advice, crisis support and advocacy to survivors, helping them to rebuild their lives.



Safe refuge and move-on accommodation is vital for women and children made homeless through domestic or sexual abuse.



Our 1-1 counselling, group work and specialist holistic therapies help women recover after experiencing traumatic abuse.



Our rape crisis service offers a range of services to women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any time in their lives.



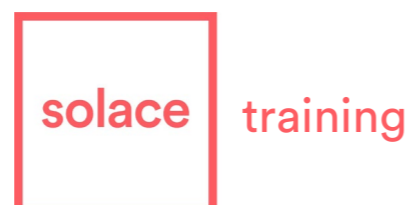
We deliver a range of services to children and young people, including prevention work, for families and young people living in the community.



Specialist, tailored services for women with multiple disadvantages and special needs, including mental health needs and problematic substance use.



Partnership working is central to our approach to provide a comprehensive range of specialist support to meet the needs of women and children.



Our expert training service works with organisations to improve their response to domestic and sexual abuse.

# Our Priorities

**Our priorities will be:**

**Promoting Diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, being an anti-racist organisation and moving towards cultural transformation.**

**Solace will be an Anti-Racist organisation. We will deliver a range of EDI initiatives to provide solutions for staff and services to end discrimination. Move towards Cultural transformation.**

**Inclusive service delivery models**

**Review Models of Service Delivery, Embed Psychologically Informed Framework (PIF), Deliver on Strategic Housing Priorities,**

**Skills and development of staff**

**Capacity of staff - one team of valued, diverse, skilled people**

**Amplifying the Service User voice**

**Representing the voice of Service Users**

**Solace strategy to eradicate of VAWG**

**To make VAWG prevention and awareness a priority for government, public services and businesses.**

**Strengthening infrastructure services**

**We aim to deliver infrastructure/central services that support staff delivering excellent quality services for Survivors.**

**Data, monitoring and evaluation**

**We aim to improve data collection across our services and to be innovative and imaginative with data presentation.**

# Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

## Equity, diversity and inclusion

Solace is committed to putting the values of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the very centre of our organisation to best support our service users and staff, and doing so in visible, measurable and accountable ways.

We strive to address the multiple and intersecting experiences of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression experienced by the survivors we support, our staff and volunteers.

Over the last year, we have created, initiated and established a range of new ways to ensure that EDI is at the heart of all we do. We are now working hard to embed these initiatives, with the aim of implementing our EDI Strategy in every area of our organisation. This includes offering more therapeutic support to staff with our daily debriefs and clinical supervision including specific sessions for Black and minoritised women with supervisors of colour.

We have also continued EDI drop-in sessions with our Head of EDI and embedded a new Employee Assistance Programme. We additionally now have a confidential reporting system called 'Tell Jane' where staff can safely and confidentially raise any concerns.

We have undertaken a full culture review and sought advice from external consultants on our complaints, grievances and HR policies.

We have established a permanent EDI and culture steering group.

## Inclusion Networks

We have launched and established four inclusion networks to bring together staff who share protected characteristics, building and expanding on the strengths of existing communities at Solace. The networks are run by our staff for our staff, with plenty of opportunity to get involved as hosts, co-hosts and active participants.

The networks are spaces for each group to explore their unique experiences and challenges, as well as to support each other through peer-led meetings and discussions.

The networks are:

- People of Colour
- People with diverse abilities (visible and invisible disabilities)
- LGBTQ+ community
- Allies

Our Inclusion Networks have spearheaded our [new Inclusion Awards](#) and our Future Leaders Programme aimed primarily at supporting women from the global majorities to work toward achieving greater parity in the workplace.



## Working in partnership and providing inclusive services

In partnerships, campaigns and collaboration we continue to champion and support 'by and for' organisations. We are committed to not bidding for funding for specific services for Black and minoritised women or for other groups such as Deaf and disabled women and LGBTQ+ survivors, unless to support a 'by and for' service as part of a partnership or where a 'by and for' service does not yet exist for a community where we have been commissioned to deliver the service.

We have secured funding from the Vision Foundation for a new project to support blind and visually impaired women to volunteer with the advice team. The project will include a comprehensive training programme, mentoring and support into employment.

## VAWG sector anti-racism charter

Solace is a signatory of the and we are seeking to incorporate its recommendations into our work.

## Trans Inclusive services

We continue to support and represent trans women and non-binary people. We are reviewing how we best support this group, and developing guidance and training to staff on supporting trans survivors in their services, in addition to the LGBTQ+ and Domestic Abuse training that Galop currently provide us.

For more information on our EDI strategy and plan click [here](#)

## Solace Together

These are workshops with our staff team that call for reflection and will build strong values and behaviours that will guide our work with service users and our effective engagement as a unified workforce.

# Our Impact

Our work touched the lives of **18,862** people

We supported **14,435** adults and children in our frontline services

We supported **809** women and children in our accommodation services

We supported **10,892** people in our advocacy and advice services

We supported **2,464** people in our therapeutic services

We supported **270** people in our children and young people services

We trained **2,418** people to recognise and respond to abuse

## Survivors experiences of abuse

**85%** of survivors we support experienced emotional abuse

**62%** of survivors we support experienced jealous or controlling behaviour

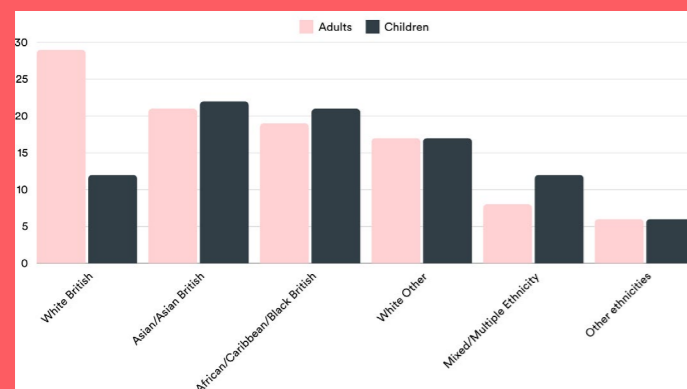
**57%** of survivors we support experienced physical abuse

**36%** of survivors we support experienced financial abuse

**32%** of survivors we support experienced harassment and stalking

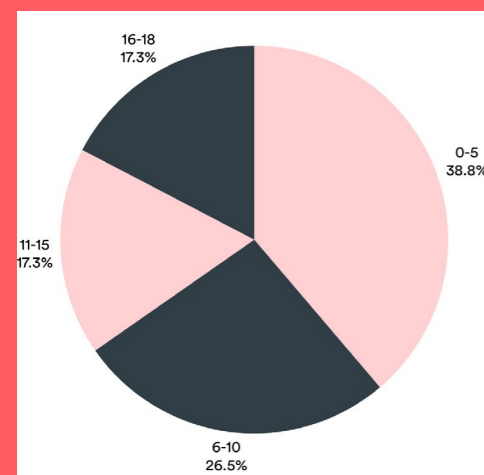
**22%** of survivors we support experienced sexual abuse

## Survivor demographics - Ethnicity of adults and children in %

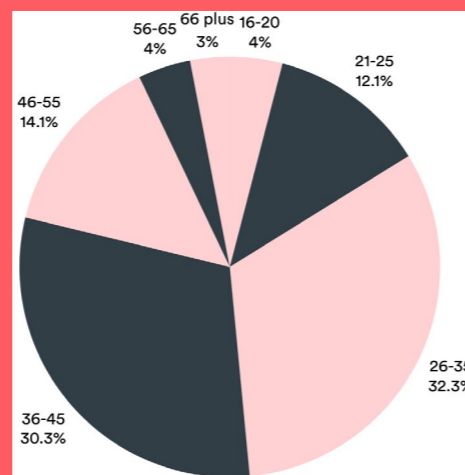


## Survivor demographics - Ages in %

### Children



### Adults



**Our volunteers:**  
102 volunteers who committed 7,197 hours of time to support survivors

**Our staff:** 302 members of staff, 207 full time and 95 part time

## Other key stats

**57%** of survivors we support have children

**2,284** survivors had mental health support needs

**30%** of survivors we supported have a disability

We supported **389** women with no recourse to public funds

We supported **125** male survivors

## Our accommodation provision

**159** refuge bedspaces across 19 refuges in 7 boroughs

**64** second stage/ move on spaces across London

# About the role

Solace is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is made up of up to 12 members from across a range of professional and life experiences.

Solace is seeking trustees to join our Board of Trustees to fulfil their responsibilities for the strategic direction and overall governance of the organisation. This is an exciting opportunity to help drive the success of a growing organisation that makes a profound and positive impact on the lives of women who have suffered from violence and abuse.

We are looking for those who value the equality of all women, are passionate about their wellbeing and the challenges they face in violent and abusive environments. An interest in Solace's work and approach are essential as well as an ambitious outlook for Solace's future.

You will have a proven track record of setting, agreeing and attending to an organisation's strategy and supporting organisational culture change. You will be an experienced leader, able to develop and help ensure the Board works effectively. It is not essential that trustees have prior trustee experience; although leadership experience or a strong base of governance knowledge would be a significant advantage.

## Key responsibilities:

- Provide regular support and leadership to the Senior Management Team and ensure that Solace is run in accordance with the decisions of the trustees and the charity's Articles of Association
- Work with the trustees and Chief Executive to develop and deliver strategic plans for the charity.
- Work with the trustees to prepare for Board and committee meetings and ensure that the business is covered efficiently and effectively in those meetings.
- Work together with the Board of trustees to fulfil its governance responsibilities.
- Welcome, induct and support new trustees and ensure their effective participation.
- Work to build a team culture at Board level.

## Accountabilities:

- The Board is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of Solace and is accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, funders, the Charity Commission, Companies House, and other regulators.
- Trustees must give close attention to the governing document and ensure that Solace meets the growing demand within the voluntary sector and the wider general public, for charities 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 Solace's activities.



# Person specification

## Experience:

- Experience as a non-executive (preferable).
- An understanding of UK charity governance.
- An ability to network with both internal and external stakeholders.
- Sensitivity and discretion in dealing with staff and service user issues.
- Significant experience and success in leading groups of people in either a professional or voluntary capacity to achieve results.
- Significant experience of chairing meetings
- Significant experience of managing, motivating, and developing people
- Strong experience of developing, deploying, and evaluating strategic plans with a view to maximising impact and benefit.
- An understanding of work in the Violence Against Women and Girls sector
- Experience of financial management.

## Skills and abilities:

- Exceptional leadership skills; able to cultivate effective collaboration but also comfortable in taking responsibility for difficult choices.
- Effective strategic communicator: able to articulate Solace's vision and engage and inspire others both within the organisation and externally.
- Highly effective relationship and alliance building abilities.
- Sound judgement with high capacity for self-reflection.
- Capacity to support both Board and Executive development.

## Attributes:

- A strong personal commitment to improving Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Collaborative approach with excellent interpersonal skills.
- A strong personal commitment to Solace's vision and mission.

**The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and open to women only (exempt under the Equality Act 2010).**



# Additional information

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## Location

Board meetings are 4 times a year held in person at our London Office. All trustees also need to join a subcommittee which are online.

## Time commitment

Solace's Board meets four times per year, at its offices in Camden, London and there are two away days. The overall time commitment for Trustees is expected to be around 2-3 days per month.

## Conflicts 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

The initial appointment is for a two or three-year term but can be extended for two further terms for a maximum of nine years. The position of trustee is voluntary, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

## Remuneration

This position is unremunerated, reasonable expenses are covered.

# How to apply

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by 23.59 on 15th August 2024.

A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities 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.

If you have further questions after reading this pack, you can discuss online with one of our Trustees.

Please send your CV and cover letter to Laura at: [l.quinn@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:l.quinn@solacewomensaid.org)

**Male  
violence  
against  
women and  
girls ends  
here.**

Advice line freephone | 0808 802 5565  
E mail | [fundraising@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:fundraising@solacewomensaid.org)  
Website | [solacewomensaid.org](http://solacewomensaid.org)  
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**solace**

Solace Women's Aid is a charity registered in  
England and Wales  
Charity number 1082450.  
Company number 03376716