

Trustee Recruitment Pack 2025

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You can make a meaningful difference to the lives of people with a learning disability, their families and carers in Chelmsford and mid-Essex.

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Thank you for your interest in volunteering with City of Chelmsford Mencap in the role of trustee. This information pack is designed to provide you with plenty of information for you to determine whether we might be a good fit for each other. We include background on the following:

- City of Chelmsford Mencap, the charity's history, its purpose and its links with Royal Mencap Society
- The charity's governance structure
- An overview of the trustee role
- A description of the trustee role
- The application process

If you have any questions about any aspect of the charity or the role, please don't hesitate to contact our Chair of Trustees, Anthony North: chair@cityofchelmsfordmencap.co.uk

You can also speak to a member of our team in the Mencap Centre office on 01245 268 303.

About us

City of Chelmsford Mencap (CCM) is a registered charity which was established in 1951. It provides lifelong learning, social opportunities and specialist support for people with a learning disability in mid-Essex. It is estimated there are 5,600 people with a learning disability aged 18-64 in mid-Essex, with numbers likely to rise in the next 20 years.

Our mission is 'to nurture, empower and celebrate every individual impacted by learning disability by enabling their own unique sense of belonging, dignity, resilience, independence and achievement'.

City of Chelmsford Mencap is affiliated to Royal Mencap Society (RMS) but is an independent, local, charity and receives no direct funding from RMS or government. Our Board of Trustees has sole responsibility for setting the strategy, budget and priorities of the charity as well as ensuring we meet our obligations to the Charity Commission, our employees and our beneficiaries.

In 2020, City of Chelmsford Mencap received the **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**, the highest honour for voluntary groups. This award recognised the strong voluntary ethos that runs through our charity, from the trustees to the occasional voluntary supporter. As a trustee, you will play an important role in ensuring we continue to develop our strong culture of voluntary service and the benefits that this brings.



Governance Structure

Board

The Board of Trustees is the senior body of City of Chelmsford Mencap, setting and monitoring the framework of everything the charity delivers. Whilst day-to-day management lies with our superb team of staff, trustees share a collective responsibility for the strategy and its delivery. The board operates as a team, making collective decisions, but specific oversight functions are given to individual board members based on their experience and contribution. Our Chair of Trustees works with each board member individually to ensure that each is able to maximise their contribution without feeling overstretched. City of Chelmsford Mencap does expect that its board members will be visible across the charity and will help and advise members of staff where appropriate. Likewise, we encourage trustees to 'roll up their sleeves' and to mix with our service users in order to gain a thorough understanding of their challenges, preferences and unique skills.



Sub-committees

The Board utilises various sub-committees to improve the productivity and efficiency of board meetings. New trustees will be invited to join or chair sub-committees. Currently our sub-committees cover finance, governance, HR and strategy and we will discuss with new trustees which of these they may be interested in joining.

Community Partnerships

City of Chelmsford Mencap has a broad range of community partnerships, through which we aim to represent, inform and promote the needs and abilities of our beneficiaries. We provide work experience placements for health and social care students at Chelmsford College and Anglia Ruskin University to help ensure future professionals are familiar with the needs of people with a learning disability. The charity works closely with health and social care agencies to enhance service users' health and wellbeing and to improve and develop services; partners include Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, Anglian Community Enterprise and Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust. The charity, and its service users, also run innovative community development projects with other charities, including Farleigh Hospice.

Trustee role overview

This role is suited to candidates who can demonstrate knowledge and professional and/or lived experience which will assist the charity's strategic development. This experience might have been gained in a professional capacity or through direct experience of living with a learning disability. At City of Chelmsford Mencap we highly value both forms of expertise and we actively work to create a diverse and inclusive board.

Prior experience of learning disability is not a requirement although we encourage trustees to take a keen interest in our services and the outcomes for our beneficiaries.

We are particularly seeking trustees with expertise in areas such as third sector, PR, fundraising, governance, management and law, although knowledge in other areas is also welcome.

We recommend all prospective trustees read more about the role in the Charity Commission's guidance: www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved

Purpose

City of Chelmsford Mencap's Board of Trustees ensures the charity has a clear strategy and that our core services and developmental aims are aligned with our vision and mission. Our beneficiaries are at the forefront of everything the charity seeks to achieve and the board regularly monitors that this remains the case. Trustees are also legally responsible for the charity's management and administration.

Impact

Being a trustee at City of Chelmsford Mencap involves making decisions that will impact some of the most vulnerable people in society. Through your role you will make a meaningful difference to our beneficiaries' lives and to the local community.

At the same time, the charity employs a skilled and dedicated team of staff (as well as self-employed tutors). We pride ourselves on being a nurturing and respectful employer and trustees have a key role in ensuring this priority is maintained.

Trustees are encouraged to take oversight of specific areas of the charity and its development, based on their experience and interests. This provides further opportunities to make tangible contributions to the expansion of our services.



Become a CCM trustee and we'll give you that priceless feeling of making a valuable difference to the lives of others.



Trustee role description

Location

Our charity's premises are located in central Chelmsford and we encourage our trustees to visit Mencap Centre whenever possible.

Support

You will be supported by our Chair, the other members of the Board of Trustees and the senior management team.

Responsibilities

- To ensure that the charity pursues its stated purposes, as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
- To ensure that the charity complies with its governing document, applicable charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects for the benefit of its members
- To ensure that the charity defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard and promote the good name and values of the charity
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- To ensure the financial stability of the charity
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and ensure the safe custody and appropriate use of the charity's funds
- To monitor policies and procedures for the appointment, supervision, support and appraisal of the charity's staff and contractors

In addition to the above, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, joining or chairing sub-committees, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise.




Qualities and experience


This role is suited to candidates who can demonstrate knowledge and experience of benefit to the charity and who have:

- A proven track record of integrity and respect for confidential and proprietary information
- A keen and respectful listener who is able to empathise and respectfully challenge
- Commitment to the charity and enthusiasm for its vision, mission and aims
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a trustee. We provide further details below.
- Strategic vision
- Sound, independent judgement
- Willingness to participate in frank and open discussion
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to coach staff where required
- The ability to read and understand management reports
- Skills to analyse proposals and their consequences
- Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board
- General competence with IT
- Willingness to be available to provide guidance to the senior management team on an ad hoc basis
- Capacity to represent the charity to external parties and at local events.

Formal guidance on the responsibilities of trustees is issued by the Charity Commission: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3



All those skills you have accumulated through years of working can be used to the benefit of others. What's most rewarding is working with other trustees and staff members to further improve our services.





Time commitment

The charity holds bi-monthly board meetings, with each lasting approximately two hours. A minimum of two hours reading time before each meeting is required to ensure trustees are familiar with items to be discussed.

There may be occasions when trustees are expected to attend charity events.

Sub-committee participation is assumed. These meetings are typically held monthly for 1-2 hours, with additional time for reading and actioning matters arising.

Our trustees typically give an average of six hours per month to the charity.

Whilst all trustees are volunteers and are not required to commit to a term of engagement, we suggest that candidates assume a two-year term of office at the outset. We are very happy to discuss this further during interview.

Training

You will be given a basic induction to the charity and opportunities to meet with the senior management team. We also strongly encourage trustees to spend time participating in our services delivery, getting to know our staff, tutors and volunteers – and most importantly, our beneficiaries. We will customise a training and familiarisation package for successful candidates based on their prior knowledge and experience.

Rewards

The role of a trustee is voluntary and is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although reasonable expenses may be reimbursed.

Being a trustee of City of Chelmsford Mencap is rewarding for many reasons, from the satisfaction of making a difference to our beneficiaries' lives to the excitement and achievement of helping our charity develop.

Through the selection process, we will arrange for you to meet with a number of our existing trustees and we encourage you to explore their motivations and rewards as part of your evaluation of us.

Conditions of engagement

Whilst you must be at least 18 years old, City of Chelmsford Mencap is an equal opportunities employer committed to diversity and treating all employees and volunteers with dignity and respect regardless of their background.

You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, including if you have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud), are bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor or have been removed as a company director or charity trustee due to wrongdoing.

You will be required to sign and adhere to our Trustee Code of Conduct, available on request.

Appointment to our Board of Trustees is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and the production of a clean enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) certificate. We will arrange the latter once an offer to join our board has been made.

Application process

If you would like to apply for a trustee role, or to discuss it informally, please contact me at chair@cityofchelmsfordmencap.co.uk

Our recruitment process will typically include the following:

- Two interviews, providing the opportunity for you to meet with at least two existing trustees in addition to me
- An invitation to visit Mencap Centre, meeting with some of our service users and staff
- An informal meeting with a member of our senior management team
- Dedicated email/phone support for any queries or concerns.

Please note: our recruitment process is designed to facilitate a two-way dialogue. We recognise that you need to be as comfortable with us and our operating model as we are with you. Our commitment throughout is to be open, transparent and to give you as much information as we possibly can so that you can be sure you are making an informed choice to volunteer as a trustee with us.

We look forward to meeting you!

Anthony P. North

Chair of Trustees



Registered Charity No. 1171835

www.cityofchelmsfordmencap.org.uk

