**WANDSWORTH CARE ALLIANCE**

**Roles and responsibilities of Trustees and Chair of the Board**

Thank you for you taking an interest in applying to be a Trustee of Wandsworth Care Alliance. This leaflet provides some information about the role and responsibilities of our Trustees. It also gives details about the role of the WCA Chair in case you are interested in applying for the advertised position of Chair Designate.

**The WCA Board**

Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA) wishes to appoint two new Board members during 2021 to fill vacancies created by Trustees who have completed their full terms. The current Chair, Jeremy Cowper, is one of the departing Trustees.

WCA is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a Board of Trustees who are empowered to elect a Chair and Vice Chair out of their number. There are currently eight Trustees. The Director/CEO of WCA, Jason Edgington, is accountable to the Board and reports to it at formal meetings.

Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that Trustees are provided with appropriate training and support to undertake their role effectively. They should be familiar with current regulatory requirements and guidance (eg guidance by the Charity Commission and the *Charity Governance Code* published by the consortium of leading charity bodies). Trustees are expected to participate fully in Board meetings, contributing to the work of Board subcommittees and/or taking an active interest in one of WCA’s projects. The Board is responsible for appointing four Trustees to the steering committee of Healthwatch Wandsworth, for which WCA holds the contract.

There are six formal Board meetings a year. In addition, Jeremy Cowper has introduced a series of six informal (non-decision making) Board meetings. These are designed to give Trustees to the opportunity to have preliminary or exploratory discussions on topical issues, or on items that will later require decisions at a formal Board meeting. Usually, meetings are held at WCA’s base (Tooting Works), but during the Covid crisis all meetings are being held remotely.

The Board is planning to recruit to a new post of ‘executive assistant’. The aim is to provide expert assistance on a part-time basis to the Chair and CEO in support of their governance responsibilities.

**Role of the Chair**

The prime responsibility of the Chair is to ensure that the Board, in partnership with the CEO, can provide strategic leadership for, and good governance of, the organization. To achieve this, the Chair should try to ensure that the Board has agreed priorities, appropriate structures, processes and culture.

The Chair’s main activities are detailed below. They include standard, formal chairing responsibilities as well as activities involved in exercising ‘light touch’ oversight of the organization.

*Leadership and governance*

The Chair works in concert with the CEO and the Vice Chair to ensure the effective running of WCA’s Board business by:

* Overseeing the appropriate planning and maintaining of the annual cycle of Board business
* convening, and planning the agendas for formal and informal Board meetings
* ensuring prompt circulation of agenda papers for, and minutes of, formal Board meetings
* taking delivery of the draft minutes and approving the draft to be circulated to the Board,
* ensuring that discussions in formal Board meetings are open, constructive and generate effective and clear decisions,
* overseeing the production of the Trustees’ annual report, to be presented at and chairing WCA’s Annual General Meeting,
* coordinating the work of Board subcommittees (these oversee finance/financial risks; appraisal and remuneration). It would be open to an incoming Chair to review and update current arrangements,
* promoting Board development by encouraging open dialogue with fellow Trustees. On an annual basis, holding confidential discussions with each Trustee about their individual contribution to the Board’s activities, and their views on the effectiveness of its governance,
* working with the CEO to ensure the regulatory aspects of WCA are carried out properly by:
* ensuring regular audit or independent examination,
* ensuring effective financial management,
* ensuring Trustee appointments are managed correctly,
* with fellow Trustees, periodically reviewing the Board’s strategy and capacity,
* ensuring WCA has in place the HR policies required of it as an employer.
* when necessary, serving as formal referral point (eg complaints, whistle-blowing, other disputes);
* establishing a supportive and productive working relationship with the CEO by:
* acting as a sounding board,
* ensuring the CEO’s contract of employment is up to date,
* undertaking their annual appraisal, usually along with the Vice-Chair,
* supporting the executive to respond to any actions requested by the WCA Board at its formal meetings.

*Relations with stakeholders*

The Chair may from time to time play a representational role with key external stakeholders, working with the CEO to ensure WCA engages successfully with clients, funders and the wider community. For example:

* helping to promote and explain WCA’s mission and achievements to key stakeholders and the wider public,
* encouraging the development of partnership working with other organizations as appropriate, in order to maximize WCA’s effectiveness in achieving its aims in the local community.

**Indicative time commitment for Chair**

This will vary a little from month to month, according to the number of meetings and other commitments. Based on previous experience, an incoming Chair should be prepared to allocate the equivalent of two to three days a month, using their discretion as to the precise allocation of time.

**Experience and skills**

WCA welcomes applications from individuals from all backgrounds. We do not wish to be overly prescriptive about the prior experience and skills of a Chair Designate. Below we indicate some of the factors that could be particularly relevant to the position of Chair:

* previous experience of Board or Committee membership, in either an executive or non-executive capacity,
* confidence in chairing meetings,
* a sound understanding of the principles and importance of good corporate governance,
* prior experience of using diplomatic, leadership and team-building skills with colleagues and (where appropriate) with external stakeholders.

WCA’s primary activities involve working with service users, their families and other groups in the wider community to ensure their voice is heard and acted on by key public services. It would be helpful if a candidate could demonstrate their familiarity with one or more of the following areas:

* the voluntary and/or health or social service sectors,
* the challenges facing individuals, the voluntary sector and communities in Wandsworth (eg the inequalities faced by some),
* working at the interface between service users, the voluntary sector and public service commissioners and providers.

**Applying**

If you would like to discuss anything more before making your application, you are encouraged to have a preliminary, informal discussion with Jason Edgington or Jeremy Cowper. To arrange this, please phone 020 8516 7716 or email admin@wandcareall.org.uk

Following receipt of your completed application, arrangements will be made by agreement for an interview with a small panel of Board members.

**The Nominations Committee of the WCA Board thanks you for your interest.**