



# voices

Your voice matters

## Chair Recruitment Candidate Pack



## Welcome from the current co-Chairs and VOICES Team

Dear Potential Colleague,

We are delighted to introduce our Charity to you and hope that you will take time to think about whether you are the right person to join us as our Chair of Trustees on the next stage of our journey.

VOICES was founded in 2014 in Bath by four women with lived experience of domestic abuse (DA), who found that beyond crisis interventions there was minimal support for those who had experienced abuse on their recovery journey. Their voices were not listened to, they had to keep telling the same story to numerous agencies that were not joined-up and no-one seemed to be focused on their overall well-being and recovery or that of their children. They understood that societal stigma and judgement about domestic abuse and how it impacts on an individual and their identity, added to feelings of isolation and guilt.

It was time for something to change – and they made it change by creating VOICES, a survivor-led, trauma-informed and recovery focused Charity for the women of Bath and North East Somerset and surrounding areas. VOICES is now recognised nationally as offering the ‘gold standard’ in support – both through the way in which it delivers holistic services for women and in ensuring that the voice of lived experience is included in policy development (justice, DA services) and research. The twin objectives of direct service provision and national influencing are core to the Charity’s ethos. VOICES is funded by charitable donations, government grants, and awards from Trusts and Foundations. At this time none of its domestic violence services is yet commissioned by the Local Authority.

One of our founders became our CEO and led VOICES for ten years. She has now stepped down and her replacement joined us in April 2024. With a new CEO in post and an experienced Board this is an exciting time to join VOICES. We need to find the right person to take on the Chair of Trustees role on a permanent basis.

We are seeking someone with the values, passion and skills to support the CEO in safeguarding the central ethos of the Charity and building upon it so that we are even stronger and more capable.

The voices of lived experience of domestic abuse are at the heart of all we do. Our approach is strengths-based, person-centred, recovery-focused and trauma informed. We subscribe to the No Them and Us approach. We believe that an understanding of the long-term impacts of trauma and injustice/re-traumatisation through systemic or professional responses is essential for effective and long-term recovery. VOICES uses a trauma informed approach in all of its work with clients, staff, Trustees and volunteers, and advocates for the same in other similar response services, be it in health, legal services or the justice system.

VOICES is based in Bath. Our working environment is one of mutual respect and compassion. The wellbeing of all our staff and volunteers is of the utmost importance. VOICES strives to provide a working environment that is supportive of staff and will seek to understand and recognise other personal responsibilities any individual has outside their working life in agreeing working patterns and hours. The Charity is flexible and inclusive. We are actively seeking to increase the diversity of our Board and persons with diversity of experience, circumstance and background are encouraged to apply.

Details of the role and the attributes we need in our next Chair of Trustees can be found below. If you believe you have the qualities we have described, please take a look. Recruitment is being supported by TrusteeWorks. For more information or to arrange an informal discussion about the Charity please contact [trusteeworks@reachvolunteering.org.uk](mailto:trusteeworks@reachvolunteering.org.uk). To allow for reflection time on whether this post is the one for you, we have extended the closing date for applications to the end of the summer 6th September 2024.

Best wishes,

Joanna Hole and Helen Wehner (co-Chairs)

## About VOICES

VOICES provides direct services to those who have experienced domestic abuse and seeks to ensure that the voice of lived experience is recognised as a powerful source of expertise within policy formulation and research.

Primarily VOICES works with women; however, it will respond to all individuals making contact for support. VOICES is committed to ensuring that everyone regardless of personal circumstances, age, race, sexuality, belief, disability or residential status has access to services that meet their needs without stigma or judgement.

The [2022/23 Annual Report](#) and [2022/23 Impact Report](#) are provided for candidates and give more detail of the activities of the Charity. Also provided is the [A Chair's Compass](#) from the Association of Chairs.

We have seven staff, four of whom deliver direct services to clients, and in 2022/23 we had a total income of £277,869. VOICES is based in a property in Bath whose address is not publicly available in order to protect clients and staff.

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This service has saved my mental health and has provided a safe service whilst helping with coping mechanisms for the future.

- Lena

## Chair of Trustees Role Description

The role of the Chair of Trustees is to 'conduct the orchestra' rather than play the loudest tune. The Constitution includes no identified responsibilities for the Chair; however, specific areas led by the Chair of Trustees include:

- Ensuring that the Charity is governed in line with its Constitution and meets all legal duties applicable to it as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- Ensuring that the operation of the Board is in line with its constitution.
- Ensuring the Charity's beneficiaries are the focus of all decisions and that public benefit can be demonstrated in the Charity's activities.
- Forming a successful partnership with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a relationship which has a fundamental importance for and impact on Board effectiveness and performance.
- Supporting the CEO as a 'sounding board' and confidential advisor in the management of the Charity's resources and staff.
- Managing the CEO as the most senior staff member of the Charity. The scope of this responsibility is in relation to changes to contracted hours and remuneration, performance and discipline. On a day to day basis the CEO is expected to manage their own time and activities to ensure that the objectives of the Charity are met.
- Nudging the Board forward on difficult, complex decisions, especially where consensus is hard to find.
- Enabling the wisdom in the room to be heard – including the dissenting voices – while synthesising views and outlining the direction of travel.
- Ensuring that there is a robust process for the appointment of Trustees.
- Ensuring that the Charity keeps appropriate records of its decisions.
- Having an eye to the Charity's reputation in how it operates within the local community and represents its activities to its beneficiaries.

## Attributes

We wish to recruit someone, with good leadership skills and the ability to work with people impacted by trauma. As the CEO's sounding board and confidential advisor in the management of the Charity's resources and staff, we are looking for a progressive, creative and innovative influencer, with a high degree of emotional intelligence.

As well as someone to undertake the responsibilities above, we are looking for:

- A total commitment to VOICES' purpose and vision, and to its transformative recovery and survivor led work, making a difference to Domestic Abuse survivors' experiences to ensure they are safe and effective.
- The highest personal standards with regard to integrity, compassion, honesty, reliability, and commitment to the role. Someone who leads by example, with the courage and resilience and empathy to work with and lead our Board. They will bring these attributes in a way which reflects VOICES' unique vision and culture.
- A deep commitment to using a trauma informed approach to ensure that strategic planning and design incorporates the lived experience of survivors and ensures the foundational principle of being survivor centric, while ensuring compliance to the Do No Harm principle and keeping in line with relevant charitable and legislative guidelines.
- A credible and practical team leader, who listens and learns, motivates and inspires the Board and is committed to the Charity's development. Able to manage team dynamics and differences to ensure effective working and focus on Charity objectives.
- Someone who is comfortable with numbers with enough experience of financial and people management to monitor strategic and annual operations.
- An active and natural networker, with the ability to influence others, without dominating.
- Someone who is externally facing in outlook and ideas, with excellent communication skills and the ability to build relationships with a broad range of stakeholders, Trustees and with staff.

- An excellent facilitator, who can make everyone feel confident and safe enough to share their views, challenge the views of others, and then reach a joint decision.
- The ability to chair meetings. This includes planning the agenda, ensuring balanced input from all members, ensuring clarity about decisions and actions agreed, and following up to make sure agreed actions are carried out in line with Board decisions.
- A commitment to Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) and trauma informed practice.

In addition, the following would be of benefit but not essential:

- Current knowledge of DA policy, practices and culture and how these affect partner relationships and Charity impact.
- Personal experience of domestic abuse or its impact.

## Remuneration

The role of Chair of Trustees is not remunerated, you are asked to volunteer your services and commit your time pro bono. However, Trustees are entitled to have their expenses met from the funds of the Charity.

## Time commitment

The Chair of Trustees is not involved in the day to day running of VOICES, so time commitment will vary with the Board schedule and not be consistent, i.e. busy in the run up to and aftermath of meetings, with activity between times focused on support to the CEO. The main commitments are:

- Prepare for, chair, and follow up on Board meetings, which are held quarterly, lasting 2 hours, usually face to face but some could be hybrid or remote.
- Participation in one or more Sub-Groups (Finance, People and Governance) held quarterly via Zoom.
- Allowing enough time to build and maintain a close working relationship with the CEO. This is currently facilitated by face to face bi-weekly check-ins but a mix of this and virtual meetings is possible.
- Networking and from time to time, attending ad hoc meetings.

The post is currently co-Chaired, with two individuals sharing the workload and acting as a sounding board for one another. It's an arrangement which works very well for both the co-Chairs and the Charity and we are open to both individual applications or from two candidates who are interested in Chairing in this way.

## Restrictions

Applications are welcome from anyone who is passionate about the Charity's objectives, and who is legally entitled to be a Charity Trustee under the terms of the Charities Act, either as a co-Chair or as a sole-Chair of Trustees.

Applicants attention is drawn to the Charity Commission guidance [here](#) and various other .gov.uk pages.

## How to apply

To apply, please send a copy of your latest CV together with a supporting statement (no more than one side of A4) explaining your motivations for applying for the role, how your skills, knowledge and experience match the role outline and what you can additionally bring to the role.

To ensure fairness to all applicants, any decision to interview will be based solely on the information that you supply on your CV and supporting statement. Therefore, it is important you give as much information as possible regarding why you wish to apply and what you think makes you a suitable applicant.

**Please send applications and enquiries to:  
[trusteeworks@reachvolunteering.org.uk](mailto:trusteeworks@reachvolunteering.org.uk)**

Deadline: 6 September 2024

We anticipate that only one round of interviews will be required but given a close working relationship with the CEO is such an important part of the post, shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet with the CEO prior to formal interview. Any offer of appointment is conditional on the following:

- i) Satisfactory responses from reference requests;
- ii) basic DBS disclosure