

Appointment of

Trustees



Introduction

Homeless Link is a national membership charity supporting and representing organisations working directly with homeless people across England. We have around 800 members, representing all sizes and types of homelessness and supported housing organisations, based in every region of England.

Our vision is a country free of homelessness. At Homeless Link we think it is a scandal that anyone in the 21st Century should be denied a place to call home.

We recognise that people do and will continue to become homeless for a variety of personal and structural reasons. The challenge, we are seeking to meet with our members, is to create a service and policy environment where those who have the ability to help:

- Act faster to prevent people losing their homes;
- Ensure that if someone becomes homeless it is for the shortest time possible;
- Provide those with complex problems with long-term accommodation and the help they need;
- Support people to realise their potential and avoid homelessness in the future.

In this way we exist to change the way that we, as a society, think and act towards individuals who have become homeless.

We do this by influencing policy and strategy at a national and local level. We also work, in partnership with our members, to develop services that practically improve our response to homelessness and its causes.

Our core activities include;

Advice and support:

We look for good practice on the ground, share this and help others to improve the quality of their work. We also develop new products that can help improve services and provide funds for our campaign to end homelessness. Our national and regional teams offer support, link up agencies as well as providing advice, consultancy and tools to help improve services.

Information, research and training:

We provide access to a wealth of up-to-date information, including good practice toolkits, the latest research, sector news and policy updates. Homeless Link also pilots new approaches to tackling homelessness and supports staff to improve their skills through training. With data on thousands of services, we use information to identify trends and enable the public and professionals to find local help and support.

Influencing:

We work with local and national Government to improve the policies that affect homeless people. Using our detailed knowledge of what's happening on the ground we campaign to challenge preconceptions and help bring about change.

Networking and events:

Through our national, regional and online events we provide professionals with the opportunity to network with others in the sector – sharing knowledge, experience and solutions.

As a membership body and a voice for the homelessness sector our approach in all things is to listen and learn, act and then speak. By listening we gather the evidence we need to develop trust and credibility with our partners. We help others to understand the problem, identify solutions and by building partnerships and alliances create the desire to act. When we speak we base what we say on what we have heard, learned and done so as to be authentic and authoritative at all times.





The current context

The next five years will be a critical time for the homelessness sector. There will be further constraints on public spending alongside a broader debate about the role of the state. We will also continue to experience population growth, migration flows and demographic change that will place different demands on homelessness and public services as a whole.

As a membership body we act as the catalyst for our members taking the lead on initiatives to rethink how services are designed and delivered.



Areas of influence

Through a series of programmes and initiatives, often in partnership with others, we are playing a leading role in the development of tools, policy and practice that add value to our membership and take us closer to consigning homelessness to the history books. These include:

Homeless Watch

We monitor the latest information on homelessness, map trends, produce research reports and publish new live data tables for policy makers and practitioners to better understand the needs in their local area and inform their work.

StreetLink

In partnership with St Mungo's we have continued to roll out this information portal allowing members of the public to send an alert when they are concerned that someone is sleeping rough and with us helping connect them to local support. During 2015/16 we received over 44,000 phone calls and 120,000 visits to the website. We passed 19,000 referrals of people sleeping rough on to local authorities, which resulted in a positive outcome on 45% of occasions.

Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution

We have convened one national and 6 regional events bringing together over 200 services to develop cross-sector working between the homelessness sector and the refugee/migrant sector. Based on this learning, we started work on producing guidance materials. We identified two regions for in-depth work to test out new approaches to supporting destitute migrants, build greater collaboration between services and increase the number of available options to vulnerable migrants who fall outside of traditional support structures.

Making Every Adult Matter

People with multiple and complex needs face a combination of problems including homelessness, substance abuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health. They fall through the gaps between services and systems, making it harder for them to address their problems and lead fulfilling lives.

In coalition with Clinks and Mind we work with statutory and voluntary agencies across the country to close up the gaps and to design and deliver better coordinated services for people with multiple needs.

In-Form

As an incubator of tools and ideas to strengthen the capacity of the sector, we have launched an online case management application called In-Form. It has now been adopted by over 50 homelessness agencies and is being used by 8,500 staff across England to improve the quality of services and response time in handling cases.

We have since developed new versions of the system to provide Homeless Link members with the data and evidence needed to sharpen the focus of their services and policies.

A Social Investment Fund

In May this year we launched a £4.5 million Social Investment Fund, the first of its kind for charities and social enterprises working to reduce homelessness.

We will offer unsecured loans of between £25,000 - £150,000 to homelessness organisations and partner with them to unlock innovative solutions and develop new models of delivery.





Governance and management

Homeless Link is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The Board currently has 10 Trustees, who are also Directors of the company. In addition to Trustees elected from the membership, the Board can appoint up to 7 independent Trustees. Each Trustee is elected or appointed for an initial term of 3 years and may be elected or appointed for further periods of 3 years up to a maximum of 9 years.

Whilst the Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the governance and direction of Homeless Link, the day to day operations of Homeless Link are managed by the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team. The team comprises of Rick Henderson, the Chief Executive, Jacqui McCluskey, Director of Policy and Communications, Mark McPherson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Innovation and Matt Harrison, Director of Business and Social Enterprise.

Our trustees

Piers Feilden MBE (Chair)

Piers Feilden MBE spent 30 years in the food industry, since which he has held a wide variety of non-executive roles including that of the chair of a housing association and the chair of a charity providing offending behaviour programmes in prisons. He is currently a trustee of The Henry Smith Charity and a trustee of Langley House Trust.

Ian Watson (Treasurer)

Ian is Managing Director of the consultancy business White Rose Capital.

Steve Benson

Steve is the Chief Executive of Two Saints, based in Hampshire

Marie Benton

Marie is Chief Executive of the charity Choir with No Name, which she founded in 2007.

Amanda Dubarry

Amanda is the Chief Executive of Step by Step

Fiona Humphrey

Fiona is the Chief Executive of Providence Row Housing Association.

Maura Jackson

Maura is director of BYPHS Charity, helping young homeless people in Bolton. She is also Chair of domestic violence charity, Paws for Kids.

Shelagh O'Connor

Shelagh is the Chief Executive of New Horizon Youth Centre based in North London.

Maggie Punyer

Until her retirement Maggie was a Director at Inside Housing's publisher Ocean Media Group, which she helped to found.

Jeremy Swain

Jeremy has worked with homeless people since 1980. Starting out as a volunteer he is now Chief Executive of the charity Thames Reach.

General trustee responsibilities

Our commitment as Trustees is to:

- Ensure effective governance in compliance with charity law, the Charity Commission's regulatory guidelines and Homeless Link's Constitution;
- Use our knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that Homeless Link pursues its charitable objectives and deploys its resources accordingly;
- Contribute by giving firm strategic direction to the charity, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets;
- Ensure effective and efficient financial stability of Homeless Link through the monitoring and control of its finance and administrative systems and investment policy;
- Protect the property, reputation and resources of Homeless Link through the ongoing identification, monitoring and management of risks to the Charity and its assets;
- Act as an Ambassador to raise the profile of Homeless Link;
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience we may have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions;
- Attend a minimum of 4 Board meetings a year.





The context to these appointments

Homeless Link is now seeking up to 3 new Trustees to join a strong Board and Executive Team in bringing expertise, strategic guidance and skilled service.

This is a very exciting time for Homeless Link.

Growth and Innovation:

Over recent years we have grown into being a dynamic movement of around 800 member organisations focused on supporting front-line agencies to deliver long-term solutions to homelessness and excellence in supported housing.

Recognising the multiple challenges facing the sector we have continued to be ambitious in pushing the boundaries of what we provide our members to maximise their opportunities for success. We have built coalitions, such as Making Every Adult Matter, to design and deliver coordinated services for individuals with complex needs. We have strengthened capacity in the sector through our training courses, conferences and consultancy. We have also continued to drive an innovation agenda, by rolling out our In-Form case management software in over 50 different agencies and launching a new funding mechanism for the sector in the form of a social investment fund.

Over the coming years we plan to continue pioneering new tools, products and initiatives to help our members excel in the delivery of services and housing to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Political momentum to end rough sleeping:

In parallel to plans to increase the supply of housing across the country each of the 3 main political parties have also made commitments to increase the support for homelessness prevention and bring an end to rough sleeping over the next decade.

Homeless Link has forged strong relationships across Government and is perfectly positioned to work with Civil Servants and service delivery member organisations to turn these manifesto commitments into meaningful action and lasting change.

High-Performing Executive Team:

The Executive Team, led by Rick Henderson, is a dynamic and highly committed group that works in great unity, embodying and exemplifying high professional and personal integrity standards. The overall staff team of approximately 50 Full Time Employees is sharp-minded, young and warm-hearted.



Person description

Our primary requirement is for individuals who can contribute to the development of Homeless Link's strategy.

Strategic leadership - Following our merger with Sitra in 2016 (a membership body for the supported housing sector), diversification of income and expansion of our social enterprise we have grown significantly in scope. As an organisation set up to serve its members with products and services that continually move them closer to fulfilling their missions, we see ourselves as incubators of innovation and new ways of working. In all of this we need to ensure that we have a Board that is adept at scanning the horizon, tackling strategic decisions and testing new ideas before roll-out. We also need to balance the application of resources between these new ventures and our core activities of supporting our members and representing the sector. We would like one of our new appointees to be an individual who has worked at senior levels and is familiar with the disciplines of strategic decision-taking.

In addition, to support Homeless Link's future development, it would be helpful if one or more individuals had expertise in:

Finance - Homeless Link handles over £4m in public funds, charitable donations and revenues from its social enterprise each year and takes financial management very seriously. The launch of a Social Investment Fund adds an additional level of complexity to our finances and whilst exciting and high profile also increases the importance of strong risk management at Board level. The Board does currently have a nominated Treasurer, however we aim to always have several trustees with expertise in business, accountancy or charity finance, and use this within our committees. To ensure succession planning, we would like one of our new appointees to have this strength. An accountancy qualification is desirable.

The Health and Social Care sector - We would like one of our new appointees to be an individual who shares our vision and can complement the general skills we seek with one of a range of knowledge areas relevant to our work. Experience of working in areas related to the health, mental health and social care systems, commissioning of services would be of particular value, as would policy-making.

In addition to these specific areas of professional experience we are seeking individuals who have;

- Experience of organisational and strategic leadership;
- An understanding of the importance of effective governance as well as insight into the social, political and funding environment in which Homeless Link operates.



Personal qualities

The following qualities and skills are also sought in these new Trustees:

- Empathy with and commitment to Homeless Link's vision, mission and values as well as an ability to communicate this enthusiasm to others;
- Strategic vision and good judgement;
- Ability to speak one's mind, challenge constructively and the confidence to engage and contribute in areas outside your specialism;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively;
- Ability to work well as part of a diverse team of Trustees and in support of the Executive Team;
- Integrity, honesty, flexibility and the ability to be proactive;
- An ability and willingness to represent Homeless Link in an ambassadorial capacity;
- A strong understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of Trustees.

We encourage applications from people with lived experience of homelessness, from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds and/or with disabilities.

Time commitment and terms of appointment

The total time commitment of a Trustee is likely to equate to approximately 10-12 days per annum. This will include:

- Preparing for and participating in the four Board meetings and serving on a Board Committee or working group.
- Occasional visits to Homeless Link supported initiatives and events to keep you informed of the work that we do and the way that we work.
- Supporting senior staff in certain projects, initiatives or areas in which they have specialist skills, knowledge or experience.

Trustees are appointed for a term of 3 years with a possibility of a second and third term.

The roles are unpaid but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

How to apply

Applications should be sent by email to Mark Powys-Smith at mark.powys-smith@macaulaysearch.com

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 28th June 2017 at 5pm BST.

Your application should comprise:

- A full CV, including educational and professional qualifications, a full employment history showing the more significant positions, responsibilities held and relevant achievements;
- A covering note of not more than one and a half pages summarising your proven ability related to the person description; and daytime, evening and/or mobile numbers (to be used with discretion).

Process

Macaulay Search has been engaged as advisor on these appointments. A selection of candidates will be invited to be interviewed on either Tuesday 11th or Wednesday 12th July by the appointment panel chaired by Piers Feilden (Chair).

You can expect to hear from Macaulay Search if you have been invited for interview by end of the day on Tuesday 4th July.