

Joining Respond as a Trustee January 2024

Background Information

Founded in 1991, Respond is a national charity that seeks to transform the lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have experienced trauma. We are committed to bringing about positive change for our clients and their families, enabling them to lead richer and more resilient lives.

Respond's services for children, young people and adults are:

- Survivors' psychotherapy
- Family support services
- Advocacy, including ISVA and domestic abuse services.
- Training, consultancy and reflective practice

Respond supports charities that campaign for equality and inclusion with the aim to prevent abuse and equip individuals and their families to come to terms with their experiences and live more positive lives.

Our specialist training, supervision, reflective practice and consultancy equips agencies and health / social care providers to deliver trauma-informed services. This includes responding to and providing consultancy and training for significant events such as institutional abuse.

Our income base is diverse with trust funds and grants continuing to be a vital part of maintaining core services Respond offers, alongside donations from trusts and foundations. We also continue to have larger ongoing or spot contracts for our work for NHS commissioners and local authorities.

It is a good opportunity to join Respond's Board at this time, following our restructure and as we move towards the last year of our current strategy for 2022-25. Following a challenging period due to changing funding landscape and closure of some services, we will be focused on consolidation and improving impact measurement to secure long-term financial sustainability.

The role of the Board of Trustees

The Trustees (or 'Board members') are trustees of the charity and directors of the limited company. They are responsible for the governance, setting the strategic direction and monitoring the implementation of the strategy. The Board ensures that the charity acts in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

The Board has responsibility for:

- ensuring the charity acts in accordance with its charitable purpose and is providing public benefit and meets its legal obligations;
- making decisions in the best interests of the charity;

- developing the multi-year strategy;
- monitoring the management of the finances and resources of the organisation (operations, budget, property, workforce and tenders);
- monitoring performance, quality and impact;
- appointing and appraising the CEO.

Who we're looking for

Following a recent skills audit within the current Board, the Board is seeking trustees with the following skills or experiences;

- **Finance** - This person will have a financial qualification and will enable the Board to ensure the sound financial health of the charity. The person will collaborate with the Finance Director to ensure that the organisation has systems that meet sector best practice and ensures financial accountability. This trustee will be the Treasurer and chair the Finance Committee.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - This person will have experience in working in HR roles, preferably in the voluntary sector. This person will help review and strengthen Respond's HR policies, set up and lead the people committee and guide the Leadership team in dealing with complex HR issues including change management.
- **Fundraising, Marketing and Comms** – This person will work closely with our Head of Development and Commissioning on our income strategy and communications strategy.
- **Psychotherapy /working in a trauma informed setting** – As an organisation providing psychotherapy and arts therapies for autistic people and people with learning disabilities, we are looking for a trustee with experience of working as a therapist with a systems-psychodynamic approach.

The Board wants to ensure that the charity's 'beneficiaries' are represented in its governance. We encourage applications from people who have lived experience of autism, learning disabilities and/or trauma-informed work (either directly or through family members). How the Board carries out meetings will also be reviewed to accommodate adjustments requested by new trustees with learning disabilities or who are autistic. *(Please refer to a separate document if you or someone you know with lived experience may be interested)*

Person Specification

The following **knowledge, experience and skills** are essential for the role:

- a commitment to the mission of Respond;
- senior experience, ideally including one or more of the following areas – finance, human resources, fundraising/marketing, legal, compliance, hard-to-reach communities, caring/social care, psychotherapy, commissioning.
- ability to identify creative solutions to problems within limited resources;
- good analytical skills;
- ability to think strategically;
- independence and flexibility in thinking;

- ability to communicate efficiently and connect with a wide range of people, internally and externally;
- a willingness to meet the minimum time requirement (see below);
- an understanding of the legal duties of trusteeship set out in the Charity Commission's 'The Essential Trustee'; and
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to make decisions for the good of Respond.

Trustees will be expected to **demonstrate the following personal attributes:**

- good interpersonal skills including listening;
- commitment to excellence and high expectations of self and others;
- values people and the contribution of all stakeholders;
- sound judgment;
- team-oriented with a supportive approach.

Respond is dedicated to developing opportunities for Trustees to be appointed reflecting greater and varied diversity among our Board of Trustees, so we welcome applications by suitably qualified candidates irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, marital or parental status, age, sexual orientation or gender identity. We particularly welcome applications from Black and minority ethnic candidates who are under-represented on the board.

What we offer

New trustees will:

- Receive induction and training;
- Develop new skills and competencies;
- Meet new people and develop professional networks;
- Contribute to ensuring that the charity offers high quality effective services to autistic people and people with learning disabilities who have experienced trauma, who are in need;
- An annual appraisal

Time requirement - What is involved?

Trustees attend eight Board meetings per year approximately every six-eight weeks currently on a Tuesday evening 5:30pm to 8pm. Meetings are in London, and remote access is available for trustees who live/work outside London.

Each Trustee is expected to be an active member of the Respond community, committing 5 to 10 hours per month to the charity which may also involve being on a sub-committee such as; Finance Committee, Clinical Governance and Safeguarding Committee each of which meets four times per year, typically during normal office hours online or in London.

Trustees are expected to attend an induction session at Respond prior to their first Board meeting. Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings. Other meetings are away-days over a weekend.

Trustees are invited to the annual general meeting, which takes place typically in November.

Trustees may claim expenses incurred in effectively carrying out their duties, in accordance with Respond's Trustee Expenses Policy.

Papers are distributed one week in advance of meetings. In addition, Trustees are expected to review documents and communicate with other board members and senior staff between meetings. Every effort will be made to ensure that trustees with learning disabilities or who are neurodiverse have access to documents in formats that they can understand or have the support available for them to fully participate as trustees.

Occasionally, circumstances may require urgent meetings (either face-to-face or virtual) to examine strategic issues or items requiring Board approval

Duration of the role

Board terms are for a five-year term following which the person can be elected to serve another three years.

Further information

For more information about Respond and its current Trustees, please visit the website at

<https://respond.org.uk/trustees/>

Further information about the role of a Trustee is available about "The Essential Trustee" information - [Here](#)

How to apply

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter showing your interest and how you meet the requirements of the role to ceo@respond.org.uk.

We will be undertaking a rolling recruitment programme and trustees will then be in touch with you to confirm receipt of your application and inform you regarding interview timelines.

For an informal chat about the role, either with Acting CEO Georgina Hoare or Chair of the Trustees, Oliver Lewis, please email ceo@respond.org.uk