TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

For prospective trustees

Abstract

This pack provides an overview of HOPS and of the roles and responsibilities of being a trustee. It is designed for people interested in joining our board of trustees but also as

Updated June 2026

Our cause ----------2

The difference we make ----------2

What we are looking for----------2

Current strategy & key priorities for board ----------3

Our Current Trustees ----------3

How HOPS operates ----------4

Support & training for new trustees ----------4

Recruitment process----------4

Links for wider information----------5

The Board of Trustees - Roles & Responsibilities----------6

Roles on the Board----------6

Working groups supporting the Board's work ----------6

Trustee role description ----------8

General Board Member Role Description----------8

Our cause

HOPS is a grass roots charity, based and working in Sunderland. We assist people on the path to good health. Offering holistic therapies and therapeutic activities, we support individuals to deal with anxiety and stress; reduce social isolation and manage their mental health and physical health concerns. We aim to work with individuals experiencing significant deprivation, whether through health issues, stress, social isolation or financial difficulties.

We prioritise unpaid carers, individuals with chronic health conditions, older people and those living through difficult circumstances. We support those in areas where serious health problems are higher than average; where knowledge of self-care activities is often minimal; and where low income would usually preclude access to holistic therapies and activities.

Our holistic approach to improving wellbeing acknowledges that mental, physical and emotional health are intimately linked to each other as well as to social and environmental factors.

We help people to "Feel better; Stay well" (our motto). We seek to enable them to experience less pain and stress now and to cope better with it in future.

The difference we make

Holistic therapies are relaxing and boost the ability to cope with stress. Therapies can help the individual to find a place of calm where they can develop emotional resilience and think more clearly about how to cope with the challenges in their life. They work very effectively alongside conventional medicine; but those who most need them often have neither knowledge of what is available nor the finance to access it.

Feedback from beneficiaries helps us to know the impact we have:

'It's an escape from constant worry and work' // ' Hops is a vital lifeline to help with my health and mental health I really enjoy being part of a really friendly non-judgemental group I can totally relax there.' // 'I enjoy the positive transformation to my physical and emotional wellbeing and my mental health after attending hops sessions' // 'The therapies are most enjoyable. When you live alone and family are far away it is the only time you feel human touch. It helps you to relax.' // HOPS provide a safe escape, for a short time, to indulge in precious restorative time…'

What 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.

You do not necessarily need previous governance (being on boards) experience – we welcome a wide variety of knowledge and experience and will provide a full induction and enable access to training.

We are asking just for an initial commitment of 1 year. Get involved, support our development and then you can review and decide whether to commit to a term of 3 years.
You must be at least 18 years old to be a charity trustee.

Current strategy & key priorities for board

In order to achieve its vision, HOPS has identified the following significant strategic action points: -

Maintain existing paid staff posts and review hours with aim to increase.

Secure additional staff posts in order to increase capacity to meet activity demand.

Further develop existing and new partnerships with like-minded organisations across Sunderland, County Durham and South Tyneside.

Identify under-represented groups accessing HOPS' services and develop relationships with appropriate partners to research and develop appropriate provision.

Develop fee-earning opportunities to diversify income and to support wider activities. e.g. Online wellbeing courses; Wellbeing days for private and statutory organisations; expand liaison with Social Prescribing Service

Our Current Trustees

Lesley Barefoot – Chair (and Founder of HOPS)

Margaret Grainger

Gillian Gill – Treasurer

Pauline Scott – Non-voting Trusted Advisor

How HOPS operates

HOPS has a small but experienced and dedicated staff team, supported by volunteers and trustees. Our trustees and staff bring a breadth of experience including lived experience of unpaid caring duties, health/stress issues, problems of old age; establishing, developing, managing community projects; governance, including financial expertise; team leadership / staff matters; strategic thinking; publicity /marketing and holistic therapies and activities,

Trustees meet every 4 to 6 weeks (approximately 10 times per year, according to need). Meetings currently alternate between in-face meetings at The Old Rectory and online (zoom) sessions.

Individual trustees get involved between meetings at varying levels based upon their own interests and availability.

We have working groups for Finance and Staff and other areas as appropriate when needed.

Support & training for new trustees

New trustees are given the opportunity to have conversations with existing staff and trustees – to understand who is who, what current roles and responsibilities are and our plans and hopes for HOPS' next steps.

HOPS will provide you with information from relevant bodies to ensure that you are aware of a trustee's responsibilities plus the support and guidance available.

We can appoint a current trustee to act as a mentor to you, who will be able to respond to and support you with any queries, questions and thoughts. They can guide you through board papers and advise on how you can raise questions at meetings. All trustees will be available to support you on any questions and provide guidance as required.

Recruitment process

HOPS requests that individuals apply through submitting a letter outlining the following points:

Why you are interested in being a trustee for HOPS;

What you feel you can bring to our organisation;

What you would like to get out of joining us;

Any particular areas you would like to engage in.

Please include details for 2 referees.

All applications will be viewed by current trustees and the CEO. Applicants will be invited to have an initial chat with the Chair (by phone or zoom). Following that, they will be invited to meet with further trustees and senior staff.

Links for wider information

On HOPS:

www.healing-sunderland.org.uk

Facebook

On Trustee roles and responsibilities:

Support for charity trustees (beingacharitytrustee.campaign.gov.uk)

Become a trustee | Reach Volunteering

The legal duties of trustees | NCVO

The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Board of Trustees - Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees acts as a single entity, with joint responsibility for all decisions.

Trustees have overall responsibility for meeting the organisation's legal duties and ensuring it is properly managed, and for promoting good practice in all its activities.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that HOPS acts in accordance with its constitution. It oversees all work done in the name of HOPS and creates and implements it's policies. The Board's remit includes long term planning, funding, finance and staffing.

When a vacancy arises, existing Trustees will audit the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to enhance the work of the Board and appoint accordingly.

Roles on the Board

Chair The Chair is the key role and is expected to provide leadership for the Board.

Vice Chair The Vice Chair supports the Chair and will take on responsibilities as requested or as necessary (e.g. in the absence of the Chair)

Treasurer This key role is usually undertaken by someone with financial experience, with the ability to advise the Board on its best course of action in financial matters as well as supervising the handling of accounts and regular financial activities.

Secretary The Secretary acts as administrator to the Board and is an active member of the Board. They are usually responsible for recording decisions in minutes of meetings and ensuring that they are implemented.

General Board Members

All Board members have an overall responsibility for meeting HOPS' legal duties and ensuring that the organisation is properly managed. This includes ensuring that finances are properly handled.

Working groups supporting the Board's work

The Board has working groups to assist it in the exercise of its responsibilities in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Each group consists of a small number of Trustees and others with relevant skills, knowledge and experience. The composition of the group is decided by the Board. Currently the working groups are as follows:-

Finance and Fundraising

This holds an overview of HOPS financial situation. The Board receives reports from the Treasurer and the CEO at each meeting. The Finance working group meets as necessary to review in depth the financial viability of HOPS and if necessary, to recommend specific measures. The group may ask specific individuals to work with the administrative staff in identifying, preparing and submitting funding applications.

Staffing

This working group deals with issues concerning the employment of paid staff, including recruitment, appraisals, disciplinary and any other related matters. It also oversees recruitment, training and support of voluntary staff and of self-employed therapists and tutors.

Policy

This working group develops and reviews policies that underpin the work of HOPS in line with the Constitution and current legislation and guidelines.

Committees keep notes of their meetings and report back to full Board meetings

Trustee role description

General Board Member Role Description

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that HOPS achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that HOPS has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge senior staff to enable HOPS to grow and thrive, and through this to achieve our goals.

Board members have a collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals. No individual Board member has sole responsibility or authority for the operation of the organisation. The Board may delegate responsibility for a specific action to a named trustee or trustees.

Duties (HOPS acknowledges that not all trustees will take on all duties)

• Support and provide advice on HOPS' purpose, vision, goals and activities.

• Participate fully in Board meetings, to express views and concerns as they arise and if unable to attend meetings send apologies.

• Together with all Board members to carry out the duties of the Board, ensuring that HOPS meets its objectives as set out in the constitution.

• Together with all Board members ensure that the Organisation is complying with the law. •

Approve operational strategies and policies and monitor and evaluate their implementation.

• Together with all Board members and the Treasurer, check to see that income and expenditure are in line with budget predictions.

• Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation. • Ensure that

key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively. • Review and

approve HOPS' financial statements.

• Provide support and challenge to HOPS' CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority and role.

• Keep abreast of changes in HOPS' operating environment.

• Contribute to regular reviews of HOPS' own governance. Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.

• Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect HOPS' interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third party interests.

• Contribute to the broader promotion of HOPS' objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

• Where appropriate represent the Organisation at meetings and functions

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.

Personal skills and qualities

• Willingness and ability to understand and accept responsibilities and liabilities as a trustee 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 board member.

• 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.

Knowledge & Experience

We are looking for a diverse range of people to make up HOPS' board of trustees. The following gives examples of the type of experience we would welcome. All are important, but whether you feel you have 1 of the following or all of the following, your interest and passion for being engaged in our work and your willingness to volunteer your time counts for a great deal. A sense of fairness, people skills, wanting to make a difference are all just as important as technical knowledge or professional expertise.

Charities / voluntary sector Board/committees Strategic development

Equity, diversity & inclusion Fundraising & income generation Building partnerships

Wellbeing Lived experience of unpaid caring Holistic health Community engagement

Mental health Chronic illness

Knowledge of HOPS' field of work Good people skills Problem solving Asking difficult questions

Decision making

Terms of appointment

Terms of office

• Trustees are usually appointed for a 3 year term of office and will not normally serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. Continuation as a trustee may be renewed for one year at a time with the unanimous consent of the other trustees.

● We currently ask that you aim to commit to a minimum of 12 months. This ensures that you give yourself the opportunity to fully engage with HOPS; to understand our aims, values and people; and to ensure that HOPS knows you.

• This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses can be reimbursed.

Time commitment

• Trustees meet every 4 to 6 weeks (approximately 10 times per year). Meetings currently alternate between in-face meetings at The Old Rectory and online (zoom) sessions. Meetings are 1.5 to 2 hours in length with upto approximately 30mins of advance reading needed.

• Attending strategy / development days.

Working Group membership

Ad hoc and occasional support through working groups and / or support to the executive team.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee with HOPS, please do get in touch with any further queries.

E-mail: info@HOPSwellbeing.org

Tel: 0191 5483722