



# BRIEF FOR CANDIDATES

## TWO NON-EXECUTIVE BOARD DIRECTORS



# WELCOME

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Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Aquarius as an Independent Non-Executive Director.

Since 1977, Aquarius has used evidence-based research to shape services that enable them to support people and their families with drugs, alcohol and gambling issues. Aquarius recognises that alcohol, drug and gambling use does not just affect individuals. Often, the consequences of these behaviours also have a great impact on families, friends and loved ones and Aquarius prides itself on delivering services offering support to those affected.

Services run by Aquarius stretch across the Midlands from Telford to Bedford, from Derby to Buckinghamshire, and further afield. We work with nearly 5,000 individuals around the Midlands with a workforce of 175. Having expanded our service reach into new parts of England, we are supporting more people than ever before, building on our powerful coproduction ethos.

Aquarius is part of Recovery Focus, a group of expert charitable organisations that have been working in a new form of collaboration to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people who use our services. Recovery Focus and Humankind have announced that they will come together in 2024, creating one larger organisation and enabling us to reach more communities and address complex issues on a larger scale. Aquarius will be a subsidiary of this new organization when the merger takes place in June 2024.

The Group's vision for the future will remain a society that values everyone including those with addiction or mental health issues. Together, we will continue working in partnership to inspire individual recovery and believe that with the right support, recovery – however that's defined by an individual – is achievable for everyone.

Aquarius is now looking for two non-executive board directors. As the Recovery Focus structure continues to evolve, we will each have a role to play in navigating this process to determine the future direction of Aquarius. You will work with colleagues to steer our organisation into the next exciting era of development and impact; your knowledge, insight and expertise will guide and enrich discussion, helping us weigh up the many opportunities ahead. You will also ensure that our Executive is fully supported and held accountable for 'business as usual', and that we operate best in class governance.

All non-executive directors demonstrate sound judgement, excellent interpersonal and influencing skills, and independence of thought. A background in M&A or transformational change would be an asset for at least one of these roles. More importantly, we're looking for colleagues who share our passion for social justice and serving vulnerable communities; you may have lived experience, or be someone who has worked with the communities we support previously. Both appointees will reside in, or have a strong personal connection with, the Midlands area. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and take pride in a Board that represents the communities we serve.

If you believe you have the skills, experience and qualities we're looking for, I very much look forward to hearing from you.



**Danielle Oum**  
Chair, Aquarius Board

## AQUARIUS IN BRIEF

We are a research-based charity set up in 1977 to develop effective new interventions for people with alcohol problems. We now operate across the Midlands, providing services for people with alcohol, drug and gambling issues. Aquarius also has a number of pioneering social enterprises including Aquarius Life training and support for commercial enterprises, our Aquarius Evolve café's, and our soon to open Aquarius Homes housing provision for young people.

Our ambition is inspiring individual recovery nationwide. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to take control of their life and to develop new meanings and purposes. We concentrate on the person and their individual needs, choices and aspirations, rather than on diagnostic categories or labels and tailor what we do accordingly. One of our founding principles is that we work with the people we support as equal partners to design, plan and provide services together. We recognise that we all have valuable skills, knowledge, experience and resources that could improve the quality of life for individuals and our communities. We harness this by creating opportunities for people to be more actively involved at all levels of the work that we do including:

- individuals' own recovery support plans
- how our services are run
- how our organisations are run
- raising awareness of mental health and substance misuse issues and challenging stigma in society

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Aquarius please visit <https://aquarius.org.uk/>

For further information about Recovery Focus please visit [www.recoveryfocus.org.uk](http://www.recoveryfocus.org.uk)



## ROLE DESCRIPTION

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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

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## YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Track record as an influential leader, within business, communities or public service.
- Experience of significant organisational transformation, ideally M&A, would be useful.
- Thorough understanding of the NED role, of good governance and of independent decision-making in setting and shaping future / strategic direction.
- Strong personal track record of contributing to social justice, ideally at Board level.
- Sound working knowledge of the sector in which Aquarius operates, along with an appreciation of the wider market and policy trends, and safe delivery of effective services.
- Experience of shaping future plans that meet diverse stakeholder needs.

## YOUR SKILLS, ABILITIES AND STYLE

- Natural partnership and alliance-builder with effective communication and influencing skills.
- Sound judgement; able to balance considerations such as resources, risk and performance.
- An effective networker and ambassador.
- Strategic thinker.
- Strong integrity.
- A champion for the values and coproduction ethos of Aquarius.
- Strong personal commitment to, and interest in, serving vulnerable communities.
- Personally committed to diversity and committed to ensuring that the principles of ED&I are promoted across all aspects of our work.
- Committed 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

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## TIME COMMITMENT

The time commitment is around 1 ½ days per month. There are six Board meetings per year, plus a small number of board development commitments, including service visits. All non-executive board directors sit on a committee which have 4 meetings per year.

## LOCATION

Board meetings are held in person in Birmingham.

## REMUNERATION

This role is performed on a voluntary basis. All reasonable travel expenses incurred in fulfilling the role are met.

## TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Appointments are made by the group parent for a term up to three years in duration. A strategic review of Aquarius' subsidiary status with the merger of Richmond Fellowship and Humankind in 2024 is expected to take place in 2025 which will confirm future direction for the charity.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We ask all candidates to ensure they are free from actual or potential conflict of interest. We are happy to discuss this at first stage interview for longlisted candidates.



# TO BE CONSIDERED

We hope you will consider making an application to become a non-executive board director of Aquarius, To apply for a role please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/aquarius-nedbd/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- a CV (no more than three sides) or equivalent biographical information
- a short covering letter that explains your motivation, suitability, availability and confirms that you would not be subject to any conflict of interest
- please tell us if there are any dates during the selection process (outlined below) when you would not be available to participate.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

**The closing date is Friday 24th May 2024.**

## SELECTION TIMETABLE

Closing date	Friday 24th May 2024
First stage discussions	w/c 10th June 2024
Agreement of the shortlist	w/c 17th June 2024
Informal conversations with stakeholders	w/c 17th and 24th June 2024
Final interviews	Late June 2024

## FORWARD MEETING DATES

29 July 2024	3.00pm-5.00pm
04 November 2024	3.00pm-5.00pm

