



Voluntary Action Lewisham

Chair of Trustees

Candidate Pack

May 2018



About Us

Our vision is to put Lewisham's people and communities at the heart of our borough. Our focus is on supporting a thriving civil society in Lewisham that achieves improved outcomes for everyone – our voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, our volunteers, and our communities.



We're creating a vibrant and dynamic new organisation, ensuring Lewisham's civil society gets the support it needs to thrive. We're building on our successful track record, as we have been working with Lewisham's communities for over 50 years. We're proud of that history, but we want to be even prouder of the organisation we are becoming, and of what we achieve next.

What do we do?

We'll be delivering this work through nine key work streams:

- Involve – getting communities involved in co-producing an understanding of need and what must happen to make Lewisham better, stronger and more sustainable;
- Introduce – understanding and connecting people, groups and formal organisations – bringing people together to achieve change;
- Initiate – identifying needs and encouraging others to act – sparking collaborations and starting discussions to get solutions;
- Incubate – providing seedbed space (physical and intellectual) for emerging groups to tackle new and changing needs;
- Inspire – showcasing excellence, developing new ideas, sharing learning from within and outside Lewisham;
- Invest – equipping civil society with the skills, knowledge and resources to make a difference;
- Inform – sharing data on needs and policy developments with Lewisham groups, and out to local decision makers and the London Hub;
- Influence – championing the role of the sector, the needs and strengths of local communities, and helping strategic people make better decisions; and
- Innovate – be a centre of excellence for civil society support, piloting new ways of working to achieve positive change.

About the Role

We have recently restructured our staff team and moved to the Mulberry Centre in New Cross. Moving centres has enabled us to provide improved support to voluntary organisations in Lewisham, for example we now provide space which voluntary organisations can use for hot desking, training and activities.

It is a critical year for us. We are seeking somebody who can guide us through an exciting and challenging time as an organisation, which might include more formal cooperation with another or other similar charities. New staff members have now been in post for 6-months and we're excited about the future. We are having a clear impact and meeting our targets, especially with our newly renewed focus area of volunteering.

As Chair, you will work with the other members of the Executive Committee of VAL to ensure that the organisation achieves its charitable objectives, whilst abiding by its values and keeping within the law. Please note that this role can either be interim, lasting 12 months, or can be longer term.

The key areas of focus for the Chair of Voluntary Action Lewisham will be:

1. Providing strategic leadership

Working through the Executive Committee to provide leadership in its strategic role setting organisational objectives, plans and policies, particularly through periods of some uncertainty. Promoting team-working within the committee and the development of a common vision for the organisation.

2. Showcasing excellence and building partnerships

Being out and about and having an awareness of developments in the external environment that can impact on VAL and civil society in Lewisham, and sharing this insight to drive change and development within the organisation, in partnership with the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Committee. Using the role of the Chair to help initiate, develop and shape partnership working for the benefit of civil society in Lewisham.

3. Acting as an ambassador for the organisation and civil society in Lewisham

Whilst gathering insight and intelligence to help shape the organisation, you'll also have a role as an external ambassador for our work, helping to position the organisation well at a time of rapid change and development for the sector, representing the organisation at functions and meetings and acting as a spokesperson for the organisation as appropriate. You'll work with the Chief Executive to ensure the team are focused on being in the right places to help the organisation and the sector navigate change and emerge stronger, with the voice of the sector and its interests heard and understood within Lewisham and beyond.

4. Ensuring VAL fulfils its legal and financial obligations

With, and/or on behalf of the Executive Committee, to hold the key responsibility for ensuring that all requirements are met. This will include liaising with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the organisation's affairs. Working with the Treasurer to ensure that: the organisation's financial dealings are prudently and systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available; and that the

organisation has a satisfactory system for holding in trust for its beneficiaries any funds, property or assets, and for investing to the greatest benefit of the organisation.

5. Shaping VAL's work to be a good employer

Ensuring that the organisation has appropriate procedures to comply with current legislation and good practice, including employment, health and safety and non-discrimination. To provide support, supervise and appraise the work of the Chief Executive, and through them other staff, and fulfilling requirements of relevant policies (for example hearing appeals to decisions made by the Chief Executive as appropriate).

6. Ensuring good governance at VAL

Ensuring the business of committee meetings is dealt with, that decisions are arrived at and recorded, and that their implementation is monitored and evaluated. Determining, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Honorary Officers, the content of Executive Committee meeting agendas. Chairing meetings of the Executive Committee and its sub-committees (as appropriate), and other partnership groups for which VAL has responsibility. Taking Chair's Action decisions, for subsequent endorsement by the Board, on matters that require urgent attention. Ensuring that the committee regularly reviews its structure, role and relationship to the staff and implements change as necessary. Working with Trustees and the Chief Executive to manage risk, reputation and the 'brand' of VAL and its place in civil society.

In common with all Trustees, the Chair will also be responsible for:

1. Providing leadership and direction
2. Keeping within the law
3. Managing resources
4. Managing people
5. Being accountable for VAL

Person specification for the Chair

- Commitment to civil society in Lewisham
- Understanding of the Nolan principles of public life
- Understanding of the needs of local voluntary and community sector groups, and of volunteers
- Experience of working in the civil society sector and understanding of how civil society support organisations can increase the impact of work locally
- Understanding of public policy and the partnership role of civil society
- Experience of staff and financial management, ideally HR expertise
- Experience of managing change
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to chair meetings
- Ability to plan strategically
- Ability to represent the organisation to external organisations and networks
- Ability to commit the time needed to undertake the role effectively

Person specification for all members of the Executive Committee

In common with all Trustees, the Chair will need to have:

- Integrity
- A commitment to civil society in Lewisham
- An understanding of the duties of a Trustee and Company Director
- A commitment to equal opportunities and valuing diversity
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort in their duties as a Trustee
- Strategic vision
- Good independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team

We seek to achieve an Executive Committee composed of people with a balance of skills, experience and competence needed to govern Voluntary Action Lewisham, and who are representative of the local community. In being committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity, all Trustees must ensure that good equal opportunities practice is integrated into all aspects of the organisation and its work.

Time Commitment

The time commitment for the role is 1.5 days per month. This includes monthly board meetings, line management support to the Chief Executive and strategic meetings as needed.

How to Apply

Applications must be made via Reach Volunteering in the first instance. Application is by CV and covering letter. Your covering letter should state why you are interested in joining the organisation, how your skills would add value to the role and any other relevant information. The organisation is happy to have a preliminary chat with interested candidates so please get in touch if you would like this to be arranged.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Monday 30th July 2018**.

Applications must be emailed to trusteeworks@reachskills.org.uk