

Trustee Application Pack



A message from our CEO



WELCOME TO LEYF!

LEYF is a busy place full of people with great ideas and a real commitment to making a difference to every child we meet. We are always looking for people who want to be part of our happy group and help us create more social justice through our admired social enterprise model.

The London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) is the UK's largest childcare social enterprise and a family of 39 nurturing and pioneering nurseries across London. LEYF works with communities and parents to enrich and extend children's learning, so that each child is the best they can be.

As a social enterprise, all surplus at LEYF is reinvested back into the business, allowing it to subsidise free places for at least 30% of its families, providing affordable access to early education and care to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

I am delighted you are considering joining LEYF as a Trustee and supporting our ambition to change the world one child at a time!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "June O'Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

June O'Sullivan MBE
Chief Executive

Our History



The London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) began as the Westminster Health Society in 1903, a time of poverty and shockingly high mortality. Distressed at the conditions they saw around them, three individuals embarked on an ambitious plan to change them.

Over 100 years before the first official children's centre and 45 years before the NHS, the Westminster Health Society helped to introduce the first health visiting programme in London. This included health education and training, clinics for maternal & child welfare and training in domestic skills. It was largely due to our three founders that maternal and child welfare and personal health services became available in Westminster.

During the Second World War, we opened our first nursery to support mothers working in the war effort. During the Blitz the nursery was temporarily housed in the air raid shelter of the Tate gallery!

As the needs of the community changed over the 20th century and health conditions improved, we focused our services on providing Early Years education and care through our nurseries. This enabled parents to go back to work, and children to get the best possible start in life.

In 2006 we began the journey to become a social enterprise to make us financially self-sustaining so that we could offer the same high-quality nursery experience to families across the city regardless of their background. In 2009 the organisation was re-named London Early Years Foundation as we moved out of Westminster, recognising the importance of spreading our model across London.

Today we are London's largest and most successful charitable social enterprises, inspired by the same passion and bravery of our pioneering founders, working to change the world one child at a time.

Learn more at www.LEYF.org.uk

Social Purpose & Values

LEYF has the ambition of changing the world one child at a time. Our social purpose is to give London's children the best start in life through the highest quality Early Years education, especially those who otherwise may not be able to access or afford it - thereby addressing the three systemic challenges that prevent children from achieving their full potential



Experiences in early childhood literally shape lives and are often the root cause of today's most difficult social challenges such as addiction, poor mental health, and homelessness. At LEYF, we are committed to providing high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as we know this benefits all children, but especially those living in disadvantage.

It is for this reason that LEYF's nurseries are disproportionately located in areas of deprivation with 77% of our nurseries in the 'most deprived' and 'deprived' areas of London versus an average of 50% throughout London. We also consistently achieve higher Ofsted ratings - as of March 2021, 56% of our nurseries were rated 'Outstanding' versus 22% on average in London (Ofsted, 2021, online).

Using a cross-subsidy model, LEYF ensures all surplus is reinvested back into the business to fund places for disadvantaged children - making LEYF one of the largest providers of the funded two-year-old places in London, subsidising 32% of our places. During FY20/21 that was ~1,250 children.



Brave
We are curious, bold and adventurous. We push boundaries and test new ideas, always standing up for the rights of children.

Inspiring
We encourage continuous development for children and staff. We challenge each other to question and explore so we learn together.

Nurturing
We are warm, caring, loving and welcoming. We create safe and homely environments for each child.

Fun
We are imaginative and creative and learn through play.

Job Description & Specification

The Board of Trustees of the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) is looking for a talented individual to join our Board. With ~800 employees and over £20m annual turnover, LEYF is the largest charitable childcare social enterprise in the UK and primarily delivers its mission to 'change the world one child at a time' through a family of 39 community nurseries across London, reaching over 4,000 children annually. You will join LEYF at a critical time for the childcare and Early Years development sector as it seeks to address key issues including funding, gender diversity in nursery provision and achievement of high-quality outcomes.

LEYF operates as social enterprise, seeking to maximise provision of subsidised high-quality childcare in some of the most disadvantaged places in London and operating a socially inclusive pricing strategy. We enrich and extend children's learning through our unique pedagogy which strengthens the home learning bridge and multigenerational engagement with communities to enhance social cohesion and inclusion.

Punching well above our weight, LEYF leads campaigners on early years issues and influencing national policies such as our work on men in childcare and child obesity. The staff at LEYF are passionate about the provision of high-quality childcare and are good at it too. We have also rolled out the first LEYF Foundation Degree and degree top up, Level 4 Sustainability Diploma and our unique chef qualification as part of our well received CPD suite of learning opportunities for all staff including chefs.

What's in it for you?

By working with the UK's largest childcare social enterprise to support long-term social change, you can make a material difference to the life outcomes of disadvantaged children across London. We can offer you an opportunity to put your skills and experience to new use, in a different context and to make a difference - using your questioning mind and resourceful nature to support a cause you really care about, helping make LEYF even stronger so it can expand the impact it has.

You'll be inspired by the passionate, nurturing and fun staff of LEYF. You'll develop your skills. You'll be part of a cohort of Trustees who are committed, professional, and collaborative. You'll help us strengthen LEYF's social impact and expand its reach, while ensuring financial and operational sustainability for future generations.

About you

We are now seeking a new Trustee to join our Board and Finance Committee to contribute to the strategic development and further success of LEYF. It is an exciting time to join our organisation as we move forward with the next chapter of our growth. We have recently aligned as a Board and Executive Team on an ambition to reach more than double the number of children in the next 7 years. The successful candidates will be passionate about LEYF's ambition and will bring experience of organisational change to support and guide us through this critical period.

As an organisation which has children at its centre, we need a range of skilled trustees who understand and align with the social mission but who also have specific knowledge, skills and understanding in a particular area. We are looking for a trustee who has a strong commercial background with a deep understanding of business in a similar size organisation.

We are looking for someone who can bring experience and understanding of the complexities of commercial growth. Trustees need to be able to blend strategic thinking with operational expertise and we are interested to understand how you have done this in a variety of roles and organisations.

Whatever your experience, we are committed to enhancing the diversity of our Board, particularly in terms of the representation of our staff and families, over 50% of whom have black and other ethnic minority backgrounds. Prior experience as a trustee or non-executive director is welcome, but not essential. We particularly value what lived, and life experience can bring to our board too.

Time Commitment

This is a voluntary, unpaid role. The LEYF Board of Trustees meet in central London for 4 (quarterly) Board meetings, typically outside working hours, and 1 strategy day. The Finance Committee meets virtually six times a year (more frequently where needed). In normal circumstances, each year you will commit to around 2 days per month including attending Board and Committee meetings, our annual Board strategy day and LEYF events and conferences.

Application Process

If you share a passion for continuous improvement and want to have a positive impact on the lives of others, then please submit the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A supporting statement detailing why you would like to be considered, your relevant experience and expertise and what you think you can bring to the role.

All Trustees at LEYF are required to complete a full [DBS check](#) prior to their appointment.

All applications are being handled by our recruitment partner, Trustees Unlimited (part of the Russam group). *Please upload your application **HERE**.*

If you have any difficulty uploading your application or if you would like to have an informal and confidential discussion about the role, alternatively please contact Melissa Baxter:

melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk | 07789 985 229

Closing date for applications:

Monday 26th September 2022

Interview Dates:

Monday 31st October, Tuesday 1st November, Wednesday 3rd November.

We look forward to receiving your application.