



A mental health social movement



# Chair Recruitment Candidate Information Pack April 2025

# Welcome

On behalf of OTR, thank you for your interest in becoming our next Chair of Trustees.

Young people are facing unprecedented challenges, including the lingering impact of the Covid pandemic, a surge in the cost of living, the climate emergency, and increasing inequality. The mental health consequences of the pandemic and economic difficulties for young people cannot be overestimated.

Youth work and timely mental health support are essential for helping young people to navigate these uncertain times. OTR is showing the way. We are not just a charity providing mental health services, we're a mental health movement mobilised to support, promote and defend the mental health, rights, and social position of young people!

This is a rare opportunity to lead the Board of an extraordinary charity. If you are excited by the challenge and opportunity of this role and share our beliefs, you will find a talented staff team and supportive Board of Trustees who will work with you shoulder-to-shoulder.

You should find all you need to know in this pack about OTR, our Beliefs, our work, and the Chair opportunity. For further details, please look at <https://www.otrbristol.org.uk/>

Thank you once again for your interest in OTR. I hope you are excited by this opportunity and wish to join us.



**Jacob Diggle**

**Outgoing Chair, OTR**

# About us

## Why we exist

OTR isn't just a charity providing mental health services; it's a movement mobilised to support, promote, and defend the mental health, rights, and social position of young people.

The charity is at an exciting stage of its 59-year history and is proud to be reaching more children and young people than ever before (over 17,000) across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset with creative and diverse mental health and wellbeing information and support. How we do this is just as important as what we do, because our approach is grounded in a set of beliefs and assumptions about mental health which we think it's important to be transparent about.

## Our offer

OTR offers a wide range of projects and services which seek to ensure that young people (aged 11 to 25) have a choice in what will best support their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The choice is informed by their strengths, interests and personal circumstances. Our offer is delivered in multiple settings and through a skilled and diverse staff and volunteer team.

**Interventions:** Our sessions support young people who wish to explore specific and self-identified issues.

**Targeted Interventions:** Our projects aim to reach marginalised young people and those most likely to struggle with their mental health but least likely to seek help.

**NHS Collaborations:** Our partnerships work with statutory services, offered in schools, hospitals and community settings.

**Health Promotion:** Our projects champion literacy, self-care and positive social change as a vehicle for better individual and collective wellbeing.



## Our Beliefs

OTR's beliefs, collectively developed across the organisation, underpin our work as a mental health social movement. At all times, OTR strives to give a choice and a voice to young people:

**We believe that our offer should be inclusive of all cultures and identities.**

*OTR's work not only recognises but actively celebrates diversity.*

**We believe that young people have unique strengths, interests and circumstances.**

*OTR will continue to develop creative and diverse services to give young people choice.*

**We believe that the world around us impacts our wellbeing.**

*We all have mental health. OTR places our wellbeing in a social, political and environmental context.*

**We believe in placing young people at the heart of our work.**

*OTR's work is guided by young people's voices; empowering and mobilising young people to make change, both individually and collectively.*

**We believe in innovating and evolving to improve our offer for young people.**

*Throughout our long history, we have adapted to an ever-changing world and we will continue to do so to ensure our work remains relevant for young people.*

**We believe that relationships are what make the difference.**

*OTR's approach centres around relationships between individuals, peers and communities.*

**We believe in the power of partnerships.**

*OTR emphasises peer relationships and organisational collaboration to improve young people's mental health.*



## Our strategic priorities

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### 1. **Magnify young people's participation and voice**

Young people will experience an organisation shaped by and for them. We will enhance our culture of participation. We will listen more intently to young people and increase their involvement in delivery and decision-making. By doing so, OTR will become a clearer expression of young people's ideas, hopes and circumstances and a place where they have agency. Their voices will also be amplified outside of OTR - to their peers, our partners and those that we seek to influence. By channelling the strengths of young people, we will become a more relevant and credible organisation and one that is better placed to serve them.

### 2. **Create a rich and wide mental health offer**

Young people across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire should have a real choice of opportunities to improve their mental health. We aim to offer something meaningful for every individual that recognises and builds on their strengths, interests, identities and circumstances. The breadth and richness of our offer will come from collaboration with young people and partners and retain the spirit of OTR as a collaborative mental health social movement. We will draw upon the many assets across our local area, including a vibrant voluntary sector and the talents of youth workers, sports coaches and others who work with young people.

### 3. **Reach more young people experiencing inequality**

OTR will extend its reach to more marginalised young people and those experiencing disadvantage. We will provide tailored support to young Black people and people of colour and those who are care experienced, disabled, neuro-diverse, LGBTQ+, working class and from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These groups are among those most likely to struggle with their mental health but are often furthest from support. We will collaborate with organisations and communities that can skillfully engage these groups of young people and bring relevant mental health support into their lives.

### 4. **Create supportive communities**

Young people will improve their mental health through the people and places that they interact with in their daily lives. We will equip parents/ carers, schools, GPs, youth



clubs and companies with mental health knowledge so that they can improve the support they offer young people and create environments in which they can thrive. Among other things, we will encourage communities to recognise that mental health is something that we all have and that there are many things we can do to stay mentally healthy. By embedding expertise within communities, young people will gain knowledge, networks and confidence to cope with future challenges.

## 5. **Positively disrupt the local mental health ecosystem**

We will continue to play a leading role in reshaping how young people in our area gain mental health support. Our local mental health ecosystem is heavily focused on clinical interventions for those in crisis. Whilst this is essential in the short term, this limited mental health offer does not reflect the diversity of young people and help often arrives too late. By working alongside our local partners and young people, we aim to shift resources from crisis to prevention and from clinics to communities. By doing so, young people will have access to the right support at the right time.

## 6. **Equip ourselves for sustainable success**

We recognise that we must evolve as an organisation, both to deliver our ambitious strategy and respond to our recent rapid growth. Since 2018, we have doubled in size, both in terms of our team and income. Over the next two years, we will develop our internal infrastructure so that we can achieve the vision set out in our strategy and ensure that it is appropriate for an organisation of our size. We have been through a comprehensive exercise with our staff and volunteers to understand what changes are needed to improve our organisation and prepare us for the future. We used the findings to set ourselves five internal priorities to focus on during the next three years.

- Build an inclusive organisation: home to a diverse, motivated and skilled team
- Produce powerful communications that inspire, influence and mobilise
- Create accessible and welcoming spaces for young people across our geographical areas
- Embed robust monitoring and evaluation to understand and improve our impact
- Secure stable funding from diverse sources to create financial sustainability



## Background and candidate brief for Chair

We are currently creating a brand new three-year strategy, setting out an exciting vision to support, promote and defend the mental health, rights and social position of young people. This follows a period of organisational growth, where expanding services into the North Somerset region, and working in partnership with the local statutory mental health provider, has increased our staffing to over 100 employees.

OTR has a team of volunteer Trustees with a wealth of skills and experience. Trustees meet at quarterly board meetings to provide governance and stewardship and drive the charity forward to achieve its organisational objectives—ultimately providing the best possible services for young people.

Our new Chair will be an experienced Trustee or Board member who is skilled in effectively managing meetings for productive discussions. We are looking for someone with energy and drive and who will ensure robust governance, aligning strategy and operations. A number of our Trustees have been with us for less than a year and we also have a new CEO and a fairly new SLT, we are therefore looking for an experienced hand who is a skilled relationship manager and a decisive leader, capable of listening to all sides and finding compromise to make difficult decisions.

A genuine belief in our mission is essential. To run a healthy and effective charity, we rely on a strong Board that provides strategic leadership and constructive challenge in a collegiate and positive spirit—always keeping our beneficiaries at the heart of every decision.



# Job description

<b>Job title</b>	Chair of Trustees
<b>Location</b>	Bristol (meetings are a mix of in person and online)
<b>Salary</b>	Voluntary with reasonable expenses paid
<b>Time Commitment</b>	The overall time commitment is approx. 1-2 hours per week. This includes quarterly board meetings, time to prepare, plus an Annual General Meeting. The Chair is expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and engage with individual Trustees regularly. Attendance at additional sub-groups and internal/external events is also required.

## Main responsibilities

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- To be responsible for providing effective strategic leadership and management to the Board of Trustees, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of OTR.
- To chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision making process.
- To plan the annual cycle of Board meetings.
- To set agendas for Board meetings and review minutes.
- To ensure the Scheme of Delegation to the CEO is reviewed and updated.
- To be knowledgeable about, and abide by, the Articles of Association and Charitable Purpose.
- To represent OTR at functions and meetings, and act as a spokesperson as appropriate.
- To liaise with the Chief Executive to keep an overview of OTR's affairs and to provide support as appropriate.
- To lead on the process of appraising the performance of the Chief Executive.
- To sit on appointment and disciplinary panels (in conjunction with members of the HR subcommittee or other Trustees, as per OTR's relevant Policies).
- To liaise with the Chief Executive and other Trustees to develop the Board of Trustees and ensure their proper induction.



- To facilitate change and address conflict within the Board of Trustees and within OTR, in collaboration with the Chief Executive.
- To act as the Chief Executive's line manager in terms of support, appraisal, grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## Shared responsibilities and duties

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In addition to the above duties, all Trustees share responsibility for the following duties, and should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they may have to help the Board of Trustees to reach sound decisions. Trustees are collectively responsible for the actions taken and decisions made by the Board of Trustees:

### Legal & Financial

- To ensure that OTR operates in accordance with Company and Charity Law. This includes the filing of statutory returns at Companies House, returns to the Charity Commission and the keeping of Company Registers.
- To ensure the prudent financial management of the Company. To exercise financial control; to scrutinise quarterly statements of the financial position; to discuss and decide on annual budgets and to review and, if required, approve reforecasts. To decide on and, if necessary, assist with applications to funding bodies. To approve the financial regulations.
- To ensure the Company keeps proper accounts and that audited accounts are produced annually and submitted to Companies House and funding bodies.
- To ensure the payment of all taxes due to the Inland Revenue.
- To appoint bankers and cheque signatories and to make clear decisions about staff spending powers.
- To ensure that the Company's assets are safeguarded and are well managed and maintained.
- To ensure that the Company is properly insured.

### Employment & HR

- To appoint the Chief Executive and lead the appointment of Trustees.
- To review regularly the company's employment policies.
- To approve the staffing structure and to take part in recruitment, as required.

- To agree the job descriptions, person specifications and terms of employment of Trustee appointments and the outline terms and conditions for other staff and to review levels of pay annually.
- To ensure the safe and efficient use of premises for both staff and the public.

### **Policy & Planning**

- To define Company policies, set policy priorities and approve strategies for the implementation of the policies. All Trustees should be familiar with and have a good understanding of all Company policy documents.
- To monitor all aspects of service delivery and policy implementation on a regular basis.
- To review all areas of policy and policy implementation documents annually and make appropriate revisions, supported by the Chief Executive.

### **Advocacy**

- To act as an advocate for OTR and be prepared to promote and support OTR and its activities.

### **Management**

- To establish a cycle of meetings with appropriate papers to service the Board of Trustees efficiently.
- To establish a system of communications and delegated decision-making so that urgent decisions can be made and acted upon between Board meetings.
- To establish fixed-term working parties on specific issues, if required.
- To monitor its effectiveness regularly.

### **Attendance & Availability**

- To attend quarterly Board meetings, any 'emergency' meetings, Annual General Meetings, and subcommittee meetings.

### **Statutory Duties**

- To ensure that OTR complies with its governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that OTR pursues its objects as defined in the Articles of Association.
- To ensure that OTR applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.

- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees in giving firm strategic direction to OTR, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of OTR.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of OTR.
- To appoint the Chief Executive and monitor their performance.



## Person Specification

### Experience

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#### Essential

- Strong leadership skills and a collaborative team member.
- Strategic vision.
- Able to display impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship from the Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Excellent people management skills, and an ability to build trusting relationships with Trustees, senior staff, external partners and stakeholders.
- Ability to make measured and fair judgements and decisions.
- A regard for Nolan's 7 principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

#### Desirable

- Familiar with Bristol and other relevant local and national organisations.
- Good insight into the issues that affect equality in Bristol and the context in which OTR's services are delivered.

### Knowledge

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- Leadership and senior management experience in any context.
- Experience of committee work.
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees.
- Chairing meetings effectively.
- Good understanding of charity governance issues.
- Experience of organisational development, strategic and business planning.
- A sound grasp of financial management and risk management.

### Personal qualities and skills

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- A commitment to the values and objectives of OTR.
- Collaborative and diplomatic.



- Strong communication, interpersonal and relationship building skills.
- An interest in charities and social impact.
- Willing and able to devote the necessary time and effort to be a passionate Board member and advocate of OTR's work.
- A strong personal interest in and commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

### **A Willingness to Work with Difference**

At OTR, whatever your role or professional background, you will be expected to work in a way that is anti-oppressive and inclusive. A key focus for OTR is to develop an organisation that is inclusive for all. We do not claim to be experts in this, but we are committed to continuous learning and improvement in these areas and invite you to join us on this journey.

OTR recognises the benefits to individual practice and organisational credibility of having a diverse community of staff and volunteers and to this end, is continually working towards building and maintaining an environment which values and pursues diversity accordingly.

We recognise that tackling systemic inequality, prejudice, racism, and oppressive practice requires each of us to actively engage, self-examine and make changes where necessary in order to improve access and ensure an equitable experience for all in society and all of those who come through our doors at OTR.

*‘I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.’*

**Maya Angelou**



# How to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting [Off the Record \(Bristol\)](#) in the recruitment of this role. Please click [here](#) to apply by submitting a CV and a cover letter both in Word doc. format. Please use the cover letter (max 2 pages) as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV and ensure that you cover the following:

- Why is OTR's work important to you and how can you contribute as our Chair?
- Your experience of working at a strategic level and of effective governance.
- How would you go about ensuring that our many stakeholders are heard and represented at Board level?

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Paul Venning, [p.venning@eastsidepeople.org](mailto:p.venning@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 **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May**. Longlisting interviews with Eastside People will take place shortly after and shortlisted candidates will have an interview with the panel at OTR during the week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

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.

OTR is 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 from an ethnic minority background who are currently under-represented on the Board and we warmly welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates.



Eastside  
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