

## Trustee Recruitment Information Sheet 2023:

### Contents:

1. **Welcome from the Chair of South West Advocacy Network**
2. **About South West Advocacy Network (SWAN)**
3. **Trustee Role Responsibilities**
4. **Who are we looking for?**
5. **Time Commitment**
6. **How to apply**
7. **Trustee Eligibility Declaration**

### 1. Welcome from the Chair of SWAN Board of Trustees

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee at SWAN.

South West Advocacy Network (SWAN) is looking for new Trustees and a Treasurer to strengthen and diversify our Governing Board. Over 25 years we have established an excellent reputation for providing quality advocacy services across Somerset, Bristol, Somerset, Dorset, Isle of Wight, West Berkshire and Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. We want to continue developing our Board, ensuring it is as inclusive as possible, and representative of the diverse communities and people that we support.

If you share our vision of providing a sustainable model of independent advocacy to vulnerable people and believe that everyone should be empowered and supported to have a voice in the decisions that impact on their lives, then we would like to hear from you.

Best wishes,



Claire Tough  
Chair of the Board

## 2. About SWAN:

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

SWAN's mission is to be respected by all stakeholders for delivering high quality, person centred and innovative services that ensures equal access to rights. A world without discrimination, with true social justice, where people are treated as equals and have influence on the decisions that affect their lives. We believe everyone deserves social justice and free access to advocacy.

Our services operate under the auspices of the Advocacy Charter and are subjected to accreditation under the 'Advocacy Quality Performance Mark' every 3 years.

### Our current services include:

- **Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA):** 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 (IMHA):** for people detained under the Mental Health Act
- **Care Act Advocacy:** for those receiving or needing support and care under the 2014 Care 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 (IHCA):** for those who need support to pursue a complaint against the NHS.
- **Victims of Crime Advocacy (VOCAS):** supporting people who have been victims of crime
- **Be Heard:** Bespoke self-advocacy projects operating in each of our service areas, delivering self-advocacy training to tailored groups of individuals.

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

## 3. 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 the agreed strategy, and legal and regulatory guidelines.

The Charity Governance Code sets the principles and recommended practice for good governance using the following 7 principles which are built on the foundation of the trustee role and charity context:

### 1. Organisational Purpose

The Board is clear about the charity's aims and ensures that these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.

## 2. Leadership

Every charity is led by an effective Board that provides strategic leadership in line with the charity's aims and values.

## 3. Integrity

The Board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which help achieve the organisation's charitable purposes. The board is aware of the importance of the public's confidence and trust in charities, and trustees undertake their duties accordingly.

## 4. Decision-Making, Risk, and Control

The Board makes sure that its decision-making processes are informed, rigorous and timely and that effective delegation, control and risk assessment and management systems are set up and monitored.

## 5. Board Effectiveness

The Board works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.

## 6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and decision-making.

## 7. Openness and Accountability

The Board leads the organisation in being transparent and accountable. The charity is open in its work, unless there is good reason for it not to be.

The Statutory Duties of a Trustee 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 Trustee duties are:

- To ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- To make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up (as set out in its Governing Document, the articles of association), and no other purpose; and applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
- To comply with the charity's governing document and required legislation
- To act in the charity's best interests and safeguard the good name and values of the organisation
- To manage the charity's resources responsibly
- To 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.
- To ensure the charity is accountable and complies with statutory accounting and reporting requirements

## 4. Who are we looking for?

We are seeking trustees who can demonstrate that they:

- Share SWAN’s core values,
- Have a commitment to our work
- Understand what the duties of a trustee requires of them
- 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

It would be an advantage if new trustees were based in one of our current operating areas of Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath, Bristol, Dorset, West Berkshire or Hampshire & IoW, so they can apply their local knowledge to help develop and sustain SWAN’s services in these areas. A willingness to travel across our service delivery area is essential.

## 5. Time Commitment:

SWAN Trustees serve a 3-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for two additional terms. Board meetings are quarterly, usually in February, May, August and November. Meeting times and venues can be varied to suit the requirements of the majority. Virtual meetings or individual attendance at meetings via Microsoft Teams can be arranged. Board Evaluation meetings are held 3 times a year – as an opportunity to explore topics in greater detail. All meetings dates are agreed and circulated at least 12 months in advance via the Board Schedule.

Trustees are encouraged to lend their skills and experience as appropriate to relevant working groups or sub committees and have an active role in the our Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (AQPM) accreditations which happen every 3 years.

Trustee training sessions are delivered as appropriate or requested and where possible take place during a Board Evaluation meeting Attendance at training sessions as appropriate to their role, experience, and expertise

## 6. Eligibility:

You cannot act as a Trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act unless your disqualification has been waived by the Commission. Reasons for disqualification can be found by following the above link. (see also the Eligibility Declaration form on page 6). 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. Please note all Trustees will require a current Disclosure and Barring Certificate (DBS) which will then need to be updated every 3 years.

**Please see Eligibility Declaration on page 6**

## 7. How to apply:

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee with us but would like an informal discussion before proceeding please contact Vikki Holloway, Chief Executive at [Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk)

If you are eligible to serve as a Trustee (see page 6) and wish to apply, please send us:

- A supporting statement describing what you can contribute to SWAN by means of skills, experience, or personal/professional interest, why you wish to be considered and crucially, your motivation for applying for the role
- A current comprehensive CV, or details of any work or volunteering, membership of community groups, charities etc. that are relevant to this application.
- Details of two referees (who will not be contacted without your prior knowledge and consent)
- Your signed Trustee Eligibility Declaration (page 6 of this document)

Applications should be sent to Vikki Holloway, at [Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:Vikki.Holloway@swanadvocacy.org.uk)



Vikki Holloway  
Chief Executive Officer



Peter Harding  
Chair of the Board Working Group



Registered Charity 1125679  
Registered Company: 6599429

## TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY DECLARATION

**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 for any of the following reasons:

- 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 a 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:**

**Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirmation-of-charity-trustee-eligibility>**