

South West Advocacy Network (SWAN)

Trustee Candidate Information

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Welcome from the Chair of SWAN

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee.

SWAN is looking for new Trustees to strengthen and diversify our Governing Board. Over 20 years we have established an excellent reputation for providing quality advocacy services across Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bristol, and Wiltshire. We want to develop a Board that is inclusive, and which represents the diverse communities we support.

If you share our vision to provide an all-encompassing and sustainable model of independent advocacy for people living in the south-west region, we're looking forward to hearing from you. We welcome applications from the broadest spectrum of backgrounds within the communities we work with.

Best wishes,

Ken Howard
Chair of the Board of Trustees

About us

SWAN is an incorporated charity that was initially established in 1999 to provide multiple advocacy services throughout Wiltshire. Over subsequent years the organisation expanded its services by securing additional contracts and funding to provide other advocacy services across the South West.

SWAN's mission is to ensure a clear voice for vulnerable adults through the provision of effective and inclusive independent advocacy based on the principles of equality and fairness; and tailored to meet the needs and wishes of each individual. We believe that:

- Everyone has the right to be heard and respected
- Everyone has the right to choice in decisions made about them
- Everyone has the right to be safe
- Everyone needs someone on their side

Our current services include:

- An award-winning Dementia Advocacy Service that develops individual Living Well Plans
- Mental Capacity Advocacy: supporting people who do not have an appropriate person to represent them on issues concerning medical treatment, or medium and long-term hospital or care home residency
- Mental Health Advocacy: for people detained under the Mental Health Act
- Generic, or Community Advocacy; case-by-case representation for most other marginalised groups, such as people who have learning difficulties, physical health problems and acquired brain injury
- Health Complaints Advocacy for those who need support to pursue a complaint against the NHS
- Victims of Crime Advocacy: supporting people who have been victims of crime

For full information about our range of advocacy services and to meet our dedicated team please visit our website: <https://swanadvocacy.org.uk/>

The Trustee's Role

The Board of Trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of SWAN, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with their agreed strategy, legal and regulatory guidelines.

The Trustees support the current Strategic Plan and help drive the changes identified, support the Chief Executive, oversee strategic financial planning, and work collaboratively and creatively with external partners and complementary organisations

The Statutory Duties of a Trustee

These are set out in the Charity Commission's document- **"The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do"** which can be found on their web site:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

In summary these duties are to:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up (as set out in its articles of association), and no other purpose; and applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests and safeguard the good name and values of the organisation
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill and contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Ensure your charity is accountable and complies with statutory accounting and reporting requirements

Who we're looking for

We are seeking trustees who:

- Share SWAN's core values of Independence, Empowerment, and Inclusion
- Have a commitment to our work
- Are willing to make time for staff enquiries and advice where requested
- Understand the duties of a trustee
- Enjoy working as part of a team
- Are able to contribute strategically across a wide range of issues
- Have skills and expertise in one or more of the following:
 - Business/service development
 - The Criminal Justice system
 - Social or Health Care services
 - Third sector advocacy or care services
 - Digital developments and IT
 - Communications and public relations
 - Civil Law
 - Finance & Resource management
 - Networking and collaborative partnerships

It would be an advantage if new trustees were based in the South West so they can apply their local knowledge to help develop SWANs services in these areas.

Eligibility

You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, unless your disqualification has been waived by the Commission. Reasons for disqualification include if you:

- are disqualified as a company director
- have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
- are an undischarged bankrupt (or subject to sequestration in Scotland), or have a current composition or arrangement including an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) with your creditors
- have been removed as a trustee of any charity by the Commission (or the court) because of misconduct or mismanagement
- are on the sex offenders' register

We undertake enhanced DBS checks for all trustees. There are further restrictions for charities that

work with children or adults at risk. See section 3 of the *“The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do”* for more information.

Time Commitment

- SWAN Trustees serve a 3-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for two additional terms.
- Core meetings are held at approximately 6 weekly intervals at SWAN offices or other locations in SWANs operating areas. These consist of:
 - Quarterly Board meetings that are usually held late afternoon/early evenings.
 - More informal quarterly Board Evaluation Meetings with managers and staff
- Trustees are encouraged to lend their skills and experience as appropriate to relevant working groups or sub committees
- There will be a maximum of 3 ‘Away Days’ for staff and Trustees each year
- Meetings with external stakeholders as and when appropriate
- Trustees are expected to attend training sessions as appropriate to their role, experience and expertise
- On average the total time commitment will amount to approximately 8 to 10 hours per month

As a Trustee the role is unremunerated, but all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed

How to apply

If you’re interested in becoming a Trustee with us and would like an informal discussion please contact Vikki Holloway, Chief Executive at Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk

If you are eligible to serve as a trustee and wish to apply, please send us:

- A supporting statement illustrating your fit for this role against the criteria and experience sought, and crucially, your motivation for applying for the role
- A current comprehensive CV, including details of two referees (who will not be contacted without your prior knowledge and consent)
- Your signed Trustee Eligibility Declaration (attached)

Applications should be sent to Vikki Holloway, at Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk

TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY DECLARATION

Trustee eligibility and responsibility

By completing and signing this form, you declare that you:

- are willing to act as a trustee of the organisation named above
- are not prevented from acting as a trustee because you:
 - have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed here *
 - have an IVA, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order
 - have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)
 - have been removed from being in the management or control of any body in Scotland (under relevant legislation)
 - have been disqualified by the Charity Commission
 - are a disqualified company director
 - are a designated person for the purposes of antiterrorism legislation
 - are on the sex offenders register
 - have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement
 - have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Date:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rules-for-charity-trustees-and-charity-senior-positions>