



**SignHealth**

Chair and Trustee

Appointment Brief



Attentive

Trusted

Authentic

## **Appointment Brief**

## **SignHealth, Chair and Trustee**

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining SignHealth as Chair or as a Trustee.

SignHealth is a national charity that works to improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. Our organisation was established in 1986 and for over 30 years we have been providing services that improve accessibility and health outcomes for Deaf people across the UK.

While there are approximately 70,000 sign language users in the UK, most healthcare providers do not provide adequate accessible support for Deaf patients. Deaf people are twice as likely to develop mental health issues, and tend to have poorer health than hearing people. We deliver services and we campaign. We played a key role in the development of the Accessible Information Standard, and will continue to influence the NHS and relevant government departments on improving health for Deaf people. We run five care homes, two outreach services, and IAPT psychological therapies services as well as a number of other projects supporting Deaf people. We published a significant report called 'Sick of It', which you can find [here](#), and in 2015 we were named as Disability Charity of the Year.

We are now in the process of refreshing our strategy, enhancing our governance, and have recently relocated our head office. While over half of our staff are Deaf, we are continuing to work towards becoming the biggest employer of Deaf people in the voluntary sector. As we enter a new and exciting phase we are now seeking to recruit a high-calibre Chair and a number of dynamic Trustees.

We have detailed within this appointment brief the skills and experience you will need to have to be successful in these roles. We hope you are as enthused as we are about our future and our ambitions, and if you feel you have the skills, experience and passion, then we would love to hear from you.

Yours faithfully,



**James Watson-O'Neill**  
**Chief Executive**

## **About SignHealth – Background and Context**

SignHealth is a national charity that works to improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. The majority of health and social care information and provision are not supported by British Sign Language, leaving many Deaf people at a significant disadvantage. It is estimated that approximately 70,000 Deaf people use British Sign Language in the UK and it is clear that there is much more to do in terms of raising awareness, campaigning for change, and supporting others to deliver essential services.

SignHealth was established in 1986 as the Anastasia Trust, and was initially focused on providing access to mental health services for Deaf people. In 1991 the organisation relaunched and became Sign. In the years that followed, Sign began expanding its facilities by acquiring housing services to serve as care homes. The organisation's first housing project opened in 1993 in Balham, with a second scheme opening the following year in Manchester. This was followed by three more housing schemes in the following years in Leeds, London, and Birmingham. The tenants living in these housing schemes are referred to us from long term institutional care or hospitals. Tenants are encouraged to learn new skills and build up their self confidence in order to become independent. In the mid 1990's, Sign began developing and expanding various outreach services to support Deaf people in their communities.

In 2005, Sign rebranded to SignHealth and began focusing on wider health work just as well as mental health. SignHealth is now profoundly respected by health officials and has been establishing various advocacy and counselling services. The organisation has also worked extensively with the Department of Health on research projects and initiatives.

The charity is funded by Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, trust funds, grants, voluntary donations, and various fundraising initiatives.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is a world where there are no barriers to good health and wellbeing for deaf people

### **Our Mission**

SignHealth's purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people

We work with the Deaf community, health services, and other charities

## **Our Aims and Values**

### **Person-centred:**

We are committed to delivering a personalised service for each individual

### **Involving:**

We talk with and listen to Deaf people about their thoughts and opinions

### **Enabling:**

We support Deaf people to live independently and to access information to make their own choices

We support our staff to fulfil their role with appropriate training and development

We aim to employ a high percentage of Deaf staff

### **Expert:**

We are respected and trustworthy

We provide a high quality and professional service

### **Respectful:**

We recognise and respect that Deaf culture is important

### **Influential:**

We respond to local, regional and national agendas and take opportunities to develop our work

We work with our partner organisations

### **Safeguarding:**

We work to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and children

## **Our Services**

### **Social Care services**

We have five care homes registered with the Care Quality Commission – Longley Road in London, Polestar in Birmingham, Constance Way in Leeds, Claridge Road and Bowfell Road, both in Manchester. Each care home has six self-contained flats with a communal kitchen and living area also.

We also run Outreach services from Manchester, Birmingham and London. Our London service is registered with the CQC and provides services to Deaf people across London and some of the neighboring local authorities too.

Our London Outreach team also provides care and support to Deaf people living at Huron Road, a supported housing project which we deliver with Wandle Housing in Wandsworth.

### **BSL Healthy Minds**

BSL Healthy Minds offers IAPT psychological therapy services for Deaf people in British Sign Language. All BSL Healthy Minds qualified therapists are fluent in BSL, and many of the therapists are also Deaf.

### **DeafHope**

DeafHope is a service run by women for women. The initiative aims to help women who are experiencing or have suffered from domestic abuse. Qualified therapists provide practical and emotional support to Deaf women in these circumstances, and help them rebuild their lives. This project also led to the establishment of Young DeafHope, an initiative that works with young Deaf people to raise awareness of domestic abuse and violence.

### **InterpreterNow**

**INTERPRETERNOW**

InterpreterNow is one of SignHealth's two trading companies. This Video Relay Service enables Deaf and hearing people to communicate easily through online interpreting for Deaf BSL users. It can be accessed through any laptop, computer, tablet, or smartphone via the InterpreterNow App. The service can be used for meetings and appointments, but also for day to day conversations on the phone or in shops.

## **sign2sing**

sign2sing is an annual fundraising event held by SignHealth, which raises funds for Deaf children and adults. Schools, Clubs, businesses, universities, and choirs all take part in the annual event, where they perform songs in sign language. Sign2sing is sponsored by the Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts and participants can win a prize from Eurocamp at the event.



## **Further Reading**

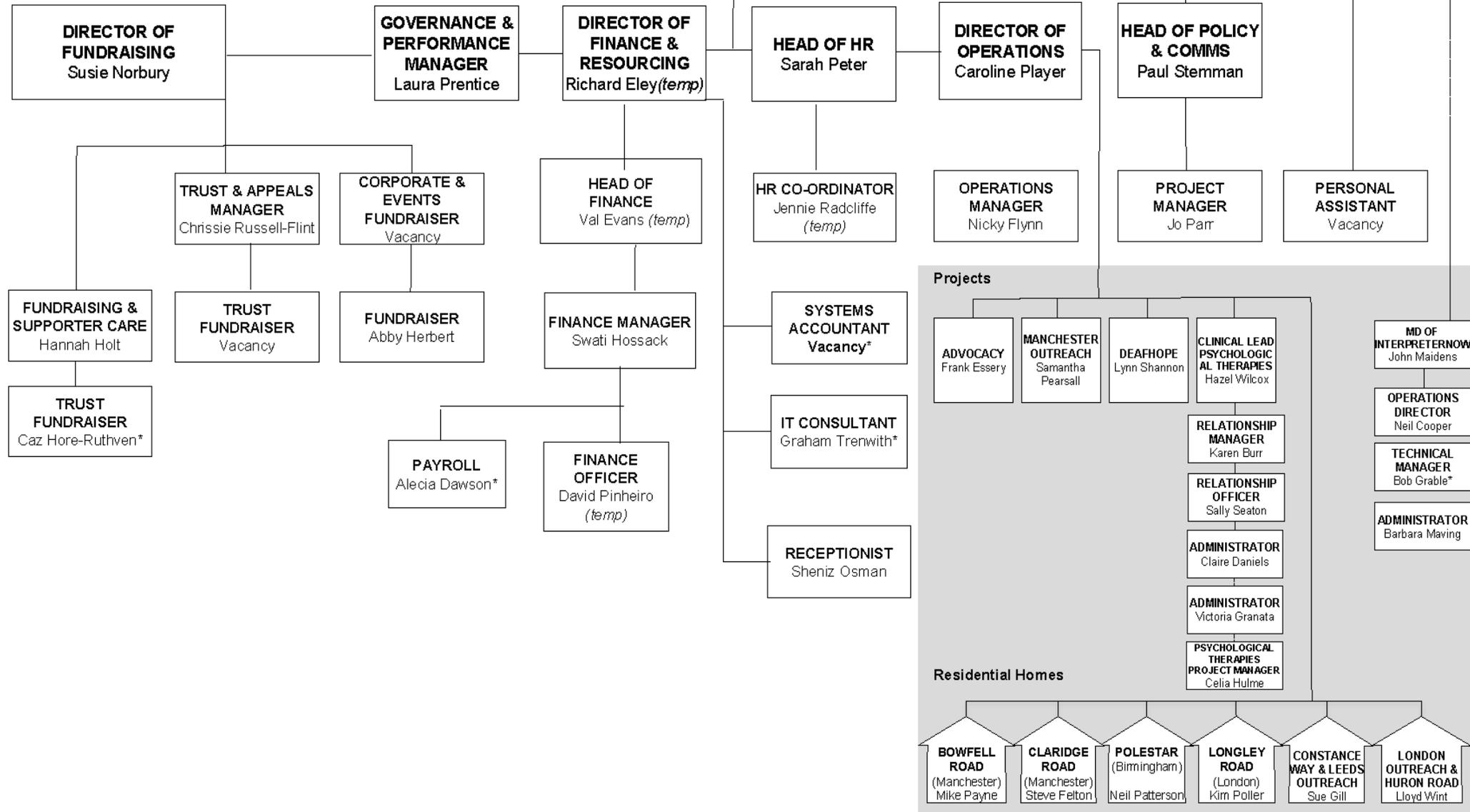
For a copy of our latest Published Accounts click [here](#)

**Trustees**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Anne Ryan (Interim Chair), Joe Gallard (Treasurer),  
Monica Wyatt, Philip Gerrard,  
Dr Favaad Iqbal, Katy Judd

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
James Watson-O'Neill

**Senior Management Team**



## **Role Profiles**

### **Role Overview of the Chair and Trustees**

To lead and inspire the direction and activities of the Board, setting high standards of probity and accountability, and ensuring the efficient conduct of the Board's business and general meetings, and effective management of the organisation to deliver SignHealth's mission.

As part of the Board, the Chair and the Trustees act as the guardians of the vision, values and purpose of SignHealth, acting in its best interests and working constructively with other Board members and staff to:

- Achieve and maintain excellent standards of governance
- Ensure SignHealth's purpose and objectives are achieved
- Ensure that SignHealth is managed and controlled appropriately and maintains its financial sustainability
- Demonstrate SignHealth is accountable to its legitimate interest groups, funders, and stakeholders
- Ensure SignHealth works within the requirements of the law, regulation, its funding bodies, and best practice standards

### **Key Responsibilities of the Chair**

- Ensure the efficient conduct and running of the Board's business and general meetings
- Oversee and set the long-term strategic direction of SignHealth through realistic objectives
- Safeguard an effective business plan and sufficient resources to deliver the organisation's objectives and maintain financial viability
- Ensure risk and performance are effectively monitored and managed by the Board, including adequate internal controls, and maintaining a risk register and a plan for business continuity
- Provide oversight, constructive challenge, and support in equal measure to the Chief Executive and his Top Team
- Engage and develop the Board ensuring it operates in an effective and efficient way

### **Specific duties of the Chair**

- Ensure that all Board members are given the opportunity to express their views and contribute to constructive debates, that appropriate standards of behavior are maintained, and that all trustees act in the best interests of SignHealth
- Establish a constructive working relationship with, and provide support and guidance for the Chief Executive. Appraise performance of the Chief Executive annually and work with the Board to determine appropriate remuneration
- Develop a dynamic relationship with and between Board members, so that the Board is appropriately skilled, is constructive in its challenges, and acts in partnership with staff
- Develop the Board's teamwork and improve its performance through regular individual and Board development sessions
- Ensure the Board annually reviews its efficiency and considers the appropriate skills, succession planning and recruitment for the continuity of its performance
- Ensure that the Board receives professional advice when needed, and that SignHealth is acting legally and with probity
- Appoint a Deputy Chair, to ensure continuity in the event of illness or absence
- Support and develop the Board through regular 360 appraisals, skills reviews, recruitment and succession planning

### **As part of the Board, the Chair will:**

- Support and contribute to the purpose, values and objectives of SignHealth, ensuring its long-term success
- Ensure compliance with the Charity Commission requirements and its guidance in 'The Essential Trustee'
- Devote sufficient time and energy to SignHealth, including preparing for meetings and keeping up to date with the Deaf community, mental health and social care sector issues;
- Use and assemble specific skills and experience, and share collective responsibility for all Board decisions
- Take lead responsibility for a specific aspect of SignHealth's work as agreed with the Chair and CEO, contributing specific expertise and support to staff to add value, while ensuring that this does not cross the boundary into the staff operational role
- Register all interests that might have a bearing on SignHealth's work and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest as and when they arise

- Represent SignHealth positively to all external stakeholders and interested groups
- If necessary, coordinate the appointment or dismissal of the chief executive in collaboration with the board
- Safeguard the integrity of financial information, approving each year's budget and business plan and annual accounts prior to publication
- Establish, oversee and review a framework of delegation and systems of internal control

### **Key Responsibilities of the Trustee**

- To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the organisation, and to collaborate in providing the direction of SignHealth's ongoing development
- To work with the other Trustees in ensuring that the practices and policies of SignHealth are in accordance with its mission
- With other Trustees, to exercise effective control of the organisation, ensuring that it functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and in accordance with best practices

### **Specific duties of the Trustee**

- Develop, review, and safeguard strategic aims, and assist in their implementation
- Attend the quarterly meetings of the Trustee Board and briefing meetings as required
- Monitor and evaluate the organisation's financial and operational performance against its strategic aims, exercising efficient control and ensuring best practice
- Work towards SignHealth's vision, strategy, and values
- Ensure all of the organisation's policies are in accordance with its aims and values
- Attend all training and development activities and opportunities, including the induction process upon taking up the role of Trustee
- Work as an efficient member of the team within the Trustee Board
- While reflecting the values of the organisation, protect its assets and integrity
- Forge and maintain efficient relations with the Executive team and the staff, engaging with members and stakeholders as necessary

### **As part of the Board, the Trustee will:**

- Ensure compliance with the Charity Commission requirements and its guidance in 'The Essential Trustee'

- Devote sufficient time and energy to SignHealth, including preparing for meetings and keeping up to date with the Deaf community, mental health and social care sector issues;
- Contribute specific skills and experience in the monitoring and safeguarding of the organisation's performance
- Attend and participate in any Board induction, training, briefing, the annual away day or other development activities, and the Board appraisal scheme
- Register all interests that might have a bearing on SignHealth's work and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest as and when they arise
- Represent SignHealth positively to all external stakeholders and interested groups
- Collaborate in the design, implementation, and monitoring of a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets and reputation of the organisation.

## **Person Specification for the Chair**

*You should be able to demonstrate and provide evidence of the following criteria listed under Part One within your written application. These will be tested further at the preliminary interview stage, along with the criteria listed under Part Two:*

### **Part One**

1. Strong strategic leadership skills with a proven track record of running a complex and successful organisation
2. Excellent Non Executive experience gained within the charity, not for profit, or public sector as a Chair or Trustee
3. Sophisticated understanding of governance with a track record of leading on Board development and working with diverse Non Executives in order to develop an efficient and professional Board
4. Significant experience of providing the appropriate support and challenge to the Chief Executive and the Top Team
5. Superb experience of driving and implementing strategy, organisational development, and brand growth, with the ability to lead and contribute to high level strategic debate
6. Strong financial and commercial acumen with superb business and management skills
7. Excellent communication and listening skills, with the ability to build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders
8. General knowledge of the operating environment of SignHealth and the political, social, and economic external factors
9. You will have significant empathy with and/or lived experience of being Deaf, being part of the Deaf community, and using Deaf services

### **Part Two**

- Superb engagement skills with a high level of emotional intelligence and gravitas
- Strong leadership qualities and an excellent and collaborative team player
- Highly networked ideally across multiple sectors
- Enthusiasm towards the development and growth of the organisation
- Risk-aware and able to make difficult decisions
- Flexible and independent thinker
- Resilient character with strong problem solving skills

## **Person Specification for the Trustee**

*You should be able to demonstrate and provide evidence of the following criteria listed under Part One within your written application. These will be tested further at the preliminary interview stage, along with the criteria listed under Part Two:*

### **Part One**

1. A record of proven and significant achievement in your own field
2. An understanding of the type of work undertaken by SignHealth and a commitment to our aims and values
3. Successful experience of operating on a Board or a major committee in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation
4. Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
5. Confident and effective communication skills with a range of audiences and the ability to challenge in a constructive way
6. An empathy with and/or lived experience of being Deaf, being part of the Deaf community, and using Deaf services
7. A background in one or more of the following areas would be welcomed but not essential as we are keen to consider candidates from a wide range of backgrounds;
  - a. Social Care
  - b. Health
  - c. Income generation
  - d. Advocacy, marketing and communications
  - e. Governance
  - f. Diversity and Inclusion

### **Part Two**

- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision-making
- Strong understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees, and Executive team
- Enthusiasm and time to commit to the role of Trustee
- A background of involvement within the not for profit and voluntary sector
- Strong networking skills
- Commitment to promoting SignHealth's vision and values
- A high degree of emotional intelligence and the ability to work as a team

## Timetable

Closing date for all applications	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July
Preliminary discussions at Attenti	Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> of August & w/c Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> August
Informal meetings	w/c 28th August and w/c 4th September
Final Panel	Wednesday 13th September and Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> September

## Terms and Conditions

### Remuneration

- These are unremunerated roles
- Essential travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed

### Appointment and tenure of office

Initial appointment will be for three years. The appointment can be renewed at the end of the first period of office, subject to consistently good performance, for a further three years. The maximum total term is six years (two terms of three years).

### Time Commitment

On average we envisage the Chair will need to commit a minimum of 1 to 2 days per month and the Trustees will need to commit on average 1 day per month. The SignHealth Board meets on a quarterly basis at our offices in Balham and in central London.

## How to Apply

If you are interested in applying for this role, please do so via the Attenti website.

<http://www.attenti.co.uk/signhealthc>

Please indicate if you wish to be considered for Chair, Trustee or both and can ensure you provide the following:

- A supporting statement. This should clearly set out how you meet each of the criteria set out in the person specification. You should provide evidence in your statement; and not simply a broad claim to have done it - give us examples and dimensions; tell us what this achieved and how it helped meet your organisations' goals.
- A comprehensive CV including details of your achievements in each role.
- Details of two referees, one of whom should be with regards to your current or most recent board level role, and let us know whether you would be happy for us to contact them as part of the process. Referees will not, of course, be contacted without your prior consent.

Please ensure that you indicate in your application any dates when you will not be available, or where we might have difficulty in contacting you, which coincide with the appointments timetable.

All applications will be acknowledged.

Attenti will respect the privacy of any initial approach or expression of interest in this role, whether formal or informal.

**Please let us know of any accessibility accommodations you may require. BSL interpreters can be on hand for all stages of the recruitment process, but will need advance notice from us.**

Closing date for applications: **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July**

For an informal and confidential discussion, please contact our advising consultants Jim Banks, David Fielding, and Andreea Pohus at Attenti on 020 7422 0620.