

# Women's Aid trustee recruitment

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## Trustee candidate information pack May 2019

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## 1. An introduction from the co-chairs

Dear applicant

We are delighted you are interested in becoming a Women's Aid trustee.

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.

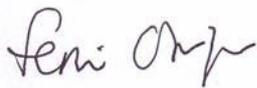
It's vital that our role, as an organisation, is to show that we are inclusive and intersectional – recognising and challenging oppression. We will always try to have a diverse representation on our board, through race, ethnicity, disability, class and sexual orientation. We will also try to ensure geographic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

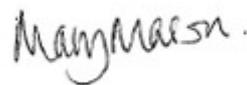
This trustee recruitment pack provides further information about Women's Aid and the work that we do along with details on the trustee roles required and how to apply. Additional information can also be found on the Women's Aid [website](#): and you can follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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.

With best wishes



**Femi Otitoju, Co-Chair**



**Mary Mason, Interim Co-Chair**

## 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.

The 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (run in partnership with Refuge) and our range of online services, which include the Survivors' Forum, help hundreds of thousands of women and children every year.

### 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](#).
- Complementing the National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership with Refuge), we are strengthening our support for women unable to access a refuge

place through our No Woman Turned Away project, created by Women's Aid in 2015. In addition to providing intensive support for individual survivors, 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 the board has recently renewed 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](#).

### 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 the recruitment process has commenced). 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 121 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. Although not constitutionally required, both posts of chair and treasurer are currently jointly held. In addition there is a board secretary and a finance, fundraising and risk sub-committee chaired by the co-treasurers.

Please refer [here](#) to the link to the current board biographies.

### 4. Trustee role descriptions

We are currently seeking four trustees to join our board; one of these trustees will hold leadership positions in the women's sector as the Chief Executive or trustee of a member organisation and three positions are open to applicants who are not from a member service. Ideally we are looking women who have commissioning, legal or financial expertise. Within this, we are also looking to recruit two Co-Treasurers, whose specific additional tasks are outlined on page seven.

The board of trustees is jointly responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, its financial health, probity of its activities, developing the organisation's aims and its objectives and goals in accordance with the governing

document, legal and regulatory guidelines. All trustees should also be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

#### Duties

- To ensure that the charity pursues its objectives;
- To ensure the charity complies with its governing documents, the Articles of Association and its associated Standing Orders;
- To ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives;
- Act within the spirit of, and in accordance with, a feminist understanding of violence against women;
- Act within the spirit of, and in accordance with, Women's Aid's equality of opportunity and diversity policies and procedures;
- 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.

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 reasonably commensurate with the role.

## Co-treasurer role description

We are seeking two trustees to join our board as co-treasurers; within these two roles we would expect to see representation of financial leadership experience and representation from a member service (these may or may not be the same person).

### 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;
- To participate in the recruitment of finance staff if required;
- To chair the finance, fundraising and risk subcommittee in line with standing orders and terms of reference, and reporting back to the board of trustees.

## Vision and values

You will have demonstrable strategic vision and a real sense of determination and pride to work with other trustees to set strategy; and support and challenge our Chief Executive and her team to deliver our ambitious plans. You will be a committed feminist able to communicate why Women's Aid is a feminist organisation and who understands how the relationship between different forms of oppression and discrimination affects survivors of domestic abuse and should frame our services and activism. You will bring knowledge and experience of the sectors, movements, alliances and partnerships within which Women's Aid operates. Trustees and staff strive to support and add value to our members; you will be passionate about ensuring their voice is heard in policy-making at a national level and

that their sustainability and the rights of the women and children they work alongside are at the heart of our strategy. Your experiences will lend themselves to the special role of trustee and company director of a national charity and federation of local organisations, always putting our beneficiaries first. Our founders were visionary and courageous, setting up from scratch the first women's refuges in the 1970s. As a trustee you will help us be faithful to their legacy as we move forward to grasp new challenges and opportunities.

Finally, you must have the highest personal and professional integrity and be able to inspire the respect of the Chief Executive and our staff. As part of the Women's Aid team, you will be confident communicating our key messages and priorities in your capacity as a trustee, your natural passion for our feminist ethos and commitment to survivors, will strengthen our brand and profile.

### **Skills, knowledge and experience**

Trustees are sought who have a strong empathy with our mission and proven track record of significant achievement within your field, operating at a strategic level. We expect to see demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives and change; strategic understanding and commitment to the violence against women and girls sector; a proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision-making, including at board level; a history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences and a track record of commitment to promoting equality and representation including understanding of feminism and intersectionality.

In addition, we seek to have the following skills represented among our board. Please evidence in your application the main skills and expertise you would bring:

- Human resources;
- Financial management;
- Operations (including IT; internal communications; knowledge management);
- Governance (applicable to charity of our size and scale);
- Digital (e.g. developing and implementing organisation-wide digital strategy);
- Public policy analysis or influencing;
- Networking experience with influential contacts and/or business and corporates;
- Experience or knowledge as a commissioner of services and/or other relevant policy or practice work with key audiences (e.g. commissioners; private employers; health and social care; policing or housing);
- Equality and diversity, for example, devising or implementing organisational policies on any aspect of equality and diversity to embed best practice or proven leadership

in this area (for example as a workplace champion). Women's Aid is currently devising and implementing a comprehensive race equality strategy and we welcome expertise in this and other areas including disability (where we recognize the significant barriers to survivors).

### Commitment

- Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort, likely to be about 12 days per year. Three year term, potentially renewable for a further three years;
- Attend board meeting four times a year in London or Bristol (one of which takes place over two days) with the possibility of additional three to four meetings as part of a specialised subcommittee, plus attendance at Women's Aid events as required;
- Willingness to speak your mind and always to act with integrity, including articulating views or recommendations in opposition to the rest of the board;
- 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 and boundaries between governance and operations;
- Ability to operate within a feminist environment.

Reasonable out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed and a nominal honorarium paid to Women's Aid member organisations as appropriate.

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.

## 5. Application process

To apply for this position, please send a CV and a supporting statement (maximum two sides of A4) to [Rachel Reed](#). 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.

### **Timetable**

Closing date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Interviews will be held: **5<sup>th</sup> July 2019, London**

### **Recruitment process**

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.

We plan to conclude the recruitment process and announce appointments by the end of July, so that trustees can complete their initial induction before joining a board meeting in November 2019 at the Women's Aid main office in Bristol.

To arrange an informal conversation with one of the co-chairs 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.