



TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

2024-2025

Who are we?

We are a Sandwell based charity, which supports adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, by providing a range of services which include outreach provision, community hub based activities, drop-in sessions and accessing community activities. We support our participants to increase their self-confidence, develop communication and social skills and ultimately increase their independence.

- Options for Life was established in 1988. We are based in Sandwell, West Midlands and we provide professional person-centred care that is tailored to meet the individual needs of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism. We provide the support through our day opportunities outreach service, building based and PMLD services.
- We aim to provide support in ways which have positive outcomes for participants and promote their active participation. Our staff are qualified and experienced as well as receiving continuous training.
- We ensure that each participant's needs and preferences are thoroughly assessed. We aim to ensure that the support and care that we provide meet the assessed needs of each participant and needs are re-assessed as frequently as necessary and that our care and support have the flexibility to respond to changing needs or requirements.
- We aim to provide a flexible, efficient, value-for-money quality care and support service.
- We aim to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of participants and to enable them to maintain their personal independence, have informed choices and have an opportunity to enjoy and contribute to society.
- Options for Life is non-discriminatory and serves all participants regardless of race, nationality, language, religion or beliefs, age, sex or sexual orientation, or social standing nor is there any discrimination made between participants who pay directly for the service and those who do not. In the event of special needs and preferences of ethnic, cultural, and religious groups advice would be sought to enable Options for Life staff to meet those needs.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to provide high quality and coordinated services to all participants which is responsive, flexible and sensitive to their changing needs, enabling them to play an active part in their local community.

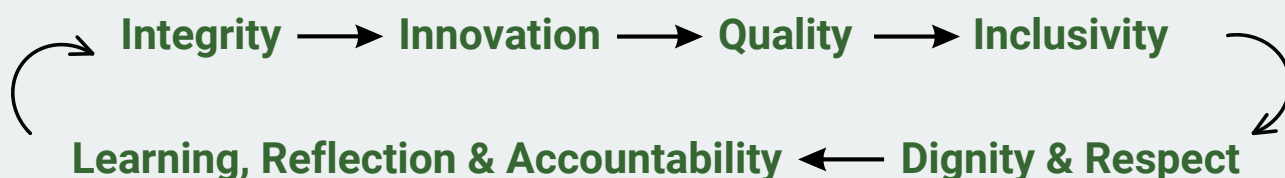
Our Vision

To give people with learning disabilities and/or autism choice and control over their lives.

Our Core Values



To ensure each participant is placed at the centre of what we do and treated as a person, giving choice about what they can do, no restrictions will be put in place due to their condition or disability. Support will focus on achieving the participants' aspirations and be tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.



Our Goals & Objectives

Build Independence & Social Inclusion

We want our participants to experience a strong boost of self-esteem, positivity and independence through life skills and social inclusion.

Skills for Life Pathways

We want to inspire and encourage our participants to achieve their goals by providing skills and opportunities to maximise their potential.

Strengthen Partnerships

We will build strong relationships based on trust, common values and mutual respect.

Be Fit for Future

We will continuously improve and expand our services to benefit our participants and ensure a sustainable future for the organisation.

Nurture Talent

We will be an employer of excellence who recognises talent and provides support, training and development to all staff within their role.



Our Objectives to achieve our goals are to:

- Develop a range of services to meet the needs of our participants
- Give control and choice back to our participants
- Enable participants to become integrated into their own communities
- Ensure our services are culturally appropriate to meet the needs of diverse groups
- Provide a variety of meaningful voluntary and work place opportunities
- Promote learning disabilities and/or autism employment benefits to local businesses and organisations
- Evidence the impact on individuals and communities
- Develop and build productive relationships to enhance the delivery of services
- Work alongside commissioners, other agencies and stakeholders to develop future delivery models
- Raise the profile of Options for Life amongst all stakeholders
- Build upon the parent/carer forum
- Develop the organisation's outcome focused approach
- Invest in research projects for growth and development to "Build Back Better"
- Increase the organisation's financial wellbeing
- Grow and diversify funding opportunities
- Celebrate ALL successes
- Value all staff and volunteers and prioritise their growth and wellbeing
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have the right training, values and support



Our impact

We empower and enable adults with learning difficulties and/or autism to live full, healthy lives.

We put our participants at the heart of everything we do by empowering them to make their own choices. We take pride in ensuring our person-centred, community-based approach improves participant's quality of life. We commit to working together to ensure the people we support live well by staying safe.

We continuously review and monitor the way we work at all levels, enabling us to focus on positive social, environmental and economic changes.

We focus on challenging inequalities and co-producing for better support.

Our services support and enable people so they do not feel socially isolated; support important routines for our participants with autism who need structure; support and recognise when there needs to be interactions with healthcare services, which can prevent hospital admissions; support and restore independence.

"My son Liam has grown in confidence since joining OFL. He especially loves Wednesdays as it's Goals football, where he has won the crossbar challenge several times and also he's a good referee."



Our services

PMLD

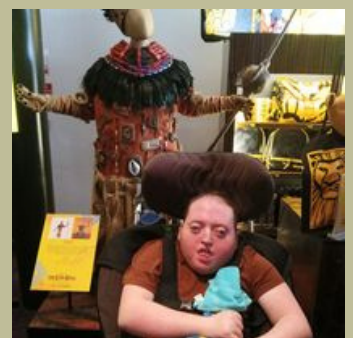
People with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)

People with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) are, like everyone else, unique individuals. Supporting people with complex, multiple needs requires more than a desire to look after them. It takes specialist skills based on proven expert knowledge and best practice. At Options for Life we invest heavily in the training and development of our support staff to ensure they have the skills and experience they need to help people with the most complex, multiple needs.

The term profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) is a description rather than a clinical diagnosis. Whilst there is no definitive set of characteristics for PMLD it is widely acknowledged that there are a heterogeneous/diverse group of people with learning disabilities who have a complex range of difficulties (cf. Raising our Sights How to Guide for Commissioners, 2013).

What's included:

- In depth support plan co designed by parents/carers, professionals and the participant
- Daily Communication Logs - including dietary, seizure charts, medication paperwork
- Home Diaries - updated daily for family re-assurance and clear communication
- Support if required for professional meetings
- Weekly/monthly communication updates from assigned key workers
- All participants have their own assigned equipment, this includes plates, bowls, aromatherapy oils, shower gels, hair brushes etc.



Outreach

Our outreach program is designed to empower individuals in the community by offering personalised support. Our staff meet individuals at their homes or a chosen location, engaging in activities that cater to their unique preferences and interests. Whether it's exploring the local community, participating in sessions, or pursuing specific activities, we prioritise creating meaningful and inclusive experiences for everyone.

As with all of our services, outreach activities are focussed on achieving positive outcomes for people.

What's included:

- In depth support plan co-designed by parents/carers, professionals and the participant
- Daily/weekly communication Logs - including seizure charts, medication paperwork etc
- Support for parents/carers if required for professional meetings

Personalised support with:

- Developing and maintaining life skills
- Healthy lifestyles
- Voluntary or work placements
- Travel training
- Social life and leisure activities



Roles, Responsibilities and Obligations of a Trustee

Options for Life is both a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, and Board members are therefore both Charity Trustees and Company Directors.

The Trustees responsibilities lie with leadership and direction, ensuring that Options for Life has a clear vision of purpose, and, in broad terms, how it will be achieved.

The Trustee's role is valued, and Board members are required to make time to read papers, attend meetings, keep abreast of the organisation's activities, charity law, company law and best practice, to ensure the organisation is well managed.

It covers the issues below, and involvement ranges from strategic planning to the detailed operational areas of responsibility that Trustee members are encouraged to take for particular issues and/or services:

- deciding on strategic issues as a Board, ensuring that all the organisation's activities are within the law, and within its charitable objectives.
- ensuring accountability as required by law (the Charity Commission, Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise), and to others such as funders, staff, volunteers, the voluntary and community sector and the general public.
- ensuring accountability to the Registrar of Companies, as required by law, that the charity has adequate resources and the organisation's property, assets and other resources are protected and managed effectively.
- agreeing the budget and monitoring financial performance.
- monitoring the organisation's programme and services.
- reviewing, annually, the performance of the Board of Trustees.
- establishing procedures for recruitment, support, appraisal, remuneration of staff, and for dealing with disciplinary matters.

Obligations of the Trustees to the Charity must include: -

- a commitment to its values and objectives including equal opportunities;
- an obligation to contribute to and share responsibility for the Board's decisions
- an obligation to read Board papers and to attend meetings, training sessions and other relevant events
- an obligation to declare relevant interests
- an obligation (subject to any overriding legally binding requirement to the contrary) to keep confidential the affairs of the Board;

an obligation to comply with statutory and fiduciary duties, including: -

·to act in the best interests of the Charity;

- to declare any interests a Trustee may have in matters to be discussed at Board meetings and not put himself or herself in a position where his or her personal interest or a duty owed to another conflicts with the duties owed to the Charity
- to secure the proper and effective use of the Charity's property
- to act personally
- to act within the scope of any authority given
- to use the proper degree of skill and care when making decisions particularly when investing funds; and
- to act in accordance with the Articles; and
- a reference to obligations under the general law.



Are you eligible?

You must be at least 18 to be a trustee of any other type of charity.

Disqualification - You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, unless your disqualification has been waived by the Commission. Reason for disqualification include if you:

- are disqualified as a company director
- have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
- are an undischarged bankrupt (or subject to sequestration in Scotland), or have a current composition or arrangement including an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) with your creditors
- have been removed as a trustee of any charity by the Commission (or the court) because of misconduct or mismanagement
- being on the sex offenders' register
- unspent convictions for a wider range of offences including bribery and money laundering, or disobeying a direction of the Commission.

There are legal restrictions under safeguarding legislation on who can be involved in working with children and adults at risk. In addition, the DBS undertakes criminal records checks of individuals, which charities can use to ensure that they are eligible and suitable for the trustee role. The type of check that can be made depends on the nature of the charity's activities and the role that the trustee plays.

For further Guidance you can read, The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do. A reading list will be sent separate to this document.



Time commitments

Board Meetings

- 4 Board meetings take place throughout the year.
- These usually take place from 5.30 pm for approximately 2 hours.
- Meetings take place face to face at the head Office, however Trustees can attend through Microsoft Teams.
- You will receive a full board pack 10 days prior (by email) which you are expected to read before to the meeting and ask the CEO any questions prior ready for board discussions.

Annual General Meeting

- This takes place in October and added on prior to the October Board Meeting
- This starts at 5 pm and last 30 mins
- Papers and decisions will be prepared and distributed 10 days prior
- Meetings take place face to face at the head Office, however Trustees can attend through Microsoft Teams.

Trustee Away Days

- 2 per year, 9.30 am - 3.30 pm
- There is an expectation that all Trustees attend in person

Committee Meetings (not all Trustees are committee members)

- There is currently 1 committee
- These take place 4 times per year (usually 1 month prior to board)
- These start at 5 pm - 6.30 pm
- Meetings take place face to face at the head Office, however Trustees can attend through Microsoft Teams.

Emergency Board Meetings

- These take place in exceptional circumstances
- They can be called at any time throughout the year

Email communications

- Emails are sent as and when, there is an expectation that all emails are acknowledged and replied to, unless FYI's

Total annual commitment for meetings and away days, **excluding committee meetings, emergency meetings, training and email communications** is approximately 22 hours per year

Training

There is an expectation that the following training takes place, this will be arranged and paid by Options for Life:

- Understanding Governance Stage 1: The Trustee Role
- GDPR (stage 1 &2)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding

Remuneration

No member of Options for Life's Board of Trustees receives payment for carrying out their duties.

Expenses

We will pay any reasonable expenses associated with your role as trustee. This may include reasonable travel expenses, the most common of which are travel to/from meetings. We encourage you to use the cheapest form of transport but recognise that this may need to be balanced with the practicalities of meeting times.

Whats next?

If you would like an informal chat, or would like to visit one of the Hubs please reach out to our CEO, Nicola Thomson.

You can call on **0121 544 6611** or email at:

Nicola.thomson@optionsforlife.info

or you can request an Trustee application form

We look forward to hearing from you



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Oak Green Lodge
Oak Green Way
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B68 8LR

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CHECK OUT OUR SOCIALS**



www.optionsforlife.info

www.facebook.com/OptionsforLifeWM

www.instagram.com/optionsforlife1

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