



The charity for
Depersonalisation and Derealisation (DPDR)
Trustee Recruitment Pack

Registered Charity Number 1186498

About Unreal

Unreal offers support and information to people with lived experience of Depersonalisation and Derealisation (DPDR) - including people experiencing symptoms themselves and their carers, friends and families. We aim to raise awareness of DPDR, provide up-to date

clinically-validated information, signpost people to relevant resources, push for policy change, assist in research studies and enable people living with DPDR to speak with others through our flagship Peer Support Programme to help support each other.

We are supported by a dedicated network of volunteers and [ambassadors](#) whose expertise and lived experience are central to what we do.

Despite being a small and relatively young charity, officially founded in 2019, we have established ourselves as the leading voice on DPDR in the UK and are proud of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements

- Raising the profile of DPDR in the national media, with coverage in The Metro, The Guardian and BBC Radio 4.
- Co-writing the BMJ entry on DPDR.
- Initiating an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, which led to a roundtable with key clinicians and policymakers and the commissioning of a dedicated training course
- Dr Elaine Hunter and Prof. Anthony David of UCL, two of our Ambassadors, have now created that training module on the “Assessment and Treatment of DDD” which is available on the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ website.
- Establishing and growing our flagship Peer Support Programme, which to date has offered 1,500 places to people living with DPDR.
- Contributing to academic research into DPDR, including as co-applicant on a feasibility study for CBT for DPDR, providing lived-experience expertise, and supporting funding and ethics applications.
- Speaking at numerous national and international conferences to raise awareness of DPDR.

“ *Thank you for this charity. It helps so much to know I’m not alone.* ”

Our Story

Unreal is a small charitable organisation officially founded in 2019.

One of our founding members, Jane Charlton, started to experience DPDR in the early 2000s. She found that there was very little awareness of the condition from clinicians and found it difficult to access resources, care and support. She then went on to experience

DPDR again some years later, to discover that the clinical landscape was much unchanged.

This led to the establishment of Unreal, together with the other founding members, Dr Elaine Hunter, Mary Charlton and Heather Perkins.

A message about our founder, Jane Charlton

After more than six years of leading Unreal, Jane Charlton has stepped down as the Chair. We want to take a moment to mark Jane's remarkable contribution, both to Unreal and to the wider awareness of DPDR.

Jane co-founded Unreal in 2019, working diligently to bring together the board of trustees and laying the groundwork for Unreal to become the UK's leading charity for DPDR.

But Jane's influence within the DPDR community goes back long before then. She has long been a tireless advocate for awareness of depersonalisation and

derealisation disorder, including through her own willingness to share her experience publicly.

In 2015 she was featured in a landmark Guardian article by Howard Swains, which over the years has been credited by countless people for helping them to recognise their own condition for the first time.

Since then she has raised awareness of DPDR through media appearances, including on the BBC Victoria Derbyshire Show in 2017, during which several viewers called in to say she had helped them identify their own condition. She has also appeared on BBC Radio 4's The Digital Human.

Jane has contributed lived-experience insight to published research and professional publications on DPDR, helping to ensure that the voices of those with the condition are part of how it is understood and treated.

In 2019, Jane's story was shared in a Westminster Hall parliamentary debate on DPDR and NHS treatment, led by MP Lyn Brown, with the Minister for Health personally acknowledging Jane's courage and contribution to raising awareness of the condition. This



debate was the catalyst for the founding of Unreal in recognition of the need to support and advocate for those with lived experience.

As Chair, Jane initiated the set up of our flagship peer support offer, which has offered over 1,500 places to people experiencing DPDR across the last two years alone. She has led this charity with warmth, steadiness and genuine care, particularly through the challenges of lockdowns and a move to a digital first approach, and leaves us on solid foundations, ready for the next chapter.

Where we are now

Unreal enters this next chapter from a position of real strength. We have established ourselves as the leading charity for DPDR in the UK, with a peer support programme that continues to grow in demand, strong relationships with clinicians, policymakers and researchers, and a clear strategic direction.

We have recently set our key priorities for 2026 to 2030, and we are looking for new board members who are excited to help us deliver on that ambition.

This is a significant moment for the charity. We are recruiting for trustees at a time when we have strong foundations, a clear sense of purpose, and real momentum. The people who join us now will help shape the next chapter of Unreal.

“ *Having a charity dedicated solely to DPDR is incredible, thank you for all that you guys do.* ”



Why join our board?

We are a small, passionate team and we take care of the people who give their time to us. Here is what being part of our board looks like:

- The chance to make a real difference to people who are often isolated, misunderstood and in urgent need of support.
- The chance to build meaningful networks with clinicians, researchers, policymakers and fellow advocates.
- The satisfaction of giving something back to an organisation that genuinely values everyone who contributes to it.
- The reward of helping shape the next chapter of a charity at an exciting and significant moment in its growth.
- The chance to work with a warm, dedicated and passionate group of people, including our brilliant network of volunteers and ambassadors.
- Induction, mentoring, and ongoing support provided.
- Personal and professional development through training and board experience.
- Development of leadership, governance, and decision-making experience.
- Exposure to charity sector governance and board-level responsibilities.
- The opportunity to raise your public profile and be associated with a cause that is gaining real momentum.

About The Roles

The Board

Unreal is governed by a board of five members, three of whom serve as trustees.

The board meets nine times a year - with a break in April, August and December. Trustees gather for a full day twice a year, with shorter online meetings twice a year

We are currently recruiting:

- A HR/Governance Trustee
- A Finance Trustee
- A Fundraising Trustee

We welcome applications from people with or without previous trustee experience. What matters most is your commitment to our mission and the skills and perspectives you bring.

Time commitment

- Board meetings: monthly (9 per year), held online
- Full trustee days, held in person: twice a year
- Online Trustee meetings, twice a year
- Additional time required for specific projects or sub-committees

Support for new trustees

We are committed to making trusteeship at Unreal as accessible and rewarding as possible. All new board members will receive a full induction and training

Expenses

All reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out your role as a trustee will be reimbursed in line with our expenses policy.

What we are looking for

We are not looking for a particular type of person. We are looking for the right people. Within our trustees and board, we aim to bring together a range of skills, backgrounds and perspectives.

Full role specifications for each position are included below. These set out the specific skills, experience and qualities we are looking for, alongside the responsibilities of the role.

In addition to the specified roles below, we will also be recruiting more widely, and welcome applications from anyone who fulfils the below general criteria.

We particularly welcome applications from:

- People with lived experience of DPDR, including carers, friends and family members.
- Clinicians and researchers working in the field.

Skills and experience that are valuable to us include:

- Finance
- Fundraising
- HR
- Governance
- Expertise in the mental health or charity sector.

We ask all trustees to commit to a term of three to four years. The Chair may be appointed for a term of up to five years.

Before you apply

Trustees of Unreal must meet the following eligibility criteria. Please check these before applying.

You must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Not be automatically disqualified under the Charities Act 2011. This includes any person: with undischarged bankruptcy those who has been declared bankrupt; that has entered into an IVA; been disqualified as a company director; or that has certain unspent criminal convictions relating to dishonesty, fraud or contempt of court
- Have no safeguarding restrictions that would prevent you from working with vulnerable people
- Be willing to declare any conflicts of interest and to complete a DBS check

If you are unsure whether any of the above applies to you, the Charity Commission website has further guidance.

All trustees are expected to uphold Unreal's Code of Conduct for Board Members. A copy will be shared with shortlisted candidates and must be signed on appointment.

General Trustee Responsibilities

Candidates should demonstrate:

- Commitment to the charity's mission and values.
- Integrity, sound judgement and professionalism.
- Ability to contribute to effective governance and strategic decision-making.
- Willingness to act in the charity's best interests at all times.
- Ability to work collaboratively and constructively as part of a board.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Understanding of confidentiality, accountability and conflicts of interest.
- Awareness of safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities.
- Financial awareness and responsible oversight of resources.
- Sufficient time and commitment to fulfil trustee duties and attend meetings.
- Willingness to undertake training and ongoing development.
- Relevant professional, leadership, governance or lived experience would be advantageous.

How to apply

To apply, please send the following to contact.unrealuk@gmail.com:

- A CV or brief summary of your relevant experience
- A short personal statement of up to 250 words setting out what you would bring to Unreal and why the role appeals to you

We ask that any applications submitted are in the candidate's own words.

Deadline

The closing date for applications is 27 August 2026.
Interviews are expected to take place in September 2026.

The Recruitment Process

We want to make this process as straightforward and human as possible. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an informal conversation with one or more of our trustees, giving you a chance to find out more about us and for us to learn more about you. Successful candidates will then be invited to a formal panel interview with set questions.

Interviews will be held virtually, though if you would prefer to meet in person we will do our best to accommodate this.

We are committed to making this process as accessible as possible. If you require any adjustments to support your application or participation in the interview process, please do get in touch and we will do our best to accommodate you. You can contact us at contact.unrealuk@gmail.com.

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do, including in how we recruit. We particularly welcome applications from people with lived experience of DPDR, and from those who are underrepresented in charity leadership.

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HR/Governance Trustee

About the role

As HR and Governance Trustee at Unreal, you will join the board at a pivotal and exciting moment in the charity's development. With strong foundations in place, a clear five-year strategy and a growing peer support programme, we are looking for someone who can strengthen the charity's governance, support the development of our people and culture, and help shape Unreal's next chapter.

This role is intended to play an important part in the charity's longer-term leadership and succession planning. While any future appointment as Chair would be subject to a formal trustee decision and constitutional process, we are particularly interested in candidates with the potential, interest and capability to develop into a future Chair role over time.

You will work closely with our two freelance members of staff, who between them deliver the day-to-day work of the charity, from peer support and volunteer management to talks, communications and reporting. You will also work collaboratively with a small, committed and passionate board of trustees and board members.

This is a hands-on trustee role that calls for someone who is not only strategically minded, but also a thoughtful and supportive partner to a lean, busy team doing extraordinary work.

Key responsibilities

- Provide oversight and support in relation to governance, trustee development, organisational culture and people practices.
- Support the board to maintain high standards of governance, accountability and regulatory compliance.
- Contribute to the delivery of Unreal's 2026–2030 strategic objectives.
- Support trustee recruitment, induction, succession planning and board development.
- Help foster a positive, inclusive and well-functioning board culture.
- Act as a trusted sounding board to staff and fellow trustees on governance and organisational matters.
- Champion equity, diversity and inclusion across all of Unreal's work.
- Work collaboratively with the Chair, Treasurer and wider trustee board to ensure effective leadership and oversight of the charity.
- Contribute to strategic discussions, decision-making and the long-term development of the organisation.
- Support fundraising efforts and help open doors to new partnerships and opportunities where appropriate.
- Uphold and model the standards set out in Unreal's Code of Conduct for Board Members, and support the board as a whole to do the same.
- Act as an ambassador for Unreal and its mission.

Person specification

Essential

- An interest in organisational leadership and governance, with the potential and willingness to develop into a future Chair role over time, subject to trustee approval and the charity's constitutional processes.
- Lived experience of DPDR, and / or a genuine understanding of the challenges faced by people with DPDR and their carers, friends and family.
- Demonstrable leadership experience, whether in the charity, clinical, academic, public or corporate sector.
- The ability to work collaboratively and efficiently with a small, dedicated and busy team.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to bring people together around a shared vision.
- A strategic mindset, with the ability to think beyond the day-to-day and support long-term planning.
- Energy, passion and drive, and a genuine commitment to Unreal's mission.
- Willingness to act as a visible advocate and ambassador for Unreal.

Desirable

- Previous experience as a trustee or non-executive director.
- Experience of charity governance, charity law and an understanding of the responsibilities of a trustee.
- Knowledge of or connections in the mental health, NHS or third sector landscape.
- Experience supporting or leading fundraising.
- Experience of working with or managing paid staff in a voluntary or governance capacity.

Time commitment

- Monthly board meetings (9 per year), held online.
- Two full trustee days per year, held in person.
- Online Trustee meetings, twice a year
- Regular contact with staff between meetings, particularly around strategic decisions and external representation.
- Additional time for external events, media opportunities or specific projects as they arise.

Term of office

Trustees may be appointed for a term of up to three years, and the Chair may be appointed for a term of up to five years.

Fundraising Trustee

About The Role

At such a pivotal time for the charity, and to help achieve our ambitions, we are looking for an enthusiastic and committed individual with a fundraising background to join our Trustees.

We are looking for someone to provide leadership and direction to our fundraising strategy. You'll be responsible for helping us set up a framework for determining which are the best opportunities to pursue, as well as advising on legal responsibilities and ethical fundraising. You will have strategic oversight and management of ensuring we reach our fundraising target and monitor our ROI.

Our ability to meet our objectives is dependant on us being able to raise sufficient funds to carry out the work we do.

We're looking for someone with experience of charity fundraising and within one or more of the following fundraising areas: major donors, crowdfunding and community fundraising,

grants, trusts and foundations.

You will also fulfil the other responsibilities of a trustee including:

- Taking a lead role on the Board for funding matters.
- To provide the Board of Trustees, management team and members of staff with guidance for funding matters
- To liaise with external advisors if required
- Review policies and risks, giving advice on any implications they may have where funding is concerned
- Set, shape and deliver key objectives from Unreal's strategic plans, alongside fellow Board members and the management team.
- A commitment to the work of Unreal and its constituent parts
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of the role
- An ability to work effectively with others
- A passion for helping those facing mental health issues and their friends, families, parents and carers
- All trustees are expected to be able to make a contribution towards securing a sustainable funding base for the organisation so some experience or an interest in fundraising is desirable.
- An understanding of the voluntary sector and previous experience as a charity trustee are both desirable but not essential.
- As a trustee you will be part of an innovative organisation, therefore we will be looking for individuals with an ability to think creatively.

Finance Trustee

Person specification

- The ideal candidate for this role will have accounting experience, preferably with a qualification or working towards a qualification
- Previous experience within the charity sector and especially within the mental health sector is desirable but not essential
- Some experience or an interest in fundraising is desirable
- An understanding of the voluntary sector and previous experience as a charity trustee are both desirable but not essential
- Ability to both constructively challenge and support the team

- Ability to work as part of a team, with a strategic vision and a commitment to the organisation
- A commitment to the work of Unreal and its constituent parts
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of the role