

catching LIVES



Chair Recruitment Pack

Contents

Welcome	p3
About us	p4
Our Board	p5
Chair - Role Description	p6
Person Specification	p8
Trustee Qualities	p9
Further information	p10
How to apply	p11



Welcome

Thank you for taking an interest in the opportunity to be our new Chair.

Catching Lives is a small charity making a big difference in our community. With a strong local reputation, our amazing staff and volunteers create a welcoming, safe and inclusive space, 7 days a week to help people who are homeless or insecurely housed.



Working collaboratively within our building and beyond, we aim to make best use of our resources and partnerships to increase the impact we can have on ending and preventing homelessness for each person.

Like any small charity, we face challenges, with rising need for homelessness support services at a time when public giving and volunteer numbers are declining. We continue to review and adapt what we do, for example, in recent years making improvements to our building and focusing on improved quality and consistency in our delivery. We have maintained a stable financial position and diversified our income streams, including the growth of our volunteer-led social enterprise. This has also meant some difficult decisions, as we go into the first winter in three years without extended provision so that we can fully focus on core day centre services.

Next year we will be writing our new strategy, with big decisions to be made, including the scope of our ambition for the building and how we further tailor our response to different needs within our client group. The external operating environment promises change and uncertainty, with a Government homelessness strategy pending and the prospect of local government reorganisation on the horizon. It's an exciting time to join Catching Lives and be part of shaping the future of this much-needed community service.

If you would like an informal conversation with me, or to visit the day centre, please contact the TrusteeWorks team at Reach Volunteering. Thank you for your interest, and I look forward to meeting you in due course.

Best regards,
Tasmin Maitland
CEO

About Catching Lives

Catching Lives is an award-winning homelessness charity with a strong reputation and local presence in East Kent. We support people who are homeless or insecurely housed, 7 days a week.

Our vision is of a society where everyone has a safe place to live and the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life.

We support people at our Canterbury day centre, providing essential facilities (including food, laundry, showers) and individual support to improve housing, health and social connection. We also run an activities programme including arts, crafts, creative writing, cookery, gardening and yoga.

Catching Lives' secondhand bookshop, in the Crooked House on Palace Street, is a volunteer-run social enterprise.

The Centre acts a multi-agency hub, hosting local partners such as Forward Trust, Rising Sun, Canterbury City Council Rough Sleeping Team, NHS complex needs nurse and Hep C Trust.



In a typical year we support over 500 people, with average daily footfall of 36.

Our current team is 8 full time and 4 part time staff, and c.70 volunteers.

To learn more about Catching Lives, visit the News page at: www.catchinglives.org or find @CatchingLives on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

Our Board

Catching Lives currently has 7 trustees, including our Chair who will be stepping down in November 2025 having come to the end of their term. While our recruitment process is underway for our new Chair, two of our existing trustees have agreed to become Interim Co-Chairs after our current Chair steps down and until our new Chair takes up position.

The Board uses time-limited 'task and finish' groups to act on specific issues, rather than regular sub-committees. The Board meets between 5.30-8pm on Wednesdays in February, March, May, September and November. There is an away day in June/July and an AGM in late November. Meetings are typically in-person with the option of occasional remote attendance.

Catching Lives is led by a friendly, engaged Board who provide a balance of support and challenge to the CEO. As a community-based charity, we encourage new and existing trustees to visit the Centre from time to time in order to meet staff, volunteers and clients and see the service in action. There are also occasional opportunities to represent Catching Lives in the community through networking and events.



Chair - About the role

The Chair leads the Board of Trustees, ensuring that it governs the charity effectively and in alignment with the charity's vision and mission.

Key aspects of the Chair's role include:

- **Inclusive Leadership:** Fostering a collaborative and inclusive Board culture, enabling trustees to work well together and make informed, collective decisions.
- **Support and Challenge:** Providing appropriate support and constructive challenge to the charity's Chief Executive to ensure accountability and strategic alignment.
- **Ambassadorial Role:** Acting as an ambassador for the charity, representing its values and interests to external stakeholders.

Role Description

- Ensure that the Board fulfils its function and legal duties, and that the charity follows best practice in governance.
- Maintain the Board's focus on strategic governance, as opposed to operations.
- Ensure that the charity is working within its mission, supported by clear strategic direction from the Board.
- Plan relevant, concise meeting agendas with input from the CEO, Treasurer and other trustees, supported by the Board Secretary.
- Chair the AGM and Board meetings, including writing papers and providing information as appropriate, arranging for meetings to be minuted (e.g. by the Board Secretary) and reviewing minutes prior to circulation.
- Ensure that Board meetings are inclusive and that all trustees have the opportunity to contribute; encourage questioning, challenge and curiosity from all Board members; and take the role of summarising and synthesising opinions and information so that decisions can be made collectively.
- Write the Chair's introduction to the Annual Report.
- Hold regular meetings (typically every 2 months) and an annual appraisal with the CEO to offer support, discuss progress with objectives and actions agreed at quarterly Board meetings, and identify upcoming areas of strategic work.
- Where appropriate, coordinate a response to HR issues (including access to specialist advice) or client complaints that have been escalated to Board level.
- Address breaches of the trustee code of conduct.
- Lead on recruitment of new trustees.

Person specification

Essential Criteria

The ideal candidate for Chair will bring the following experience, qualities, and commitments:

- **Governance Experience.** Experience as a trustee (You do not need to have previously been a Chair) OR at Director level within a charity.
- **Strategic Thinking.** A keen sense of strategic purpose and the ability to guide long-term direction.
- **Inclusive Leadership Style.** Able to inspire and support everyone to participate on an equal footing, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose.
- **Strong Communication & Listening Skills.** Able to listen actively and engage effectively. Comfortable with constructive challenge and debate, and skilled at encouraging the same in others while maintaining a collaborative Board environment.
- **Awareness of Sector Issues.** A willingness to develop your understanding of the issues in and around homelessness at both at a local and national level.
- **Commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).** A strong personal commitment to EDI principles in all aspects of leadership and governance.
- **Responsiveness & Availability.** As a small charity, urgent matters may arise that require the Chair's input, support, or consent. It is important that the Chair is available and responsive when needed.

In addition to the above, the Chair will automatically be a trustee and have the responsibilities and qualities of all trustees.

Responsibilities of all trustees:

- Support and provide advice on Catching Lives' purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Approve operational strategies and policies, monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee Catching Lives' financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Review and approve Catching Lives' financial statements.
- Provide support and challenge to Catching Lives' CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority and affairs.
- Keep abreast of changes in Catching Lives' operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of Catching Lives' own governance.
- Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect Catching Lives' interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of Catching Lives' objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

As a small charity, there will be times when the Trustees will need to be actively involved beyond Board meetings. This may involve scrutinising Board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, presenting externally, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.



Trustee person specification

What we are looking for

We want the board to reflect the people we work with and to have a range of different voices within it.

We know that diverse groups of people make better decisions and that's why we are particularly keen to hear from under-represented groups including: people from global majority backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people, people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, people with lived experience of homelessness and/or addiction either personally or through a close family member, non-graduates and first-in-family graduates.

- We are looking for people willing to bring energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and who will broaden the diversity of thinking on our Board.
- A willingness to develop knowledge and understanding of charity governance issues. For the role of Chair, previous charity governance experience is essential.
- Understanding of, and respect for, confidentiality.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Flexible and positive approach.
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a Trustee.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision and mission.
- Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Why should you join us?

The role as Chair is pivotal to us achieving the strategic plans of our charity. Our Trustee Board makes sure that Catching Lives delivers on its mission to help people find safe places to live and the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives. This is an opportunity to make a genuinely important contribution to a small community organisation that needs people with your skills and experience to continue providing its services to some of the most disadvantaged individuals.

Further information

Time Commitment

The expected time commitment for our new Chair is estimated at 3-6 hours per month. This will include:

- Attending 5 Board meetings annually - most meetings are in-person in Canterbury (usually at the Centre or another local venue if the Centre is unavailable) and typically last 2-2.5 hours.
- Attending an annual away day, occasional events & training sessions.
- Bi-monthly meetings with the Chief Executive with flexibility to respond swiftly to the occasional ad hoc issue.

Terms of appointment

Trustees are appointed for a 3-year term, with the potential for re-election. This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Trustees receive a welcome pack and an induction with the Board and CEO, including a daytime visit to the Centre. Training will be offered where necessary.

Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in the recruitment process

As a charity, we recognise the importance of having a diverse Board that reflects the wide range of communities across East Kent and the people we support.

We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer and deeply value the unique contributions that each individual brings to our organisation.

We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment—one in which all staff feel empowered, respected, and valued. Our goal is to ensure both our Board and our workforce are representative of the communities we serve throughout the region.

As part of this commitment, we actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in our recruitment processes.

If you require any specific adjustments to support your participation in the recruitment process, please do not hesitate to let us know.

How to apply

The TrusteeWorks team at Reach Volunteering are supporting Catching Lives with their Trustee recruitment. Applications should be made via TrusteeWorks in the first instance.

To apply please send your CV or a link to your LinkedIn profile, along with a Cover Letter outlining the following:

- Why you are interested in becoming our new Chair at Catching Lives.
- The skills and experience you will bring to the Board.
- What you would hope to get out of the role.
- A brief description of your prior governance experience.

Please send applications and enquiries to: trusteeworks@reachskills.org.uk

Applications will be accepted until 5pm on Friday the 5th of December.

