

Chair - Role Description

Volunteer Role title: Chair of Trustees of Carefree Kids

Summary of role

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| What day: | Varies |
| How many hours | Varies - average of 8 hours a month during term time. |
| Minimum Commitment | 2 years |
| Where | Sutherland House Sutherland Road Walthamstow London E17 5ER |

About your organisation

Carefree Kids is a small, expanding, community-based children's mental health charity based in Walthamstow, run by local people who live and/or work in or local to the borough. Our main service so far has been the provision of one-to-one therapeutic play sessions for 3–16-year-olds (counselling or other therapies for older children as appropriate) in their own school during the school day, and counselling for parents. The sessions are facilitated by our dedicated team of trained volunteers, some of whom are qualified or students from a variety of counselling or arts therapy courses. We have around 50 volunteers — male and female — from all walks of life, all ages, and all ethnic, social and educational backgrounds. Sessions are open ended with no fixed time limits imposed, respecting the child or young person's own pace. We stay with them for many months and even years, if the need is there. We use the child-led model of therapeutic play, as well as incorporating our own ideas and non-directive methods.

Purpose of role:

We are looking for an active Chair of Trustees for as we enter an exciting phase of development and diversification. A major area of our development work is to build on and formalise our training and to seek accreditation, as well as providing training for schools across Waltham Forest. We are looking for someone with the time, energy and commitment to help us move forward with our plans. The Chair will hold the Board and sub-committees to account for the Charity's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the staff team and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the entire staff team to achieve agreed objectives. He or she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the staff and Trustees.

Main activities/tasks:

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to CFK and its Board, ensuring that it has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of CFK
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for CFK
- Ensure that the Board regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the CFK, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the CFK

- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees
- Encourage positive change where appropriate and address and resolve any conflicts within the Board
- Appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead CFK effectively, and which also reflects the wider population
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by CFK

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of CFK and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees
- Work closely with the staff team to give direction to Board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

Relationship with the staff

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the staff team, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Support the staff team, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensure regular contact with the staff team and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each person can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the staff team to maintain an overview of the CFK's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for each member of the staff team in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that each member of the staff team has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support
- At present there is no managerial staff post, which can mean the Chair, in conjunction with other trustees, may need to get involved in issues that would be with a manager's remit. However, it is one of the priorities of the Board to employ a manager, subject to funding.
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Additional information

We have an active group of highly-qualified Trustees and several sub-committees and have an ethos of collective responsibility as the work of the Board is shared amongst us, so the full burden does not fall on the Chair.

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Who are we looking for?

You would need to have the time, energy and enthusiasm to commit to us for at least 2 years. You will need to be prepared to give time as required in addition to attending and chairing meetings.

A real interest in working therapeutically with children, young people and their families is essential. You may have a background in health, mental health, therapies, education or social work (through paid or voluntary work) but may know about this area through your own lived experience.

You would also need to have an understanding of the Charity Sector and of the responsibilities of being a trustee – training and information is available and we have current trustees with a wide range of knowledge and skills who will give their full support.

You will be able to demonstrate leadership and be used to collaborating with and motivating groups of people in a positive way.

You need to be a good communicator who can champion our organisation.

What you would gain from becoming our Chair:

The chance to work collaboratively with our dedicated and well-qualified staff, trustees and volunteers.

The prospect of making a real difference to children, young people, their parents, carers and schools in Waltham Forest and neighbouring boroughs.

The opportunity to build on what we have already achieved at this time when the need to improve our young people's mental health is all too apparent.

The opportunity to receive training.

Other information:

You would need to live close enough to our office near to Blackhorse Road station in Walthamstow to be able to attend meetings and drop in when necessary. There are limited parking spaces during the day.

As well as 4 full trustee meetings a year, you would also need to attend a trustee training session, an annual strategy day and be involved in a minimum of one of our sub-committees.

Unfortunately, our office is not wheelchair accessible and is based on the first floor of the building.

Some home working will be required.

References will be required, as will a DBS check.

Contact Details:

**Sutherland House
Sutherland Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 5BU**

Visitors by appointment only

T: 020 8558 7799

E: cfk@carefreekids.co.uk