

Chair of Trustees Role Pack (Voluntary role)



About us

At Wessex Cancer Support we understand how important it is for people who are affected by cancer to have high quality emotional and wellbeing support. That's why we offer personalised support for people with cancer and their loved ones, that empowers them to live well with and beyond cancer.

Every year over 14,000 people are diagnosed with cancer within the Wessex region (Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight). A diagnosis can be a shock and have a huge impact on an entire family. We help and support people affected by cancer regardless of age, gender or type of cancer. Our dedicated team is committed to offering support for as long as people need it, away from a hospital environment.

All our services are provided free of charge; we have four drop-in cancer support centres, local outreach and an online service. Clients visiting any of our services are welcomed by support volunteers who are trained to provide information, support and a listening ear. New clients will have an appointment with our Wellbeing Co-ordinator to agree a personal support plan which aims to help the individual deal with the emotional impact of cancer, improve well-being, help with pain management and increase self-confidence. The plan might include access to support groups or one-to-one sessions with one of our team of specialist counsellors and therapists. We also provide health and well-being information, exercise programmes, Sing for Life Choirs, and courses to help clients live well with and beyond cancer.

The charity relies on income from donations, legacies and our six charity shops to fund our work.

Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision

Everyone in Wessex affected by cancer will have access to personalised wellbeing support so that they can face whatever's ahead with more confidence.

Our Mission

To engage with local communities to help improve the emotional health and wellbeing of anyone affected by cancer.

Our Values and Behaviours



Our values drive everything we do – the services we provide, the decisions we make, the actions we take, the partners we choose, the way we treat each other. They are our statement about what matters to us, and how we hold ourselves accountable for our own behaviour.

We're **compassionate**

We do everything with kindness and care

- We take time to listen
- We strive to understand one another
- We are considerate when we respond to others
- We treat people as individuals and don't make assumptions

We're **purposeful**

We always aspire to go above and beyond, and we take responsibility for the decisions we make.

- We have a can-do attitude
- We are accountable and understand that our behaviour and approach reflect on the charity
- We use initiative and evidence to prioritise effectively and achieve the best outcomes
- We maximise time in the most effective way
- We take responsibility for our own personal professional development

We're **inclusive**

We offer a warm and friendly welcome to everyone. We celebrate and embrace the differences that shape who we are. Our door is open.

- We are friendly and approachable
- We are non-judgemental
- We challenge and root out prejudice
- We stay up to date with current terms and avoid using words and language that may offend

We're **collaborative**

We work with others so that we can always do our best for people with cancer and their loved ones.

- We respect other people's opinions
- We share knowledge and skills openly and try to help others whenever we can
- We participate in discussions, but do not dominate.
- We discuss matters objectively to find the best outcome.
- We proactively seek and accept feedback, using it to improve
- We give constructive, honest and open feedback
- We endeavour to be a great role model to others

A letter from our current Chair of Trustees and CEO



Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in Wessex Cancer Support.

It is an important time for the work of the charity. We are two years into our new five-year strategy, which outlines how we will respond to an expected increase in demand for our services, as the number of people diagnosed with cancer continues to increase. We will continue to provide emotional and wellbeing support, and introduce a range of courses, workshops and talks that focus on empowering our clients to develop tools and skills to support them to live well with and beyond cancer

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the charity, and for supporting the Executive team in delivering that strategy. The current Board comprises seven Trustees with wide ranging experience, all giving their time voluntarily. Our current Chair is nearing the end of her term, and as part of our planned succession we are now seeking to appoint a Trustee who will step into the role of Chair following a structured and supportive transition. Your leadership and passion will be instrumental in ensuring we can achieve our mission to support those affected by cancer.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and we are particularly keen to build an ethnically diverse Board to ensure we fully represent our communities. A diverse Board strengthens our decision-making and ensures we better reflect the communities we serve. Our new Chair will receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing support to ensure they can lead the Board confidently and effectively.

This is a fantastic opportunity for motivated individuals to make a real difference to Wessex Cancer Support, helping us to reach more people affected by cancer in the Wessex region.

For further information and for an informal discussion, please contact Chair of Trustees, Diane Cutler at diane.cutler@wessexcancer.org.uk We look forward to receiving your application.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Warm regards from us both,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Cutler'.

Diane Cutler
Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Creek'.

Ian Creek
Chief Executive



Role Description

Chair – Voluntary Role

Role description



Key responsibilities

- Provide leadership to the board and to ensure that trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity
- Support and where appropriate challenge the chief executive
- Ensure that the board as a whole works in partnership with executive staff.

Duties and tasks to fulfil the key responsibilities

To guard the long-term future of the charity by ensuring that:

- the board sets the mission, vision, strategy and high-level policies for the charity within the powers and restrictions in its charitable objects and governing instruments
- the board takes steps to monitor the performance of the charity and to ensure that the charity satisfies all regulatory and legal compliance requirements
- major risks to which the charity is exposed are reviewed regularly and systems are established to mitigate these risks without the charity becoming totally risk averse
- the charity has a satisfactory system for safeguarding its assets and ensuring that funds are invested to the maximum benefit of the charity, within the constraints of the law and ethical and other policies laid down by the board
- the charity's financial dealings are systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available
- internal controls and systems (both financial and non-financial) are audited and reviewed regularly
- the board and the charity are fair and open to all sections of the community in all the charity's activities
- the board and the charity hear the voices and views of key stakeholders, especially beneficiaries.

To ensure the highest possible standards of governance by ensuring that:

- the charity has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects and that these structures and the governing instruments are reviewed regularly
- the board delegates sufficient authority to its committees, the chair, the chief executive and others to enable the business of the charity to be carried on effectively between meetings of the board
- the board's delegated authority is recorded in writing by means of terms of reference for board committees, role descriptions for its officers, staff and volunteers, and the board monitors use of these delegated powers

- the board has on it the skills it requires to govern the charity well and these skills are utilised, and that the board has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise
- there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for the recruitment and appointment of trustees, chairs of the board and chief executives
- all members of the board receive appropriate induction, advice, information and training (both individual and collective) and annual reviews
- trustees act reasonably, always act in the interests of the charity
- the board of trustees regularly reviews its performance.

To ensure the proper and efficient conduct of board meetings by:

- chairing trustee meetings effectively, seeking consensus, balancing the need for full debate on key questions with the expeditious despatch of business so as to reach clear and agreed decisions as swiftly as possible
- encouraging all trustees to participate and to feel free to challenge constructively
- taking an active role in ensuring that board agendas are meaningful and reflect the key responsibilities of trustees
- ensuring that the chief executive and their staff provide the board with relevant, timely and accurate information in order to allow the board to discharge its responsibilities.
- ensuring that board decisions are made in the best, long-term interests of the charity and that the board takes collective ownership of these decisions
- ensuring that decisions taken at meetings of the board are implemented
- ensuring that there is an annual programme of board and committee meetings, carefully structured agendas and high-quality briefing papers providing timely information and concentrating on governance.

To support the chief executive by:

- ensuring there are clear and open processes for the recruitment (and, if necessary, dismissal) of the chief executive, and for setting and reviewing their remuneration package
- ensuring that the board focuses on its governance role and does not slip incrementally, or otherwise, into the management role (unless essential to the good governance of the charity)
- arranging regular meetings with the chief executive and developing a professional relationship with them within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges

- providing leadership to the chief executive to ensure that the charity is run in accordance with the decisions of the board and the charity's governing documents and that there is clarity about the charity's objectives at all levels
- supervising the chief executive on behalf of the board, always remembering that the chief executive is responsible to the board as a whole and not to any one individual trustee or sub-group of trustees
- ensuring the chief executive's performance is reviewed regularly
- ensuring the chief executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support
- in partnership with the chief executive, to agree respective roles in representing the charity and acting as spokesperson.

To make sure that the board understands and fulfils its responsibility to hold the chief executive and the executive team to account by ensuring that:

- when necessary, the chair and the trustees challenge the chief executive constructively and only in the best interests of the charity and as "critical friends"
- the chief executive is clear about the key performance indicators by which they will be held accountable
- the chief executive understands their crucial responsibility to provide relevant, honest, timely, high-quality information and advice to the board of trustees
- there are appropriate mechanisms, both internal and external, to verify that the board receives a balanced and honest picture of how the charity is doing.

To ensure the board works in partnership with staff by:

- ensuring through the chief executive, that staff understand the role of the board and that the chief executive provides an effective link between the board and staff
- ensuring that staff are aware of the board's appreciation of their successes and hard work
- ensuring that, through the chief executive, a performance evaluation process is in place for everyone in the organisation and that the charity invests in the development of staff
- ensuring that whenever practicable, trustees visit various parts of the charity, attend events organised by the charity and have informal opportunities to meet staff and clients

Terms of Service and Time Commitment

- As Chair of Trustees, you should expect to spend 3-4 days (TBC) per month fulfilling the role
- All Trustees are elected for a four-year term and can choose to stand for a second term. Trustees serve a maximum of 2 terms.
- Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings in person, held four times per year for around three hours. Attendance at one all day strategy meeting per year.
- Possible further attendance at 4 sub-committee (virtual) and 2 Advisory Forum (in person) meetings during the year.
- Ad hoc events and meetings in person or virtually, and phone calls.

Remuneration

This is a voluntary post for which there is no remuneration. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are paid.

Person specification

For this role, we are looking for someone who is inspired by our Vision, has proven ability to lead the Board of Trustees and build an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive, and through doing so will shape and deliver our future strategy. You will understand the environment in which we operate, including opportunities created by the NHS 10-year plan and National Cancer Plan for England. Your insight will be instrumental in helping the charity stay abreast of current thinking and the opportunities and challenges in the external environment, ensuring we remain fit for the future.

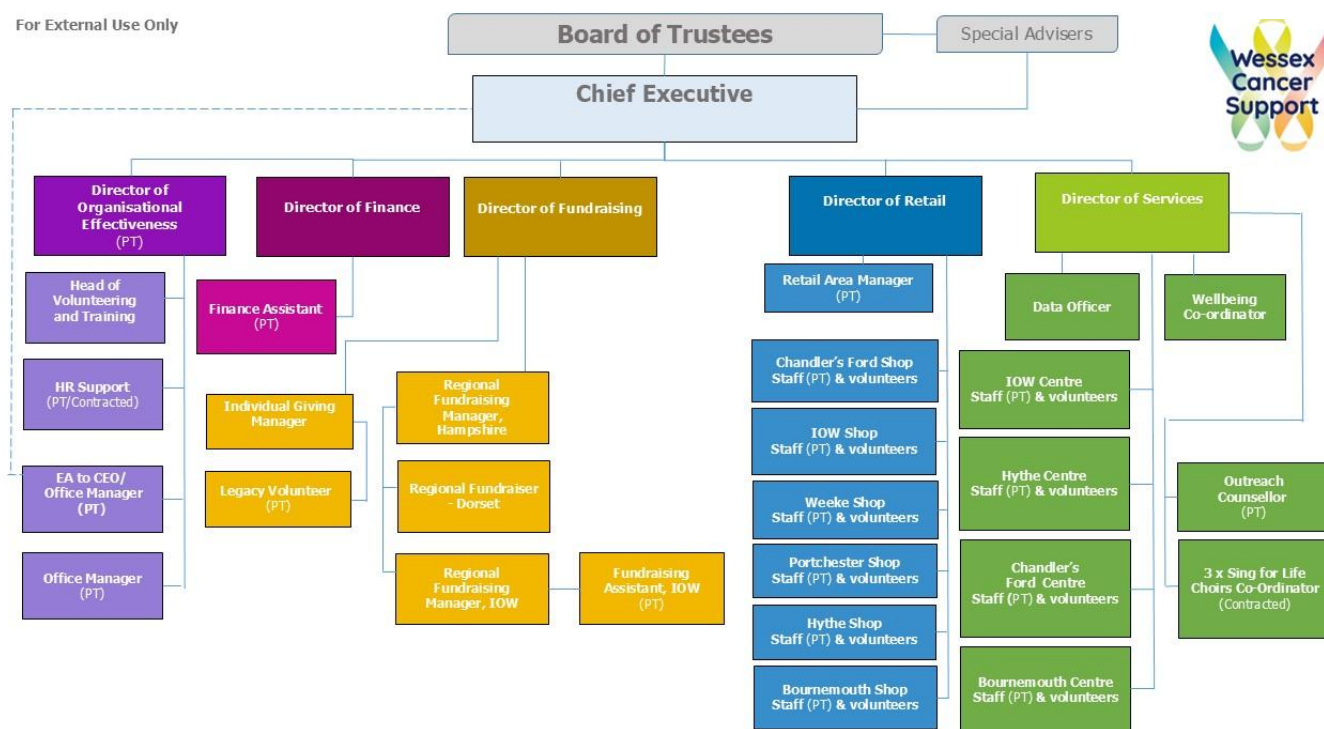
We encourage applications from individuals with experience as Trustees, non-executive directors or senior leaders. Previous Chair experience is welcome but not essential.

In addition, all Trustees are expected to demonstrate:

- Interest in and commitment to the aims and objectives of Wessex Cancer Support
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to persuade and advocate.
- Ability to work collaboratively and constructively with colleagues on the Board and the Executive.
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities, legal and otherwise, of Trustees and organisational governance.
- An understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Organisation Chart

For External Use Only



Last updated: 21 August 2026

How to apply

For further information about becoming a Trustee and to arrange an informal discussion with Diane, please contact diane.cutler@wessexcancer.org.uk

To complete your application, please send your CV and a covering letter indicating your reasons for wanting to become Chair and how you believe you can support the work of the charity to diane.cutler@wessexcancer.org.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Wessex Cancer Support is committed to being inclusive and welcoming of diversity; please see our strategy and policy for further information by clicking on the link below. To measure our success in this area, we invite you to complete a very brief anonymous survey (also on the link below). All information collected is confidential and anonymous; we appreciate that this information may be sensitive, and completion of the form is entirely voluntary.

<https://www.wessexcancer.org.uk/edi/>

If you have any questions at all regarding our EDI Strategy, the completion of this survey or would like the survey in an alternative format please contact jobs@wessexcancer.org.uk

