



Children First  
Chair Recruitment  
Information for candidates

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## PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN

**Children First is Scotland's national children's charity. We stand up for every child because all children should have a safe childhood.**

We protect children from harm and support them to recover from trauma and abuse through our national support line and in their homes, schools and communities.

We help children, their families and the people that care for them by offering emotional, practical, and financial support.

We believe all children should have hopes, dreams and opportunities. But, for many they don't exist.

We work with families, funders, supporters, partners and volunteers to put Scotland's children first. Together we can create a safer, brighter future for all children in Scotland.



## OUR VALUES

**Our values are truly at the heart of everything we do at Children First. Our values guide our behaviours, inform our decision making and set the standard for how we engage with children, families, external stakeholders and one another. They are not simply words, they shape the experiences for everyone involved in working towards our mission, including our trustees.**

Here's what our values mean to us and what we expect from you.

### With love, we put children first

**What this means to us:** We are committed to creating nurturing and supportive environments for children, families, and colleagues, ensuring that love guides every aspect of our work.

**What we expect from you:** You will demonstrate resilience in the face of difficult decisions. You will hold yourself and others accountable, ensuring that we maintain the high standards and quality that is expected within Children First.

### With purpose, we transform lives together

**What this means to us:** We are committed to collaboration and shared responsibility, believing that meaningful change is only possible when we work together with children, families, colleagues and partners.

**What we expect from you:** You will actively contribute to our vision, through collaboration within the board, our executive leadership team and with external stakeholders. You will bring your expertise, creativity and commitment to help us achieve transformative outcomes for children in Scotland.

### With strength, we do whatever it takes to protect Scotland's children

**What this means to us:** We are committed to providing a strong, solid infrastructure where our people feel supported and empowered to ensure children's rights are upheld.

**What we expect from you:** You will be an advocate for innovative solutions, supporting Children First in its brave and courageous approach to protecting Scotland's children.

“I would encourage anyone to serve as a charity trustee - and couldn't think of a better organisation to be a part of.”

**Anne Hughes**  
Trustee







## OUR STRATEGY

**Children First's strategic goals align to our core purpose. Our strategic goals take us to 2025 and focus on demonstrating the quality and impact of our direct support to children, young people, and their families and campaigning for the fundamental changes which are required to respect, fulfil and protect the rights of every child in Scotland.**

### Our strategic goals focus on:

- Preventing abuse, neglect and trauma by offering practical, emotional and financial support to children, their families and communities to overcome the challenges that get in the way of strong, safe relationships.
- Ensuring all children's rights are respected, protected and upheld in legislation, policy and practice.
- Supporting children, their parents and carers to recover from the impact of childhood adversity and trauma.

You can read [Prevention, Protection and Recovery, our strategic priorities for 2023-2025](#), for more information.

Helping to govern and guide the development of a new and ambitious strategic plan to fulfil our mission to protect Scotland's children will be an immediate priority for our new chair.

“This is a charity with an exceptionally caring culture and a uniquely dedicated team and it is a privilege to work alongside them.”

**Farah Mohammed**  
Trustee





## CHAIR OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHILDREN FIRST

**Our vision is that all children in Scotland grow up safe and well in strong, resilient families and communities and we work tirelessly to make sure that happens. By getting alongside children and their families to offer practical, emotional and financial help we uphold the rights of children to be raised in their own families.**

Far too many children in Scotland have to overcome challenges; poverty, fear and isolation, anxiety and trauma caused by violence, abuse and online harm. But we know that with the right support they can recover and live safe and happy lives. We are proud of the way we do things at Children First, we put relationships at the heart of everything we do and we believe that with the best people delivering the best quality support amazing transformation can take place.

Our campaigning work is led by the voices of the children and families we support and we are determined to build on our track record of success in improving legislation, policy and practice to transform the lives of all children in Scotland.

We are seeking a dynamic and experienced new chair for our board of trustees to help govern and guide us as we continue to fulfill our mission to protect Scotland's children and develop a new and ambitious strategic plan.

Applicants should have the values, experience and passion to lead Scotland's national children's charity at a time when our support is needed more than ever. The successful candidate will be inspiring, inclusive and will provide strategic leadership and direction to a strong and experienced board of trustees to ensure sound governance and management for Children First. They will be expected to work in close partnership and collaboration with the chief executive as well as develop and maintain a relationship of mutual trust and respect with our colleagues, trustees and stakeholders.

Experience of operating at a senior level in corporate, public or third sector environments would be an advantage. Significant experience as a trustee, particularly as chair or vice chair, would also be beneficial, as would strong knowledge of the demands and complexities of board-level governance. The position requires excellent collaboration and interpersonal skills.

Children First is committed to ensuring that the board represents the families, stakeholders, and colleagues whom we represent and welcomes expressions of interest from all individuals who have the experience and expertise needed to help direct and shape the organisation for the future. In particular, the board seeks to further enhance its diversity from the perspective of ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender and disability.

This is an unremunerated position, however reasonable travel expenses are reimbursed.





# CHAIR OF THE BOARD – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Specific responsibilities:

### Overview

**We are looking for a chair to help lead and shape our new strategic direction. The chair will be responsible for providing effective strategic leadership and management of the board of trustees to support the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity.**

They will ensure that trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance and strategic direction of the charity, as well as complying with the relevant statutory obligations and regulations. Internally they will foster positive working relationships between the board and executive leadership team, (ELT) and externally they will carry out ambassadorial functions for the charity, helping it to develop its profile and representation with all relevant stakeholders. Overall, the role of chair is one of facilitator and coach, rather than decision maker.

### Relationship with the CEO and the executive leadership team

- Support the CEO in the delivery of the strategy and act as a sounding board and support when required in relation to the strategic day-to-day activities of the charity.
- Liaise closely with the CEO to keep an overview of the charity's affairs and provide support as required whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the roles.
- Lead the process of appointment and ongoing performance review, goal setting and professional development of the CEO.
- Lead and encourage the board in challenging the CEO and ELT constructively and supportively when necessary to meet the best interests of the charity.
- Ensure effective communication between the board and the CEO, the ELT and Children First colleagues where appropriate.

### Strategic leadership

- In collaboration with the CEO the chair should provide vision, leadership and stewardship of Children First, ensuring delivery of the objectives and goals outlined in the charity's strategic plan.
- Ensure that the board fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity within the terms of the Royal Charter and other relevant legislation.
- Act as role model, living and demonstrating our values and behaviours and ensure the board exemplifies the culture of Children First and the way we show up in all our roles.
- Chair the AGM, a strategy day and four board meetings per year.
- Attend 7-8 committee meetings (for two committees who meet four times a year).
- Liaise between board meetings with appropriate staff to ensure that any requirements for action or authorisation are carried out timeously.
- Monitor the implementation of decisions taken at board meetings.
- Build and maintain a cohesive, diverse and inclusive board ensuring the effective recruitment, induction and training of trustees.
- Ensure the annual evaluation of board effectiveness and take actions resulting from the feedback and conclusions.
- Provide leadership in ensuring that trustees take opportunities, where possible, to visit services, attend events and meet with staff, fundraisers and the children and families we support.



## Personal attributes

- Commitment to and understanding of the aims, principles and values of the organisation.
- An enthusiasm for the work of Children First and willingness to act as a champion for it.
- An ability to be open minded, to exercise judgement and work collectively.
- Preparedness to offer personal and business skills and experience to support the work of the staff when required.
- An openness to creativity and innovation.
- An ability to deal effectively with people at all levels and to build and maintain relationships of trust and respect with staff, trustees and stakeholders.
- Ability to demonstrate commitment to equality, human rights and inclusion.
- Ability to absorb, evaluate and interpret complex information.
- Availability and commitment to attend meetings, functions and deal with urgent business as required.

## Meeting effectiveness

- Ensure that board meeting agendas are focused on strategic matters and add value.
- Ensure the meetings are structured and chaired effectively.
- Ensure that the board receive accurate, timely and high-quality supporting information, enabling them to take decisions and obtain appropriate advice.
- Ensure that all relevant matters are discussed, including committee issues, allowing sufficient time for discussion of complex or contentious matters.
- Facilitate and encourage active engagement and appropriate challenge from trustees, ensuring everyone is able to participate fully in discussions and decision making.

## Ambassador for Children First

- Be a visible public advocate for the charity and for Scotland's children.
- Represent Children First at key events or meetings as required.
- Actively support and promote fundraising activities including networking with potential funders and influencers.

## Additional information

The board of management has two working sub-committees, each of which the chair is an ex-officio member.

The successful candidate will shadow the current interim-chair for a period of time prior to taking up the post.

## Terms of appointment and commitment required

The chair will be appointed for a term of three years and is eligible to seek nomination to serve a further three year term.

Annually, you will be required to attend four board meetings, seven to eight committee meetings (for two committees who meet four times a year), a board strategy day and the AGM. Papers for meetings are issued a week prior and trustees are required to commit adequate time to review these.

In addition to the meetings, the chair must be available to the CEO on a regular basis and attend other meetings and events as necessary. This is likely to require commitment of around two – three days per month on an average.





# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Qualities	<b>Essential</b>
	A strong passion and commitment to supporting the charity, its values and strategic objectives
	Strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities
	Demonstrable tact and diplomacy
	Ability to listen and engage effectively
	Ability to build and maintain effective relationships with board and senior management
	Leadership skills
	Commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity
	Strong networking capabilities which would benefit the charity
	<b>Desirable</b>
A national profile that will aid our mission to raise awareness and influence on behalf of children	
Experience	<b>Essential</b>
	Previous board membership, preferably as chair or vice chair
	Experience in a senior leadership role in public, commercial or third sectors
	Significant financial or business experience
	<b>Desirable</b>
	Experience of working in the third sector
Experience as a volunteer	
Knowledge & Skills	<b>Essential</b>
	A good understanding of governance within the third sector
	Competent public speaker and communicator
	Strong financial analytical skills
	<b>Desirable</b>
	A good understanding of financial issues within the third sector
Knowledge of child protection and welfare issues	



## HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this position, please send your CV and supporting statement including details of two referees to [hr@childrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:hr@childrenfirst.org.uk)

If you have any queries about the application process, please contact Nicola Cook, Executive Assistant by email: [nicola.cook@childrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:nicola.cook@childrenfirst.org.uk)

### Enquiries

If you would like an opportunity to have a discussion about the role with Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, please contact Nicola Cook, Executive Assistant by email: [nicola.cook@childrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:nicola.cook@childrenfirst.org.uk)

### Timetable

Closing date: midnight on **Monday 24th February 2025**

Interviews: week commencing **17th March 2025**  
(date tbc), Edinburgh

**CHILDREN  
FIRST** Protecting  
Scotland's  
Children



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE