

Chair of Trustees Candidate Information

2024



Welcome from our Chief Executive

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming the new Chair of our Board of Trustees.

Blue Cross is a national charity that has been helping sick, injured, and homeless pets since 1897. It has grown into one of the largest and best loved pet welfare charities in the country.

Every month we help thousands of pets and their people in need by providing veterinary care, advice, and support as well as a network of pet food banks. We also support owners with expert behaviour advice, we help find homeless pets loving families and we provide pet loss support for those who have lost their beloved pet companion.

We love the ways that pets can make such an amazing difference to the people they live with, and we offer lifelong support and advice to help that unique relationship thrive.

Following the successful leadership of Tim Porter, we are seeking to appoint a new Chair to our Board of Trustees when he steps down in June 2024.

We are looking for someone who has a passion and commitment to our cause and our strategic objectives, to work alongside a diverse and talented group of trustees, and with me, to make sure we focus on achieving our clearly defined strategic objectives and operate to the highest standards of governance, as well as a mentor and advisor to a dedicated and experienced leadership team.

If you have a genuine empathy with and compassion for animals, with the willingness to bring your time, passion, and expertise to support the development of our work, we would love to hear from you.



Chris Burghes MBE, Chief Executive



Pets change lives
We change theirs

Who we are

We have been changing the lives of sick, injured, and homeless pets since 1897. Pets are at the heart of everything we do and every month we continue to help thousands more.

We love the way that pets can make such an amazing difference to the people they live with. So we offer lifelong support and advice to help that unique relationship thrive.

We change lives. For pets, for people, for life. We believe that pets and their people should be able to enjoy lifelong care and support, and we won't rest until that goal becomes reality.

We have a strong history of caring for animals during times of conflict commencing with the Balkans War and then First and Second World Wars. Today, we are supporting the efforts of partner charities in Ukraine, such as Save the Dogs, TOZ and TAC.social as they care for stray dogs, give pets veterinary treatment and reunite pets and people who have been separated.

Our Data and Performance Measurement team has calculated that over the past 125 years, Blue Cross has helped an amazing 38,179,284 animals and people. This incredible figure is testament to the fantastic work all our people have done in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Our Vision

Every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home.



Our Values

Compassionate: We listen, we are non-judgmental, we are kind and caring to the pets and people we encounter, and we offer support in difficult times.

Courageous: We make brave decisions, embrace change, and encourage innovation, ensuring we always act with integrity – doing the right thing even when no one is looking.

Inclusive: We value all our relationships and work in an open and positive culture where we celebrate our diverse talents and empower you to be you.

Our Work

Our work is complex because the needs of our pets are diverse. We take a holistic approach that stretches from veterinary and clinical care and rehoming to public affairs and advocacy. Our work includes:

Rehoming

We find loving families for homeless cats, dogs, horses and small pets across the UK.

Veterinary

We provide care for sick and injured pets when their family can't afford private treatment.

Behaviour

We provide behavioural expertise so that pets, and their people, can live healthy, happy lives.

Education

We give talks and provide advice to people who may need a little help now, or in the future.

Pet loss support

We support people who are struggling to cope with the loss of a pet.



Strategy

Our new Chair will be someone who buys into our strategy and vision, someone who is keen to get involved, to listen, understand, and share their wisdom over the longer term.

For more information about our activities, you can visit:
bluecross.org.uk/publications

The Role

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a talented, collegiate and unified Board.
[Meet our trustees here.](#)

Objective

The Chair will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for Blue Cross's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance and advancement of the Charity's purpose and values.

The Chair will also support the Chief Executive and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the entire Executive of the charity to achieve agreed objectives. They will act as an ambassador of Blue Cross in partnership with the Chief Executive.



Principal Responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to the Charity and its Board, ensuring that the Charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Creating the environment for a high performing board team
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives and provides a clear strategic direction for the Charity
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the Charity
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees
- Encourage positive change where appropriate, address and resolve any conflicts within the Board
- Appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees, and Sub-Committees, are regularly refreshed and incorporate the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively and which also reflects the wider population
- Work within agreed policies adopted by the Charity



Principal Responsibilities

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for the cause and the Charity
- Maintain close relationships with key influences and stakeholders
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings, and events
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders

Efficiency & Effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Charity and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees
- Work closely with the Chief Executive to give direction to Board policymaking and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees.
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.



Principal Responsibilities

Relationship with the Chief Executive and wider executive team

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive, ensuring s/he is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Support the Chief Executive, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensure regular contact with the Chief Executive and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the Chief Executive in consultation with other Trustees
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support

Additional Information

- The Vice-Chair acts for the Chair when the Chair is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the Chair.
- The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.



Person Specification

In addition to the qualities required of a Trustee of the charity, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:

Experience

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation.
- Successful track record of achievement through their career.
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees.
- Significant experience of chairing meetings, events, committees or boards; recognising and leveraging the strengths of the collective, ensuring all voices are heard and guiding decision making when there isn't a consensus.
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders.

Knowledge & Skills

Essential

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the charity sector and current issues affecting it.
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together.
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance issues.
- Good understanding of charity governance issues.

Desirable

- Relevant political, and/or government body, and/or boards and/or authorities' connections.
- Experience of influencing the development of new policies or legislation that improve the welfare of animals.

Person Specification

Personal Qualities

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives, values and cause.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the EDI objectives of the charity.
- Personal gravitas to lead a significant national organisation balanced with being approachable, accessible and visible.
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role, both internally (staff and volunteers) and externally.
- High degree of emotional intelligence, demonstrating tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively.
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity.
- Ability to foster and promote autonomy and a collaborative team environment.
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and attending events out of office hours.



Terms & Time Commitment

Terms

The Blue Cross Chair will serve a 3-year term to be eligible for reappointment for one additional term.

Time Commitment

2 days per month

In addition to chairing the main Board meetings, the Chair has the right to attend the subcommittees, which all meet quarterly, though this is not essential.

The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

Additionally, the Chair is also expected to have regular meetings with the Chief Executive and also represent the Charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders.



How to Apply

If you would like to be considered for the role of Chair, please include the following with your application:

- An up to date CV with the details of two referees (we will not contact them without your prior consent).
- A supporting statement, detailing how you meet the criteria for the role, and your motivations for applying.

All applications should be sent to applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk with 'Blue Cross' in the subject heading.

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter at melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk / 07789 985229.

Closing date for applications:

Friday 23rd February 2024

Interviews with Blue Cross:

14th & 15th March 2024 - informal meetings
Tuesday 19th March - At Blue Cross, Burford



Blue Cross holds inclusion as a core organisational value. We positively encourage applications regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender status, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy and maternity. We actively embrace our differences and know that it is our differences that make us unique. You are welcome at Blue Cross, without the need to hide any part of who you are.