

**FRIENDS &  
FAMILIES**

Trustee Information Booklet  
September 2022



**EMPOWERING  
FAMILIES!**

## **CONTENTS**

Page 4	Introduction
Page 6	The Board of Trustees
Page 7	Governance Structure
Page 8	The Role of a Trustee
Page 11	The Role of the Chief Executive
Page 11	Organisational Structure
Page 12	Our Vision, Mission Statement and Values
Page 13	Services Offered by Friends and Families
Page 15	Strategic Priorities
Page 17	Get in Touch

# **OUR VISION IS A WORLD WHERE FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILDREN, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR DISABILITY OR IMPAIRMENT, CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND THRIVE.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your interest in wanting to become a trustee for Friends and Families.

We were established 20 years ago to support and empower families with disabled children to offer practical advice, support, and fun activities to children with a disability or impairment and their families in and around Plymouth.

Currently, 50% of our trustees have lived experience of caring for a child with a disability - some of whom are now young adults. A third of our workforce also brings “lived experience” into their roles. We have a parent/carers’ advisory group and a young peoples’ action group - chaired by one of our trustees with lived experience.

Friends and Families provide:

- Information, advice, emotional support and advocacy for parents and carers.
- Social and leisure events for the whole family as well as specific groups aimed at children, young people, or their siblings.
- Peer support for all family members who live in similar circumstances.
- Educational workshops for parents and carers to develop knowledge and skills relevant to their child and their impairment or disability.

The role of CEO was established just over a year ago and since then our team has grown considerably from 3 employees in May 2021 to 12 today. Underpinning this has been the further evolution of our Board of Trustees and the establishment of two subgroups, with the opportunity to focus on specific areas of priority and gain both the support and challenge from a Board with a diverse range of skills and experience.

We hope you find the contents of this pack useful in giving you an insight into our work and what it would mean practically should you wish to be considered as a trustee.

Kay O’Shaughnessy - Founder and Chair

Tim Tod - Chief Executive



## THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

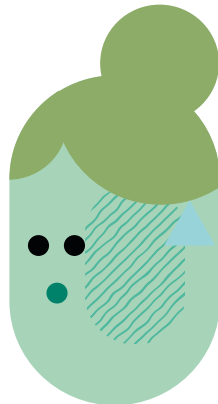
The Board of Trustees works closely with our CEO exploring issues and challenges. Together they work on the principle of consensus building and try to ensure that the voice of our workforce, along with our families, inform our decision-making.

### CURRENT TRUSTEES:

Kay O'Shaughnessy	Chair of Trustees
Steve Parker	Trustee - Chair of Quality Assurance
Ashleigh Phillips	Trustee - Chair of Finance, Fundraising and Marketing
Theresa Hardy	Trustee
Jack O'Neil	Trustee

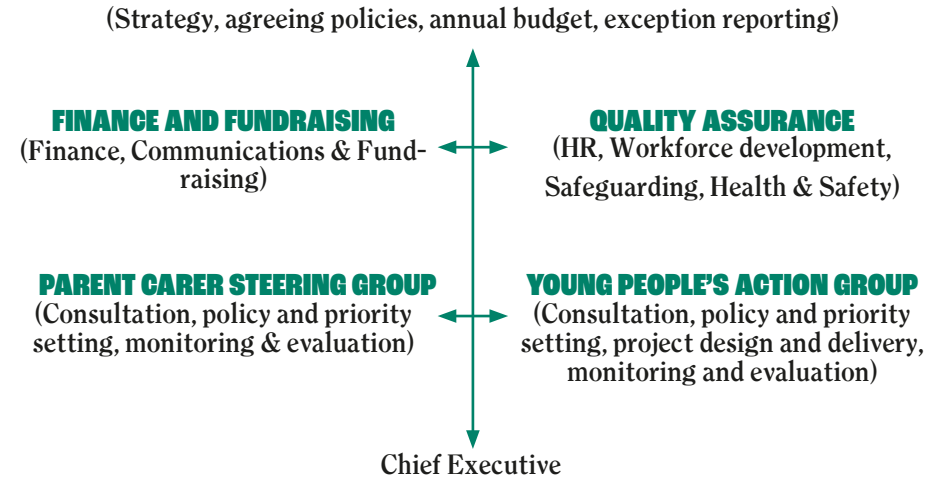
### OTHER BOARD MEMBERS:

Tim Tod	CEO
Georgie Thompson	Clerk to the Trustees



## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Below is our current governance structure and shows how we involve young people and parent/carers at a board level:



## THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

The Charity Commission has highlighted the specific responsibilities and duties of a trustee - below is a summary (please follow the [link](#) for further details).

### TRUSTEES' DUTIES AT A GLANCE

Before you start - make sure you are eligible to be a charity trustee:

You must be at least 16 years old to be a trustee of a charity that is a company or a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), or at least 18 to be a trustee of any other charity. You must be properly appointed following the procedures and any restrictions in the charity's governing document. You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified, unless authorised to do so by a waiver from the Commission.

### ENSURE YOUR CHARITY IS CARRYING OUT ITS PURPOSES FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

You and your co-trustees must make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose. This means you should:

- ensure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve
- be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

### COMPLY WITH YOUR CHARITY'S GOVERNING DOCUMENT AND THE LAW

You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document

- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity

### ACT IN YOUR CHARITY'S BEST INTERESTS

You must:

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long-term as well as the short-term
- avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

### MANAGE YOUR CHARITY'S RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

You and your co-trustees should put appropriate procedures and safeguards in place and take reasonable steps to ensure that these are followed. Otherwise, you risk making the charity vulnerable to fraud or theft, or other kinds of abuse, and being in breach of your duty.

## **ACT WITH REASONABLE CARE AND SKILL**

As someone responsible for governing a charity, you:

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings

## **ENSURE YOUR CHARITY IS ACCOUNTABLE**

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

- be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure appropriate accountability to members if your charity has a membership separate from the trustees
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

## **COMMITMENT**

The Board meets four times a year. Currently, all our Board meetings are online, but we anticipate a blended approach going forwards where we will alternate between meeting at Virginia House and via Teams. Our meetings generally last for two hours, with the expectation that trustees also:

- join one of our subgroups (which also meet four times a year and last for two hours)
- attend an annual half-day planning session
- attend the AGM.

All information to be discussed at meetings is sent ten days in

advance to allow trustees sufficient time to adequately prepare for meetings, inform discussion and help with decision making.

## **THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) IN SUPPORTING THE BOARD**

Our CEO has overall responsibility for providing leadership of Friends and Families and for the delivery of its mission and strategic direction as determined by the Board of Trustees. The CEO works closely with the Chair for enabling the Board of Trustees to fulfil its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity.



## OUR VISION, MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

During our last planning day - with trustees, staff and parents - we refreshed our vision, mission and values, which now sit at the centre of all we do.

### VISION

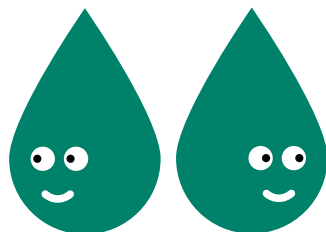
A world where families and their children, irrespective of their disability or impairment, can reach their full potential and thrive.

### MISSION

We're on a mission to support and empower families with children living with a disability or impairment. We do this by providing services and activities for the whole family so that everyone gets to live their best life.

### VALUES

Inclusivity	Striving for a society that's accessible to everyone
Determination	We won't stop
Professionalism	Accountable for all we say and do
Friendliness	Showing compassion and kindness everywhere we go
Togetherness	Coming together to make good things happen



## SERVICES OFFERED BY FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

Friends and Families offer practical advice, support, and fun activities to children with a disability or impairment and their families in and around Plymouth.

We have co-designed a yearly consultation cycle, getting feedback about our work, including areas of unmet need. We then work together to agree key priorities for the year ahead and thereafter monitor its implementation and evaluate impact.

Last year Friends and Families spent £250,000 on delivering a range of services to local families. We employ 12 full and part-time workers (plus two apprentices). Alongside our paid staff, we also deploy several volunteers.

We have contact with 1,700 families and actively engage with 300 families a year. Our recent survey highlighted that 60% of our families have linked in with us for over five years. Maintaining consistent and trusted "offers" is seen as a major reason for their continued engagement.

Families can access Friends and Families services via our city centre setting as well as our outreach into family homes.

Friends and Families is made up of a range of services available for young people in Plymouth and the surrounding area. Described below are the services we currently offer:

- Information, advice, emotional support and advocacy for parents, carers and young people
- Social and leisure events for the whole families as well as specific groups aimed at children, young people, or their siblings
- Support for all family members where they meet their peers who live in similar circumstances.
- Educational workshops for parents, carers and young people to develop knowledge and skills relevant to their impairment or disability.

In practice we currently offer the following:

#### Parent/ Carer

One-to-one information, advice, support and advocacy (helping with DLA/PIP form-filling through to advocating and supporting families at agency meetings)

#### Workshops facilitating:

- peer-to-peer support (wellbeing, resilience, and capacity building)
- subject specific support and learning (Makaton, challenging behaviour, BSL, system navigation, paediatric first aid, safeguarding, sex and relationships)
- activities - without their children

#### Making Sense Group - providing a mix of support and activities

- for children and young people with a profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD) aged 0-25
- To attend with a parent/carer

#### Fun and Freedom - supporting young carers with a disabled sibling.

- lots of fun with weekend clubs, days out, trips away and activities
- a chance to make new friends in a similar situation
- around people who will listen and support when needed

#### Adventure Club - providing activities to young people with a disability

- open to any child/young person with a disability or additional need, aged 0-25
- to attend with a parent/carer

#### Youth Adventure - providing a mix of activities and social events

for young people with a disability or additional need

- aged 14-25
- young people to attend independently - with support from high ratio of sessional staff

Little Steps Together is our new group for parent/carers with a child age 0-5 with a disability or awaiting a diagnosis.

- Fun activities to support a child's development
- Opportunities to meet other parents and carers

## FINANCIAL POSITION 2022/23

Over the past three years, our journey has been similar to many other charities because of the global pandemic. However, thanks to the fantastic support of Charitable Trusts, and local communities, we have developed an exciting plan that reflects our ambition to work in partnership with others to achieve our vision as a charity.

We recently heard from the Big Lottery Partnerships Fund that we successfully secured a sizable grant to cover our development plans over the next three years. The money has given us a solid foundation to help us deliver our strategic priorities, as listed below.

Please also look at our annual accounts via this [link](#) to the charity commission website.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022- 2025

We developed the following priorities as a result of a series of staff meetings and an awayday with trustees, parents, carers and our team:

1. Further develop our existing offer to reach more families





2. Involve our families in developing the quality of our work internally and externally
3. Campaign on issues important to our families
4. Broaden our age focus to include early years and transitions
5. Celebrate the impact and outcome of our work that maintains sustainability



## GET IN TOUCH

We hope you have found this booklet of use in helping you understand Friends and Families and the role of the trustee within the charity.

If you have any questions or would like to register your interest in becoming a trustee, please contact our Chair of Trustees, *Kay O'Shaughnessy* and she will be happy to help.

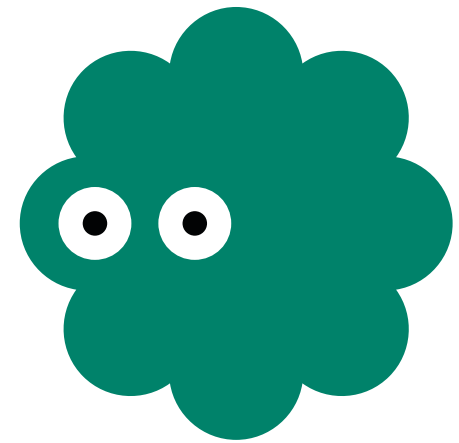
*Kay O'Shaughnessy – Chair of the Trustees*

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