



Brief for Candidates Trustees



Welcome

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in joining us as a new Trustee on the Board of Think Ahead.

Think Ahead is the national charity that promotes and develops the mental health workforce in health and social care. Mental ill-health can turn lives upside down and it affects our whole society. One in four adults in England have experienced mental ill-health, and a third of families include someone with a mental health problem. Improving people's mental health can transform lives, and supporting people with their mental health is good for everyone in society. We urgently need better, more consistent support - enabling everyone to live the life they want and creating wider societal and economic benefits.

At Think Ahead, we believe that advocating for, promoting and co-producing a social approach to mental health within the health and social care workforce is essential to address the national challenge. We also believe sharing knowledge and learning in workforce development, service design and innovation helps to build a more effective response to the growing need for mental health support and ultimately enables and empowers people, their networks, and their communities. We are delighted that our funding to deliver our flagship mental health social work training programme is secure for the next four years; and we are building a new strategy which will see business growth in the next five years, taking our mission from strength to strength, and expanding our reach, influence and impact in the sector.

We are now looking for three new Trustees who can help us drive forward our ambitious strategy and ensure we're governed to the highest possible standards. A priority for us is to secure someone with strong commercial and / or brand building and business experience, who understands our business model and can support the development of our long-term financial sustainability. We are also seeking trustees with either a background in, and deep understanding of, social work, or in social policy, research and influencing decision-makers, who can use their perspective to support and inform Board discussion.

We are keen to hear from candidates who share our vision for innovation in the mental health workforce and ideally offer experience of engaging with stakeholders to help unlock opportunities for funding and strategic development. Whatever your area of expertise, you will be someone with the highest level of personal integrity, maturity of judgement and who is a skilled ambassador. We are a collaborative Board and effective interpersonal and communication skills will be essential, along with a commitment to our mission and values. We also want to ensure any appointee is committed to promoting diversity in its broadest possible sense.

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



Professor Dame Carol Black GBE
Chair of the Board of Trustees

About Think Ahead

Mental health is an urgent national challenge. But against a backdrop of the increasing need for mental health specialist expertise and trauma-informed practice, there is a crisis in recruitment and retention in the health and social care workforce.

This means delays in accessing clinical and social care and support, casework overload, unprecedented levels of workforce turnover and increased vacancies, along with too few people choosing mental health social work, social care and support as a career. We cannot hope to improve mental health without investing in the workforce and changing public perceptions of mental health careers.

Think Ahead promotes change and innovation in workforce development and is well-known for its successful adult social work programme. Launched in 2016, under the strategic leadership of Professor Dame Carol Black, CBE, we have trained nearly 1,000 people through our accelerated two-year, practice-based mental health career development pathway, culminating in a post-graduate qualification and a Master's degree in social work.

The Think Ahead flagship programme focuses on social factors that affect mental health and wellbeing –like housing, employment, access to education, discrimination and relationships with family and friends. A difficult social situation can be part of the root causes of mental ill-health, and improving the social factors in someone's life can have a transformative effect.

Our Vision

A thriving mental health workforce able to support people to live the life they want.

Our Mission

We recruit, train and promote the mental health workforce, ensuring professionals can deliver the right support at the right time

Our Values

In pursuing our goals, we each aim to be:

Inspirational. We set ambitious goals, and we attract and lead others to achieve our vision.

Inclusive. We respect everyone, build networks, and act in partnership.

Genuine. We are honest with others, we seek feedback, and we reflect on ourselves.

Determined. We stay on course, we set the right pace, and we don't give up.

Effective. We use evidence and innovation to find what works and get things done.



Our Strategy

Now, Think Ahead has ambitious new plans to extend its evidence-based learning, research and workforce expertise right across the health and social care workforce.

Our new strategy will focus on:

- Embedding an extended programme of workforce development and career pathways in health and social care to have a broader impact on the future and sustainability of the mental health workforce, building on our learning, knowledge, evidence, skills and expertise.
- Expanding our flagship mental health adult social work programme to make sure that social workers are at the heart of mental health services and to ensure that everyone has access to a dedicated and inspired workforce.
- Enhancing our external relationships to shape and influence workforce policy and practice, model excellence and become the delivery partner of choice for mental health workforce policy-makers and providers.
- Putting our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and listening to the voices of people with lived experience at the heart of everything we do.
- Develop our organisational effectiveness to increase positive impact in the mental health sector.

Further information

To read out more about our innovative work, strategy and impact please [click here](#).

For financial information see our [Annual Report](#).

To hear stories from social workers and people they support, visit [about mental health social work](#).



Our Board



Professor Dame Carol Black GBE, Chair of the Board of Trustees has provided a dedicated commitment to the organisation since we were founded in 2014. As a former consultant rheumatologist, she provides expert advice to the Department of Health and Public Health England on a range of health and social care policy areas, conducting many reviews and consultations. She is also the Principal of Newnham College Cambridge and Chairman of the Nuffield Trust for health policy.



Dr Ruth Allen, Board Member is Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers and has been a qualified social worker since 1994. Formerly Director of Social Work for South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust and Research Fellow at St George's University of London, she is currently Chair of the national Social Care Strategic Network for mental health, and an advisor to the Chief Social Worker for adults. She is currently working with the Department of Health on the 'Social Work for Better Mental Health' initiative and is a spokesperson for social work and social care in a variety of other forums.



Professor Kamaldeep Bhui, Board Member holds a wide range of roles across mental health, research, and academia. He is Professor of Psychiatry at the Department of Psychiatry and Nuffield Department of Primary Health Care Sciences at the University of Oxford. He is also Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at East London NHS Foundation Trust and Editor in Chief of the British Journal of Psychiatry at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, amongst other roles. He has a strong interest in preventing health inequalities and improving mental health services for diverse communities. His research interests include multimorbidity and ethnicity, and ethnic inequalities in experiences and outcomes of severe mental illness.



Levi Chambers-Cook, Board Member was a participant on the Think Ahead programme from 2016 to 2018, joining in our very first year. She started her social work training with South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, and has since moved to Manchester where she continues to practise as a mental health social worker. Working in a Community Mental Health Team, she supports people experiencing a range of severe mental health problems, such as psychosis, personality disorders, and eating disorders. She is currently training to become an Approved Mental Health Professional at the University of Manchester.



Professor David Croisdale-Appleby OBE, Board Member is Executive Chair of the Government Standing Commission on Carers, Dementia UK, and the Public Health Advisory Committee at the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. He is also the board member for Higher Education, Medical Education and the NHS Leadership Academy at Health Education England. A former Chair of Skills for Care and Hft, in 2014 he authored the Croisdale-Appleby Review, Re-visioning Social Work Education for the UK government. He is the UK Ambassador to the Nelson Mandela Legacy Programme, including the creation of the first specialist paediatric hospital for the 14 nations of South African Development Community.



James Darley, Board Member is the Chief Executive of Transform Society. Previously, he headed up the Teach First graduate recruitment department and saw Teach First grow from a 'modest' recruiter to become the largest graduate recruiter in the UK. He was previously European Head of Graduate Recruitment at Credit Suisse and the Chair of the Board for Police Now and is currently on the Board for Unlocked Graduates.



Dr Navina Evans CBE, Board Member is the Chief Executive of Health Education England and former Chief Executive of East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT). She has over twenty years' clinical experience in psychiatry, medicine and paediatrics, and came to East London in 1997 as a Consultant Psychiatrist. She has been involved in Medical Education at Barts and The London Medical School as Honorary Senior Lecturer, Associate Dean. She has considerable experience of working across organisational boundaries, especially with Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector, Acute and Community Services and Primary Care. More recently she has taken an active role in the development of local Integrated Care Systems. She was also involved in the development of the NHS Long Term Plan and the NHS People Plan.



Jayne King, Board member. Jayne recently retired as Director of Finance at the British Library after eight years. Prior to this she had a long career as the Director of Finance for a large Metropolitan Probation Trust. Jayne is values driven and has a passion for ensuring high quality and value for money in public services. Her long accountancy career has spanned social housing and care, higher and further education, criminal justice, libraries and culture. Jayne is a Non-Executive Director of the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, is a Fellow Chartered Certified Accountant and has an MBA from the University of Durham. She lives in North Yorkshire and enjoys table tennis, photography and travelling.



John Lawlor, Board Member joined Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust in June 2014 as Chief Executive. He is also Chair of the Children and Young People's mental health inpatient Quality Improvement Taskforce across England. His earlier career included roles as a Chief Executive of a Primary Care Trust in West Yorkshire between 2010 and 2013 and as Chief Executive of Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust between 2006 and 2009. Prior to his NHS career, he worked as a Civil Servant in the Department of Health and prior to that as a schoolteacher in South Yorkshire.



Sharon Rice-Oxley, Board Member is a partner and co-founder of Q5, an international consultancy specialising in organisation change. She has been a consultant for over 20 years and has worked with a wide range of FTSE 100 companies across most industries both as an external and internal consultant supporting leaders of those businesses to review, change and ensure their organisation is fit and healthy. She previously worked at BAA and Accenture. She is a fellow of the CIPD and has an MBA from City University Business School. Sharon leads the Q5 foundation which works with a number of mental health charities including Think Ahead and MQ.



Nicholas Timmins, Board Member is a former public policy editor at the Financial Times and is currently a senior fellow at the Institute for Government and the King's Fund. He is also a visiting professor in social policy at the London School of Economics, an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and author of the award winning *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, along with other publications including *A Terrible Beauty: A short history of NICE* (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). He worked previously for the science journal *Nature*, the Press Association, *The Times* and *The Independent*.

Main duties and responsibilities of the Trustee role

- Contribute to the Board's role in setting the vision and strategic direction of the organisation, providing rigorous oversight of its performance.
- Contribute to discussion and debate by bringing specific skills, knowledge and background experience to bear in helping the Board reach sound decisions.
- Ensure the objectives in Think Ahead's founding document are properly carried out.
- Support the safeguarding of Think Ahead's investments and resource and ensure, collectively, that risks are reviewed and addressed regularly.
- Act as ambassador for Think Ahead internally and through networks and contacts.
- Support Think Ahead's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the mental health workforce and the organisation itself.
- Demonstrate commitment to Think Ahead's mission, priorities and values, and act in its best interests at all times.



Person Specification

Knowledge and experience

- At least one of the following will be **essential** for these appointments:
 - Deep commercial and / or business experience: you will be able to support our longer term financial sustainability.
 - Deep background in, and understanding of, social work, with the ability to use your perspective to support and inform Board discussion.
 - Significant track record of influencing decision-makers, most likely with a background in social policy, research or well-regarded influencer or commentator.
- Clear understanding of the role of the Trustee Board in delivering effective strategic oversight of an organisation.
- Solid understanding of the principles of good governance, and of the respective roles of the Board and Executive in working together.
- Direct experience of supporting engagement with external stakeholders that unlock opportunities for funding, strategic development and support.
- Experience of providing inspiring and engaging leadership in a relevant context.
- Appreciation of the mental health sector, and the funding, public health, workforce development, public policy and other questions it faces.
- Experience of supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.

Skills, abilities and personal qualities

- Effective communication and interpersonal style.
- Team player.
- Willing to speak out on issues and to accept personal accountability.
- Demonstrates strategic acumen and sees the bigger picture.
- Undisputed personal integrity.
- Personally flexible and agile working approach.
- Deep commitment to the mission and values of Think Ahead.



Terms of appointment

Remuneration

This role is offered on a voluntary basis. Reasonable expenses incurred in the course of the role will be reimbursed by the organisation.

Time commitment

This role requires a maximum of between one to two days per month, which includes quarterly Board meetings and one or two strategic away days per year. Additional time for Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, includes an additional four meetings per year, usually online between 10am and 12 noon.

Location

Board meetings currently take place in person either at the Think Ahead office in Farringdon/Chancery Lane or at a location nearby in London.

How to apply for this appointment

We hope you will consider making an application to become a Think Ahead Trustee. To apply, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/thinkahead-trustee/> 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 and suitability, your availability and confirms that you would not be subject to any conflict of interest, and
- 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 also 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 1st March 2024**.

Selection timetable

Closing date	Friday 1st March 2024
First stage discussions	w/c 11th March 2024
Agreement of the shortlist	Early April 2024
Final Interviews	w/c 15th April 2024

Forward board meeting dates

20th March 2024
26th June 2024
22nd October 2024
12th December 2024