avenues
brighter futures, better lives

2025

Opportunity: Trustee

Charity No: 1130473

avenuesgroup.org.uk

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your interest in a Trustee role at Avenues.

We're a specialist provider of support services for autistic people, people with learning disabilities and acquired brain injuries. We work across London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Suffolk, Hampshire Cambridgeshire and Shropshire

For more than 25 years Avenues has aimed to provide the very best to the people we support. We have succeeded in transforming the lives of so many people for the better, and the ripples of which have touched their families, friends and communities where they now live.

Over that time, we have gradually grown in terms of the numbers of people supported and the areas in which we operate. But we believe that we can do more. We are looking for new trustees to join the board in guiding the work of the charity.

We have trustees from lots of different backgrounds. If you would like to come and make a difference at a truly fantastic organisation we encourage you to apply.

Terry Rich, Chair of Trustees

Who we are: Our vision, mission and values

Vision

Everyone should have the opportunity to be an active citizen and engaged in the community where they live.

Mission

To challenge and overcome the disadvantage people face through illness, injury and disability.

Values

Respect: We treat people as we would wish to be treated ourselves.
Excellence: We don't settle for okay, we are determined to achieve more.
Integrity: We do the right thing, even if it takes more time and effort.
Pride: The work we do is something we want to tell others we're part of.

Our organisation

Avenues Group is a specialist provider of adult social care, supporting autistic people and people with learning disability, acquired brain injury and complex needs to enjoy life.

Our core belief is in community-based support. This is driven by our vision, that everyone should have the opportunity to be an active citizen and engaged in the community where they live. We do this by supporting and promoting their intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual welfare.

We have 1,700 employees supporting around 650 people across our subsidiaries in the South East, West Midlands, London, East of England and Hampshire. The group operates on a not-for-profit basis, with financial surpluses reinvested into the services we provide.

Our support recognises the needs, wants and ambitions of each individual and we work closely with families and friends to get this right.

We are able to offer young people, adults and older people the right level of support at the right times so they can develop or retain maximum independence throughout life. We do this using Active Support, Positive Behaviour Support and person-centred care.

It's our shared expectation that all our services maintain a Good or Outstanding overall rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the regulator for social care in the UK.

What people say about us

Families

“Rachel’s disability means she has heightened perception of what is going on around her, and this extends to the people who are supporting her, and their attitude and mood. The support she gets with Avenues is fantastic – she’s treated like an equal and can sense the people supporting her want to be there and are connected with her.

“There is a real feeling of ‘family’ within the service, and that extends to us as parents when we visit. The great thing is we often have to make an appointment to visit just because she’s out and about so much. And then when we leave we have peace of mind that our daughter is safe, happy and enjoying life.”
Mark - Rachel’s dad.

People who work with us

“I love what I do! I always give myself dedicated hands-on time with the people we support and staff. I'd miss it if I didn’t and it keeps me in the present!

"I’ve always wanted to help people. I think it’s just built in. I want to give them the skills to achieve anything they want! I love seeing the results of what we do, the smiles, the achievements, no matter how big or small!"
Melanie - Support Manager

"What drew me in was the variety of the work. I enjoyed being out in the community and the fact that no two days were ever the same. "
Avenues has provided me with incredible opportunities for growth and personal development. Over the past 16 years, I’ve progressed through various roles, starting as a Support Worker and working my way up to Senior Operations Manager.”
Darren, Senior Operations Manager

The Avenues Leadership team

Jo Land - Group Chief Executive

Caroline Neal - Group Director of People

Nicola Ford - Group Director of Finance

Steven Parker - Group Director of Housing and Property

Dan Gower-Smith - Group Director of Operations

Karina Hourd- Group Director of Business and Development

Governance

Avenues is made up of a group of subsidiary organisations, all of which are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee, with the exception of Avenues South which is a mutual society, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Trustees are non-executive directors who work on a voluntary basis to make sure we have a clear organisational strategy, the right actions are being taken to deliver the strategy and legal and financial obligations are met.

The Group operates an overlapping board structure (also known as a common board). This structure provides the opportunity for all of the boards within the group to come together and focus on the business as a whole.

The structure consists of a group of core trustees who sit on every board within the group, and up to two independent trustees who sit on each individual board. All of the trustees on all of the boards, core and independent, meet together and discuss the entire business of the group and individual subsidiaries.

The boards operate a shared committee structure, and are committed to following the Charity Governance Code, which supports the organisation's compliance with the law and regulations. This is within a culture where everything works towards fulfilling the charity's vision

Read more about our current trustees here

Become a trustee - what we are looking for

As well as providing an invaluable service for an organisation and it's people, becoming a trustee can be an excellent step for your career development.

Anyone can apply to be a trustee with us. Avenues is a hugely diverse community of people and we always want our trustee group to reflect this. You might have a relative with a disability, have professional skills that can support us, or just be passionate about equality and our values. Everyone has their own reasons for applying, and everyone has something to offer.

We do need to have a balance of skills and backgrounds on our trustee group and we are currently very interested in applications from:-

- younger people who may not have professional experience but want to make a difference - we will support their long-term learning and development as trustees.
- people with professional experience in areas such as social care and the NHS

At present we are looking for (core) trustees with experience in these particular skills:-

- Financial experience within the Care Sector
- Experience in Health and Social Care (outside Avenues)
- People management and organisational development
- Risk Management (specialising in a quality, compliance and regulatory environment)

Rina has over 15 years' Human Resources experience in the NHS with broad skills involving strategy, leadership and talent development. She is currently Chief People Officer at NHS Property Services Ltd. Rina previously worked at the Department of Health & Social Care and Centrica Plc.

Rina was inspired to apply for the trustee role for very personal reasons; "The work of Avenues Group is really close to my heart, my young brother has a learning disability and autism, I understand how good person-centred support can genuinely make a difference to quality of life, so I'm very passionate about supporting people to live their best lives in their community."

"It's been a real eye opener working and supporting avenues being close to a receiver of social care and I understand more about the complexities. I have also learned a lot by being on a board of people." Rina Pandya, Group Boards Independent Trustee

Read more of Rina's story

Trustees responsibilities and duties

Trustees are responsible for providing appropriate oversight, governance and leadership to the charity in the pursuit of its strategies to fulfil its charitable purposes.

A trustee's main duties under charity law are to:

- ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;
- comply with the charity's governing document and the law;
- act in the charity's best interests;
- manage the charity's resources responsibly;
- act with reasonable care and skill; and
- ensure the charity is accountable.

Go to full Job advert profile and person specification

Person specification

The following characteristics, knowledge and experiences (or willingness to learn) would be helpful in being a trustee:

- a high level of understanding and interest in the charity and its work
- a commitment to the values and principles of the charity;
- strong business and financial acumen;
- experience of committee work;
- good interpersonal and communication skills;
- sound, independent judgement, courage, common sense and diplomacy;
- an interest in politics and current issues in social care
- clear understanding, and acceptance, of the legal duties, liabilities and responsibilities of trustees;
- knowledge of charity governance;
- enough time and commitment to fulfil the role
- ability to listen to and welcome other opinions and experiences;
- flexibility in thinking;
- a desire to implement the highest standards of governance.

What if I have never been a trustee before?

We will give training and development to help you grow in your role. We will also match you with a more experienced trustee mentor/buddy. We actively encourage people with no prior board level experience to apply.

Become an Independent Committee Member (ICM) at Avenues

At Avenues, there are times when our board may need additional skills and expertise that our current members do not have. This is when we appoint Independent Committee Members (ICMs).

What is an ICM?

An Independent Committee Member (ICM) is someone who brings a specific skill, experience, or passion to a committee or project. ICMs contribute to the future success of the charity at a board level without taking on the full responsibilities of a trustee.

Why Become an ICM at Avenues?

- You will provide valuable insights and guidance in your area of expertise, helping to shape the direction and success of our projects and initiatives.
- Full voting rights: ICMs at Avenues are appointed to committees by the Board and have full voting rights, ensuring your voice is heard and your contributions are impactful
- Count towards quorum: Your presence as an ICM counts towards the quorum, making your participation crucial for the decision-making process.

For ICMs we are currently looking for the following skills and experience:-

- VAT and Tax Experience
- Employee Perspectives
- Accounting, audit and Pensions
- People with first-hand experience of disability and support.
- Neurodivergent people

You don't necessarily need these to apply. Personal attributes such as honesty, transparency, commitment and kindness are of equal importance.

How much time do I need to give as a trustee or ICM?

Trustees are appointed for an initial four-year term with the opportunity to extend for a further four-year period.

Board meetings are held online four times a year along with two in-person away days. Committee meetings are held online four times a year along with one in person away day.

You are required to attend four to five Board meetings a year plus two away days and relevant committee meetings. This averages out at approximately a day a month. In addition all trustees and ICM's must visit one of our services at least annually.

Board meetings are generally during the evening and last for two to three hours. We know this is difficult for some potential candidates. Just let us know and we can look at flexing this time.

Our trustees are not remunerated however, travel expenses or payment for childcare, directly incurred in the role, will be arranged in advance or reimbursed.

Join us as a trustee or Independent Committee Member

Are you excited about the idea of being an Avenues trustee?
Do you share our vision, mission and values?
Do you have skills or experience which could make a difference?
Do you have first hand experience of disability or/and autism?

If so, we'd love you to apply. We always welcome applicants from all kinds of backgrounds, to ensure our trustee group reflects the diversity of the people we support and communities we work in.

How to apply

Applications should consist of:

1. A full CV (or video application) including the names and addresses of two referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.
2. Please complete a covering letter (or send a video if you prefer) of no more than 2 sides of A4 which answers the following questions:

- What motivates you to join our Board and why will you be successful?
- How do your skills and experience match what we are looking for?
- What will you bring of yourself, your life experience and your perspective to the Board?
- As a Board Member, how will you apply the Avenues values (Respect, Integrity, pride and Excellence) when helping us make decisions?

Should you wish to discuss the role in strict confidence, please email recruitment@avenuesgroup.org.uk

To read the full role profile and submit your application, please visit our careers website:
https://careers.avenuesgroup.org.uk/jobs/vacancy/5673/description