

Trustee Recruitment 2026

Application Pack for the recruitment of new Trustees

Welcome & Introduction

A Letter from Deborah Stump, Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in joining Bridge Support's Board of Trustees.

This is our 40th year of steady, focused work to improve the independence of people affected by mental ill health. Bridge initially supported individuals from Greenwich. In the past four years, we've expanded into Kingston and Essex with our income growing from £5.1M to £12.2M. We now support over 2,000 people annually. Most significantly, we've become the sole provider of supported living services for people with enduring mental ill health across the whole of Essex.

That growth brings opportunity and responsibility in equal measure. We need to scale our operations while protecting what makes Bridge effective: our flexibility, our focus on the individual, and our ability to bridge the gap between hospital and independent living in ways that large institutional providers often can't.

We are looking for up to four new Trustees, each bringing specific expertise in one of the following areas: communications and PR; health and mental health; charity governance; or local authority commissioning and contract management. The full person specification, setting out what we are looking for in each role, accompanies this pack.

But across all four roles, what we need most is the same: people who understand that good governance isn't about rubber-stamping decisions; it's about asking the questions that others haven't thought to ask.

Being a Trustee at Bridge involves genuine responsibilities. You'll read board papers, prepare for meetings, challenge the Executive Team when needed, and support them when they're doing excellent work. You'll visit our services and see first-hand what supported living looks like.

In return, you'll have the chance to shape how mental health support works in London and Essex. You'll work alongside a committed Board and an Executive Team that knows their work inside out, whilst contributing to something that actually matters.

If that sounds like something you want to be part of, I'd encourage you to read on. And if you have questions, please get in touch with Sarah Baxter (sarah.baxter@bridgesupport.org). She can arrange an informal conversation with me or another board member.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Deborah Stump
Chair, Bridge Support

Bridge Support: Our Story & Impact

Where We Came From

Bridge started in 1986 with the mission of bridging the gap between in-patient mental health services and independent living. We provide cost-effective, proven pathways to support people with long-term mental health conditions in the community.

We started with one hostel in Greenwich. Forty years later, we have grown to become the largest provider of mental health and wellbeing services to residents in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the sole provider of mental health supported accommodation in Essex.

What We Do

Mental health support is multi-faceted, depending on where someone is in their recovery. Bridge runs services across the full spectrum:

- High, medium, and flexible community support services in the London Borough of Greenwich
- Supported living accommodation services in Essex
- 24-hour complex care in South West London
- 24-hour supported accommodation through our forensic Tilt project and our hostels in Sidcup Road and Wrotesley Road in South East London
- Bridge Back Home service supporting hospital discharge
- Recovery Colleges in Greenwich and North East Essex offering courses and workshops for people with lived experience of mental illness, their families and carers
- Greenwich Mental Health Hub - a partnership service with Oxleas NHS and South East London Mind
- Community Mental Health Rehabilitation and Enablement Plus Service.

Our Approach

We understand the complexity of providing mental health services that meet individual needs within a health care system under pressure from increasing demand and constrained budgets.

Our flexible pathways approach ranges from low-level flexible support to high-level 24-hour support, helping people who no longer need hospital care to navigate their way back to independent community living.

The Numbers

- Over 2,000 people supported annually
- 240 staff across our services
- £12.7M operating budget this year
- Operating across several London boroughs and the whole of Essex.

What Makes Us Different

We're not the biggest mental health charity, and we're not trying to be. What we do well is stay close to the people we support and adapt quickly. We're small enough that the CEO knows all the staff, but large enough to have real influence with commissioners and the NHS.

We're also unusual in running services across the full spectrum of need. That means we can offer real pathways to independence. Someone can move from our high-support accommodation to medium support to their own flat with floating support, all within Bridge's network.

Our recovery colleges operate outside the NHS model. People join as students, not patients - which makes a significant difference to how people see themselves.

The Current Challenge

NHS mental health services are under enormous pressure. Community services are stretched thin. Councils are trying to do more with less.

That creates demand for what Bridge does. But it also creates risk. If we grow too fast, we lose quality. If we don't grow, we miss the chance to help more people at a moment when good supported living services are desperately needed.

We're trying to grow thoughtfully. That means strong financial management, careful recruitment, good supervision and training, and governance that keeps us honest about what we can and can't do well.

This is where we need your help.

What Being a Trustee Means

The Role in Brief

As a Trustee, you're legally responsible for Bridge. If things go wrong, you're accountable. The good news is that if you act reasonably, take advice when needed, and don't do anything reckless, you're protected by trustee indemnity insurance.

Your core responsibilities are to:

- Ensure Bridge delivers its charitable purpose - supporting people with long-term mental health conditions
- Keep Bridge financially sound - you don't need to be an accountant, but you do need to ask questions when the numbers don't make sense
- Ensure Bridge complies with the law - employment law, health and safety, data protection, safeguarding. You don't need to know these in depth, but you need to ensure Bridge has people who do
- Oversee risk management - not managing risk day-to-day (that's the Executive Team's job), but ensuring the Executive Team is approaching risk appropriately
- Support and hold accountable the CEO and Executive Team.

Time Commitment

An average time commitment of between 6 - 8 hours a month, comprising:

- Six Board meetings per year (3 hours each)
- Four to six sub-committee meetings per year (1-2 hours each, usually via Teams)
- Preparation time: 2-3 hours before each meeting
- One annual strategy day (full day)
- Annual General Meeting (2-3 hours)
- At least one service visit per year (half day to full day)

Some months you'll have both a Board meeting and a sub-committee meeting. Other months you'll just read papers and respond to the occasional email.

What Governance Looks Like at Bridge

At Board meetings, you:

- Review performance against our strategic priorities
- Look at financial reports and ask whether we're on track
- Discuss risks and how they're being managed
- Make decisions on significant contracts, new services, or policy changes
- Challenge the Executive Team's assumptions (respectfully)

- Approve major expenditures or changes

Outside board meetings, you:

- Read board papers (usually 30-50 pages, sent a week before meetings)
- Serve on at least one sub-committee
- Visit services at least once a year to see the work first-hand
- Occasionally represent Bridge at events or meetings
- Respond to emails that need Trustee input.

Board Culture

This is an unpaid role. You'll be reimbursed for reasonable travel and accommodation expenses, but you won't receive a salary or day rate.

Board decisions are collective. You might argue passionately for something and be outvoted. Our board is respectful and encourages diverse opinions to be shared and discussed openly.

What You Will Get

- The satisfaction of contributing to effective mental health support at a time when it's badly needed
- Strategic leadership experience with a growing, financially sound organisation
- Insight into how mental health commissioning and service delivery actually work
- Connection with other Trustees who bring different expertise and perspectives
- The knowledge that your time is making a tangible difference.

Your First Few Months

The induction process includes:

- One-to-one meetings with the Chair and CEO
- Service visits to see our different types of accommodation and support
- Background reading on Bridge's history, strategy, and current challenges
- Introduction to governance at Bridge (how decisions get made, committee structures, board culture)
- Guidance on our Trustees SharePoint site.

Who We're Looking For

Essential Qualities

Regardless of professional background, all successful applicants will:

- Bring genuine commitment to Bridge's work and strategic vision
- Have time to do the job properly (approximately 6 – 8 hours a month)
- Understand the role of a trustee and the boundaries between governance and management
- Be able to challenge constructively – asking difficult questions in a way that helps rather than hinders
- Bring strategic thinking, integrity, and strong communication skills
- Be willing to learn (both about Bridge and about effective trusteeship).

The Four Roles We Are Recruiting For

We are looking for up to four new trustees, each bringing specific expertise in one of the following areas:

1. Communications, Digital Communications, PR and Press

Strategic communications, external relations and reputation management

2. Health and Mental Health - Policy and Delivery

Clinical, managerial or policy experience in mental health services

3. Charity Governance and Charity Sector Experience

Governance, risk management and organisational effectiveness

4. Local Authority Commissioning and Contract Management

Public sector commissioning and contracting in social care or mental health

The full person specification, setting out in detail what we are looking for in each role, and the essential criteria that apply to all four, is available as a companion document to this pack. Please read it alongside this pack before applying.

First-Time Trustees Welcome

You do not need previous trustee or non-executive director experience. If you understand what the role involves and are willing to learn, we are interested. We will provide proper induction and training. What we need is sound judgement, commitment, and skills that will strengthen the board.

Lived Experience

Bridge particularly welcomes applications from people with lived experience of mental health challenges. Trustees with lived experience bring invaluable perspectives on the needs of the people Bridge supports and help ensure the Board maintains focus on what matters most.

Diversity

Bridge is committed to having a Board that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from groups currently under-represented on charity boards, including younger professionals.

Want to Know More?

Before You Apply

Being a Trustee is a significant time commitment, and you should be confident it's right for you. If you'd like to have a conversation before you apply:

Contact Sarah Baxter:

- Email: trusteerecruitment2026@bridgesupport.org
- Phone: 020 8298 9677

Sarah can arrange an informal conversation with Beez Fédia (Vice-Chair), Deborah Stump (Chair), or another Trustee. These conversations are confidential and will not affect your application.

The Trustee Handbook

We have prepared a comprehensive Trustee Handbook that sets out governance arrangements, responsibilities, and how Bridge operates in detail. If you would like to review this before deciding whether to apply, email Sarah Baxter at trusteerecruitment2026@bridgesupport.org and we will send you a copy.

The Handbook is not required reading for your application, but some applicants find it helpful to understand the role in depth.

The Person Specification

The person specification accompanying this pack sets out the detailed criteria for each of the four Trustee roles, including the essential qualities required of all applicants. Please read it before applying and use it to shape your covering letter.

Other Useful Information

You can find more about Bridge at:

- Our website: www.bridgesupport.org
- Our most recent Trustees' Annual Report (available on request).

How to Apply

Application Process

To apply, please send the following to trusteerecruitment@bridgesupport.org

1. A covering letter of no more than two pages, explaining:
 - Which role you are applying for
 - What drew you to this opportunity?
 - Why Bridge, and why now?
 - How your experience and expertise would contribute to Bridge's Board?
 - Your understanding of the Trustee role and time commitment?
2. A current CV of no more than two pages covering your employment history, relevant voluntary work, and professional qualifications.

The Timeline

- Application deadline: 26 June 2026
- Shortlisting review by: 10 July 2026
- You'll hear from us by: 17 July 2026
- Interview dates: late July/early August 2026

The Interview

If we think there's a good match, we'll invite you to an interview. Interviews will either be held in person at Bridge's London office or online by Teams. The panel will typically include two to four Trustees and an independent person who will provide an external perspective.

We want to have a substantive conversation about Bridge's work and whether this is the right role for you. Interviews typically last 60-75 minutes. We'll give you plenty of time to ask questions too.

After the Interview

If we'd like to appoint you, we'll make a verbal offer within five working days of the interview. At that point we'll:

- Take up two references
- Arrange an Enhanced DBS check (with barred list check)
- Confirm your eligibility under the Charities Act
- Carry out a right to work check

The Board of Trustees will formally approve all appointments.

If you're not appointed, we're happy to provide feedback. Contact Sarah Baxter to arrange a call.

Eligibility Requirements

You cannot be appointed as a Trustee if you're disqualified under the Charities Act. This includes if you:

- Are disqualified as a company director
- Have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception
- Are an undischarged bankrupt or have an IVA with creditors
- Have been removed as a charity trustee by the Charity Commission due to misconduct
- Are on the sex offenders register
- Do not have the legal right to work or volunteer in the UK

Bridge must also satisfy itself that you meet the 'fit and proper persons' test under the Finance Act 2010.

If you're unsure whether any of this applies to you, please contact Sarah Baxter confidentially.

Equal Opportunities

Bridge welcomes applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

All appointments are made on merit following a fair and transparent process. However, in line with the Equality Act 2010, Bridge may use positive action where diverse candidates can demonstrate equal ability to perform the role.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you need any adjustments to the application or interview process because of a disability, please let us know. Contact Sarah Baxter to discuss what would help.

Questions?

If anything in this pack is unclear, or if you have questions we haven't answered, please get in touch:

Sarah Baxter

Email: trusteerecruitment2026@bridgesupport.org

Phone: 020 8298 9677

We look forward to hearing from you.