

eikon



Chair of Trustees

Candidate Information Pack

April 2026



eikon

helping young people in Surrey



Welcome from our CEO

Thank you for your interest in joining The Eikon Charity as our Chair of Trustees.

At Eikon, everything we do is rooted in the belief that every child and young person deserves to feel and be safe, heard, and supported. We support thousands of children and young people across Surrey every year, while also enabling the adults around them to provide good care and guidance. Whether it's through safe spaces, one-to-one support, school-based clubs, group work or residentials, our dedicated staff and volunteers go above and beyond to be there when it matters most.

We are at a pivotal moment in Eikon's journey. As one of Surrey's leading charities supporting children and young people, we are extremely proud of the strong foundation we've built—one rooted in trust, collaboration, innovation, and a deep commitment to improving young lives.

Yet, the environment around us is changing rapidly. The challenges facing children's wellbeing and mental health are growing in scale and complexity, and the systems designed to support them are at breaking point. This moment calls for bold, strategic leadership.

We are seeking a new Chair of Trustees who will play a central role in shaping Eikon for this future. You will guide the organisation through a period of considerable change, complexity and uncertainty, helping us adapt, innovate, and grow. We are looking for an individual who can manage and balance risks with the opportunities available to Eikon. We will work closely together, and with the Board, to ensure Eikon remains resilient, agile and forward-looking, capitalising on our current strengths, including our ability to influence transformational improvements in children's mental health services - both in Surrey and beyond.





You will contribute to vision and provide progressive and inclusive leadership, helping to set the tone for governance, culture, and long-term strategy.

This is a unique opportunity to shape and influence an organisation with a strong foundation and a compelling ambition to improve services for young people and increase our impact more broadly.

Thank you once again for your interest and I look forward to meeting you.

With warm regards

Chris Hickford MBE

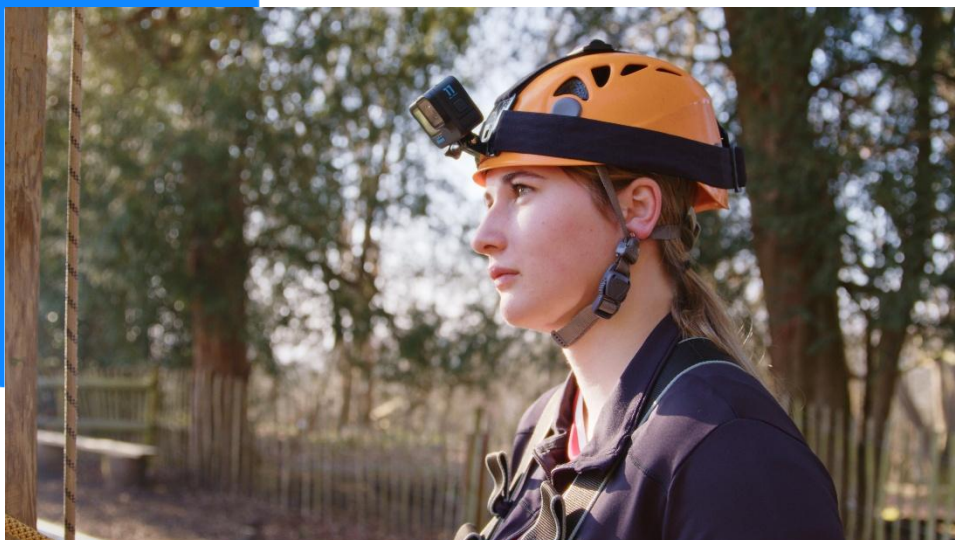
Chief Executive



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“I just needed someone to listen to me...I’m here today because they did.”

– Young Person, Eikon



About us

Who we are

Now in our 30th year, The Eikon Charity supports children and young people across Surrey to feel and be safe, heard, and supported.

Growing up in today's world can be incredibly challenging. That's why we empower children and young people to find the inner and outer resources they need – skills, knowledge and resilience – as they develop and navigate life.

So, we create spaces for them where they can be themselves and talk about their thoughts and feelings. They understand better than anyone what's happening in their own lives, so we listen, without judging.

We are looking for the current Chair's successor to build on all he's achieved and lead the exciting growth and development in the years ahead that we know is possible.

What we do

Schools, parents, and carers sometimes need help too, so we work with families and professionals to provide networks of support and care around children and young people.

Where help is needed, we help early, because it often stops problems from becoming much bigger. We're also there for children and young people when problems have developed, and they need more focused help.

All the insights we gain from our work are used to inspire positive change for children.

We are committed to understanding and tackling the causes of declining mental health and wellbeing in children and young people with the aim of reducing the amount of crisis support they require.

Through collaboration with our partners, we are dedicated to transforming the support systems for children and young people to be more responsive, relational and attuned to their needs, creating lasting and positive change in their lives and communities.

Eikon has grown significantly over recent years. Having grown incrementally over time, in 2020/21 we doubled in size having influenced and created an opportunity that resulted in

funding from combined local commissioners, including the NHS and Surrey County Council, for a new mental health and wellbeing service across all of Surrey. We're now in year five of a seven-year commitment and, given its impact on the children and young people the service has been able to reach, we're confident of making a strong case for its continuation.

During this period, we benefited from the incredible support of our highly skilled and dedicated Board of Trustees, who brought a range of skills and experience and were able to ensure the governance, policies, finances, legal compliance, and general performance of the charity were fit for purpose to manage the growth.

The 2025-28 Eikon Strategy sets out how we will achieve our mission to support even more children, young people and families over the next three years, which includes a focus on our commitment to creating lasting change for children and young people by building evidence and using it to influence improvements in the wider support system as to what they need and want, and crucially, what works.

Our impact

David's is just one of many hundreds of stories from children and young people who have benefited from Eikon's work. Please see [here](#) to read more.

'In secondary school I was considered 'normal', someone who did their work and someone the school had no concerns about. But after a tough time in my first year of secondary school, I found myself feeling very depressed and scared of what the future may hold. I started having negative thoughts and questions about who I was and why I was so different.

In Year 8, it only started to get worse. Kids started saying horrible things to me in the playground. Inside my mood, anger and upset were getting worse. I was battling to try and get help – but just couldn't.

When I was 11, I found out lunch clubs were running in 'the blue buildings in the corner of the school', I thought I'd give it a try. The Eikon lunch clubs were an invaluable space to me throughout my time at Fullbrook School. They were a space to go where no one judged you, a space where you could be yourself. In Year 9 I also started to see an Eikon Youth Worker one-to-one, they helped me combat my anxiety and depression and boost my confidence.

By the time Year 10 came around I felt so much happier, and even though I had the occasional bad week, I'd made so much progress and I have Eikon to thank for that.

But Year 11 was tough. I started to suffer with my depression again, was having arguments at home, and was stressed and anxious about my final year of GCSEs. I got help from a different Eikon Youth Worker who pointed me in the right direction. I felt back on track and made great progress with my GCSEs, and was even able to take on a Young Leader role with Eikon helping to run lunch clubs – this was a big milestone for me and overcoming my anxiety.

Since then, I became a Volunteer stepping up to helping supervise and run garden clubs for young people. I'm also now a Volunteer Mentor providing one-to-one support and passing on the different strategies I learnt to other young people who may benefit from them. I'm doing all of this while now studying at University.

In February 2023, I was incredibly pleased to be awarded Young Volunteer of the Year in the Runnymede Civic Awards! The best part of being a volunteer is seeing all the young people learning new skills with a 'learn by doing' approach in the garden. Seeing the positive impact these services have on young people, and knowing that mentoring is really making a difference.

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“Getting help from Eikon has really given me the confidence to do what I do today.

I can't thank Eikon enough for the support they have given me and I'm glad that Eikon has given me the opportunity to help young people through lunch clubs and mentoring sessions today – long may it continue!”

- David (Young Person), Eikon

Our vision, mission & values

Vision

By 2028, Eikon will be a leader in transforming the wellbeing landscape for children and young people.

Mission

To enable and support children and young people in Surrey to have the wellbeing and resilience they need to stay safe and to thrive. To make this happen we will:

- **Empower children and young people** to find the inner and outer resources to be resilient and to stay well.
- **Enable adults** (families, schools, and communities) to provide networks of support and care around children and young people.
- **Commit to be there** when they need help, offering the right support at the right time, and making sure they know how to get more help if they need it, then children and young people will thrive.



Our Beliefs

We believe that:

There should be more investment in empowering children and young people to prevent them needing help with their mental health. We therefore commit to increasing our own investment in preventative services and will use our influence to persuade others to do the same.

If we build and highlight the evidence base as to the causes of declining emotional wellbeing and mental health, the value of preventative approaches and the merits of improving support systems for children and young people, then we can influence systemic change and a shift in investment toward preventing more children from needing to access specialist services and support.

Our Values

As we work we will:

Elevate and amplify the voices of children & young people. The needs of young people guide everything we do, shaping every decision and action we take.

Act with compassion. We empathise with the pressures of modern life and feel compelled to help without judgement.

Work together. Partnering with parents, carers, schools, policymakers, and young people themselves helps us all to succeed.

Take responsibility. We recognise our part to play in the future of children & young people, and we hold ourselves accountable for their success.

Strategic priorities

Our Strategic Aims for the next 3 Years:

Strategic Aim 1:

Evidence and Influence (Systemic Change)

Working with others, develop the capacity and capabilities to evidence the case for systemic change for children locally and nationally.

Strategic Aim 2:

Empowering Approach (Preventative)

- Design a suite of services and resources that will have the greatest impact on maintaining and improving, children and young people's emotional wellbeing.
- Develop new, and improve and develop relevant existing, services/resources that focus on enabling and empowering children, young people and their families.

Strategic Aim 3:

Early Support (Help)

Continue to be there, improving and delivering high-quality, evidence-based help for children, young people and their families as problems emerge.

Our commitment to diversity

The Eikon Charity is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working environment which is free from unfair discrimination and will enable employees and volunteers to fulfil their personal potential.

An exciting time to join us

At Eikon we are poised to deliver an increase in our vital, evidence-based services across Surrey and the South-East, as well as to share our model of success and influence children and young people's services across the UK. We know, and others know, that what we do has an impact on our children and young people who, tragically, need more of everything we offer as their challenges increase.

We are now looking for passion, commitment and bold leadership from our new Chair. You will have had a senior career in the public, private or voluntary sector, you'll have grown an organisation sustainably, leading with vision and courage, and engaging and influencing stakeholders internally and externally. You may have networks in the NHS or Local Authorities regionally and/or nationally. You will be forward-focused with ambition to effect the change that you believe in as wholeheartedly as we do. You will involve and lead the Board in a way that ensures we remain relevant and fit for purpose for our next season of growth and impact, while also retaining our resilience and sustainability. You will ensure our CEO and senior leadership team are empowered to lead as effectively as possible in an increasingly complex and challenging environment.

If you think this could be you, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Being a Chair – what's involved

The Chair of Trustees lead the Board, ensuring that it governs The Eikon Charity 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, just 1% of the trustee population surveyed would not 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's job description

Location New Haw, Surrey

Salary This is a voluntary role. Travel expenses can be claimed.

Chair responsibilities

Strategic and bold leadership

- Provide leadership to the charity and its Board, ensuring that the charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Engage, enable and encourage the charity, its CEO and the staff to be brave, bold and confident in their work
- Ensure that the Board regularly reviews opportunities and ensures that systems are in place to take advantage of them while managing and mitigating any potential risks
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable purposes and provides a clear strategic direction for the charity
- Liaise with the Chairs of the four Board Committees: Engagement, Governance & Risk, Audit & Finance, and Operations

Governance

- Build on our strong Governance foundation ensuring that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity and compliance with the Charity Commission Governance Code
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees, encourage positive change and deal effectively with any performance issues
- Ensure that the Board is regularly refreshed, taking into account the need for diversity and inclusion, and having the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the Charity effectively
- With the Board, ensure the sound financial health of the charity, with clear financial accountability, and compliance with charity legislation

External relations

- Be an ambassador for both the charity and the children and young people it works with

- Facilitate, encourage and influence change by networking and engaging with external stakeholders, using regional or national contacts that you may have
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when required
- Represent the charity at external meetings and events

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Work closely with the CEO to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful, Trustees are engaged and decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Charity and the Board takes collective ownership and responsibility
- Foster, encourage and maintain constructive relationships between the Trustees, CEO and the senior leadership team; chair meetings effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process while encouraging inclusive behaviours
- Ensure that accurate minutes are made for all Board meetings and that decisions taken at meetings and any actions arising are implemented

Relationship with CEO and senior leadership team

- Establish and build a strong, effective and constructive working relationship with the CEO, ensuring that he is supported and held to account for achieving the agreed strategy and annual objectives and budgets; to support this, it will be important to establish a more general relationship with the senior leadership team
- Ensure regular contact with the CEO and develop and maintain an open, supportive and advisory relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges, whilst respecting the boundaries between the two roles
- Liaise with the CEO to maintain an overview of the charity's affairs, providing support as necessary, including strategic and financial oversight
- Agree annual personal objectives for the CEO and conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review, in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support, as or when needed

Who we're looking for

Overview

The Chair will provide strategic leadership and governance oversight to ensure the charity delivers maximum impact for the children and young people it works with. This role requires a senior individual with bold vision, strong interpersonal skills and influencing capabilities, and a deep commitment to the charity's mission and values.

Essential personal qualities

- Commitment to mission: passion for the charity's purpose and a deep understanding of its social impact
- Exemplary leadership: demonstrates vision and bold, strategic thinking as well as the ability to inspire, involve and guide the Board and executive team toward long-term sustainable growth
- Inclusivity & collaboration: fosters a collaborative and inclusive Board culture, encouraging diverse perspectives and constructive challenge
- Integrity & diplomacy: exercises sound judgment, tact, and discretion in complex and sensitive situations
- Influencing & advocacy: skilled in representing the charity externally, influencing key stakeholders, and acting as an ambassador for its work

Skills and experience

- Senior strategic leadership: proven experience operating at a senior level within the charity, public, or corporate sectors
- Change leadership: ability to lead through change, support innovation, and guide the charity through growth and transformation
- External representation: comfortable in public-facing roles, with strong networking and influencing skills to promote the charity's work
- Financial oversight: sound financial acumen with the ability to oversee budgets, risk management, and strategic resource allocation
- Board governance: Significant experience in governance, including chairing or sitting on boards or committees, and understanding of charity regulatory framework

Time commitment

The role is voluntary and the time commitment will vary. As a guide, however, we expect you to commit to the following:

- The time commitment is, on average, approximately two-three days a month
- Chairing, in person, four evening Board meetings per year, a Board and Senior Leadership Team awayday and the annual Audit & Finance Committee meeting
- Regular in-person or online meetings and calls with the Chief Executive Officer, with individual Trustees, and senior staff
- Attending external events and meetings
- Standard appointment term is three years



Ready to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting The Eikon Charity in the recruitment of this role. Please [click here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter **both in Word doc format**. You are also welcome to submit your cover letter in video format by emailing it to lucinda@eastsidepeople.org.

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 Eikon?
- Having read the information pack and understanding who we're looking for with reference to the criteria in the Person Specification, what relevant experience, skills and personal qualities would you bring to this role?

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Lucinda Shaw to arrange a convenient time at lucinda@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 Tuesday 5 May. Shortlisting interviews will take place shortly after and shortlisted candidates will have an interview with the panel at Eikon during the weeks beginning 18 or 25 May.

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.



Eastside People

Eastside People
Canopi
82 Tanner Street
London
SE1 3GN

0203 821 6174
eastsidepeople.org

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4958922.