



# CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHAIR

# WELCOME

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming our next Chair at Makaton.

Operating as a Social Enterprise with charitable status, the Makaton charity has been at the forefront of supporting individuals with learning and communication difficulties for over 50 years. Our mission is simple yet impactful: to ensure everyone facing communication challenges has the tools and resources they need to understand and be understood. By empowering individuals, we work towards a more inclusive society where communication barriers no longer limit opportunities or participation.

Makaton is a comprehensive communication programme that blends signs, symbols, and speech. These components offer multiple ways for individuals to communicate effectively, depending on their preferences and needs. Signs assist those with no or unclear speech, while symbols cater to those who find signing difficult or prefer alternative methods. The programme is proven to reduce frustration and enhance understanding for individuals with speech and language difficulties, helping them build confidence and independence.

Put simply, Makaton has transformed the lives of thousands by enabling more meaningful interactions at home, school, work, and in the community.

Our organisation is now entering an exciting phase of growth and development. With strong foundations in place, and a clear strategic direction, we aim to double our impact by reaching more users, expanding our membership base and enhancing our financial sustainability. By embracing innovation and fostering collaboration, we're confident in our ability to transform the lives of even more individuals with communication challenges, ensuring Makaton remains at the heart of inclusive communication for generations to come.

To help us turn our vision for the next five years into reality, we are seeking an experienced Chair to lead our Board of Trustees and work with our CEO and Executive Team across a broad range of priorities. In addition to providing clear strategic leadership and direction, you will foster a cohesive and inclusive board culture and be an ardent champion of our mission. It is likely that you will be someone who already understands the transformative impact that Makaton can have. But wherever you are now, you will demonstrate clear governance expertise and strategic reach, along with the skills to mentor our talented trustee team.

If this sounds like you, and you are excited by the prospect of making a difference for over 2.2 million people who experience speech, language, and communication challenges in the UK, we would be delighted to hear from you.

**Stephanie Kogels**  
**Chair of the Selection Panel**

# ABOUT MAKATON

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## OUR REACH AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

In the UK, over 2.2 million people experience speech, language, and communication challenges. Of these, approximately 100,000 are core Makaton users who rely on it for daily communication. Additionally, there is a wider network of 500,000 supporters, including parents, carers, educators, and professionals who use Makaton to assist others.

The Charity also provides training and support to ensure more people can access Makaton. Each year, over 40,000 individuals are trained through our extensive network of 1,200 Tutors and Trainers. This network is essential to building localised capacity and spreading the impact of Makaton to every corner of the UK.

## OUR STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

The Makaton Charity is led by a committed team of 11 Trustees working alongside a Chief Executive and a Senior Leadership Team. Based in Fleet, Surrey, the organisation employs 26 staff (15 full-time and 11 part-time) and collaborates with over 90 consultants who develop resources and deliver training.

Innovation and adaptability are at the heart of our operations. While our traditional training and licence models continue to provide a strong foundation, we have embraced digital transformation to expand our reach and accessibility. These efforts have enabled the Charity to achieve an annual turnover of £2.2 million, with a targeted 10% surplus reinvested into community-driven objectives.

## OUR DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The Makaton Charity has undertaken a comprehensive strategic review to align its future goals with evolving societal needs. Our new strategic framework is built on five core pillars:

1. **Innovation:** Leveraging new technologies and methodologies to expand access to Makaton and improve user experiences.
2. **Intelligent Operations:** Streamlining processes to maximise efficiency and effectiveness in our service delivery.
3. **Impact:** Ensuring measurable outcomes and demonstrable benefits for users and communities.
4. **Inclusion:** Reaching underrepresented groups and creating opportunities for wider participation.
5. **International Development:** Sharing Makaton's benefits globally and establishing a broader presence.

## READ MORE

You can find out more about Makaton by visiting <https://makaton.org/>



# ROLE DESCRIPTION

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<b>Role title</b>	Chair
<b>Key relationships</b>	Board of Trustees, CEO and Executive Team

## ROLE PURPOSE

The Chair role provides inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each individual trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. The Chair holds the management team to account for delivery of the charity's vision and mission. In addition, the Chair works closely with the management team; supports and, where appropriate, challenges the CEO; and ensures that the board functions as a unit. They act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with members of the staff team. The process for the appointment of a new CEO is expected to take place during the term of the appointment, and the Chair will be expected to play a leading role in this.

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

### Strategic leadership

Providing leadership to the charity and its board, ensuring that we have maximum impact towards our vision and mission, including:

- Ensuring that trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity.
- Ensuring that the board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for the charity.
- Ensuring that the board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks.
- Ensuring that the board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.

### Governance

Ensuring that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the charity, including:

- Developing the knowledge and capability of the board of trustees.
- Addressing and resolving any conflicts within the board.
- Appraising the performance of the trustees and the board on an annual basis.
- Ensuring that the board of trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern the charity effectively.
- Working with the board and staff team to ensure that our future governance reflects the values and objectives of the charity.

### External relations

Acting as an ambassador for the charity and its vision, including:

- Maintaining close relationships with key stakeholders of the charity.
- Acting as a spokesperson for the organisation, when appropriate.
- Representing the charity at external functions, meetings and events.

## Efficiency and effectiveness

Chairing meetings of the board of trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process, including:

- Ensuring that trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the charity and that the board takes collective ownership.
- Fostering constructive relationships with and between the trustees.
- Working closely with the CEO to give direction to board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees.
- Monitoring to ensure that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

## Relationship with the CEO and the wider management team

Establishing a strong working relationship with the CEO, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives, including:

- Ensuring regular contact and maintaining an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles.
- Liaising to maintain an overview of the charity's affairs, providing support as necessary.
- Conducting an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the CEO and ongoing feedback as needed.
- Ensuring that the CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate professional support.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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## PART ONE

### KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- **Governance Expertise**  
Extensive experience in governance is essential, through prior service as a trustee or chair in a charity, or as an independent director with a charitable or social impact focus. The candidate should be well-versed in governance best practices and the nuances of trustee responsibilities and board dynamics.
- **Strategic Insight**  
The Chair should possess the ability to think and act strategically to guide the board and organisation. They should be adept at helping the organisation anticipate and respond to sector changes and work with the CEO to evolve the organisation's strategic focus.
- **External Representation (optional)**  
While not essential, experience in external representation, including building high-level relationships and acting as an ambassador, may be advantageous as the organisation evolves. This includes an ability to champion the charity with key external stakeholders and potential partners, enhancing its visibility and support networks.
- **Connection with Makaton**  
While it is not essential to have any direct experience in the field, we expect some interest from individuals who have previously come into contact with Makaton and have some awareness of its transformative value; this may be through your personal experience, or through an interest in communication and learning in the course of your career.

## PART TWO

### SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- **Able to build cohesive teams**  
The Makaton Trustee team is talented and modern. We work both hybrid and remote as a board and require a chair with well-developed leadership, influencing and interpersonal skills, and who is present, connected and personally flexible.
- **Financial Acumen**  
Financial literacy is essential. The Chair must be comfortable discussing and analysing financial matters to support informed decision-making alongside the SMT, Treasurer and trustees, ensuring the organisation's financial health.
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness**  
The Chair should excel at ensuring meetings are well planned, meaningful, and constructive. The Chair will champion impartiality and objectivity in the decision-making process.

## PART THREE

### LEADERSHIP STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- **Inclusive Leadership**  
A collaborative, inclusive leadership style is vital. The Chair should excel at uniting diverse perspectives, facilitating open communication, and fostering clear decision-making, ensuring the board remains cohesive and focused.
- **Supportive and Mentorship-Oriented**  
A supportive approach to leadership is key, including a readiness to mentor the CEO and provide guidance to new trustees. The Chair should be approachable and invested in the growth and development of the team.
- **Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**  
The candidate will demonstrate a commitment to EDI. They should be able to evidence their experience with EDI initiatives and how they have fostered inclusion within their professional sphere.
- **Passion for the Mission**  
A deep commitment to the organisation's mission and values is essential. The Chair should be demonstrably inspired by Makaton's work and have the personal drive and dedication to contribute two to three days per month.

# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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## TIME COMMITMENT

This appointment requires 2-3 days per month, with quieter periods in both August and December.

## REMUNERATION

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

## LOCATION

The role is based at Makaton's offices in Fleet, Hampshire.

Meetings have been held hybrid and remotely; it would be useful if the Chair could be available to be in Fleet on a reasonably regular basis, to spend time with the CEO.

## TERM OF APPOINTMENT

The appointment is for three years, renewable for a further three years.



## HOW TO APPLY

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

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

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.

<b>Closing date</b>	Friday 4th April 2025
<b>Preliminary interviews</b>	Late April / early May 2025
<b>Final Panel interviews</b>	Tuesday 3rd June 2025 (TBC)

