



Richmond upon Thames Council for Voluntary Service (RCVS)

TRUSTEE FORWARD

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for your interest in taking part in Trustee Forward, our new governance support package for new trustees and aspiring chairs of local voluntary and community organisations. This information sheet contains all the key information about the programme. If you have any questions, or if you need this information in a different format, please contact our Project Coordinator, Santiago Torchiaro, at santiagot@richmondcvcs.org.uk, and we will be happy to help.

Background information

Richmond CVS is excited to launch our new governance project, Trustee Forward, in partnership with the Richmond Foundation. The 12-month project will provide targeted training, a mentorship scheme, and opportunities for peer support to a cohort of both new trustees and aspiring chairs. We are aware of the increased pressures that trustees face, the growing number of vacancies, and how the composition of trustee boards is often not fully representative of the communities they serve. The aim of Trustee Forward is to remove barriers to trusteeship, increase diversity, and enable trustees to lead with confidence – in turn, helping to ensure our local sector is well run and well governed. This programme is free of charge for programme participants, thanks to funding from the Richmond Foundation.

Eligibility

The groups we are currently prioritising are:

- New trustees – trustees who have recently started in their roles or are about to start
- Aspiring chairs – trustees who aspire to become a chair or have just become a chair

You must be a new trustee or an aspiring chair of a Richmond based voluntary or community sector organisation. By Richmond based organisation, we mean an organisation that provides services to a significant number of Richmond beneficiaries. Please get in contact if you are unsure as to whether or not you would be eligible.

You should make your board aware of your intention to take part in the programme, and your chair or vice chair will need to agree to your participation.

We welcome participants from all backgrounds. We particularly encourage applications from people whose backgrounds are currently underrepresented in boards or who have faced extra barriers to trusteeship. This may include young people, women, people of colour, disabled people, people from a working-class background, people who identify as LGBTQ+, people with caring responsibilities, or people with lived experience of the causes that their charity works on, but this list is not exhaustive.

If you are an experienced trustee interested in volunteering as a mentor, we would very much want to hear from you – please email santiagot@richmond cvs.org.uk for further information on the separate application process we have for mentors.

Please note that if you are not a new trustee or aspiring chair, you may still be able to access other support from Richmond CVS outside of the Trustee Forward programme. Please get in contact at action@richmond cvs.org.uk

Core components of the programme

There are three core components to Trustee Forward: additional targeted training, a mentorship scheme, and peer support opportunities. The programme will be mostly delivered remotely. All participants will be expected to follow our code of conduct, which will be shared at the beginning of the programme.

All aspects of the programme will be free of charge for programme participants, thanks to funding from the Richmond Foundation.

Additional targeted training

We will be providing up to 6 sessions of targeted training. The topics of these sessions will be decided after receiving feedback from programme participants. At least one of the sessions will be specifically targeted towards aspiring chairs, with the others targeted towards new trustees.

Mentorship scheme

We will be matching participants with experienced trustees who have volunteered to be mentors. Volunteer mentors will provide you with up to 6 one-to-one mentoring sessions to help you build soft skills and confidence. Volunteer mentors will help you set goals, listen to your experiences, ask constructive questions, and share their own experiences where appropriate.

Peer support opportunities

We will be providing participants with peer support opportunities where they can connect and support each other. The aim is to have at least three sessions. The specifics of the format will be decided in consultation with programme participants.

Whilst we will try our best to make sure that all selected participants can access all parts of the programme, please note this may not always be possible. We will try to have different sessions at different times of day, including evening options, but we understand that not everyone may be able to attend every session. Similarly, we have a limited number of volunteer mentors, and whilst we will try our best to find you a good match for your needs, this may not always be feasible.

Prioritisation criteria

It is possible that we may receive many eligible applications and that despite our best endeavours, we may not be able to accept everyone.

If we receive more eligible applications than we can accept, we will apply a scoring mechanism to prioritise participants whom we believe may benefit the most from the programme. Any tied scores will be resolved in favour of the applicant who applied first, so early application is encouraged. The scoring mechanism will prioritise:

- Trustees from smaller organisations, as measured by annual income
- Trustees who are newer to the role
- Trustees who identify as coming from a background that is currently underrepresented on boards or having faced extra barriers to trusteeship

We will also be reserving six spaces for aspiring chairs.

Please note that this scoring mechanism will only be applied if we receive too many eligible applications and we have no choice but to turn down some of them. You are still most welcome to apply provided you meet our basic eligibility criteria, as stated in the eligibility section, and we will try our best to accept as many participants as possible.

We will initially open applications for 25 spaces. It is possible that more spaces may become available, and we will operate a waiting list for any eligible applications that are not selected at this stage. We will only reopen applications to new applicants after everyone on the waiting list has been offered a space.

Application process

In order to apply, please [complete our application form](#). The deadline to apply is the end of the day on Thursday 18 September. This deadline might be extended if there were to be still spaces available, but that is not guaranteed, so early application is strongly encouraged.

You will need to get consent from the chair of your board in order to take part. The application form will ask for your chair contact details as we will need to confirm their agreement.

If you are selected, we will then invite you to an informal interview. This will be a chance for us to better understand how we could support you as part of the programme and get your feedback on what you would or would not find helpful.

We are committed to equal opportunities, and we want our processes to be fair and inclusive for all applicants. Please get in contact if you require any reasonable adjustments as part of the application process, and we will try our best to support you.

We would be grateful if you could also complete our [Diversity and Equal Opportunities Form](#). The responses from this form are anonymous and will not be connected in any way to your application. The information given is used solely for monitoring purposes.

If you have any questions about the programme or the application process, or would like to arrange an informal discussion, please contact our Project Coordinator, Santiago Torchiario, at santiagot@richmond cvs.org.uk