Chair of Trustees

The Sheppard Trust

About The Sheppard Trust

The Sheppard Trust is a long-established charitable housing trust providing affordable, secure homes for older women in housing need. Residents live independently within a supportive community, with the Trust helping individuals access services and support that enable them to maintain independence, dignity and wellbeing. The Trust is entering an exciting new chapter, having recently completed a significant programme of development and growth that has expanded its housing provision from 29 to 60 homes in a purpose built residential development in Hampton Court.

With substantial investments, property assets and financial resources, alongside a clear social purpose, The Sheppard Trust combines the stewardship of significant charitable resources with a deeply human mission: ensuring older women can live safely, independently and with a strong sense of community.

As the organisation transitions from a decade focused on development and expansion into a period of operational delivery, strategic planning and long-term sustainability, we are seeking an exceptional individual to become our next Chair of Trustees.

Chair of Trustees

Role Purpose

The Chair will provide strategic, inclusive and values-driven leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring The Sheppard Trust remains well governed, financially sustainable and focused on delivering its charitable purpose.

Working closely with the fellow trustees and the leadership team, the Chair will help shape the Trust's next phase of development. They will lead an effective Board that balances strategic oversight with thoughtful stewardship of the Trust's assets, investments and property portfolio, whilst ensuring residents remain at the heart of decision-making.

This is an opportunity to lead a highly respected charity at a pivotal point in its history. The successful candidate will bring sound judgement, excellent governance skills and the ability to foster a collaborative Board culture while supporting and challenging the team in equal measure.

Key Responsibilities

Board Leadership and Governance

- Lead the Board of Trustees in fulfilling its legal, regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Ensure the Board operates effectively, strategically and in accordance with the Trust's governing documents and charitable objectives.
- Chair Board meetings in a manner that encourages engagement, collaboration, constructive challenge and effective decision-making.
- Promote high standards of governance, accountability and transparency.
- Lead trustee recruitment, succession planning, appraisal and Board development activities.
- Foster a positive Board culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed and all trustees are able to contribute effectively.

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the Board in developing and overseeing the Trust's long-term strategic direction.
- Support the transition from a period of development and expansion into one focused on sustainability, impact and organisational effectiveness.
- Encourage strategic discussion on future opportunities, challenges and risks affecting the Trust and its residents.
- Ensure appropriate oversight of financial sustainability, investment performance, property assets and organisational resilience.
- Help the Board navigate emerging issues relating to housing, ageing, resident wellbeing and changing community needs.
- Ensure that decisions are aligned with the Trust's values and long-term charitable objectives.

Partnership with the Chief Executive and operational team

- Build and maintain a trusted, supportive and appropriately challenging relationship with the team.
- Act as a sounding board for the Chief Executive on strategic opportunities, organisational challenges and significant risks.

- Support the Chief Executive while maintaining clear boundaries between governance and operational management.
- Work in partnership with the team to ensure the Board receives the information and assurance it requires to fulfil its responsibilities.

Ambassadorial Leadership

- Serve as an ambassador for The Sheppard Trust and its mission.
- Build strong relationships with residents, trustees, partners, advisers and key stakeholders.
- Represent the Trust externally where appropriate, enhancing its profile and reputation.
- Support the development of strategic partnerships and opportunities that strengthen the Trust's impact and long-term sustainability.
- Maintain visibility within the organisation and actively seek opportunities to understand residents' experiences and perspectives.

Culture and Values

- Model compassionate, inclusive and ethical leadership.
- Champion a culture of respect, integrity and collective responsibility.
- Ensure residents' voices and lived experiences inform Board discussions and strategic decisions.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the Trust's governance.
- Uphold the highest standards of conduct and stewardship.

Person Specification

We are seeking an individual who combines strong governance capability with empathy, sound commercial judgement and a genuine commitment to the Trust's mission.

Essential Experience and Attributes

- A strong commitment to the values and purpose of The Sheppard Trust.
- Demonstrable empathy with older people and an understanding of the importance of independence, dignity and community.
- Significant experience operating at Board or senior leadership level.
- Previous experience as a trustee, non-executive director or member of a governing body, with a strong understanding of charity governance.
- Experience chairing Boards, committees or senior decision-making groups, or clear evidence of readiness to step into a Chair role.
- Strategic thinking skills and the ability to guide organisations through periods of change and transition.

- Commercial aptitude with an ability to interpret organisational issues, including strategy, risk, finance, safeguarding and performance.
- The ability to build effective relationships and maintain credibility with trustees, executives and external stakeholders.
- Strong communication, facilitation and influencing skills.
- The confidence and judgement to provide both support and constructive challenge.
- A collaborative, inclusive and emotionally intelligent leadership style.
- The capacity and commitment to devote sufficient time and energy to the role.

Desirable Experience

While we are open to candidates from a broad range of backgrounds, experience in one or more of the following areas would be advantageous:

- Housing, almshouses or supported housing.
- Property, development or asset management.
- Charities, foundations or mission-led organisations.
- Older people's services or community-based provision.
- Investment oversight, financial stewardship or income generation.
- Public service, social purpose or place-based organisations.
- Strong local knowledge and connections relevant to the Trust's work.

We particularly welcome candidates who can help the Board think strategically about the Trust's future as it enters a significant new phase of development and organisational maturity.

Time Commitment

This is an active Chair role requiring meaningful engagement with the organisation beyond formal Board meetings.

The anticipated commitment is approximately **one day per week**, including:

- Six Board meetings per year and an annual away day, held in person.
- Regular meetings with the Chief Executive, typically on a weekly basis.
- Participation in Board committees and occasional working groups.
- Trustee recruitment, succession planning and governance activities.
- Site visits, resident engagement and stakeholder meetings.
- Preparation for Board and committee meetings.
- Occasional representation of the Trust at events and meetings with external stakeholders.

Location

Board meetings are held in person and the Chair is expected to maintain a visible presence within the organisation. Candidates should be reasonably local and able to attend meetings, visits and key events regularly.

Terms of Appointment

- Voluntary position.
- Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- Appointment will be made in accordance with the Trust's governing documents and trustee appointment procedures.