



because children should be heard



Board Chair

Candidate information pack

October 2023

# Welcome

We are delighted that you are interested in learning more about The Purple Elephant Project and the opportunity to join us as our Chair. Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Pack, which I hope gives you a clear picture of what we are seeking and how you could apply your skills, knowledge and experience to support our important work.

The idea of opening a charity with a children's centre as its core was something that our CEO and Founder, Jenny Haylock, nurtured for many years. As a senior play therapy specialist, she had worked with many children and their families over the years and learnt first-hand the importance of early intervention in supporting children to a brighter future.

The Purple Elephant Project was founded as a charity in 2019 and despite the challenges of the pandemic, fuelled by Jenny's passion, focus and commitment, we have built a thriving organisation with children and young people at the heart of everything that we do. We are so proud of all we have achieved and yet ever mindful of the need to significantly increase the number of children and young people we can work with, while ensuring we remain rooted and strong as an organisation.

At this pivotal moment in our charity's journey, as we refine our vision for the future and shape and implement our strategy, we look forward to welcoming a confident and experienced leader to chair our Board and work with our CEO – someone who shares our passion and commitment to supporting children's mental health at a time of unprecedented need and providing the vital building blocks to a better future for the young people we serve.

We look forward to receiving your application and meeting you.

Andrew King, Interim Chair

On behalf of The Board of Trustees

## About us

*“Just to say thank you for getting me through and making me believe in myself.”*

The Purple Elephant Project began life in 2019 and has already supported over 500 children. We provide short and long-term therapeutic support to children and young people experiencing mental health distress. Using approaches such as Play Therapy, Art Therapy, Theraplay, group work, and other specialised interventions, we work to transform the lives of children affected by difficult life experiences, enabling them to overcome mental health challenges and trauma and work towards achieving brighter futures.

We support children affected by issues such as anxiety, bereavement, parental separation, adoption, school refusal, poor self-identity, abuse, neglect, self-harm, peer relationship problems, classroom challenges, domestic violence and neurodiversity. Many of our interventions are long-term and can offer children with more complex needs the level of support they require to overcome significant trauma. We believe every child should be able to access therapeutic support when they need to, and we continue to work tirelessly to make this achievable for as many children as possible.

Integral to our work is the support we provide to the adults around the child, and this is particularly evident for those families who access our services by visiting our Hub in Twickenham. Here we offer a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment, where parents and carers can relax, pause and allow themselves to be cared for whilst their child receives therapy.

*“This project has made a HUGE difference to our lives, and we are all stronger because of it – thank you!”*



## Our mission

We believe every child should be able to access therapeutic support when they need to.

## Our impact

We monitor and evaluate intervention progress on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of the child, and using a range of monitoring tools. We were immensely proud that in the year December 2021 - November 2022:

- we hosted over 900 visits to our hub
- saw a 66% increase on the previous year in families supported each week
- supported over 230 children, many with long-term interventions
- delivered over 3,450 therapy sessions, of which over 700 were free or subsidised
- provided interventions or training in 46 schools
- delivered 88 parent consultancy sessions
- 97% of parents/carers said that they strongly agreed or agreed that their hopes for therapy for their child had been fulfilled
- 96% of parents/carers reported a reduction in their child's presenting behaviours following one of our interventions
- 90% of referrers reported a reduction in the child's presenting behaviours following one of our interventions



## What our children, young people, parents and carers say

- “I really enjoyed therapy. It really helped me concentrate on my feelings and my anger. It really also helped at school.”
- ‘We’re so glad for the time our son had with you - the enduring impact you had on him was of someone who was so clearly intent on entering into his world and enjoying him where he’s at. You showed him compassion and grace when things got too much for him and honestly, that for him was priceless ...even though we had a short time with you, the impact you had on us will last forever.’
- “I was so grateful for your help at a very difficult time and for how much you have helped our son. I can’t think of anything you could have done better”
- “It has helped me dramatically and I now know how to cope with overwhelming and stressful situations. I feel much more confident in myself physically and mentally.”



## Recruiting a Chair to lead our board

Having had a couple of Chairs who have sadly only been able to support us for short periods of time, we're now keen to recruit a Chair who is passionate about our work and is willing and able to commit time and energy for the longer term. We are seeking an experienced, knowledgeable and motivated individual to help steer The Purple Elephant Project through a time of exciting opportunity and development this year and beyond. Our new Chair of the Board will be someone able to bring strategic leadership, ensuring that we consolidate all that we have achieved so far, in order to effectively develop our services to meet the huge need that exists, e.g. demand for subsidised or free interventions for children from low-income backgrounds and family support needs.

We are seeking an individual with significant charity governance experience, ideally having already been a charity Chair, capable of leading long-term strategic development and driving financial growth and sustainability. We are looking for someone who can act as a passionate and persuasive advocate for our work with a range of stakeholders, and who has an appreciation of the issues concerning children who have mental health challenges and the need for targeted support. We also want our Chair to be able to support, encourage and inspire staff, fellow trustees and stakeholders alike and be able to provide leadership to the CEO, who brings immense knowledge, skill and experience in her field.

Candidates must have excellent interpersonal skills, be an effective ambassador and champion for The Purple Elephant Project, be interested in developing opportunities for the organisation and have significant empathy and belief in the work we do.



# Being a Trustee – what we offer

## **Contributing to a great cause**

As you will know, being a board member is a powerful way to contribute to a community or a cause you really care about. As Chair of The Purple Elephant Project, you will play a vital part in good governance, not only ensuring the organisation remains viable and sustainable but that it adheres closely to its mission and works in the interests of all its stakeholders.

## **Using your strategic experience**

People with experience of having significant strategic responsibilities will know that a board role of this kind provides a great opportunity to use those skills, often in a significantly different context if you have only worked in the private or public sector or for a large charity.

## **Continued personal development**

Sitting on a Board can be an absorbing experience, not least because it allows you to adapt and apply your skills, knowledge and experience in an entirely new setting. Even for people with previous experience of leading a board, the Chair role can continue to provide opportunities to learn new skills. Understanding how to adapt your professional knowledge to useful and impactful ends is a good reminder of your own versatility, giving you confidence in your existing abilities whilst challenging you to push the boundaries of your expertise.

## **Teamworking**

As Chair and a member of our Board, you are part of a team and will have the opportunity to apply your unique skills and experience whilst learning from others. Working with a passionate team of people who have different perspectives is often one of the most enjoyable aspects of the role. You will use your ability to collaborate effectively with others. You will also use your knowledge and understanding to constructively challenge the ideas of fellow Board members as well as those of the staff team. This is essential to scrutinise and test the Board's strategic decisions before being implemented. Negotiating, empathising, listening and clearly communicating ideas and concerns are huge factors in this process and often help to set the tone and culture of board meetings.

# Role Description – Chair

## Key Information

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<b>Location</b>	Remote with frequent onsite visits
<b>Time Commitment</b>	<p>Board meetings are currently held every two months although the board may shortly move to meeting once a quarter. Meetings are held at the charity’s centre on Tuesdays at 19.00 and usually last a couple of hours. It is possible to join remotely on occasion, but it is essential that the Chair and trustees are available to meet in person most of the time. The Chair should be available for ad hoc conversations with the CEO as and when needed and a regular presence on site is welcomed.</p> <p>The estimated average total time commitment is two/three days per month.</p>
<b>Remuneration</b>	Unpaid, expenses covered in line with policy

## Overall purpose of the role

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The Chair’s role is to lead the Board of Trustees, ensuring that the charity operates for the benefit of the children and parents/carers it serves. The Chair will ensure the Board fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of The Purple Elephant Project including setting the overall strategic direction. The Chair is also responsible for optimising the relationship between the Board of Trustees, the CEO and her team and the children and parents/carers who use our services.

## The duties of the Chair include the following:

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- Provide strategic leadership to The Purple Elephant Project with the Board and ensure that the organisation operates within its charitable objectives
- Ensure the charity develops and maintains a profile that reflects its ambitions and objectives, and its achievements



- Ensure the Board has sufficient members with a diversity of skills and experience appropriate to the governance of the charity
- Advocate for, represent and act as a spokesperson for the charity
- With the CEO and her team and the Board, review major risks and opportunities and verify that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate the risks and take advantage of opportunities
- Ensure all trustees comply with their duties and responsibilities for effective charitable governance and play an active role on the Board
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure the sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability
- Plan the annual cycle of Board meetings and other meetings where required, ensuring that key issues are covered, and all trustees are updated on key issues or concerns
- Chair the Board meetings ensuring they are properly run and recorded with a balance struck between timekeeping and space for discussion, that business is dealt with and decisions made
- Develop the Board including recruitment, induction, training, appraisal and succession planning
- Address conflict within the Board and within the organisation
- Establish a strong, supportive and constructive working relationship with the CEO ensuring she is able to develop her skills as well as held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Ensure there is an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the staff team in consultation with other trustees
- Ensure that the CEO has the opportunity for appropriate professional development and external professional support as needed
- Represent the organisation at events and meetings and act as a spokesperson and representative to influence key stakeholders on behalf of the charity when appropriate
- Bring impartiality and objectivity to decision-making within the board

## Person specification

The Purple Elephant Project has done remarkably well in its four years and is enjoying significant growth and development, and we are looking for our new Chair to lead us as we consolidate and plan our future growth and direction. The Chair will be someone with the

ability to take strategic lead for the next few years during which time we anticipate our charity will consolidate and develop its mental health service for children.

You may not have direct experience of working within a charity like The Purple Elephant Project, but you will have board experience and must have an understanding and passion for our children and young people and share our ambition.

**Essential:**

- A commitment to the mission, values, and ethos of the charity
- Charity governance and strategic experience at a senior organisational level
- Experience of managing Board level discussions to rounded decisions and agreement for action
- Ability to lead through facilitating, enabling, and consensus-building
- Ability to challenge constructively and supportively
- Ability to operate strategically, noticing trends, opportunities, and risks
- High level of interpersonal skills including tact, diplomacy and enabling contributions from all
- Experience and success in continually improving governance and developing Board performance
- Experience of over-seeing organisational change
- Impartiality, fairness and ability to respect confidences
- Ability to quickly acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding of the organisation and be a 'critical friend' to the CEO
- Ability to commit to the equivalent/average of 2-3 days per month, delivered in a flexible way across the year. Time commitment will fluctuate in line with Board meetings, CEO 1:1s, on-site visits and other specific pieces of work that may involve reading, preparation and attending events

**Desirable:**

- Specific experience/understanding/knowledge of voluntary sector provision of children and young people's mental health services
- Fundraising knowledge
- Knowledge of the commissioning services environment
- Knowledge of adoption processes in the public and voluntary sectors

## How to apply

[Eastside People](#) is supporting The Purple Elephant Project in the recruitment of this role. Please [click here to apply](#) by submitting your CV and a cover letter which should indicate why you are interested in applying for this role and how you meet the selection criteria.

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Lucinda Shaw, [lucinda@eastsidepeople.org](mailto:lucinda@eastsidepeople.org) to arrange a convenient time. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

**The closing date for applications is Monday 6 November** and longlisting interviews, held by Eastside People, will take place the following week. Interviews with The Purple Elephant Project for shortlisted candidates will be held the week beginning 20 November.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability, and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can help with making the application process work for you.

We are fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity to ensure that we reflect the full breadth of the people we aim to support. We work within an increasingly diverse area, and it is important that the Board is representative of the communities that we serve. We would particularly welcome applications from people with a disability and from an ethnic minority background who are currently under-represented on the Board and warmly welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates.



# Eastside People

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