

# Treasurer candidate information

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## 1. An introduction from the Board

Dear applicant

We are delighted you are interested in becoming a Women's Aid board member and Treasurer.

Women's Aid is the national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. Over the past 45 years, Women's Aid has been at the forefront of shaping and coordinating responses to domestic violence and abuse through practice, research and policy. We empower survivors by keeping their voices at the heart of our work, working with and for women and children by listening to them and responding to their needs.

Effective governance is key to strategic renewal and sustainability, for ourselves and our members. You will join a fantastically committed board of trustees who have embarked on a process of governance renewal, to ensure we provide the best strategic oversight, support and challenge for the 100+ staff who work for Women's Aid.

From social movements to new legislation, numerous opportunities and huge challenges face those of us who are committed to ensuring women and children's voices are heard and influential in shaping policy and practice. Only a feminist analysis and response can transform the tackling and prevention of domestic abuse. As a

trustee, you will ensure Women's Aid continues to work with its members to develop and promote an approach centred on the rights and needs of women and children that is intersectionality informed.

It's vital that our role, as an organisation, is to show that we are inclusive and intersectional – recognising and challenging oppression. We will always try to have a diverse representation on our board, through race, ethnicity, disability, class and sexual orientation. We will also try to ensure geographic diversity.

If you are a feminist with proven leadership and governance abilities, and want to work with us and our staff to take Women's Aid to the next level of achievement and impact, we would love to hear from you.

This trustee recruitment pack provides further information about Women's Aid and the work that we do along with details on the trustee roles required and how to apply. Additional information can also be found on the Women's Aid website: and you can follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We'd be delighted to answer any questions you may have about the role – please get in touch with us via Rachel Reed, Executive Assistant, at [r.reed@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:r.reed@womensaid.org.uk), or call her on 01179 157453 or 07534 620498.

## 2. About Women's Aid

**Our vision:** A world where every woman's right to equality and freedom from violence is unquestioned. We want survivors to be believed, know that the abuse they suffered is not their fault; to receive the right response the first time they speak up about their experiences and as a result feel safer and better able to make their own choices.

**Our mission:** To use our expertise, knowledge and influence to raise the status of women to a level where violence against them is no longer legitimised or tolerated.

**Our beliefs:** Equality, diversity, empowerment and transformation are core values, expressed in the non-judgemental, empowering approach we seek for every survivor; the transformation we support them to achieve in their lives, and in society's response to domestic abuse (expressed in our pioneering Change That Lasts initiative).

**Our activities:** We are a federation of over 180 organisations who provide just under 300 local lifesaving services to women and children across the country. We provide expert training, qualifications and consultancy to a range of agencies and professionals

working with survivors or commissioning domestic abuse services, and award a National Quality Mark for services which meet our quality standards. We hold the largest national data set on domestic abuse, and use research and evidence to inform all of our work. Our campaigns achieve change in policy, practice and awareness, encouraging healthy relationships and helping to build a future where domestic abuse is no longer tolerated.

### Recent achievements include:

- A draft domestic abuse bill that includes a widened definition of domestic abuse, and commitments to ban cross-examination by abusers in the family courts.
- Developing and rolling out Change That Lasts, our ground-breaking initiative that works within communities to make sure survivors get the right response, first time. For our latest impact findings can be found [here](#).
- Our No Woman Turned Away project, created by Women's Aid in 2015, funded by the government, offers intensive support for individual survivors who face multiple barriers to accessing refuge. The project's insights are proving invaluable in understanding the additional obstacles survivors face in accessing support, including institutional racism and immigration status.
- Several successful campaigns, including legal changes to allow survivors to access life-time tenancies; improvements to anonymous registration for survivors of domestic abuse and new improved guidance for judges and magistrates presiding over child contact cases where there are allegations of domestic abuse.

### Current plans

Some of our key areas of work currently include:

Working with our member organisations on our Change That Lasts approach; Demonstrating the value of our members' services and the need to invest in their sustainability; A domestic abuse bill broader than a criminal justice response, that reaches all parts of society, with a gendered understanding of domestic abuse; Providing excellent support and services to survivors and members; Building a strong organisation with fulfilled people, sustainable workplace and funds maximised

We have a strategic plan due to end in 2020, under which our work sits with detailed annual plans and budgets.

## Resources

Budgeted income and expenditure for 2019/20 is £5.4m. The majority of our income comes from restricted grants although we also receive significant funding from donations, legacies and from earned income sources like publications, membership fees and training. We have embarked on a process of improvements to our financial systems and skills set and the board is reviewing our reserves policy. Key challenges which face us include: achieving sustainable income for the national charity and our network of members through reduced reliance on time-limited restricted grants and a sustainable model of funding for refuges and all domestic abuse services; diversifying our income base through finding new sources of income; full cost recovery for our core costs; ensuring stability in reserves. Our most recent annual accounts can be found here. <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/signed-accounts/>

## 3. Governance and organisational structure

Women's Aid is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. As a federation, our members provide independent refuge and community-based services. As a national network, we enable women and children experiencing violence and fear in the home to travel to a place of safety. We also campaign for new laws and policies to protect women and children living with domestic abuse.

The board of trustees is responsible for overseeing the management of the charity and delegates this responsibility on a day-to-day basis to the Chief Executive (this post is currently vacant although two of our Directors are Acting Chief Executive as a job share). The board want to ensure the autonomy of the leadership team in implementing the agreed strategy and support the leadership team of Directors and managers to achieve this. The Chief Executive role is supported by an Executive Management Team, with an overall team of around 100 full and part-time staff. Each appointment to the board is in accordance with the Women's Aid Memorandum and Articles of Association. Women's Aid is required to have a minimum of three board members and a maximum of 12, with 60% represented from the membership. In addition there is a board secretary and sub committees dealing with finance, fundraising, governance and risk; communications, campaigns and policy; and services.

Please refer here: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/board-of-trustees/> for current board biographies.

## 4. Trustee and Treasurer role description

### General trustee responsibilities:

- To ensure the charity complies with its governing documents, the Articles of Association and its associated Standing Orders;
- To ensure that the charity pursues its objectives;
- To ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives;
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the chief executive, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets;
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation;
- Acting in the best interests of beneficiaries and avoiding conflicts of interest;
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation;
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation including the proper investment of the charity's funds;
- Act as an ambassador for Women's Aid by positively and actively engaging to promote Women's Aid's public image;
- Act within the spirit of, and in accordance with, Women's Aid's equality of opportunity and diversity policies and procedures;
- Act within the spirit of, and in accordance with, a feminist understanding of violence against women.
- In addition, with other trustees, to hold the charity "in trust" for current and future beneficiaries by: Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these;
- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements;
- Acting as guardian of the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application;
- Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

The above list of duties is indicative only and not exhaustive. Trustees will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonable commensurate with the role.

## Main responsibilities of the treasurer

- Liaise with relevant staff, committee members and/or volunteers to ensure the financial viability of the organisation;
- Make fellow committee members aware of their financial obligations and take a lead in interpreting financial data to them;
- Regularly report the financial position at committee meetings (balance sheet, cash flow, fundraising performance etc.);
- Oversee the production of an annual budget and propose its adoption at the last meeting of the previous financial year;
- Ensure proper records are kept and that effective financial procedures and controls are in place;
- Appraising the financial viability of plans, proposals and feasibility studies;
- Lead on appointing and liaising with auditors/an independent examiner;
- To make a formal presentation of the accounts at the AGM;
- Advise on the financial implications of the charity's strategic plan;
- overseeing the charity's financial risk-management process and financial strategy;
- To participate in the recruitment of finance staff if required;
- ensuring that the organisation has an appropriate reserves policy;
- ensuring that the organisation has an appropriate investment policy and ensuring its consistency with the organisation's policies and legal responsibilities;
- ensuring that there is no conflict between any investments held and the aims and objectives of the organisation;
- contributing to the fundraising strategy of the organisation.

## Trustee person specification

### Experience

An individual is sought who has a strong empathy with our mission.

- Proven track record of significant achievement within your field, operating at a strategic level;
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives and change;
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making;
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences;
- A track record of commitment to promoting equality and representation

- Knowledge and experience of current finance practice relevant to voluntary and community organisations;
- Experience in one or more fundraising disciplines such as grants or individual fundraising
- Delivering complex financial information at a senior strategic level;
- Advising and coaching on finance matters

## Knowledge, skills and understanding

- A financial qualification, ideally a qualified accountant
- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort (see below);
- Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board, and a willingness to speak their mind;
- Willingness to be available to the chief executive and the management team for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis;
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision;
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team;
- An understanding of the respective roles of the chair, trustees and chief executive;
- Ability to operate within a feminist environment.

## Values

- Will listen to the voice of women and children;
- Will exist to serve Women's Aid's members;
- Will ensure the rights of women and children are central to decision making;
- Will communicate why Women's Aid operates as a feminist organisation;
- Will ensure the beneficiaries come first, both as an individual and in decision making.

## Personal qualities

- Influential and persuasive;
- Adaptable to various audiences and circumstances;
- Confident and professional;
- A visionary with integrity and resilience;
- Excellent self-presentation, drive and enthusiasm;

- Passionate about the ethos of the charity.

### Time commitment:

Board meetings are held in central London, usually in February, May and July with a 2 day board meeting usually held at the charity's main office in Bristol in November. Board meetings usually last for several hours, starting mid-morning and finishing mid-afternoon to permit travel from around England.

The Treasurer plays a key role on the Finance, Fundraising, Risk and Governance sub-committee which meets, usually by phone, in the week or two prior to Board meetings. In addition, meetings with staff and other committee members may occur during the organisational budget preparation period and the annual accounts preparation period. The Treasurer will be expected to join calls with all Board members to present the organisational budget for approval and the audited accounts for approval. They may also be asked to brief the Chair on financial matters outside of these meetings.

The Treasurer may also meet our auditors, work with the Finance Team and the Head of Finance to enhance management information presented to the Board on an ad hoc basis, in Bristol or via remote means.

A national conference is held once a year for 2 days in July, and Board members are asked to attend. Our AGM is held at this conference on the second day and the Treasurer would be expected to present the annual accounts. There may be other high profile events and conferences which Board members may be invited to.

## 5. Application process

To apply for this position, please send a CV and a supporting statement (maximum two sides of A4) to Rachel Reed [r.reed@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:r.reed@womensaid.org.uk). Please ensure that your supporting statement fully addresses how your values, knowledge, skills and experience match our requirements.

You should give the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of two referees, one of whom should be your current/most recent employer. References will only be taken with your permission.

You are also invited to complete and return the attached monitoring information form. The information on the form will be treated as confidential, and used for statistical purposes. The form will not be treated as part of your application.

We would also be grateful if you could let us know if you will require any special provision as a result of any disability should you be called for interview.

Finally, please ensure that you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with the indicative timetable.

**Closing date: noon 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

Should you decide to apply, you will receive acknowledgement within five working days of submission of application. Shortlisted candidates may be required to undertake an additional assessment prior to the final interview. The successful appointment is subject to a satisfactory criminal records disclosure and written references. Unsuccessful applicants are welcome to request feedback.

To arrange an informal conversation with one of the Board about the roles or for any further information relating to the roles or the organisation, please contact Rachel Reed at [r.reed@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:r.reed@womensaid.org.uk) or call her on 01179 157453 or 07534 620498.

*Where the candidate has special requirements of any kind we will endeavour to facilitate these to ensure there are no barriers to full participation as a board member.*