



CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHAIR

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in joining us as our new Chair of The Connection.

The Connection is based in the area with the highest concentration of rough sleeping in the UK. We have been working here for over 100 years and we play a pivotal role in addressing homelessness in London.

As our Chair you will play a key role in our strategic direction and impact. Now is an exciting time to join as we have a refreshed strategy and a clear set of values which place inclusion and empowerment at the heart of our work.

We are keen to attract people with a diverse range of skills, expertise and perspectives to guide the charity to success. We're looking for a strategic and visionary leader, who is passionate, collaborative and values driven, with experience of influencing change across a diverse range of partners in a complex stakeholder environment.

You will have excellent communication and influencing skills and bring experience of working with senior leaders and external stakeholders with the ability to skilfully balance diverse perspectives and foster collaboration around shared goals.

You will have a solid understanding of governance and although you do not need to have come directly from the homelessness sector, you will bring an appreciation of the factors which influence homelessness. Fundamentally you will bring a deep commitment our belief that by working together we can and will end homelessness.

The Trustees at The Connection are committed to equality and diversity and we are particularly keen to expand the diversity of the Board to broaden perspectives and reflect the diversity in our staff and client groups.

If you think you bring what we are looking for, we hope you will read on to find out more.

Board of Trustees



WHO WE ARE

When your way is hard to find, and there's nowhere left to turn, we are there.

At The Connection, we open our door to everyone who needs a place to call home. We support people sleeping rough in the heart of London, helping them to recover and find their way off the streets. We get to know every person we work with, going the extra mile to understand their needs and hopes for the future, and being creative about finding help and solutions.

The journey can be long, and it's not an easy path. But we take heart, we stick with people and we don't give up, supporting them to find their own way home.

As part of St Martin-in-the-Fields, we have been on the front line of homelessness for over one hundred years, right in the heart of Westminster – which has more people sleeping rough than anywhere else in the UK.

OUR VISION

We believe that no one should have to sleep rough on London's streets, and that everyone should get the support they need to find a place to call home.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

Help us make London a city where no one sleeps rough on our streets.

OUR MISSION

We support people sleeping rough to find a way off London's streets. We get to know every person we work with, understanding what they need to recover.

Trusting relationships are at the heart of everything we do, with our clients and our colleagues. It is vital that the way we work provides the conditions to facilitate these relationships. We have agreed [4 core cultural traits](#) which guide our day to day behaviour at The Connection. These are Curious, Safe, Together and Motivated.

WHY WE'RE HERE

Every day, we meet people who've been forced into homelessness. People tell us how they were pushed to the edge; trying to hold on to a place to live while surviving on income that makes everywhere impossible to afford. People tell us about leaving hospital or prison without a safe place to go. They tell us about fleeing from domestic abuse or losing contact with their family, about profound untreated long term mental ill health, about addiction and the problems they face in getting any meaningful help.

Rough sleeping in London is at its highest ever levels, with over 13000 people found by a local authority street outreach team in 2024/5. Of these, over 3000 have been living on the streets for over 2 years and 1800 have returned to the streets as the accommodation they were offered didn't meet their needs.

The Connection focuses on people living on, or returning to the streets. They feel let down by a system which doesn't work for them and they need alternatives. We know that the longer people are on the streets, the more difficult their situation gets and people are at risk of serious harm from their situation. The average life expectancy for a rough sleeper is 44 and people are dying far too young.

This is where we can make a difference – being there for people who need us the most, making a connection, minimising the harm associated with rough sleeping, finding ways to get people what they need to move away from the streets towards a place to call home.

At The Connection we have embarked on a new Strategy, from 2023-2028. We are determined to bring the right support and housing for people who come to us for help. The strategy highlights our Theory of Change, with a strong focus on trauma informed care and integration of psychology in our response to rough sleeping. We intend to develop more provision, with a greater focus on health and treatment, a better offer for women and for people with no recourse to public funds. It also sets out an ambitious plan to access far more accommodation for our clients so that they can move away from crisis into a long term home of their own.

It is an exciting period for the charity, and we are looking for a Chair who can support and add value to our ambitions, help us to open doors to new support and ideas, widen our perspective on what we need to do to be really successful, share our determination to address rough sleeping in central London, with the enthusiasm and energy to make us a UK and world leading charity in our field.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

GOVERNANCE

The Connection at St Martin in the Fields is a company limited by guarantee, therefore each Trustee is also a company director and must fulfil the legal and financial responsibilities required under the Company Act 2006.

The Connection has a board of up to 16, and a governance link to the St Martin in the Fields Church through the Vicar and the Church Warden. The Board meets at least 6 times a year. There are four sub committees: Finance, Audit and Risk; Services, Development and Quality; Remuneration and Nominations; Fundraising and Communications.

The Board of Trustees at the Connection have adopted the Charity Governance Code for larger charities which sets out the principles and key elements of good governance. Trustees will support the integration of the key principles of the Code which are described under the following areas: organisational purpose; leadership; integrity; decision making, risk and control; board effectiveness; equality, diversity and inclusion; openness and accountability.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Trustees are appointed for a 4-year term of office, with the opportunity to renew for one further term to a maximum of 8 years, unless the Board resolves that exceptional circumstances apply in which case a Trustee may serve a third term of up to a maximum of 4 years.

All Trustees will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interests, and these will be discussed with the Chair of the Board to establish whether and what action is needed to manage a conflict or perceived conflict.

All Trustees will be asked to undergo a Basic DBS check prior to taking on the role, and every three years thereafter.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role Title: Chair of the Board

Key relationships: Chief Executive, Senior leadership team, key cross-site partners

ROLE PURPOSE

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that The Connection achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that The Connection has a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision and mission.

While trustees share collective responsibility, the Chair of the Board of Trustees leads the board, ensuring it functions effectively and fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the charity.

The Chair also acts as a lead point of contact with the Chief Executive, providing line management-as well as support and challenge. In the context of the cross-site community at St Martin-in-the-Fields and externally, the Chair plays an important ambassadorial role for The Connection.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic leadership

- Provide inclusive leadership to the Board in its role promoting the vision and mission of The Connection, providing clear strategic direction, defining goals and evaluating performance, managing risk to protect the charity, its clients, staff and volunteers, and ensuring public trust and confidence in the charity
- Work closely with the CEO to ensure the organisation is thriving and achieving its strategic objectives, providing support and constructive challenge where appropriate
- Act as an internal and external ambassador for The Connection working with the CEO on building strong and effective working relationships across the organisation and with the St Martins community and other key stakeholders
- Support the cultural values of The Connection and our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Support the fundraising activities of The Connection and act as an ambassador for the charity and the cause when appropriate
- Support individual trustees in the performance of their duties and responsibilities
- Participate in the selection and appointment of new trustees, a process led by the Remuneration and Nominations subcommittee
- Effectively manage the overall performance of the Chief Executive, conducting the Chief Executive's annual appraisal. Ensure that appropriate development is provided and any issues of underperformance are addressed
- Co-ordinate the recruitment and induction of the CEO, should the need arise

Effective Governance

- Demonstrate commitment to high standards of governance and set expectations for the charity accordingly
- Ensure high standards of governance by periodically reviewing Board effectiveness and compliance with the Charity Governance Code and ensuring any areas of weakness or non-compliance are addressed
- Set the risk appetite of the Board and ensure that major risks and opportunities are regularly reviewed and addressed
- Develop the culture knowledge and capability of the Board. Ensure strong Board member performance through appraisal, attendance, appropriate participation and debate. Ensure that the development needs of individual members are addressed

Managing board business

- Chair meetings effectively and efficiently, ensuring a high-quality debate and well-informed decision-making, in the best interests of The Connection
- Work closely with the Chief Executive to ensure that Board agendas, meetings and away days are well-planned, reflecting the responsibilities of trustees and the Board and that appropriate actions and decisions are implemented
- Ensure that meetings are inclusive and respectful spaces in which all trustees contribute, are engaged, and take collective ownership of decisions made, regardless of individual position
- Attend meetings of the Board's subcommittees to ensure consistency and common purpose in decision-making



PERSON SPECIFICATION

We welcome applications from candidates with the relevant skills and expertise to undertake the role effectively, who have an interest in and understanding of the trends, issues and environment for people experiencing homelessness in central London and who are eligible to act as a Board of Trustees' Chair.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Credible personal track record of providing inspiring and engaging strategic leadership; it is likely that you will have held a non-executive leadership role previously, as Chair, Vice or Committee Chair or as Senior Independent Director
- Strong understanding of the principles of good governance and financial oversight, and of the respective roles of the Board and Executive in working together
- Proven leadership ability, with experience of chairing meetings and facilitating collaborative decision-making
- Experience of leading succession planning and search processes for key management roles
- Considerable experience of building and maintaining effective relationships with senior stakeholders, staff and volunteers and effectively managing diverging interests
- Understanding of charity governance and the legal responsibilities of trustees under UK charity law

DESIRABLE (NOT ESSENTIAL)

- Knowledge of and connections within the homelessness sector and/or social housing, including voluntary providers, local authority commissioning and work with housing associations
- Experience of leading or supporting fundraising efforts, including relationship building with major donors and senior leaders at funder organisations in an "ambassadorial" role.
- Legal qualification and/or experience, including in a charity setting

SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Ability to think strategically, see the 'big picture,' and translate vision into clear goals and outcomes
- Excellent communication and listening skills, with the ability to chair meetings inclusively and effectively
- Personal integrity and an ability to role model the charity's values and good governance practices
- Capacity to assess risks, opportunities, and external factors affecting the charity, and to support informed decision-making by the Board
- Sound judgment and an ability to make decisions based on evidence, values, and inclusive discussion
- Able to challenge constructively and foster a culture of openness, mutual respect, and accountability
- Demonstrable commitment to our mission and beneficiaries and a positive desire to end homelessness
- Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, both in the governance of the charity and in its operations
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil the responsibilities of the role
- Able to support and constructively challenge the CEO, promoting mutual trust and professional development

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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.

TIME COMMITMENT

It is estimated that the role requires approximately 15-20 hours per month which comprises:

- Chairing six Board Meetings per year (usually Trafalgar Square premises), late afternoon/evening for 2 hours
- Chairing the Board away day in January in person in central London
- Attending subcommittee meetings which are held online
- Preparations for chairing and attending governance meetings
- Representing The Connection on cross-site leadership forums across the St Martin's community
- Some subcommittee attendance as Board Chair
- Working with and line management of the CEO
- Internal and external events and networking as required

There are currently four permanent and one ad hoc subcommittees of the Board, which each meet four times per year. These meetings comprise up to 10 people and many are held virtually. The Chair is invited to attend all meetings. Materials for Board and subcommittee meetings are shared in advance.

LOCATION

Most Board meetings and events are held in London.



HOW TO APPLY

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

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

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.

RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE

Closing date: Friday 17th October 2025

Preliminary interviews: w/c 27th October 2025

Final Panel interviews: w/c 10th November 2025

