

**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 Strategic Plan 2024-2029 (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 (1122972) and a company limited by guarantee (6266972), 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.

The 2021 Census estimated that there were over 31,000 carers in Northumberland who are family members, partners or friends providing unpaid support to people because of illness, disability, or frailty, with over almost 10,000 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 carers 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 Strategic 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 Strategic 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 service supports carers of all ages, including young carers (under 18 years) and parent carers (caring for a child under 18 years with additional needs).

The current staff structure consists of:

* Chief Executive Officer
* Service Delivery Manager
* 4 x Carer Information and Advice Workers
* Finance and Administration Assistant
* Young Carer Service Coordinator
* Young Carer Activity and Link Worker
* Business Administration Apprentice

The current Trustee Board has eight 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. Funding for the Young Carer Service and support for parent carers is via a contract from Northumberland County Council’s Children’s Services. We also receive a small amount of funding from the North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) and Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne, and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW) to support carers who are supporting someone with a mental health condition. 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.

**Carers Northumberland Board Member 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.

**Our 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.

A full Role Description is provided in Appendix 1.

**The recruitment process**

Vacancies will be reviewed regularly to confirm requirements and maintain the necessary range of skills on the Board. Vacancies are advertised on the VONNE recruitment portal, Northumberland CVA bulletin, social media platforms and direct advertisements in local publications.

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 Strategic 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.

Appendix 1

 **Trustee Role Description**

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| Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that Carers Northumberland achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that Carers Northumberland has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge the executive team to enable us to grow and thrive, and through this, achieve our vision = to improve the lives of unpaid carers in Northumberland.Board members have a collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals. Trustees are both Trustees of the charity and Directors of the Company and are accordingly registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House respectively. |

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| **Duties:** |
| * Provide a strategic overview for the Carers Northumberland
* Approve operational strategies and policies and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
* Oversee Carer Northumberland’s financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
* 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 statutory regulations, and timely and accurate reporting to funders, Companies House, and the Charity Commission
* Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored, and controlled effectively.
* Provide support and challenge to the CEO in the exercise of their delegated authority
* Avoid and declare Conflicts of Interests
* Contribute to regular reviews of Carers Northumberland’s own governance.
* To prepare relevant, and study all Board papers prior to the meeting, and be prepared to debate and approve agenda items during the meeting
* Contribute to the broader promotion of Carer Northumberland’s objects, vision and reputation by applying relevant skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.
* Support the pursuit and management of appropriate partnerships to achieve results in line with the Strategy and Annual Plan
* Keep abreast of changes in Carer Northumberland’s operating environment
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| **What we are looking for:** |
| We are looking for people who:* Bring energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the role
* Will broaden the diversity of thinking on our board.
* Understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees
* Act in the best interests of the organisation
* Show enthusiasm for our vision and willingness to lead according to our values
* Are able to commit to Nolan’s seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

You do not need previous governance experience – we will provide a full induction and training.  |

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| **Essential Personal skills and qualities:** |
| * **Effective communication skills** - uses clear language, active listening, and questioning. Coherent and concise and can assert a point of view without dominating others
* **Analytical skills** - can review, analyse, and interpret a broad range of information and data to understand the charity and inform decision-making
* **Strategic thinking and planning** - Focus on the future and helps create strategic plans to guide operational planning and decision making
* **Running and taking part in effective meetings** - ensure all voices and opinions are heard; handle differences of opinion fairly and achieve clear outcomes
* **Monitoring and evaluation skills** – able to monitor and evaluate relevant information to review the performance of the charity
* **Financial planning, management, and reporting** - review, interpret and question financial statements and reports. Use financial information to make decisions and ensure robust financial controls are in place
* **Self-awareness** - aware of, and reflect on their own values, assumptions, and strengths
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| **Terms of appointment** |
| * 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
* As a voluntary position, the role is unpaid, but reasonable out of pocket expenses (including travel) will be reimbursed upon submission of an appropriately completed expenses form.
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| **Time commitment** |
| * Trustee Board meetings are quarterly, currently in February, May, August, and November, with an AGM in July.
* Trustee meetings are currently on a Thursday morning and last for approximately two hours.
* The dates for the year are usually set following the AGM, and meetings are generally held face to face, but on-line video, and telephone can also be used in exceptional circumstances.
* Trustees may also be invited to attend and participate in relevant strategy and development days.
* Trustees may be asked to contribute to sub-groups of the Board and/or Task and Finish groups if they have a particular skill or interest in a subject or topic which is being discussed.
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