

**TRUSTEE  
RECRUITMENT  
PACK 2024**



**WE  
ARE  
FAMILY**  
ADOPTION SUPPORT COMMUNITY



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## WELCOME LETTER FROM THE CURRENT CHAIR

Thanks for your interest in the joining the Board of We Are Family.

Since the organisation's founding in 2013 it has gone from strength to strength – growing to over 1,450 members, primarily across London and the South East. We are expanding and have big ambitions for the future. We Are Family provides a range of opportunities for adopters and prospective adopters to connect, share experiences and provide support as well as webinars, podcasts and a wealth of useful resources to support members throughout their adoption journey.

We Are Family is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) governed by a board of Trustees. Everything we do is driven by our values of community, inclusivity, independence, reliability and safety.

We are inviting expressions of interest to join the board, including as the Chair of Trustees. This pack tells you more about us, the opportunity and commitment and how to apply.

We look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoult-Allen'.

Mark Hoult-Allen



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

### **Vision statement**

We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive.

### **Mission statement**

We Are Family works to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support from a place of lived experience through the highs and lows of parenting.

Our aim is to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adoptive parents throughout the UK. We seek to connect people at the same stage in their adoptive journey, so they can build strong relationships and networks of peers, as well as creating opportunities to hear the experiences of others at different stages.

### **Equality & Diversity**

At We Are Family we embrace diversity and feel passionate that our trustee board should be truly representative of the people it serves. We're therefore encouraging applicants from all backgrounds and (especially those) from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

**WHO WE ARE**

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## WHO WE ARE

We Are Family is a peer support community by adopters, for adopters. We're there for families throughout their adoption journey.

Originally founded in 2013 by adopters who experienced first-hand the lack of post-adoption support available for their families and wanted to provide locally-based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney & Islington, the organisation grew to seven over two years.

Online and in person, our parents' groups, events, resources, podcasts and talks offer mutual support, information and inspiration to adopters and those considering adoption.

We Are Family's small part-time staff team (Director, Community Development & Engagement Manager, Programme & Content Manager and Operations Assistant) are supported by a number of volunteers and by the trustees. The charity is funded through grants from two Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) Adopt London and Adoption Partnership South East (APSE), trusts and foundations and a small (but growing) individual giving campaign.

# THE ADOPTION JOURNEY

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Adoptive Families  
 Prospective Adopters  
 Regional & Voluntary Adoption Agencies  
 Funders and Supporters  
 Policymakers  
 Wider Society

Adoptees have almost invariably suffered early trauma

The journey to adoption has many ups and downs

**START**  
 Placement is the beginning of the story, not the end.

**THE PROBLEMS WE NEED TO SOLVE:**

**PROBLEM**  
 We need to solve

On the adoption journey, there is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support

**PROBLEM**  
 We need to solve

On the adoption journey, there is a lack of freely accessible information to help parents better support their children/families and advocate for them

**PROBLEM**  
 We need to solve

On the adoption journey, there is difficulty in accessing structured support and making adopter voices heard

**VALUES**  
 Keeping us on track

**RELIABILITY**

**THE CHANGE WE NEED TO CREATE:**

**CHANGE**  
 We need to create

Improved well-being of parents, and by extension, their families

**VALUES**  
 Keeping us on track

**COMMUNITY**

**CHANGE**  
 We need to create

Improved understanding of how to respond to the challenges the face

Access to the right services at the right time

**WE ARE FAMILY**

ADOPTION SUPPORT COMMUNITY

**VALUES**  
 Keeping us on track

**SAFETY**

**HOW WE CREATE THE CHANGE:**

**HOW**  
 We are making the change

**AMPLIFYING VOICES**

We use the voice of our We Are Family community to amplify calls for improved support for adoptive parents and families

**VALUES**  
 Keeping us on track

**INDEPENDENCE**

**HOW**  
 We are making the change

**CONNECTION & RELATIONSHIP**

Adoptive Parent and Prospective Adopter support. Peer support groups, family meet ups, social events, cultural connections... for all stages of the journey.

They say it takes a village to raise a child. WAF is building those villages.

**MISSION**

Our mission is to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting.

**GOAL**

Our vision is to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support, and are part of a community which enables them to thrive.

**VALUES**  
 Keeping us on track

**INCLUSIVITY**



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## OUR SUPPORT

We Are Family membership is FREE. We offer:

### CONNECTION & RELATIONSHIP

Online and in-person groups including:

- Parent Support Groups
- Playgroups and Family Meet-ups
- Parent Socials
- Single Adopters Support Group
- Prospective Adopters Support Group
- Thematic Groups such as 'Teens and Tweens'

### INFORMATION & INSPIRATION

- WAF Talks webinars - inviting leading experts to share their knowledge, available live and on-demand.
- Member-led blog, and our podcast series 'Adoption Shared'
- Access to our digital Member Hub featuring regular news, updates, recommendations and opportunities.

### AMPLIFYING VOICES

Amplifying adopter voices to improve support for adoptive parents and families.

I was lucky that I found We Are Family early into our placement, my husband and I were struggling a great deal with the challenges with no family or support close by and being part of We Are Family changed that. I don't believe that we would have the relationship with our children that we have now if it were not for the help, support and understanding that other WAF members gave to me.



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## THE ADOPTION LANDSCAPE

Adoption provides a new, permanent family to a child or group of siblings who cannot be raised within their birth family. Adoptive parents take on a lifelong commitment, with the same rights and responsibilities as a biological parent.

Whilst adoption has been around for centuries, the process and legal system surrounding adoptive families has evolved significantly. The profile of an adoptive family is also quite different - today, the majority of adopted children will have suffered abuse or neglect in their birth families<sup>1</sup> and most spent time in foster care. This means that adoptive parents are often caring for children who have experienced early trauma, with increased risk of social, emotional and mental health difficulties<sup>2</sup>. To compound these challenges, post-adoption services are not always accessible, and the level of support is usually lower than what was available when the child was in foster care<sup>3</sup>.

A two-year evaluation of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) by King et al. (2019) showed that whilst it contributes to positive outcomes, more must be done to sustainably support adoptive families into the longer term<sup>4</sup>. In addition to the services that we offer adoptive parents, We Are Family aims to promote the importance of access to consistent, reliable and sustainable support for adoptive families in order to improve adopter health and wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup><https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/d1162385-ef28-47d1-8bdd-99a27d0a2714>

<sup>2</sup>Gore Langton, E. (2017). Adopted and permanently placed children in education: From rainbows to reality. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 33(1), 16-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1217401>

<sup>3</sup>Palacios, J., Rolock, N., Selwyn, J., & Barbosa-Ducharne, M. (2019). Adoption Breakdown: Concept, Research, and Implications. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 29(2), 130-142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731518783852>

<sup>4</sup>King, S., Gieve, M., Iacopini, G., Hahne, A. S., & Stradling, H.. (2019). Are the early benefits of the Adoption Support Fund (therapeutic support for adoptive families) sustainable? *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 18(1), 66-72. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-08-2018-0056>

WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

**OUR IMPACT**

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## OUR IMPACT

- Over 1,420 members across the UK and beyond - REACH in excess of 3500
- 1,170+ resources and webinars in the Member Hub. 89% have watched a WAF TALK, citing highlights as the information / support provided (82%) and it feeling like parent self care.
- Over 1,500+ lifetime peer support hours
- 82% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have opportunities to engage with a variety of experience on adoption.
- 57% have attended PEER SUPPORT GROUPS, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (73%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (71%).



*\*Approximate number based on available data.*



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## KEY PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

We Are Family are recognised by our partners for the significant positive impact that we have on adoptive families' lives. Many adoption support groups are local authority run and as such are not able to offer the independent, safe-space approach and flexibility of service provision based on member feedback that We Are Family is able to offer. We Are Family provides additionality to existing statutory support services. Some of our current funders, including Trusts & Foundations, are shown here:

As an adopter-led organisation, We Are Family is uniquely able to support fantastic adopter peer support networks in a way which is most helpful for parents and responsive to their needs. Through We Are Family, our adoptive parents are connected to social networks of other adoptive parents from the earliest stages of adoption, providing parents with a place to seek advice, normalise parenting challenges, and reduce the potential for isolation.

Adopt London, Partner





WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

**THE BOARD**

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We Are Family became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) in 2015 and, as such, is governed by the charitable objects set out in its Constitution. The trustees of the charity have legal, financial and fiduciary duties under charity legislation.

The Board of Trustees fulfils the important roles of scrutiny and governance. This includes responsibility to:

- Ensure that the organisation works to its Vision and Mission
- Maintain a policy of inclusiveness and diversity
- Ensure responsible financial control which is prudent and sustainable
- Support the striving for excellence and high quality in all which We Are Family is involved

The Board of Trustees draws on its members' extensive knowledge, skills and experience to provide strategic and occasionally operational guidance for the charity and to advocate for it within appropriate contexts.

The Board of Trustees currently operates two sub-committees made up of trustees, members of staff, other members of We Are Family and external co-opted specialists.

Trustees are asked to serve on at least one of the committees, based on their skills and specialisms. The committees are:

- Programmes and Strategy Committee
- Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee

Further short-term 'task and finish' or 'working groups' are established by the board in order to address specific issues or new business.

Associated Trustee expenses such as travel, childcare will be covered by We Are Family.



## CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board consists of up to 16 trustees including the Chair and Deputy Chair. The two staff members also attend Board meetings as does the Company Secretary.

Current trustees include:

- Mark Hoult-Allen (Chair)
- Liz Hocter (Deputy Chair)
- Amy Burns-Thompson
- Anita Goveas
- Anna Willow
- Andrew Taylor-Dawson
- Diane McGrath
- Esi Cathleen
- Mike Clarke
- Sophie Miller

The Company Secretary and Treasurer roles are currently vacant.

Biographies of the current trustees can be found at <https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/about/our-board/>

Any appointment to the Board is as a trustee of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the Board's role and responsibilities are governed by charity law in England and Wales.

WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

**THIS OPPORTUNITY**

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## THIS OPPORTUNITY

We are looking to strengthen and enhance our board of trustees with new skills and ideas. We want to appoint new board members to help consolidate and broaden our influence and capacity to provide support for adoptive parents.

We are looking for individuals who share our commitment to supporting adopters and prospective adopters throughout their adoption journey, and those that can bring skills, knowledge and experience that will complement that of the existing trustees.

Ideal candidates will have the capacity to think strategically, work collaboratively and make a significant contribution to our future.

### Commitment

Trustees are volunteers and so the capacity to devote the time needed for the following is essential:

- 4 Board meetings per year
- 2 Board away days per year (on a Saturday)
- Membership of at least one sub-committee (which also meet 4 times a year)

We estimate 8-10 hours for the charity per month.

Trustees will need to read papers in advance of Board meetings and may, from time to time, be asked to contribute to specific activities such as hosting Welcome webinars for new members. We Are Family staff may consult with trustees from time to time on an individual basis, during or out of normal working hours.

Board and committee meetings are held in the evening via Zoom and dates of meetings are distributed a year in advance. The away days are held in person in central London.

All new trustees will receive an induction and associated expenses will be covered.

We value a diverse team and welcome applications from all sectors of the community, including those with lived experience of adoption, those new to adoption, those who are new to trustee board work and individuals who have a proven track record in senior governance roles.



# THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

## Purpose

To advise, govern, oversee policy and direction and assist with the leadership and general promotion of We Are Family to support the organisations Vision, Mission, Values and needs.

## Length of term

The duration of membership for a new Board member is for three years in the first instance, with the possibility of appointment for a further three year term.

## Skills and knowledge

All applicants should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Skills or experience in strategic planning, setting targets and monitoring and evaluating performance;
- Good organisational and communication (written and oral) skills

We are particularly interested in candidates with the following experience:

- Working as a professional with or in the adoption sector,
- Advocacy and/or research work;
- Finance/charity finance
- Leadership within a charity
- Education
- Legal.

**Previous board/trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds.**

WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

# THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

## Principal Responsibilities and Accountabilities

- To ensure the organisation has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- To determine levels of delegation to the officers of the Board and members of staff.
- To work in partnership with other Board members to support and develop We Are Family and take responsibility for the corporate governance of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective operation and management of the organisation..
- To support the staff in the formulation of business plans outlining the organisation's operational and programmatic direction within the budgetary framework.
- To approve the annual budget and to have a good grasp of the finances and resources of the organisation.
- To maintain a general overview of the organisation's policies and procedures.
- To ensure the organisation complies with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- To act as guardians of the organisation's assets..
- To ensure that the organisation's governance is of the highest possible standard.
- To build a good understanding of the organisation's day-to-day operating processes, procedures and practices.
- To ensure there are effective mechanisms to listen to the views of current and future beneficiaries.
- To have a serious commitment to participate actively in committee work.
- Involvement in the appointment of senior staff members when required.
- To actively promote and communicate the organisation's work to the adoption community.



WELCOME

OUR VISION,  
MISSION & VALUES

WHO WE ARE

OUR SUPPORT

THE ADOPTION  
LANDSCAPE

OUR IMPACT

KEY PARTNERS &  
FUNDERS

THE BOARD

THIS OPPORTUNITY

THE ROLE OF A  
TRUSTEE

EXPRESS AN  
INTEREST

## EXPRESS AN INTEREST

If you would like an informal conversation about joining the board with either Mark Houlton-Allen, Chair of trustees or Liz Hocter, Deputy Chair, please contact us via [applications@wearefamilyadoption.org.uk](mailto:applications@wearefamilyadoption.org.uk).

If you are interested to apply for the role, please send:

- An up-to-date copy of your CV (or equivalent written information)

And either:

- A short email introducing yourself and your interest in the role
- A short film introducing yourself and your interest in the role (no more than two minutes)

If we are able to move forward with your expression of interest, we will be in touch to organise an interview held via Zoom.

We look forward to hearing from you!