



Centre for ADHD
& Autism Support

Chair of the Board of Trustees Candidate Pack

Support • **Educate** • **Empower**



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Welcome from our existing Chair of Trustee Board

Dear Prospective Candidate,

Thank you for taking the time to explore this candidate pack and for considering the pivotal role of Chair of the Trustee Board at the Centre for ADHD & Autism Support (CAAS).

The cause we serve is both urgent and profound. Globally and within the UK, neurodivergence represents a vast landscape of both immense unleashed talent and, unfortunately, deeply tragic lost potential when appropriate scaffolding is absent. Research indicates that autistic individuals and those with ADHD face systemic barriers from early education through to adulthood; for instance, data from the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) consistently shows that autistic adults have one of the lowest employment rates among all disabled groups, with only around 30% to 34% in national datasets experiencing meaningful employment. Furthermore, academic studies highlight that individuals with undiagnosed or unsupported ADHD are at a significantly higher risk for mental health co-morbidities, educational underachievement, and operational burnout. CAAS exists entirely to rewrite that narrative.

It has been the privilege of my career to serve this purpose over two full terms—spanning eight remarkable years of growth, development, and deep systemic evolution. Over its 20+ year history, CAAS has journeyed from a small, passionate parent-led group into a highly sophisticated, multi-disciplinary regional anchor. Under my tenure, I have watched this team climb a steep organisational maturity curve, gaining the space, authority, and infrastructure required to command outstanding influence and deliver elite support across our communities.

Day after day, I have witnessed our team's relentless drive to execute our core pillars:

- **Support:** Providing an uncompromised, non-judgmental, and safe environment where individuals feel a definitive sense of belonging wherever they stand on their diagnostic journey.
- **Educate:** Shifting public and institutional perceptions by delivering empirical, lived-experience-informed training that drives true cultural acceptance.

- **Empower:** Arming our service users with the independence, metrics, and confidence required to advocate for their own futures and unlock their true potential.

My decades of corporate leadership experience have taught me to instantly recognise when an operational engine is working. The strategic agility, resilience, and positive culture of this charity are nothing short of remarkable. We have systematically put the processes, systems, and robust governance policies in place to ensure our frontline professionals are fully insulated, safeguarded, and structurally equipped to deliver their highest value. They perform this vital work in a macroeconomic climate where funding is precious and institutional support must be hard-won.

The baseline truth is this: the more resources, empowerment, trust, and recognition given to this charity, the greater the compounding impact it will continue to deliver.

The definitive governance framework and leadership structure we have established provide an unshakeable foundation for the incoming Chair. Your role will be to safeguard this architecture, reinforce our financial resilience, and strategically guide CAAS as it expands its outreach through smart, effective, and inclusive services. CAAS beautifully embodies the execution precision of a top-tier corporate entity while rapidly becoming the absolute gold standard for purpose-driven, neuro-affirmative organisations.

If you are an established leader with an aspiration to convert your business acumen, strategic agility, and genuine adaptive leadership into a highly functional, collaborative board, you will find immense purpose and joy in this post.

We have designed our selection process with deep care, openness, and curiosity. I look forward to meeting you, reviewing your strategic perspective, and handing over the stewardship of this extraordinary organisation.

Good luck!

Gabriella Eberhardt
Existing Chair of Trustee Board



Welcome from Our Chief Executive Officer

Dear Prospective Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of the Trustee Board at the Centre for ADHD & Autism Support (CAAS). I am delighted you are taking the time to learn more about our charity, our purpose, and the values that guide our work.

CAAS exists for one clear reason: to support, educate, and empower ADHD and autistic individuals, their families, and the wider community. Everything we do is rooted in listening - truly listening - to ADHD and autistic people and shaping our services, strategy, and advocacy in response, with compassion, integrity, and practical impact.

Our strength lies in the depth and authenticity of our experience. Alongside more than 25 years of professional expertise, we draw heavily on lived experience. Many of our trustees, staff, and leaders are parents, partners, or family members of ADHD or autistic individuals, or are neurodivergent themselves. This perspective keeps us grounded, challenges us to do better, and ensures we remain focused on what matters most to the people we serve.

The organisation began in 1996, when a small group of parents - supported by a local CAMHS consultant - came together to respond to significant unmet need. Since then, CAAS has grown and evolved alongside its community, broadening our services and developing into a centre that recognises the significant overlap and shared experiences between ADHD and autism. While our scale and reach have changed, our purpose has not: to challenge barriers, influence attitudes, and help create inclusive communities where people can thrive.

As Chair of the Trustee Board, you would play a pivotal role in stewarding this purpose. Working in close partnership with the Board, the senior leadership team, and myself, you would help ensure CAAS remains well-governed, financially resilient, and strategically focused, while staying true to its values and neuro-affirmative ethos. Your leadership would support and challenge us in equal measure, enabling the organisation to grow sustainably and maximise its impact.

Everything we do is guided by our core values: integrity, valuing difference, collaboration, trust, respect and passion. We are proudly neuro-affirmative,

strengths-based, and impact-led. We work alongside ADHD and autistic people to amplify their voices, never to speak for them. Diversity of thought, background, and experience strengthens our Board and our organisation, and effective governance depends on openness, curiosity, and collective responsibility.

Just as importantly, we believe people are our greatest asset. We are committed to fostering a healthy, values-led culture in which wellbeing is prioritised, relationships are built on respect, and everyone is supported to contribute their best. Strong governance and compassionate leadership go hand in hand.

If you choose to apply for this role, you would be taking on a unique opportunity to lead a committed Board and support a charity that makes a meaningful difference every day to children, adults, and families. Above all, you would be joining a community that cares deeply, learns constantly, and is ambitious for the future.

Thank you again for your interest. I look forward to learning more about you and what you would bring to CAAS as our next Chair.

Steve Parkinson
Chief Executive Officer



Chair of Trustee Board Skills and Experience

The ideal candidate will bring a proven track record of board-level governance within a commercial or purpose-driven enterprise, complemented by previous experience as a Chair in the voluntary sector or a minimum of six years as a strategic trustee. Just as critically, they must demonstrate exceptional, adaptive leadership with a deeply ingrained neuro-affirmative posture to champion, elevate, and amplify the voices of neurodivergent individuals.

Our Vision

Our mission is to support, educate and empower individuals diagnosed with ADHD or who are autistic, their families and the community. Through raising awareness we change perceptions and break down barriers.

Support

CAAS aims to provide support and understanding in a safe and non-judgemental environment. Those who use our services feel a sense of belonging when they access the centre. We provide a comprehensive service that supports people wherever they are on their diagnosis journey.

Educate

Understanding, increased awareness, and acceptance come through education. CAAS provides training and other educational sessions using skilled staff, tried and tested resources, and informed by lived experience, ensuring a variety of meaningful learning opportunities that drive positive change.

Empower

Through our work, CAAS empowers those who use our services to be more confident and independent, enabling them to advocate for what they need, and feel more positive about the future.

Our History

ADHD Support Harrow was founded in 1996 by a small group of parents at the suggestion of a local CAMHS consultant. In 2000 the group became a registered charity and in 2002 moved to premises and began delivering services to meet increasing demand from parents of children with ADHD. We widened our objectives in 2010 and took over the support work of the former Harrow branch of the National Autistic Society to become ADHD & Autism Support Harrow, now Centre for ADHD & Autism Support. The aim of the merged charity is to allow ADHD/Autistic individuals and their parents/carers to benefit from the significant overlaps in need between the two conditions by bringing a range of knowledge and experience under one umbrella.

About our Board of Trustees

8 Trustees
(including the Chair)

6 Board meetings
annually – typically held
bi-monthly, virtually,
from 4:00pm to 6:00pm.

A Board Strategy Day
in October annually
(in-person)

Monthly informal
"catch ups" with
the CEO (virtually
or in-person)

An AGM in November
annually (virtually)

All Trustees are volunteer roles,
including the Chair





Our Values

Integrity: We are honest, professional, and consistent. We deliver to the best of our abilities, listening and learning to continually improve what we do.

Valuing Difference: We believe that diversity makes us stronger. We are neuro-affirmative in all our work.

Passion: We are driven to achieve positive impact for ADHD and autistic people, and to create inclusive communities where people can thrive.

Collaboration: We work with ADHD/autistic people to amplify their voices. We never aim to speak for them. We work with each other, our funders, our partners, and our community, to achieve our mission.

Trust and Respect: We always treat others with the utmost respect. Our services are impact and client-led. We can be relied upon.

Safeguarding

Having a culture of respect, care and compassion is at the core of all we do, and that involves having extremely robust policies in place to ensure our clients, their families and our staff and volunteers are effectively safeguarded. We have strict guidelines in place about the clients we are able to support, and strong procedures to follow should any risk arise. We also have clear expectations of our clients when they are attending services that we offer.

CAAS recognises that:

- the welfare of the service users is paramount in the work that we do and in all the decisions we take
- all users, regardless of age, disability, gender/reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some service users are identified as additionally vulnerable due to previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues, and extra safeguards may be needed to keep those service users safe
- working in partnership with service users, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

You can read our full safeguarding policy on our website:

<https://adhdandautism.org/about-us/policies-and-information/>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

CAAS has a deeply held and genuine commitment to EDI, and has included EDI considerations specifically within our strategic aims. This commitment includes, but is not limited to:

- Developing an **inclusive internal culture**, which has a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and community at its heart, that encourages individuals to develop and achieve their full potential and that ensures that everyone feels trusted and valued.
- Ensuring **accessible recruitment** approaches and promotion opportunities
- Treating all individuals with whom we have contact **fairly and responsibly**
- Complying with the law, to ensure we do not unlawfully discriminate, both generally, and specifically in respect of the **Equality Act 2010** protected characteristics
- Having a workplace that is **free from harassment, victimisation and bullying.**
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through our policies, strategies, procedures and action plans, for everyone in our employment, be they temporary, permanent, part time or full time

Our Strategy

CAAS will be a strong, thriving, mission-driven organisation if it is:

- **Committed to Quality:** CAAS offers a broad range of accessible and inclusive services, for clients of all ages and stages of diagnosis.
- **Client-Led:** CAAS has an excellent reputation for quality services and resources, and we are trusted by clients, partners and other service providers.
- **Creating Change:** CAAS raises awareness and understanding of ADHD and autism and shares best practice to drive positive changes for our community.
- **Comprehensive and Inclusive:** CAAS delivers the impact-driven services that our clients need.

You can read our full EDI policy and strategy on our website:

<https://adhdandautism.org/about-us/policies-and-information/>

Board Information

Clear Purpose and Strategic Direction:

A charity board exists first and foremost to protect and advance the charity's purpose. The board must:

- Be clear about the charitable objects and public benefit
- Set and regularly review the strategic direction
- Ensure activities remain aligned to mission, values, and beneficiary needs
- Focus on long-term impact rather than day-to-day operations

Effective Governance and Legal Compliance:

The board is collectively responsible for ensuring the charity is properly governed and compliant. This includes:

- Meeting Charity Commission and legal obligations
- Ensuring the charity acts in its best interests at all times
- Managing conflicts of interest
- Ensuring appropriate policies and controls are in place

Financial Oversight and Sustainability:

Boards must safeguard the charity's assets and ensure financial resilience. Responsibilities include:

- Approving budgets and monitoring financial performance
- Understanding income streams and financial risks
- Ensuring reserves are adequate and used appropriately
- Supporting sustainable growth and diversification where needed

The Right People Around the Table:

An effective board has the right mix of skills, experience, and perspectives. This means:

- Trustees who understand governance (not operational control)
- A balance of skills (e.g. finance, safeguarding, strategy, lived experience)
- Diversity of thought, background, and lived experience
- Clear role descriptions and expectations

Board Information (cont.)

Clear Roles, Relationships, and Accountability:

The relationship between the board, Chair, and CEO is critical. The board must:

- Clearly separate governance from management
- Support and hold the CEO to account
- Ensure the Chair provides leadership, not dominance
- Foster a culture of trust, openness, and challenge

Risk Management and Safeguarding:

Boards must ensure the charity is safe, ethical, and resilient. This includes:

- Identifying and managing strategic and operational risks
- Ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are fully met
- Responding effectively to risks, incidents, and crises
- Protecting the charity's reputation and beneficiaries

Performance, Impact, and Learning:

A good board focuses on impact as well as activity. Trustees should:

- Understand who the charity serves and why
- Use evidence and feedback to assess effectiveness
- Encourage learning, reflection, and improvement
- Hold the organisation accountable for outcomes

Board Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement:

Boards must reflect on how well they are working. This involves:

- Regular board and trustee evaluations
- Honest reflection on culture and dynamics
- Ongoing development and support for trustees
- Willingness to change how the board operates

The Role of the Chair

Purpose and Strategic Direction

How the Chair contributes:

- Leads the board in maintaining a clear focus on the charity's mission, values, and long-term purpose
- Ensures strategic discussions are prioritised on the board agenda
- Helps the board distinguish between strategic oversight and operational detail

Chair in practice:

- Facilitates constructive strategic debate
- Tests whether proposals align with purpose and public benefit
- Keeps the board focused on the future, not just immediate pressures

Financial Oversight and Sustainability

How the Chair contributes:

- Supports the board in understanding financial information and risks
- Reinforces the importance of financial stewardship and sustainability
- Works closely with the Treasurer and CEO without duplicating their roles

Chair in practice:

- Ensures sufficient time is given to financial planning and resilience
- Encourages appropriate challenge and scrutiny of budgets and forecasts
- Helps the board balance ambition with financial reality

Governance and Legal Compliance

How the Chair contributes:

- Sets the tone for strong, ethical governance
- Ensures trustees understand their legal duties and responsibilities
- Oversees effective board processes and decision-making

Chair in practice:

- Ensures meetings are well-chaired, inclusive, and compliant
- Addresses conflicts of interest appropriately
- Acts as a point of contact on governance matters if concerns arise

Board Composition and Capability

How the Chair contributes:

- Leads recruitment, induction, and succession planning for trustees
- Ensures the board has the right mix of skills, experience, and perspectives
- Promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion at board level

Chair in practice:

- Oversees skills audits and board development
- Supports trustees to contribute confidently and effectively
- Manages board dynamics to ensure all voices are heard

The Role of the Chair (cont.)

Relationships, Roles, and Accountability

How the Chair contributes:

- Acts as the key link between the board and the CEO
- Ensures there is clarity about roles, authority, and accountability
- Creates a supportive but appropriately challenging environment

Chair in practice:

- Holds regular meetings with the CEO
- Leads the CEO appraisal process on behalf of the board
- Ensures trustees do not drift into operational management

Performance, Impact, and Learning

How the Chair contributes:

- Keeps the board focused on outcomes and impact, not just activity
- Encourages the use of evidence, data, and lived experience in decisions
- Promotes reflective learning at board level

Chair in practice:

- Ensures impact reporting is meaningful and understood
- Welcomes constructive challenge and different viewpoints
- Encourages continuous improvement rather than defensiveness

Risk Management and Safeguarding

How the Chair contributes:

- Ensures risk and safeguarding are taken seriously at board level
- Encourages a culture of transparency and learning
- Leads the board response in times of difficulty or crisis

Chair in practice:

- Ensures risks are discussed openly and regularly
- Supports decisive, calm leadership when issues arise
- Maintains focus on beneficiary safety and organisational integrity

Board Effectiveness and Culture

How the Chair contributes:

- Leads by example in modelling values, behaviours, and integrity
- Creates a board culture that is respectful, inclusive, and curious
- Oversees regular board evaluation and development

Chair in practice:

- Addresses unhelpful behaviours early and sensitively
- Encourages openness, trust, and psychological safety
- Ensures the board reflects on how it works, not just what it decides

What Our Staff Say

"I have worked at CAAS for two years, and it is the first place where I have felt genuinely valued and encouraged from day one. We are consistently supported to put our clients first, and the work I do feels meaningful and impactful. At the same time, I feel well supported in maintaining a healthy balance with my life outside of CAAS."

Helen, Youth Team

"I think CAAS is a fantastic charity and a fantastic place to work."

Toby, Youth Team

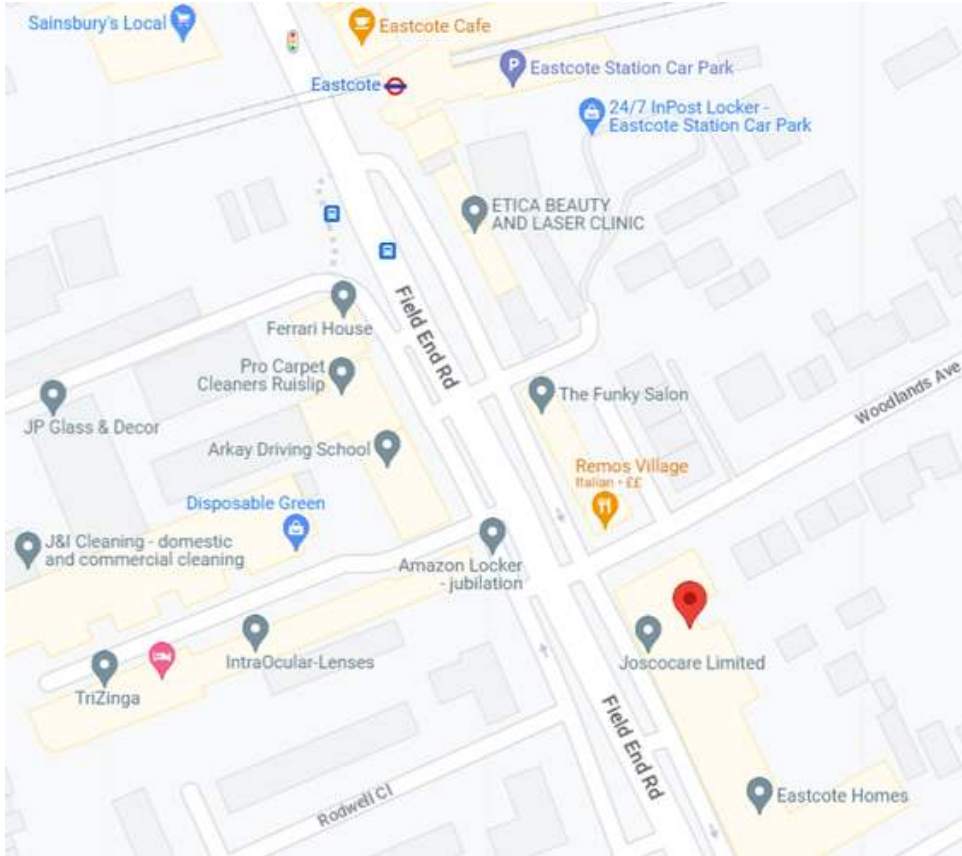
"One of the things I value so much from initially setting up and working at CAAS is that during its humble beginnings, the culture was always one of kindness and respect. Even though the charity has grown significantly over the last few years, it has maintained its personal feel without losing its focus and care. Recruitment has always been important and team fit with qualities as those mentioned above have been paramount and what make CAAS such a great charity to be part of."

Therese, Services Team

"CAAS is a genuinely lovely place to work, you really feel a sense of being part of a team as everyone is so supportive of one another and staff wellbeing is really at the core of everything that CAAS does!"

Emma, Adult Team

Where We Are



Address:

CAAS Centre,
2nd Floor,
Television House
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What 3 Words

[reveal.plants.upon](https://www.reveal.plants.upon.com/)



Gallery

