**MumsAid trustee roles—January 2020**

**Introduction**

MumsAid is a maternal mental health charity that was founded in 2012 to address the lack of support for mothers during pregnancy and after birth. We believe passionately that pregnancy and new motherhood can be an exciting, but also challenging, time, and that the right support can make a difference, not just to mothers but to the healthy emotional development of their babies, and the broader well-being of their families and communities.

Since its inception, MumsAid has delivered a growing programme of support during the perinatal period (pregnancy, birth and the early infant years), which has included counselling and psychotherapy, therapeutic groups, befriending support by trained peer volunteers, training for frontline staff in postnatal depression awareness, clinical supervision, and an active social media presence aimed at providing support to mothers and raising awareness.

Our therapy is open to women of all backgrounds, but we have a particular focus on marginalised groups within our local community, including mothers from BME communities, those on low incomes and single mothers. We also run YoungMumsAid, a bespoke therapy programme for teenage and young mothers with complex needs. We work primarily in Greenwich, but have plans to expand our reach to new audiences and areas.

Our work has a proven positive impact on maternal mental health. A [2019 evaluation](https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/mumsaid/2019/06/26185516/Highlight-report_final.pdf) by McPin Foundation found that: “MumsAid clients significantly improved in all outcomes after receiving the service (wellbeing, confidence, bonding, perceived stress), these improvements were drastic and appeared to be maintained after the therapy was complete. Clients provided almost universally positive feedback about their experiences, including how important the service had been for them. MumsAid is not only providing essential support for the local area but is potentially providing a service which could be expanded into other areas.”

We have been highlighted by [Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/perinatal-counselling-early-intervention-for-new-and-expectant-mothers) as a case study for good practice in perinatal mental health, and in 2018 we received two prestigious national awards: The Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) [Award for Inclusivity and Diversity](https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/tag/award-winners/); and The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) [Award for Mental Health and Wellbeing](https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/awards/health-wellbeing-awards/public-mental-health-and-wellbeing/2018-winner.html).

MumsAid was originally set up as a Community Interest Company but became a registered charity in 2018. For further information about our work see: <https://www.mums-aid.org>

**Trustee roles**

With a couple of trustees stepping back from the board after a few years’ service, MumsAid is currently looking for 2-3 dynamic new trustees who can bring their energy and expertise to the board. We are particularly keen to recruit trustees who have experience in the following areas:

* **Lived experience of perinatal mental health issues:** MumsAid is committed to ensuring that the women we support are at the heart of our work, informing our strategy and services, and we are looking for new trustees who have lived experience of the challenges of early parenthood, including women who have been supported by MumsAid in the past.
* **Business strategy and organisational growth**: This is an exciting time for MumsAid as we develop and expand our services and explore opportunities to share our expertise more widely so that we can support more mothers and babies in Greenwich and beyond. New developments include therapeutic groups, partnerships, a paid-for out-of-hours service for working parents, and we are also interested in the potential to provide a specialist training programme for counsellors and psychotherapists in perinatal mental health. We have recently been awarded a grant to support a new Business Development/Operations post, and we are keen to recruit a new trustee who has particular interest and experience in strategy development and business planning, who can work with the new postholder and support MumsAid’s sustainable growth.
* **Communications and marketing**: These functions have a crucial role in helping MumsAid to raise awareness of maternal mental health issues, publicise the services and support we offer, and ensure that we reach as many mothers and professionals as possible. We are looking for a trustee with communications and/or marketing experience who could provide strategic guidance and input on this aspect of our work, which will become increasingly important as we work with new communities.
* **Fundraising**: As for most charities, fundraising is a priority for MumsAid and we have been working hard to try and diversify our funding streams and ensure that the organisation will be financially sustainable over the long term. We already have a couple of trustees with skills and experience in fundraising (particularly with trusts and foundations), and we would be particularly interested in recruiting a new trustee who has experience in the areas of corporate and/or community fundraising.
* **IT**: MumsAid has recently gone through a digital refresh process, including the introduction of a new website and IT systems, and we are also trying to build our social media presence. We are keen to find a trustee with IT expertise who could help to guide our digital strategy and ensure that we optimise our use of IT platforms.

The role will require regular attendance at two-hour board meetings, held every 6-8 weeks in Greenwich/Blackheath, plus one half-day awayday per year. We try to alternate evening and Friday morning meeting times to ensure that as many trustees can attend as possible.

We also expect trustees to be able to provide support for MumsAid in between meetings, usually remotely. This might be through involvement in board sub-committees (e.g. on finance and fundraising) or project groups, or by providing advice, input or guidance to the senior management as appropriate (e.g. acting as a sounding board for the CEO, reviewing or commenting on reports, funding applications or policies).

Overall, we are looking for trustees who can demonstrate:

* A commitment to the charity
* An engaged, energetic approach and willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to support the charity
* Strategic vision
* Independent judgement
* An ability to think creatively
* A willingness to act as a ‘critical friend’
* An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
* Integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
* An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship

**Trustee responsibilities**

As Reach Volunteering puts it: “Trustees ensure that their charity has a clear strategy, and that its work and goals are in line with its vision. A trustee's role in a charity is to be the ‘guardians of purpose’, making sure that all decisions put the needs of the beneficiaries first. They safeguard the charity’s assets – both physical assets, including property, and intangible ones, such as its reputation. They make sure these are used well and that the charity is run sustainably.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Key responsibilities are summarised below.

Planning:

* Approve the organisation’s vision and mission statement and review the team’s performance in achieving it
* Annually assess the changing environment and be involved in updating and approving the organisation’s strategy, business plan and financial goals
* Annually review and approve the organisation’s budget
* Approve major policies

Organisation:

* Be involved in advising, supporting and evaluating senior management
* Be involved in staff or trustee recruitment where appropriate
* Regularly discuss with the Chief Executive matters that are of concern to her or to the board
* Review whether organisational staffing, resources, systems and financial structure are fit to meet the evolving requirements of the organisation
* Be involved in reviewing salaries, terms and conditions of service for staff, as appropriate
* Annually reviewing and approving the team’s work plans and performance, including for staff and the trustee board
* Provide candid and constructive criticism, advice, comments and praise as appropriate
* Approve major actions of the organisation, such as capital expenditure on all items over authorised limits and major changes in activities and services

Audit:

* Be assured that the board is adequately and currently informed – through reports and other methods – of the condition of the organisation, its operations and results
* Be assured that published reports adequately reflect the nature of the services and the financial condition of the organisation
* Be assured that the organisation’s policies (including health and safety, safeguarding and other policies) are appropriate and up to date
* Approve the appointment of suitable independent auditors
* Review compliance with relevant laws affecting the organisation

Other:

* Represent the organisation at professional, community or public events, as appropriate
* Seek opportunities for the organisation where relevant (for example linking into fundraising opportunities)
* Contribute to sub-committees or specific projects

**Further information**

The Charity Commission has published a useful overview of the role of a trustee: *The essential trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>

1. <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/guide/become-trustee> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)