



National Survivor
User Network

NSUN TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK 2023: CHAIR



ABOUT NSUN

A note from Angela Newton, Chair of the Board of Trustees

I'm really excited to know that you're reading this right now, and that you're keen to find out more about the role of Chair of the Board of Trustees at NSUN.

NSUN, the **National Survivor User Network**, is a network of people and groups with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress and trauma. As a membership organisation with over 5000 members, NSUN works to connect, support and amplify the voices and work of individuals and user-led groups.

I have supported NSUN for many years and have had the pleasure of being Chair for the past few years. This has been throughout a period of significant and exciting change. During this time, our staff team has increased, our income has increased, and our membership has increased. We have agreed to change our legal structure to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, refined our membership and spent time developing as a Board. We are hosting **Synergi**, a programme of work that focuses on the intersection of mental health and racial justice with a specific focus on lived experience and community action. We are also about to embark on an exciting new strategic direction that will enable us to:

- Build and distribute the invaluable knowledge that is held by those of us with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress and trauma;
- Grow more collaborative spaces through coalitions and networks
- Build an alternative approach to mental health policy work
- Work with funders and act as a micro-funder to help redistribute resources to grassroots user-led groups

We have a bright and exciting future ahead of us, and it feels like now is the right time for me to step aside and give somebody else the opportunity to lead the work of the organisation. The role of Chair is essential within any charity, and we're looking for somebody who is dynamic, driven and comes with experience of governance. We're really hoping that this person also has a deep interest in racial justice as well as personal experience of mental distress.

This is an incredibly exciting time to join us as a Trustee in the Chair role: NSUN is in a period of consolidating our recent growth, change and development, and this a real opportunity to be part of this journey and help strengthen the organisation from within.

NSUN is a user-led organisation: lived experience is at the heart of our work. **We particularly welcome applications from people from under-represented and/or marginalised communities, including people from racialised communities and disabled people.**

Thanks for taking the time to read through this Information Pack – we really hope you find it useful. To find out even more and ask any questions you can speak with Angela Newton, Chair (angela@livedexperiencematters.org.uk) or Akiko Hart, CEO (akiko.hart@nsun.org.uk). Please email one of us to arrange a call.

ABOUT THE TRUSTEE ROLE

Trustees act as the guardian of the vision, purpose and values of NSUN, acting in its best interests and working constructively with other Board members and staff to:

- Achieve and maintain excellent standards of governance
- Ensure NSUN's purpose and objectives are achieved
- Ensure that NSUN is managed and controlled appropriately and maintains its financial sustainability
- Demonstrate that NSUN is accountable to its members, funders and stakeholders
- Ensure NSUN works within the requirements of the law, regulation, its funding bodies and best practice standards

The Trustee role is strategic rather than operational. [Click here to view our Scheme of Delegation.](#)

ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis, so if you are interested in the role, we encourage you to get your application in as soon as you are able to.

To apply, please download and complete the following two documents and return them to info@nsun.org.uk:

1. [NSUN Chair Application Form](#)
2. [NSUN Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form](#)

If your application is considered to be strong, you will be invited to an interview. Interviews will be held online at a mutually agreeable time with Angela Newton, Chair of Trustees, Amy Rushton, Vice-Chair of Trustees, and another member of the Board. There will also be an informal conversation with the CEO arranged following the interview.



WANT TO FIND OUT MORE, ASK QUESTIONS, OR SPEAK TO ONE OF US BEFORE APPLYING?

Please contact Angela Newton, Chair (angela@livedexperiencematters.org.uk) or Akiko Hart, CEO (akiko.hart@nsun.org.uk).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The role of the Chair of the Board of Trustees is a leadership role in ensuring the Board of Trustees fulfils its responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The key responsibilities of Trustees are set out below and a specific role description for the Chair follows.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES ARE

1. To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the organisation, and to collaborate in providing the direction of NSUN's ongoing development
2. To work with the other Trustees in ensuring that the practices and policies of NSUN are in accordance with its mission
3. With other Trustees, to exercise effective control of the organisation, ensuring that it functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and in accordance with best practices

AS PART OF THE BOARD, TRUSTEES WILL

- Ensure compliance with the Charity Commission requirements and its guidance
- Devote sufficient time and energy to NSUN, including preparing for meetings and where possible keeping up to date with relevant mental health, social care, human rights and disability sector issues
- Contribute specific skills and experience in the monitoring and safeguarding of the organisation's performance
- Attend and participate in any Board induction, training or other development activities, and the Board appraisal scheme

- Register all interests that might have a bearing on NSUN's work and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest as and when they arise
- Represent NSUN positively to all external stakeholders and interested groups
- Collaborate in the design, implementation, and monitoring of a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets and reputation of the organisation

TRUSTEES' SPECIFIC DUTIES INCLUDE

- Develop, review and safeguard NSUN's strategic aims, and assist in their implementation
- Attend the meetings of the Trustee Board, AGM and sub-committee meetings as required
- Monitor and evaluate the organisation's financial and operational performance against its strategic aims, exercising efficient control and ensuring best practice
- Work towards NSUN's vision, purpose, and values
- Ensure all of the organisation's policies are in accordance with its aims and values
- Attend all training and development activities and opportunities, including the induction process upon taking up the role of Trustee. Commitment to continually develop an understanding of the work NSUN undertakes
- Work as an effective member of the team within the Trustee Board whilst reflecting the values of the organisation, protect its assets and integrity
- Forge and maintain effective relations with the staff team, engaging with members and stakeholders as required

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM TRUSTEES

Trustees are expected to attend and contribute to all board meetings, bringing their skills and experience to ensure effective governance through support, constructive challenge and scrutiny. Board meetings are held six times a year, are usually 3 hours in length, and require around 3 hours of preparation. Meetings are held online, however we are aiming to include some face-to-face development days in addition to this, for which expenses are covered. Additionally, Trustees are invited to the online Annual General Meeting. Additional subcommittee meetings are c. 1 hour in length and can number between four and eight meetings per year.

To enable the smooth operation of the organisation between meetings, trustees will also need to respond to regular email communications (the time commitment will vary from week to week but should average no more than 1 hour per week) The Trustee role is voluntary (unpaid) but expenses related to the work are covered.

- Papers are emailed two weeks in advance of meetings, with optional pre-board meetings to run through the papers
- Trustees are encouraged to join one of the board committees/working groups
- Trustees are invited to the annual general meeting (AGM) and members' event which usually takes place over a full day (the business part is around 1 hour long)
- Trustees can claim out-of-pocket expenses incurred including travelling to meetings with any reasonable adjustments necessary
- Trustees serve a three-year term before being eligible for re-election. Officers are elected annually
- Trustees will have a yearly appraisal to support their development. Training and additional support is also available, to meet specific development needs. Training on topics relevant to the work of NSUN is provided 2–3 times a year (usually for half a day) and attendance is an important part of the Trustee role
- Upon joining and regularly thereafter we will discuss how best to meet any access and support needs you may have

The scope of the Chair's involvement will be wider and will include:

- Monthly supervision meetings with the CEO and annual appraisals (1 hour in length)
- Being the named contact and lead in response to complaints and whistleblowing
- A slightly higher time commitments in terms of email correspondence, meetings and check-ins with board members and the staff team around time critical or more involved decisions (approx. 1–2 hours per week)

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

In addition to the normal responsibilities as a Trustee, the Chair has a leadership role in ensuring the Board of Trustees fulfils its responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity.

Overall responsibilities

- Provide leadership to the charity and its Board, ensuring that the Board fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation and has maximum impact for its members and wider stakeholders
- To work in partnership with the CEO to help achieve the mission of the organisation, and maintain effective relationships between trustees, staff and members

Strategic leadership

- Ensure the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving this
- To hold a strong understanding of the power imbalances commonly seen at Board level within the sector and provide leadership on ways of working which address this and continue to hold lived experience as an integral part of the board's effectiveness
- To be comfortable to bring constructive challenge to areas where improvement is needed

Governance

- Continue to develop the Board to ensure governance is effective and ways of working are regularly reviewed
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees, addressing performance on an ongoing basis and through annual 1-1 performance appraisals
- Ensure that the balance of skills within the Board is suitable and that future Trustees recruitment incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience
- Lead on any key appointments within the charity such as the CEO

External relations

- Act as an ambassador for the charity
- Develop and maintain close relationships with key stakeholders and influencers
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events

- Attend meetings with prospective funders when required, with the support of the CEO

Relationship with the CEO of NSUN and the wider team

- Build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the CEO
- Ensure regular contact with the CEO and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship. Undertake regular supervision and performance appraisals
- Liaise with the CEO to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Ensure that the CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support

Additional information

- Develop a collaborative system of support, in particular between those Trustees with officer roles (Vice-Chair and Treasurer)

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- All Trustees must have lived experience of mental ill health, distress or trauma
- All Trustees must have a demonstrated commitment to the values and mission of NSUN
- All Trustees must have an excellent understanding of, and interest in, current work happening on the intersections of racial justice and mental health in the UK

Skills and knowledge

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives and cause
- Exhibit strong interpersonal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment
- Use their specific knowledge and experience to support the effective running of the charity and help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions
- Demonstrate a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Chair and a Trustee, attending Board meetings and an active involvement outside of the Board meetings
- Demonstrate good, independent judgement in your role as Chair

Trustee experience

- Significant experience of chairing meetings/events or experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation
- Experience of effective governance in a charity or similar organisation and understanding of governance issues.
- Experience of external representation
- Experience with overseeing a transitional period at a senior level within an organisation

Other knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the Charitable sector and the issues affecting it
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate Trustees and the staff team
- Good understanding of charity governance issues

INFORMATION FOR MEMBER GROUPS REGARDING FUNDING

NSUN has recently run three small grants programmes for our user-led group members – the COVID-19, Side By Side, and Sustaining Spaces Funds.

All Trustees must declare any roles within organisations or groups with the potential to cause a conflict of interest and are prohibited from personally benefitting financially from their role at NSUN. However, should NSUN run similar programmes in the future, a Trustee being part of a member group need not mean that group could not apply for a grant. Rather, the Trustee concerned would be expected to have declared their membership in advance via NSUN's register of interests for Trustees and would remove themselves from any discussion regarding that group's application for funds.



**National Survivor
User Network**

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