

**Carers Northumberland**

**Trustee Information and Recruitment Process**

This pack is designed to provide information for prospective trustees and consists of:

* this document which includes background information on the charity, the generic role description and responsibilities for Carers Northumberland board members, and details of the trustee recruitment process
* the current Carers Northumberland Business Plan (separate document)
* the most recent Annual Report (separate document)

Also included are two useful documents produced by The Charity Commission: The Essential Trustee (May 2018) and It’s Your Decision (revised July 2017) which both help inform potential trustees of the duties expected of the role and will be included.

The charity’s governing document, the Memorandum of Articles of Association can be provided upon request.

**Introduction to Carers Northumberland**

Carers Northumberland (CN) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales and Companies House.

**Background and Demographic**

CN developed from combining two previously active generic carer support projects in the county, consolidating and building upon this carer support base to produce and equitable service to all carers in Northumberland.

It is estimated that there are almost 36,000 carers in Northumberland who are family members, partners or friends providing unpaid support to people because of illness, disability or frailty, with over almost 9,000 providing more than 50 hours unpaid care a week. Carers are of all ages, the largest proportion of carers are aged between 45-64 and juggle caring with other family commitments and work, nearly half of all carers are working either full time or part-time. Carers are assisting people of all ages, but half of all cares look after someone aged over 75. Many carers care for more than one person and many have health problems themselves, sometimes as a result of caring. When caring ends people continue to have support needs and former carers have a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience.

**CN’s Vision is – To improve the lives of unpaid carers in Northumberland**

In addition to developing and delivering a comprehensive range of appropriate, high quality carer support services throughout the county, CN also aims to be the lead agency in the county on all carer issues, including providing a responsible voice for carers and influencing local government and NHS policy in respect of carers. These aims will be achieved within the context of setting and maintaining the highest standards in all areas of activity, being a quality employer and devising and implementing management systems that reflect best practice. CN’s Business Plan sets out the values of the organisation, strategic aims and the key business activity which will ensure the effective delivery of the service. The Business Plan is reviewed annually. CN produces an annual report which is the official record of the activities and financial status of the organisation for the year it covers. CN’s financial year runs from 1 April – 31 March and the current annual report will be made available to prospective trustees.

Carers Northumberland’s registered office is 107 & 109 Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8RS. We currently rent three office spaces from Northumberland Community Voluntary Action, the organisation which supports other voluntary organisations in Northumberland. At present this is Carers Northumberland’s only fixed accommodation and all staff are based in the Ashington office. As a whole county service, Carers Northumberland makes use of community, local authority and health authority buildings and spaces for outreach work.

CN strives to be a dynamic organisation and the staffing structure is regularly reviewed in relation to shifting workloads, new and completed projects and funding forecasts. All staff have clearly defined roles and job descriptions but enshrined in these is the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, for example, new opportunities, emergencies and absences.

The core staff structure currently consists of:

* Chief Executive Officer
* Service Delivery Manager
* 2 x Carer Information and Advice Workers
* Finance and Administration Assistant

The staff team also consists of project workers on fixed term contracts who are responsible for implementing specific services according to funding received. Current projects are:

* Supporting working carers and helping carers return to start work, education or training.
* Supporting young carers.
* Supporting parent carers.
* Supporting carers of people with a mental health condition or learning disability.

The current Trustee Board has ten members and we also have a team of volunteers who assist us to provide core services across the county, many of whom are support group facilitators for the regular monthly peer support groups we run and who help with events and information sessions.

**CN Funding and Financial Management**

CN’s core funding comes from Northumberland County Council’s Adult Services Directorate. This funding is currently in the form of a renewable annual grant agreement. The Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group also provide core funding via an annual grant agreement. The organisational structure ensures that the core delivery within the parameters of our core funding can be efficiently maintained.

Alongside core funding which supports the delivery of the core carer service and the core staff team, CN also takes advantage of any project funding opportunities both individually and collaboratively with trusted partners. Project funding can be for a short piece of work or an event or a longer fixed-term intuitive which may include an additional member (s) of staff. Project work is usually time-limited and complements the core service.

In addition to these sources of funding, CN receives small amounts of financial support from a number of other sources. Although not as substantial as the core grants, these smaller financial contributions are nevertheless an important part of our overall income and are very gratefully received.

The Financial Strategy Group (FSG) is a sub-group of the trustee board which meets regularly to discuss financial matters, funding and fundraising opportunities and works with the CEO to implement a funding strategy. The CEO also appraises the FSG and the full Trustee Board of any funding opportunities for consideration.

**Governing Documents**

The Memorandum of Articles of Association is our governing document or constitution. It is a legal document that defines our objects and our working principles and is based on a model constitution approved by both the Charity Commission and Companies House. It sets down the governance framework within which we conduct our business, including the scheduling and conduct of our AGM and our trustee meetings. We are bound by law to operate entirely in accordance with the Memorandum of Articles of Association. The Memorandum of Articles of Association is reviewed bi-annually, and any changes need to be notified to both the Charity Commission and Companies House by special resolution. A copy of the governing document is available by request.

**Trustee Commitment, Roles and Responsibilities**

Carers Northumberland recognises that an effective Board of Trustees is essential if the charity is to achieve its objects. The Board must seek to be representative of carers and former carers and have available to it all the knowledge and skills required to run the charity. Individual Trustees must have sufficient knowledge of Trusteeship in general and of Carers Northumberland’s activities to enable them to carry out their role and represent the charity at meetings and other events. Trustees of Carers Northumberland are also Directors of Carers Northumberland Limited.

Trustee Board meetings are bi-monthly, currently in February, April, June, August, October and December with an AGM usually in July. Trustee meetings are currently on a Thursday morning and last for approximately two hours. There is a set agenda for each meeting which members can add to if required. The dates for the year are usually set following the AGM. Dates and times of meetings can be discussed and negotiated where trustees are balancing other commitments. Meetings are generally held face to face, but on-line video, and telephone are also used.

**Carers Northumberland Board Member Role Responsibilities**

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| **Charity Objects** | The relief of the sick, elderly, infirm and disabled in Northumberland by the provision of information, advice and support to their carers’. |
| **Charity Ethos** | Carers Northumberland (CN) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House. CN’s vision is ‘to improve the lives of carers in Northumberland’.  In addition to developing and delivering a comprehensive range of appropriate, high quality carer support services throughout the county, CN also aims to be the lead agency in the county on all carer issues, including providing a responsible voice for carers and influencing local government and NHS policy in respect of carers. These aims will be achieved within the context of setting and maintaining the highest standards in all areas of activity, being a quality employer and devising and implementing management systems that reflect best practice. |
| **Board Responsibilities** | Trustees are both trustees of the charity and directors of the company and their names are accordingly registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House respectively.  Trustees are responsible for the overall management of CN, ensuring it is run entirely in accordance with all relevant charity law, employment law, company law and good business practice. To:   * Provide a strategic overview for the charity. * Support the development and sustainability of the charity. * Be accountable for the good practice and overall performance of the charity. * Be accountable for the charity’s compliance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association and all financial and statutory regulations and timely and accurate reporting to funders, Companies House and the Charity Commission. * Exercise independent judgement in the best interests of the charity. * Avoid conflicts of interest. * Appoint a Chief Executive and monitor his/her performance. * Sit on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required. * Support the pursuit and management of appropriate partnerships to achieve results for CN in line with the business plan. |
| **Board Duties** | * To meet as a member of the Board regularly. * To communicate with other Board members as necessary via email, telephone and in person. * To receive, scrutinise and approve financial reports and accounts. * To prepare relevant, and study, all Board papers prior to the meeting and be prepared to debate and approve agenda items during the meeting. * To direct and support the work of the staff and volunteers through the Chief Executive. * To establish and maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders. * To support the development of appropriate policies and procedures. * To maintain confidentiality about Board meeting discussions unless authorised by the Board to discuss them outside the meeting. * To safeguard the good name and values of the charity. * To maintain awareness of the activities of the charity and the wider issues which affect its work. * To represent the charity at functions and meetings as appropriate. |
| **Collective Board skills, knowledge and experience** | * Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship. * Commitment to the charity. * Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort. * Strategic vision. * Good, independent judgement. * Ability to think creatively. * Willingness to speak their mind whilst maintaining respect to others. * Ability to work effectively as a member of a team. * Commitment to Nolan’s seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. * Adherence to the Trustee Code of Conduct. |
| **Renumeration** | The role is unpaid, but out of pocket expense (including travel) that are necessarily incurred in fulfilling the Trustee role, will be reimbursed by the charity upon submission of an appropriately completed expenses form. |
| **Length of office** | Membership of the Board is reviewed annually at the AGM to ensure that all Trustees are prepared to commit to the role for the year ahead. Trustees can serve a maximum of three years from election after which they must stand down but can be re-elected if willing. |

**The recruitment process**

Vacancies will be reviewed regularly to confirm requirements and maintain the necessary range of skills on the Board. Vacancies are often advertised through word of mouth, but the VONNE recruitment portal, and Northumberland CVA bulletin are also used.

Anyone who expresses an interest will be sent this Trustee Information and Recruitment process document, an application form, a copy of the Charity Commission guidance – The Essential Trustee, the current CN Business Plan and the most recent Annual Report. This information is available on the website and can be requested as a hard copy. Application forms may be returned either by post or by email for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

Potential applicants can attend a Trustee meeting as an observer, to assist them in their decision making around applying to become a Trustee. Please contact the Chief Executive Officer if you wish to take up this offer.

Once the application form has been received, the potential applicant will be contacted by a member of the current Trustee board for an informal telephone discussion. This will usually be followed by a meeting with the Chair of Trustees (or another board member) and the Chief Executive.

Applicants will be formally nominated at the next available Board meeting.

Successful applicants can be co-opted to join the Board at any time throughout the year until the AGM as appropriate.

Once approved by the board applicants will complete the necessary paperwork for submission to Companies House and the Charity Commission by the Chief Executive.