



Home to Darlington women's refuge

Supporting women and children fleeing
domestic abuse since 1976

Information and Application for the Role(s) of Trustee

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Trustee with Finance Portfolio/Treasurer

Contact:

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Supporting Women and Women with Children Fleeing Domestic Abuse

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Contents

1. Introduction and Background
2. Family Help Darlington CIO – Governance and Management, Our Trustees
3. Trustee Roles and Responsibilities
4. Chairperson Role and Responsibilities
5. Treasurer Role and Responsibilities
6. Application Process

Appendix 1 – Eligibility Declaration

Information for Applicants

Family Help Darlington CIO invites applications from anyone who is interested in joining the Board of Trustees. In particular, the Board is seeking individuals who would be interested in being a Trustee and those who would be interested in joining the Board as Chairperson or taking on the role of Treasurer. As this post is covered by a genuine occupational requirement under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, part 1, we are only able to accept female applicants for the roles of Chairperson and Treasurer.

Further information regarding the responsibility of each of the roles, the skills and experience required for the Board and the process for application is included in the pack.

As Trustees must be legally eligible to serve all potential Trustees will be required to complete the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' prior to appointment as a Trustee.

If you wish to have an informal discussion about any of the roles available, request more information or wish to make an application, please contact:

Carole Clarkson, CEO

Email: c.clarkson@familyhelp.org.uk

Tel No: 01325 364486

1. Introduction and Background

Family Help Darlington CIO (Family Help) is an independent charity that provides emotional and practical support services to women and women with children fleeing domestic abuse.

Established in 1976, Family Help is home to Darlington's only women's refuge and is one of the longest-standing and independent women's refuges in the UK. As well as offering safe temporary accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, Family Help also run a busy helpline for anyone affected by domestic abuse. Family Help is looking for skilled and experienced people with a passion for social care to lead its award-winning team.

You will be joining an enthusiastic and dedicated Board who work closely with the Family Help staff team that have over 100 years' of combined experience. These are key appointments for Family Help and you will have the opportunity to use your skills and expertise to help shape the business plan and enable Family Help to fulfil its potential and make a vital contribution to those that so desperately need the charity's support.

This brief sets out the range of skills and experience the Trustees have identified to ensure strong and effective governance. Additionally, having held an executive or non-executive board position in a charitable entity and/or having a strong interest in domestic abuse prevention would help to inform and enrich the decision-making of the Board as it develops its plans for Family Help.

The Trustees are keen to have a diverse Board in line with its commitment to equality and diversity.

If you feel you have the skills, experience, commitment and enthusiasm to be part of this worthwhile cause, we would really like to hear from you.

2. Family Help Darlington CIO Governance and Management

Family Help Darlington CIO is governed by a small but skilled and experienced Board of Trustees supported by a Chief Executive Officer and a small staff team.

The Board have agreed a range of policies and procedures that underpins our governance. In addition, the Board is committed to good governance practice in line with the Charity Governance Code and Charity Commission guidance.

Our Trustees

Valerie Dugdale (Chairperson)

Val joined Family Help's committee in 2004 and elected chair in 2006. Val works part-time for Darlington Borough Council in the short-break centre for children with disabilities.

Val was a former user of the service back in 2002. Her family were the first residents in the refuge building currently occupied. Val has first-hand knowledge and experience of living in a refuge and surviving domestic abuse. Val shares her story of abuse openly with clients, and the wider community to inform and help others.

Emily Thomas (Vice Chairperson)

Emily re-joined the Board of Trustees in 2018, having previously been at Trustee between 2004 and 2014. Emily is a caring and compassionate housing professional with over 15 years' experience of working in the sector. Emily has an evidence-based record of working with customers to influence service improvement in a positive way. Her skills are in campaigning, fundraising, community development, strategic planning, general management and partnership working.

Kara Ditchburn (Secretary)

Kara joined the Board of Trustees in July 2021. Kara is a trainee Family Lawyer specialising in divorce, finances and child arrangements. Kara has recently taken on the role of Secretary.

Melanie Caygill

Joined the Board of Trustees July 2021.

Now retired, Mel has a commercial management background and has worked for a housing association previously. Mel also has had first-hand experience of dealing with domestic abuse issues by supporting her daughter and grandchildren to escape an abusive relationship.

3. Family Help Darlington CIO – Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees are appointed through the procedures set out in the governing document and following the process agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Trustees must be eligible to serve as a Trustee of a charity, therefore all potential Trustees will be required to complete the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' document prior to appointment.

This is a volunteer role and the term is three years initially with the opportunity to stand for re-appointment for a further term of 3 years to a maximum of 9 years.

Overall Responsibilities

The duties of the Trustees are to:

- Fulfil responsibilities as required by the current Charity Act and all other relevant legislation;
- Appoint the Chief Executive Officer ensuring that the person appointed to this role has the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil the role, which would include leading the staff team;
- Set and ensure maintenance of a framework of delegation and internal controls;
- Agree and review operational and governance policy and procedures for the charity and monitor the implementation of these;
- Develop, agree and monitor the delivery of the strategic plan to achieve the overall charitable objectives, including a financial plan, for the achievement of the overall charitable objectives and mission;
- Receive, scrutinise and analyse regular financial reports and progress information provided by the Treasurer, accountant, independent examiner or sub-committees of the Board;
- Regularly review major risks to which the charity is exposed and ensure systems are established to mitigate these risks without the charity becoming totally risk averse;
- Ensure the Board and the charity are fair and open to all sections of the community in all aspects of the charity's activities;
- Promote the interests of the charity within a wider network.

Family Help Darlington CIO requires that Trustees should attend ten board meetings annually – currently meetings are held via Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 but generally meetings take place face-to-face (two meetings will be development meetings and include board members, staff, volunteer and clients) – and at least one day of activity for the charity per month.

It is essential that Trustees understand the governance and management processes and can carry out their role both diligently and efficiently without becoming either a barrier to progress or overstepping their responsibilities.

Trustee Profile

In appointing new Trustees, the Board will be mindful of the following:

The Board of Trustees will endeavour to ensure that a range and mix of skills are represented at Board level and this will be considered when appointing new Trustees. In addition, the Trustees will strive to achieve a diverse Board that will reflect its equality and diversity policy.

Desired skills and experience:

- Knowledge of charity leadership and development

- Experience of building and leading teams with diverse skills
- Considerable knowledge of domestic abuse issues and safeguarding
- Background in finance and accounting
- Fundraising experience
- Knowledge of planning and strategic management
- Knowledge of HR and people management
- Legal knowledge (commercial and/or family law)

Lived Experience

‘Lived experience’ of domestic abuse, whether directly or indirectly, and/or an active interest in domestic abuse issues would help to inform and enrich the decision-making of the Board as it develops its plans for Family Help Darlington CIO, therefore the Board are particularly keen to hear from people who can contribute to the organisation in this way.

Trustee Commitments

It is expected that all Trustees will be able to demonstrate:

- A commitment and enthusiasm for the work of Family Help Darlington CIO
- A commitment to work in the best interests of the charity at all times
- A professional approach to the work of and development of the charity and the Board

Trustees will ideally have access to wider networks and will act in an ambassadorial role, representing the charity into that network.

Trustees are expected to devote approximately 12 days per year to support activities of the charity. Trustee roles are voluntary, however, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed according to the rates agreed by the Board and in line with government legislation.

4. Family Help Darlington CIO - Chairperson

The Board of Trustees wishes to appointment a Chairperson for a term of 3 years.

The Chairperson will provide leadership and direction for the Board of Trustees and enable it to fulfil its roles and responsibilities within an overall framework of good governance practice.

The Chairperson will work in partnership and liaise with the Board and senior staff as appropriate.

Chairperson Profile

The person appointed to the role of Chairperson is likely to have proven experience of being a Chairperson of a charity/not-for-profit Board, company Board or similar.

It is expected that the person appointed to the role of Chairperson will bring with them a wide network and is likely to have a high profile within that network. They will be able to communicate well and act in a public relations/ambassadorial role as appropriate.

The Chairperson will commit to the charitable aims and objectives of Family Help Darlington CIO and to the values and principles of good governance.

In addition, the Chairperson is expected to demonstrate the following skills, abilities and attitudes.

Duties and tasks to fulfil the key responsibilities:

To provide leadership to the Board and to ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity as well as guard the long-term future of the charity by ensuring that:

- the Board sets the mission, vision, strategy and high-level policies for the charity within the powers and restrictions in its charitable objects and governing instruments
- the Board takes steps to monitor the performance of the charity and to ensure that the charity satisfies all regulatory and legal compliance requirements
- major risks to which the charity is exposed are reviewed regularly and systems are established to mitigate these risks without the charity becoming totally risk averse
- the charity has a satisfactory system for holding in trust for the beneficiaries' monies, properties and other assets and ensure that moneys are invested to the maximum benefit of the charity, within the constraints of the law and ethical and other policies laid down by the board
- the charity's financial dealings are systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available
- internal controls and systems (both financial and non-financial) are audited and reviewed regularly
- the Board and the charity are fair and open to all sections of the community in all the charity's activities
- the Board and the charity hear the voices and views of key stakeholders, especially beneficiaries.

To ensure the highest possible standards of governance by ensuring that:

- the charity has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects and that these structures and the governing instruments are reviewed regularly
- the Board delegates sufficient authority to the Chairperson, the CEO and others to enable the business of the charity to be carried on effectively between meetings of the Board

- the Board's delegated authority is recorded in writing by means of terms of reference for role descriptions for honorary officers and for key staff etc, and the Board monitors use of these delegated powers
- the Board has on it the skills it requires to govern the charity well and these skills are utilised, and that the Board has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise
- there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for the recruitment and co-option of Trustees, future Chairs of the Board and future senior management
- all members of the Board receive appropriate induction, advice, information and training (both individual and collective)
- Trustees act reasonably and always act in the interests of the charity
- the Board of Trustees regularly reviews its performance.

To ensure the proper and efficient conduct of board meetings by:

- chairing Trustee meetings effectively, seeking consensus, balancing the need for full debate on key questions with the expeditious despatch of business so as to reach clear and agreed decisions as swiftly as possible
- encouraging all Trustees to participate and to feel free to challenge constructively both the Chairperson and the CEO
- taking an active role in ensuring that Board agendas are meaningful and reflect the key responsibilities of Trustees
- ensuring that the CEO and her staff provide the Board with relevant, timely and accurate information in order to allow the Board to discharge its responsibilities. This should include alerting the Board to major risks, informing the Board of current and future key issues, including significant trends, and informing the Board about external changes which may impact on the charity
- ensuring that Board decisions are made in the best, long-term interests of the charity and that the Board takes collective ownership of these decisions
- ensuring that decisions taken at meetings of the Board are implemented
- ensuring that that there is an annual programme of Board meetings, carefully structured agendas and high quality briefing papers providing timely information and concentrating on governance.

To support, and where appropriate, to challenge the chief executive and to ensure that the board as a whole works in partnership with executive staff and to support the chief executive by:

- ensuring there are clear and open processes for the recruitment (and if necessary dismissal) of the CEO, and for setting and reviewing the remuneration package of the CEO
- ensuring that the Board focuses on its governance role and does not slip incrementally, or otherwise, into the management role (unless essential to the good governance of the charity)
- arranging regular, but not over frequent, meetings with the CEO and by developing a very professional relationship with the CEO within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- providing leadership to the CEO to ensure that the charity is run in accordance with the decisions of the Board and the charity's governing documents and that there is clarity about the charity's objectives at all levels

- supervising the CEO on behalf of the Board (unless other arrangements are made), always remembering that the CEO is responsible to the board as a whole and not to anyone individual Trustee or sub-group of Trustees
- ensuring the CEO's performance is reviewed regularly with annual appraisals
- ensuring the CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support
- in partnership with the CEO, to agree respective roles in representing the charity and acting as spokesperson.

To make sure that the board understands and fulfils its responsibility to hold the chief executive and the executive team to account by ensuring that:

- when necessary, the Chairperson and the Trustees challenge the CEO constructively and only in the best interests of the charity and as "critical friends"
- the CEO is clear about the key performance indicators by which she will be held accountable
- the CEO understands her crucial responsibility to provide relevant, honest, timely, high-quality information and advice to the Board of Trustees
- there are appropriate mechanisms, both internal and external, to verify that the Board receives a balanced and honest picture of how the charity is doing.

To ensure the board works in partnership with staff by:

- ensuring through the CEO, that the staff understand the role of the Board and that the CEO provides an effective link between the Board and staff
- ensuring that staff are aware of the Board's appreciation of their successes and hard work
- ensuring that, through the CEO, a performance evaluation process is in place for everyone in the organisation and that the charity invests in the development of staff
- ensuring that whenever practicable, Trustees attend a few events and team-building activities organised by the charity and have informal opportunities to meet staff and beneficiaries – this could include evenings and/or weekends.

Commitments

It is expected that in fulfilling the above responsibilities the Chairperson will contribute the equivalent of 2 days per month.

Board meetings are held 10 times a year and can be face-to-face or virtual.

The role of Chairperson of the charity is voluntary although reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed according to the rates agreed by the Board and in line with government legislation.

5. Family Help Darlington CIO - Treasurer

The Board of Trustees wishes to appoint a Treasurer to act as the first point of contact at Board level for financial matters and to lead the Board in its responsibilities to safeguard its assets.

Treasurer Profile

The person appointed to the role of Treasurer will be a qualified accountant and someone with high-level financial management qualifications/experience as well as having the following essential skills:

- Competent IT skills including accounting software
- Proven ability to communicate and explain financial information to members of the Board and other stakeholders
- Analytical and evaluation skills, demonstrating good judgement
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship
- Good communication and leadership skills
- Innovative problem-solving skills.

Ideally, the Treasurer will also have the following skills:

- Demonstrated knowledge and experience of charity fundraising and finance practices
- Knowledge of the latest Charities Act, Charities (account & report) regulations and SORP
- Commercial experience and knowledge.

The Treasurer will commit to the charitable aims and objectives of Family Help Darlington CIO and to the values and principles of good governance.

In addition, the Treasurer is expected to demonstrate the following skills, abilities and attitudes.

Duties and tasks to fulfil the key responsibilities:

- Lead the Board's duty to ensure proper accounting records are kept, financial resources are controlled, invested and spent in line with the charity's policy, legal and regulatory requirements
- Ensure the appropriate financial protocols and arrangements are in place and approved by the Board of Trustees
- Advise on the financial implications of the charity's strategic plans and overseeing the charity's financial risk-management and investment policies
- Undertake other responsibilities expected of all Trustees with regards to charity governance, strategy and oversight.

The Treasurer will work closely with the Chairperson, the CEO and the Board of Trustees to:

- Monitor the financial standing of the charity and report to the Board regarding cash-flow forecasting, income streams, outgoing expenses and the overarching strategic management of financial resources
- Oversee the charity's financial risk-management process and report financial health to the Board of Trustees at regular intervals
- Act as a counter signatory on cheques and authorising electronic payments and banking and applications to funders
- Ensure that annual accounts and reports are submitted to all relevant regulators in a timely fashion

- Liaise with external auditors on financial issues and ensure that Family Help Darlington CIO's finances are responsibly managed/invested for the betterment of its work and for the beneficiaries it serves and in line with the agreed Investment Policy.

Specific Tasks:

Budgeting and strategic financial planning:

- Ensure all the strategic plans are financially appraised and budgets are aligned to both short-term and long-term objectives each year
- Oversee planning/budgeting process in participation with the Board and constructively challenge where required
- Suggest alternative scenarios while evaluating strategic plans as a part of the risk management process and as a part of performance and reporting scenarios
- Create greater transparency and accountability to improve resource allocation and the charity's image by adding specific measures as per SORP guidelines.

Financial Management Reporting:

- Ensure a high standard of management accounting is maintained to safeguard assets
- Liaise with the CEO, finance manager and Trustees to prepare and produce management accounts at a frequency agreed by the Board.

Statutory Financial Reporting:

- Board-level liaison with external auditors on specific issues in auditing process and related Board representations
- Guide and advise fellow Trustees to formally approve the annual report and audited / examined accounts
- Explain technicalities of accounts in plain language, which is understood fully by the Trustees.

Financial Policies and Processes:

- Support the development of appropriate policies, processes and systems to underpin the management of Family Help Darlington CIO's finances
- Develop Reserves Policy and safeguard Family Help Darlington CIO's finances
- Keep the Board informed of the unrestricted reserves position and advise to cope with changing circumstances
- Ensure a record of assets is maintained.

Commitments

It is expected that in fulfilling the above responsibilities the Treasurer will contribute the equivalent of 2 days per month.

Board meetings are held 10 times a year and can be face-to-face or virtual.

The role of Treasurer of the charity is voluntary although reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed according to the rates agreed by the Board and in line with government legislation.

6. Application Process

The Board of Trustees would like to hear from individuals interested in joining the Board who can bring the required skills and experience to further benefit and advance Family Help Darlington CIO.

If you are interested in joining our Board then please send an application letter indicating which role you are applying for, why you are interested in applying for that particular role, how you meet the requirements for the role and what skills and experience you can bring to the Board of Trustees.

You should include a copy of your current CV with your application letter.

Your application can be sent by email to info@familyhelp.org.uk or by post to PO Box 248, Darlington DL1 1WQ. Please address your application to Carole Clarkson, CEO and ensure it is marked as 'confidential'.

Your application will be acknowledged and you will be informed whether the Trustees would like to meet you to discuss your application further.

Applications should be submitted by Sunday 31st July 2022 and, if Trustees wish to discuss your application further, you will be contacted before Wednesday 31st August 2022.

If you would like any further information before making an application, please contact:

Carole Clarkson, CEO

Email: info@familyhelp.org.uk

Tel No: 01325 364486