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Service

Cogwheel Counselling

Registered Charity 1157141

Affordable help when life slips out of gear

Cogwheel Counselling

Chair to the Board of Trustees Vacancy (Spring 2024)

Job Title: Chair to the Board of Trustees

Reporting to: Board of Trustees

Remuneration: This is a volunteer role without remuneration

Time commitment: Four Board meetings per year. The Chair is also expected to have regular meetings with management staff and represent the charity at various events including fundraising events

Term of office: Trustees are appointed for a three-year term of office and may be eligible for reappointment at the end of term for a further additional term

Charity background

Cogwheel Counselling is a Cambridge-based mental health charity formed in 1988 which celebrated its 35th anniversary last year. Cogwheel provides affordable and accessible counselling to individuals of all ages (including children/young people) on low and limited incomes. These individuals would not otherwise be able to access counselling, either because they are unable to afford private counselling or capacity in NHS mental health services is extremely stretched and prioritised for those with acute needs.

The Charity's founding Christian ethos, which includes compassion, respect, listening and healing, still provides a motivation for many within the charity. The organisation seeks to provide a unique and effective therapeutic service available to everyone, irrespective of their financial circumstances and personal beliefs.

Cogwheel has a team of 20+ counsellors who in 2023 provided over 3,600 counselling sessions and the charity was approached by nearly 400 people for help. The charity operates from the Citizens Advice Bureau in Cambridge and offers a bespoke service of in-person, online and telephone counselling.

Cogwheel is funded by a mix of client session contributions, grants, donations and community fundraising.

The Charity Trustee Board has 9 Trustees, and the present Chair of Trustees is stepping down after 4 years in the role.

This is a voluntary position and an exciting opportunity to lead a charity which, through its mental health counselling service, provides an essential service for the city of Cambridge and surrounding areas, and can make a transformative difference to client's lives.

Chair to the Board of Trustees Job Description

Role Summary

The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and direction to the Board of Trustees to whom the role directly reports to.

The Chair's aim is to enable the board to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance, regulatory compliance and strategic direction of the charity.

The Chair will ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document and any other relevant legislation or regulations and to make sure that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its constitution.

The Chair's role is to work in partnership with the Charity's Senior Management, helping them achieve the agreed vision for the charity.

Objective

The Chair will hold the Board and Board of Management to account for Cogwheel Counselling's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees and helping ensure 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 Senior Management and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the Senior Management of the charity to achieve agreed objectives. They will act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the Charity's Senior Management.

Principal responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to the Charity and the Board by ensuring that everyone remains focused on the delivery of the organisation's charitable aims.
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity.
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives and provides a clear strategic direction for the Charity.
- Ensure that the Board is able to 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 risk.
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the Charity.
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees.
- Encourage positive change where appropriate, address and resolve any conflicts within the Board.
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively, and which also reflects the wider local population.
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by the charity.

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for the cause and the charity and as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate.
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events.
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders.

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 the Charity and that the Board takes collective ownership.
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees.
- Work closely with the Senior Management 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 Senior Management

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Management, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives.
- Support the Management, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles.
- Plan the annual cycle of board meetings.
- Ensure regular contact with the Management and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
- Liaise with the Senior Management to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary.
- Sit on appointment and disciplinary panels.
- Ensure annual remuneration review for staff in consultation with other Trustees.
- Ensure that the Head of Services has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.

Person Specification

In addition to the qualities required of a Trustee of the charity, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:

Personal Qualities

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives and cause.
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role.
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity.
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team approach.
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well including attending events.
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively.

Experience

- Experience of operating at a leadership level within an organisation and of chairing meetings and events
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Experience of external representation and managing stakeholders
- Experience of recruiting Trustees

Knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the Community Voluntary sector and current issues affecting it.
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together.
- A broad understanding of charity finance issues.
- Good understanding of charity governance issues.

Applicant information

- There is no closing date for applications and would encourage any interested applicants to apply in the near future.
- If you would like to talk about the role, please email Lis Silver, Chair of Trustees Chairoftrustees@coqwheel.org.uk so that a convenient time can be arranged.
- Please provide a CV and letter of application detailing personal qualities and relevant experience, and send to Clerk of Trustees Neil Davies e; neil@coqwheel.org.uk.
- Interviews will take place at a mutually convenient time.