



National Childbirth Trust Chair

Candidate Brief
March 2013



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of NCT.

NCT is the UK's largest charity for parents. Since 1956 we have been a trusted voice and provided essential support for millions of parents.

Our vision is a world where parents are valued and supported to build a strong society, believing that a child's early years significantly impact on the future they help to shape. We believe our role is to help parents through what will be one of the most challenging changes in their lives and we offer services across the UK, from antenatal and parent preparation courses through to day to day peer support based in our local branches. We guide people through the transition to parenthood, from pregnancy up to their children's second birthday.

We help parents both through our own activities and by working externally with health professionals and maternity and family service providers as well as policymakers, opinion formers and employers.

In 2010 we set ourselves a challenging new goal; to benefit 20 million parents by 2020. The Board of Trustees is a key part of the team needed to deliver this goal, and we are seeking a strong Chair to work in partnership with our Chief Executive and to lead and inspire our Trustees.

I'm delighted that you are considering applying for this role and I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

Seána Talbot
Acting Chair



About the National Childbirth Trust

NCT Key messages

Who we are

NCT is the UK's largest charity for parents. Since 1956 we have been a trusted voice and provided essential support for millions of parents.

What we do

We offer services across the UK, from antenatal and parent preparation courses through to day to day peer support based in our local branches. We guide people through the transition to parenthood, from pregnancy up to their children's second birthday. We believe our role is to help parents through what will be one of the most challenging changes in their lives.

Our online support, events and helpline reaches millions of people each year.

How we do it

We help parents both through our own activities and by working externally with health professionals and maternity and family service providers as well as policymakers, opinion formers and employers.

We have 10,000 volunteers on hand to help with local branch support and 1,000 NCT Practitioners to deliver courses. Alongside our traditional classes we also provide antenatal and breastfeeding support through the NHS and Children's Centres in England as well as providing parent focussed training for health professionals.

Our vision

Our vision is a world where parents are valued and supported to build a strong society, believing that a child's early years significantly impact on the future they help to shape.

Why we exist

Confident and supported parents are better prepared to raise strong families and contribute positively to their local communities and society in general. We understand parents are key to the development of happy and well-adjusted children. So our focus is always on new and expectant parents, and their early parenting experience.

Becoming a parent is a major life change. The transition to parenthood has huge emotional and physical impact. At the same time there are many other changes taking place in relationships, careers, finances and general life balance.

Parents often care for their babies and young children under difficult circumstances, while facing more than one challenge at a time. With social and economic pressures and an array of conflicting advice from official and unofficial sources, everyday issues can start to become real problems.

We want to help them distinguish between high-quality, factual information and personal opinion and to look for solutions that help them to meet all their needs.

Key stats and facts

We have **100,000** members. Our membership scheme enables parents to engage in their local NCT community, courses and events and raises money to help NCT to continue to deliver services such as our helpline and to support disadvantaged parents through a range of practical outreach projects.

We have **318** branches throughout the UK offering face-to-face support to parents and parents-to-be and running events such as Bumps and Babies groups where new parents make friends and NCT Nearly New Sales, where parents can pass on their old baby clothes and pick up low-cost toddler essentials, saving money and reducing waste.

We have **1,000** NCT Practitioners who support over **80,000** new and expectant parents each year. NCT practitioners' training is university accredited and ours is the only educational programme that teaches facilitators of antenatal and perinatal education.

16% of parents receiving NCT antenatal education do so free through contracts with NHS and Children's Centres. Reduced rates for courses and membership are also available for those on reduced incomes.

Around **900** health and family services professionals receive NCT training each year. NCT Professional's training service offers a range of bespoke workshops for health professionals and Children's Centre staff as well as training for Maternity Service Liaison Committees (MSLCs), to help increase their effectiveness.

Every year our website attracts over **1.8 million** visitors. The website is a key touch point for parents seeking information on services and topics of concern and interest during the transition to parenthood.

Our helpline attracts **40,000** calls every year. It offers access to specialist information and support on pregnancy and birth and breastfeeding, from highly-trained breastfeeding counsellors and antenatal teachers. Our helpline also offers postnatal support with issues such as crying, sleep and depression in the weeks after birth.

Every year **380,000** parents receive our information sheets. NCT produces fact based information sheets free for parents to assist them in making informed decisions about their birth and parenting choices. They are distributed via health and social care professionals, volunteers and NCT Practitioners as well as being available for downloads from the NCT website.

2010-2020 Strategy

Since 2005, the launch of NCT's first strategy, we have doubled in size, increased the number of people we support and created more services for them, as well as succeeding in many of our campaign goals. So we have updated our vision, set new priorities for the future and developed a strategy for the coming decade – taking us to 2020.

Our aim is to benefit **20 million parents by 2020**

To do this we will focus on:

Growth – increasing our reach, both geographically and socially as well as expanding our postnatal and early years services

Thought leadership – using our position of influence to change the perception of parenthood and create breakthrough solutions to address the dilemmas parents face.

Partnership – working more formally with other organisations to increase the support available to new parents

Five key themes will underpin all of our work to achieve our goals for 2020:

- Creating **confident parents**
- Creating **supportive services** for new and expectant parents
- Creating a **positive image of parenthood**
- Providing **high-quality, impartial information**
- Building a **more efficient organisation**

We are calling on everyone in our community of members, volunteers, staff, practitioners, health and family services professional, partner organisations and sponsors to help us achieve what we need to in these key areas

Examples of how the charity is expanding its reach include working to increase NHS and local authority contracts to deliver services to parents. Already, 16% of parents receiving NCT antenatal education do so free through contracts with NHS and Children's Centres. NCT provides free breastfeeding support through NCT breastfeeding counsellors and NCT-trained breastfeeding peer supporters, reaching parents from all backgrounds and parenting in a variety of situations.

About the role

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The main duties of the Chair of the NCT Board of Trustees are:

- To provide leadership and management to the Board of Trustees, enabling Trustees to fulfil their collective responsibilities for the governance of the charity, and for setting the charity's strategic and long term direction and goals
- To chair Board meetings effectively, facilitating all Trustees' contributions and enabling the Trustees to work together constructively
- To ensure (with the support of the Honorary Secretary) that Board processes and procedures comply with the charity's governing documents, Byelaws, Board Standing Orders and Policies, and that appropriate decisions are correctly made
- To report to members on the performance of the charity and chair the charity's AGM and any other general meetings called from time to time
- To build and maintain an effective working relationship with the CEO based on mutual respect and understanding of their different roles in the leadership of the charity, and ensure contact and communication through regular 1:1 sessions
- To work closely with the CEO to:
 - develop the Board's agenda
 - ensure that Trustees decisions are implemented
 - to ensure that the charity is managed effectively, in line with agreed strategy, plans and policies, with governing documents, and agreed delegated authority
- To lead the CEO's annual performance appraisal, consulting other Trustees, and recommend to Remuneration Committee any change in CEO remuneration and benefits
- To support the President as required in carrying out her role
- To be a member ex-officio of all Board Committees and support and advise Honorary Officers and Committee Chairs on the work of their Committees
- To support, advise and guide individual Trustees to enable them to contribute fully and effectively to the work of the Board
- To carry out any other roles, responsibilities or duties specified for the Chair in governing documents, Byelaws, Board Standing Orders and Policies, agreed Financial Procedures or as otherwise agreed by the Board

CHAIR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Search Criteria

- Commitment to NCT's charitable objectives
- Excellent chairing skills
- Willingness to commit the appropriate amount of time
- Ability to lead, motivate and manage the board of trustees
- Able to work with and provide leadership to the CEO and SMT (senior management team)
- Experience of board development
- Experience of working at senior level in a large and complex organisation
- Ability to influence a diverse group of stakeholders
- Experience of Group board structure
- A range of influential NHS contacts and/or a commercial background would be an advantage

ON APPOINTMENT:

The successful candidate will be appointed by the Board of Trustees for a term of 2 years. After this time, the Chair will be eligible to stand for election by the membership (candidates are reminded to review the supplied copy of the NCT Articles of Association for further details).

The timetable:

- The closing date for applications is **COB Friday 22nd March**.
- **Preliminary interviews** with Trustees Unlimited will be held in central London between **Thursday 28th March and Thursday 11th April**.
- **Interviews with the Nominations Committee will be held w/c 22nd April**, dates and times TBC in due course/upon receipt of application.
- **Informal meetings with NCT's Chief Executive will also be held w/c 22nd April**, dates and times TBC in due course/upon receipt of application.
- An NCT Board meeting is scheduled for Monday 29th April and the successful candidate will be contacted thereafter.

How to apply

To apply for this post, please provide the following:

- a short introductory statement demonstrating your motivation for this role
- a supporting statement, explaining how you believe your skills and experience match the requirements of the role, directly addressing the person specification,
- details of two referees, one of whom should be your current or most recent employer if this applies, otherwise please provide details against each referee identifying how long they have known you and in what context. Referees will not, of course, be contacted without your prior consent.

All of these documents should be forwarded by email with the reference **NCT_TU** as the subject title to ian.joseph@russam-gms.co.uk with a copy to emma.kynoch@russam-gms.co.uk

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact Ian Joseph on 07825 267500 or call Emma to schedule a call on 01582 697765

Just to be clear, like most trustee roles, this is an unpaid voluntary post.