



Non-executive
Directors



Welcome

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in joining our Board as an Independent Non-Executive Director. Aquarius Action Projects (known as Aquarius) is a well-established Midlands based charity that has over 40 years' experience supporting individuals, families, organisations and communities to overcome the physical, emotional and psychological harms caused by alcohol, drugs and gambling.

At Aquarius we recognise that alcohol, drug and gambling use does not just affect individuals. More often than not, the consequences of these behaviours also have a great impact on families, friends and loved ones. Aquarius prides itself on delivering services that support everyone affected. Co-production is at the centre of what Aquarius stands for.

In 2019/20 we managed a caseload of nearly 4,700 clients – 78% in our adult services, with 22% in our services for young people. We achieved referral to treatment times within three weeks of 95% and the year-on-year performance against most of the key recovery and health indicators was encouraging, with strong trends for physical health, family relationships and social networks being of particular note.

Our Board is now looking for three outstanding new non-executive directors who share our vision and values and wish to contribute to the decision making around our strategic direction and quality standards. You will also support the delivery of our services by working alongside the individuals we support to ensure they are actively involved in shaping their own personal recovery journey. We are looking for committed people who can bring experience of one or more of the following professional areas:

- People / Human Resources
- Statutory safeguarding (children and adults are both relevant)
- Drug related treatment and support programmes.

Candidates with lived experience of the services akin to those we operate are positively welcomed. We are actively seeking to rebalance the diversity of our board and wish to make a significant change in that area. Our non-executive directors must demonstrate sound judgement, strong interpersonal skills and independence of thought. Strong governance skills are an asset for the role and you must be committed to our highest priority of putting the people we support at the heart of everything we do.

Aquarius is a partner delivering within a group of expert charitable organisations known as Recovery Focus Group, working in a new form of collaboration to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people who use our services. The Group's vision for the future is a society that values everyone and that with the right support, recovery – however that's defined by an individual – is achievable for everyone.

This is a particularly exciting time to join our Board, shaping our future in the face of our sector's considerable challenges. If you believe you can demonstrate the experience, skills and attributes we are looking for, I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Albert E J Fletcher, Chair, Aquarius Board

Aquarius is a key delivery partner for Recovery Focus Group. In these unprecedented times, presenting challenges to virtually every sector, we believe that in growing stronger together we can better face any future whilst helping more people find their route to recovery. Working with the people we support and bringing great talents together to deliver our services, we know we can change people's lives.

Helen Edwards, Chair of the Board, Recovery Focus Group

About Aquarius

Since its inception in 1976, Aquarius has used evidence-based research to shape services that enable it to work with people and help change the behaviours which lead to the problematic use of drugs, alcohol and gambling. Aquarius has proudly maintained its commitment to evaluation and research and the development of evidence based effective practice over the past 40 years and the team has been involved in some crucial research initiatives. In particular, we have been involved in the UK Alcohol Treatment Trials (UKATT) assessing whether or not motivationally based treatment (MET) is as effective as more intensive socially based treatment (SBNT).

In developing and delivering our services, Aquarius' vision is to support individuals and families to overcome the harms caused by alcohol, drugs and gambling by:

- listening and responding to the needs of people who use our services
- providing innovative and high-quality services
- being effective
- improving our services and their delivery
- working to promote change and understanding

Our adult alcohol and drug contracts in Wolverhampton, Telford and Wrekin, Solihull and Derby are all provided in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies. We believe this provides the best possible model of care as the knowledge and expertise of our partners ensures a strong clinical governance framework across a range of treatment options all with a strong recovery focus to meet the needs of people who use our services.

We have contracts to provide young people's substance misuse services in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Telford and Wrekin, Solihull, Oxfordshire, Northampton and Bedfordshire. The needs of young people are becoming more complex and varied potentially being affected by coercive control, criminal and sexual exploitation, mental health, suicide risk and gambling. The number of referrals for young people affected by parental substance misuse continues to rise.

As a partner in the Recovery Focus Group we have a track record of developing and running personalised services that work with people who are working through substance use, gambling, mental health, domestic violence and other complex challenges to achieve their ambitions.

The Group has consolidated over recent years and currently comprises just two partners:

Aquarius was originally a research-based charity set up to develop effective new interventions for people with alcohol problems. It now operates across the Midlands providing services for people with alcohol, drug and gambling issues. Aquarius also runs social enterprises and supports Richmond Fellowship to deliver its West Midlands domestic abuse services.

Richmond Fellowship is a specialist provider of mental health services and currently offers a wide range of housing, care, crisis provision, domestic abuse programmes, employment and community support, social enterprise, well-being services and peer support networks.

Our common ambition is inspiring individual recovery. We concentrate on the person and their individual needs, choices and aspirations, rather than on diagnostic categories of labels and tailor what we do accordingly.

Where to find further information

<https://aquarius.org.uk/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/AquariusChannel>

Role Description

Role: Board Non-Executive Director

Performance appraised by: Chair of the Aquarius Board

All board members are expected collectively (with fellow directors) to:

- set the strategic direction for the group;
- be assured that the charity provides safe, high quality, cost effective services for those using the services and relevant stakeholders;
- ensure the charity is sustainable in the long term.

Principal duties and responsibilities

Collectively, board non-executives will:

1. Ensure those using our services are at the heart of everything we do and be able to use lived experience to inform process.
2. Be confident in participating in board discussions.
3. Set strategy for the group by contributing to reviewing the market, setting policy and priorities, defining goals and evaluating performance against agreed plan targets.
4. Be assured that the group is appropriately managing risk, has effective controls in place (and receives assurances to that effect) and uses resources effectively.
5. Ensure we are making ourselves accountable to our stakeholders and partners.
6. Constructively work alongside fellow directors and staff to be an Ambassador at all times, including when visiting our services and stakeholders but also with national and regional agencies plus other networks.
7. Uphold the latest legal and regulatory standards required of directors.
8. Define and aid compliance with the values and objectives of the group and ensure these are reflected in the actions of and communications from group partners.
9. Appoint and monitor performance of the senior executives in both the group parent and provider partners within the group.
10. Ensure they have adequate information and guidance to execute the above responsibilities and are not conflicted in their involvement in the decisions.

You will meet with the Aquarius senior team and delivery managers from time to time to stay abreast of issues and offer support from an independent and external perspective.



Person Specification

In your written application, we would be grateful if you could provide an indication of your experience against the priorities listed below.

Part One

Knowledge and Experience

- Experience of one or more of the following will be essential for these roles:
 - People / Human Resources
 - Statutory safeguarding (children and adults are both relevant)
 - Drug related treatment and support programmes
- Experience of delivering cultural change in a group-based structure would be an asset
- Sound working knowledge of the current and proposed sector, policy trends and innovations, the wider market and the safe delivery of effective services
- Experience of helping to set and contribute to high-level desirable outcomes that meet the needs of all stakeholders
- Experience of the importance of strong governance, independence of decision-making and managing conflicts of interest
- Knowledge of communities in the west midlands or surrounding areas and ideally resident there.

Part Two

Skills and Abilities

- Strong communication, interpersonal and influencing skills with the ability to make considered contributions and exchange respectful views with board and management colleagues
- Able to contribute to setting strategy, policy and business plans, and to help assess use of resources, risk management and controls assurance, operational and financial performance
- Able to work pro-actively and constructively with fellow directors and key staff as an Ambassador and in a way that demonstrates positive behaviours
- Able to uphold good governance by observing directors' duties and legal and regulatory governance standards, and by setting and delivering charitable goals.

Part Three

Attributes and Behaviours

- Holds productive and current relationships and networks in relevant communities and is committed to working with diverse and disadvantaged groups
- Has a perspective on lived experiences and can relate this to business decisions to ensure charitable objectives are achieved
- Committed to the values and co-production ethos of Aquarius with an interest in the client group
- Strong personal commitment to diversity and ensuring that the principles of diversity are promoted across all aspects of the board's work
- Commitment to supporting the continuous quality improvement initiatives for the benefit of the future users of our services across the spectrum of care and support delivered by Aquarius.

Terms of appointment

Time commitment

The time commitment is around six meetings a year, plus a small number of board development commitments, including visits to services to better understand the business.
All reasonable travel expenses incurred in fulfilling the role are met.

Remuneration

This role is performed on a voluntary basis.

Term of appointment

Appointments are made by the group parent for a term up to three years in duration. An appointment can be renewed subject to a review of contribution, performance and future requirements.

Location

Board meetings are currently being held virtually through audio-visual technology. This facility is likely to continue into the future but in person meetings, when safely restored are generally held at Aquarius' Evolve Café, Digbeth, Birmingham.

Conflict of Interest

We ask all candidates invited for interview to refer to the Conflict of Interest Group Policy.

Board profile

The Aquarius Board is made up of eight non-executive director roles. A minimum of two of these must be filled by appointed members of the Recovery Focus Group Board. The remaining non-executives are appointed independently.

We ask for our board non-executives to be able to commit to shared values and to contribute to making formal decisions by consensus (in practice, votes are rare).

We seek to represent the communities we serve and our intention is to use the appointments process actively to re-balance the diversity of our board.

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact our advising consultant Juliet.Taylor@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/aquarius-3-ned/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- your CV or equivalent biographical information
- a covering letter that sets out your motivation for taking on this appointment and why you think your skills and experience make you suitable.

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

Closing date is Friday 23rd October 2020

Agreement of the final shortlist: candidates will hear from us by the end of October 2020.

Opportunities for selected candidates to speak informally with the Head of Service, Richard McVey, to find out more about the work of Aquarius will be made available before interview.

Formal interviews for shortlisted candidates are likely to be held during the first week of November 2020 and we are working on the basis that these are likely to be held via Zoom video-conferencing.



