

grief encounter

supporting bereaved children & young people



Board Chair

Candidate Information Pack

Feb 2026



Eastside People

“Could you help shape a future where every bereaved child and young person can find hope and healing when they need it most?”



Welcome from our CEO

Thank you for your interest in the Chair of Trustees role at Grief Encounter. We're excited about the possibility of you joining our vibrant and experienced board, many of whom have firsthand experience of grief in childhood.

As Chair, you will lead our non-executive board in making a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families navigating life after the death of someone close. Your passion for this cause will be essential as we work towards ambitious growth for our charity. We are committed to upholding integrity, courage, and compassion in all that we do.

In this role, you will work closely to support the CEO and provide strategic oversight, engage with various stakeholders, and foster a collaborative environment to support our mission effectively. Together, we will create lasting change for grieving children and families.

We look forward to discussing your application further and exploring how your leadership could enhance our efforts.

Warm regards,

Suzy

Chief Executive Officer

About us

Who we are

[Grief Encounter](#) was founded by Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE, and our mission is to give every child and young person and their families access to the best possible support following the death of someone close.

We are an open-access charity, funded by the generosity of our supporters, and here to help alleviate the pain and confusion caused by the death of a parent or sibling. Bereavement is devastating at any age, but for a child it is life-changing.

What we do

We work closely with individuals, families, schools and professionals to offer a way through the anxiety, fear and isolation so often caused by grief. Our services include:

- One-to-One counselling
- Group workshops
- Music, art and drama therapy
- Therapeutic residential weekends
- Bespoke support for schools, universities and colleges
- Accredited training courses and webinars for professionals
- Award-winning resources including our unique Grief Relief Kit, Grief Encounter Workbook and Journal

Our impact

- 756 Grief Relief Kits sent out
- 959 calls to the Support Line
- 2,263 children, young people and families supported across Grief Encounter services in 2024/2025
- 213 Bereavement Support Sessions attended
- Sleep therapy delivered to 31 children and young people
- 3 in 5 of our referrals came from the 30% most deprived areas

- 77 volunteers



Our vision, mission & values

Vision

A world where no child grieves alone.

Mission

To help children, young people and their families to find hope and healing after the death of someone close.

Values

1. Integrity

We act honestly, ethically, and with courage.

- Fundraising: Ensure all communications and supporter interactions are transparent and accurate, building long-term trust and credibility.
- Service Delivery: Uphold ethical standards in therapeutic practice, making decisions that prioritise client welfare even under pressure.
- Office/HR: Foster an open and accountable culture, ensuring policies and decisions

2. Compassion

We lead with empathy and kindness, putting people first.

- Fundraising: Build meaningful relationships with supporters by understanding their motivations and demonstrating genuine care for their impact.
- Service Delivery: Design services that respond to the diverse needs of children, young people, and families with sensitivity and empathy.
- Office/HR: Create supportive workplace policies and initiatives that prioritise employee wellbeing and engagement.

3. Excellence

We deliver the highest quality and make a meaningful difference through our work.

- Fundraising: Understand and respond to the competitive market, ensuring fundraising initiatives are targeted, ambitious, and deliver the right return on investment.
- Service Delivery: Continuously enhance services using evidence-based practices to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people, and families.
- Office/HR: Develop and maintain efficient systems, processes, and structures that drive organisational performance and effectiveness.



Strategic priorities

Grief Encounter is at a critical juncture: a mission-driven charity with a clear purpose and powerful impact, now needing to strengthen its internal foundations to meet rising demand. The organisation has made meaningful progress in professionalising its structures, yet recent HR challenges and operational strain highlight the need for strong, stabilising leadership at Board level. The new Chair will play a pivotal role in consolidating governance, improving organisational structure, and supporting the CEO through a period of intense change and capacity building. This includes helping the continued evolution from a small, founder-shaped organisation into a more mature, resilient entity capable of sustainable growth.

At the same time, Grief Encounter is navigating competing pressures: balancing immediate operational concerns with longer-term strategic planning, responding to surging demand for services while ensuring systems, processes and staffing are fit for purpose. The Chair will bring clarity, prioritisation and calm leadership, helping the Board and CEO embed accountability and build a stronger executive layer. The right person will find this an exciting, high-impact challenge: the opportunity to guide a deeply meaningful organisation through organisational transformation, enabling it to reach more bereaved children and families with compassionate, high-quality support. For someone who enjoys turning complexity into clarity, strengthening teams, and helping leaders grow, this is a rare and rewarding moment to make a lasting difference.

Our commitment to diversity

Grief Encounter is committed to building a Board that reflects the rich diversity of the children, young people and families we support. We know that bereavement affects people from every community, background and identity, and we believe our leadership should meaningfully reflect those varied experiences. We warmly welcome applications from individuals of all ages, ethnicities, faiths, genders, sexual orientations, and from people with disabilities or lived experience of grief. We are especially keen to hear from candidates who may be under-represented in charity governance.

Our recruitment approach is grounded in fairness, inclusion and the belief that great leadership comes from a broad range of perspectives. We will make any reasonable adjustments needed to ensure all candidates can participate fully in the process.



Being a Chair – what's involved

The Chair or Co-Chairs of Trustees lead the Board, ensuring that it governs Grief Encounter effectively, in service of the charity's vision and mission. They lead inclusively, supporting the Board to work together effectively and providing constructive challenge to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for advising the Board and overseeing the day-to-day running of the organisation.

A helpful summary of trustee roles and responsibilities can be found in the Charity Commission guidance: [The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\)](#).

What you'll gain from this role

Becoming a trustee is an interesting and compelling way to engage with the charity sector. It is a role that will give back as much as you put in, and often more. One of the primary takeaways from the [Charity Commission's 2025 research into trusteeship](#) is the extent to which trustees benefit from their experience. Although trusteeship is a significant voluntary undertaking, the majority would recommend it to others. Many trustees reported experiencing multiple and profound benefits, from feeling they are positively impacting the world to feeling more connected to a community or movement, highlighting the rewards of responsibility. Overall, 99% of the trustee population surveyed would recommend the role to others.

Even for people with previous experience of leading a Board, a 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 versatility, giving you confidence in your existing abilities while challenging you to push the boundaries of your expertise.

As our Chair (thanks to Eastside People), you will have access to membership of the [Association of Chairs](#), a fantastic resource of peer support and guidance for your role. If you'd like to learn more about chairing, you can access [A Chair's Compass](#), a useful guide focusing on the challenges and opportunities of being a Chair.

Chair job description

Location	Mill Hill Broadway, London
Time Commitment	The overall time commitment is approx 2-3 days per month. See additional information below.
Salary	This is a voluntary role. Reasonable expenses can be claimed.

Role Purpose

Lead the Board to govern Grief Encounter effectively in service of its mission: to help bereaved children, young people and their families find hope and healing following the death of someone close. Ensure the Board provides strategic leadership, robust governance, and appropriate challenge as the organisation continues to professionalise, embed good governance practice, and grow sustainably. Act as a visible, values-driven ambassador for the charity, championing its commitment to compassion, courage and community.

The outgoing Chair will remain on the board of trustees for your first year, to ensure a smooth transition.

Chair responsibilities

- Chair Board meetings, ensuring well-structured agendas, inclusive discussion and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Lead the Board in upholding governance best practice, including clear role boundaries, independence of oversight, and safeguarding of beneficiaries and staff.
- Build an open, supportive and constructively challenging relationship with the CEO, providing strategic oversight without becoming operational.
- Guide the CEO in balancing day-to-day operational pressures with forward-looking strategic planning and in enhancing the executive team.
- Oversee the continued transition from a founder-led model to a professionally governed, future-ready organisation, ensuring clarity of Trustee roles and delegations.
- Provide oversight of financial sustainability, alongside the board Treasurer.
- Work with the Board to ensure strong financial controls, principled fundraising, and adherence to regulatory requirements.

- Support strategies to diversify and grow income, enabling long-term resilience.
- Foster a board culture rooted in empathy, reflection, accountability and lived experience.
- Act as an ambassador to partners, supporters, policymakers, funders and the wider bereavement community.
- Support the organisation's intention to engage more actively in APPGs and public understanding of childhood bereavement.

Who we're looking for

Essential Experience & Skills

- Significant leadership experience at senior strategic level in a complex organisation.
- Proven experience of working with or on a board, with strong ability to chair meetings effectively.
- Demonstrable understanding of charity governance, particularly in organisations transitioning to more mature structures.
- Strong financial literacy and ability to oversee budgets, reserves and financial risk.
- Experience of organisational growth and/or change, particularly in settings moving from founder-led to professionally governed environments.
- Ability to act as an ambassador, representing Grief Encounter credibly in external settings including funders, communities and sector partners.

Personal Qualities

- Compassionate, emotionally intelligent and aligned with the charity's mission to support grieving children and families.
- Values-driven, reflective and grounded; able to hold space for sensitive conversations with care and professionalism.
- Inclusive leader able to draw out contributions from Trustees with diverse personal and professional backgrounds—including many with lived experience of bereavement.
- Strong judgement, integrity and the ability to maintain independence while building deep trust with the CEO and team.

Time commitment – additional information

The role is voluntary and the time commitment will vary. The overall time commitment is approximately 2 to 3 days per month. We expect the early stages to be closer to 3 days, dropping to 2 as the Chair's operational involvement reduces. As a guide however, we expect you to commit to the following:

- Pre read the Board papers and prepare for and attend 4 in-person board meetings per year
- Liaise with committee chairs between board meetings
- Review accounts and prepare chairman's statement annually
- Review impact statement annually
- Review risk register with CEO periodically
- Speak to the CEO approximately fortnightly for around 1 hour
- Induction, training and development would be managed by CEO and current chair .
- The Chair should be available for ad hoc conversations with the CEO as and when needed.
- Trustees undertake an initial 3-year term and are can be re-appointed for up to Y additional terms of 4 years.



Ready to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting Grief Encounter in the recruitment of these roles. [Please click here](#) to apply by submitting your 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 are you interested in the Chair role at Grief Encounter?
- What experience do you have of leading an organisation through periods of change?
- Having read the information pack, what other relevant experience and skills do you feel you would bring to this role?

You are welcome to send your cover letter in writing, or as a video or audio clip, alongside your CV. Any video or audio submissions should be emailed to johns@eastsidepeople.org.

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email John Sanger to arrange a convenient time at johns@eastsidepeople.org. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential. If you have a disability or require reasonable adjustments during the application or interview process, please contact us so we can support you appropriately.

The closing date for applications is Monday 30th March. Shortlisting interviews will take place shortly after and shortlisted candidates will have an interview with Grief Encounter during the week beginning 13th April.

Finally

We understand AI can be a helpful tool, but please use it with caution and ensure your application is personalised and accurate.

If you know anyone else who might be interested, then please pass this Information Pack on as we would be very pleased to hear from them.



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