



# Chair of Trustees

## Candidate Information 2024

# About us

React – **R**apid **E**ffective **A**ssistance for **C**hildren with potentially **T**erminal illness is a dynamic charity working to improve the quality of life for children with life-limiting illnesses living in financially disadvantaged households throughout the UK. Our work is unrivalled by any other organisation and our passion and belief that every child should have comfort, dignity, and the opportunity to participate in life as fully as possible is our driving force.

We stand out for our unique approach in supporting families with children in need. Unlike other organisations, we offer prompt assistance, often within hours, without bureaucratic hurdles. Families aren't limited in the number of applications they can submit, and we consider almost all essential requests crucial for a child's health, streamlining the process by working closely with medical professionals to identify each child's specific needs, sparing families from lengthy application forms. We provide continuous support, 52 weeks a year, throughout a child's life.

**For us, it's all about making sure every child gets the help they need, when they need it, in the most efficient and compassionate way possible.**





Aside from the huge emotional cost, many low-income families struggle with the added financial strain of caring for a terminally ill child at home. Local authorities are also increasingly limited in what they are able to supply and so many carer families must instead turn to React for the equipment their child needs.

Working with medical professionals involved in palliative care, React can respond to specific identified needs. Our remit is broad enough to ensure that the range of support we provide is as diverse as the many illnesses with which thousands of children across the UK are living with every day. Below are examples of how we can help:

## **Specialist equipment**

Addressing the needs of children with a life-shortening illness can require specialist or medical equipment. This is invariably 'medical-grade', adapted or manufactured to order and the cost can be extremely high.

## **Educational equipment**

It is essential that children who are no longer able to attend school are able to continue to learn and develop. Families and carers may apply for educational equipment to suit the specific requirements of each child.

## **Homecare equipment**

We understand the urgency and importance of homecare equipment in the care of a terminally ill child. To our families, it is as vital to their child's care as specialist and educational equipment.

## **Travel & subsistence expenses**

Caring for a sick child inevitably involves frequent hospital visits and in many cases, hospice stays. This can mean travelling long distances at very short notice, sometimes on a daily basis. We recognise the emotional, physical and financial strain placed on families and aim to alleviate some of the pressures by providing essential travel and subsistence expenses.

## **Respite breaks**

Caring for a child with major disabilities or special care needs can be exhausting and seemingly relentless. Many families find that their lives revolve around treatment and where a child's health is rapidly deteriorating, there can be seemingly little for families to look forward to. To address these issues React will consider requests for a React holiday or other day trips/short breaks.



# Family stories

## A new bed for Harry

Harry was born with a serious congenital heart defect that later contributed to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

By six years of age, after outgrowing a hospital cot, it was clear that Harry would need a specialist profiling bed to help keep him safe and ensure he was at the correct height for his mum to tend to him. A bed with clear sides allows for easy monitoring should Harry experience a seizure or become tangled in his nutrition line.

Harry's community nurse referred the family to React, and the team were delighted to help. Claire told us: *"I felt completely overwhelmed when the bed was awarded. It's been a tremendous help keeping Harry safe."*



## The importance of flooring

At just seven years old, Qasim was diagnosed with Sandhoff Disease. The family were eventually housed in a council property to accommodate the mobility issues that followed, but the home came with just bare floorboards and although Aisha knew cheap carpeting would offer a temporary solution, this would hamper Qasim's wheelchair which requires a smooth surface to glide efficiently.

The family's hospice social worker referred her to React. Aisha told us *"The new flooring has made so much difference - Qasim can still walk a few steps around the house and his wheelchair glides easily on the hard surface, React has brought peace of mind to our whole family."*

## Isla's trike

Isla was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy and faces multiple challenges. Despite numerous physio sessions she cannot stand unaided. Her mum, Rebecca, researched children living with SMA and found many were successfully using specialist tricycles, and following a consultation with Isla's physiotherapist, an assessment was arranged with a manufacturer.

With the trike costing £2,225, Isla's parents turned to charitable organisations for funding, without success. Almost a year went by before they heard about React, and they agreed to submit one last application. Rebecca told us: *"We cannot thank you enough, Isla always wanted to ride a bike like her sister, and she is over the moon with her tricycle. It is already benefiting her development as she builds her leg muscles. Thank you so much for responding to our application so quickly."*





# Our team



## Vicky Andreas, Director

Vicky leads a team of 7 staff, to include team members who are based outside of London and the Home Counties. As further part of React's efforts to increase its national scope, the charity closed its office in Kew and has transitioned to home working for all staff.

## Our Patrons

React is most grateful to our three Patrons Baroness van Dedem, Sir Derek Jacobi CBE and Samantha Bond for their valued support and assistance in raising awareness of the charity's work.

They bring with them devotion, compassion and commitment to React families and share in the belief that every child deserves the right to live in comfort and participate in life to the greatest degree.



## Our trustees

The foundation of React is built on the strong belief, dedication and hard work of our Founder, Sister Frances Dominica OBE.

React's trustees passionately believe in the services React provides to families. They bring a great deal of knowledge and expertise and each Trustee is prepared to fully immerse themselves within the ethos of React and roll up their sleeves when needed.

Form left to right: Rupert Wiles (current Chair), Richard Clifford, Keith Entwisle, Paul Mellor, Dr Mike Miller, Judy Burdett, and recently joined Debbie Brownlee (not yet pictured).

[Find out more about our board of trustees.](#)



# The role

## Introduction

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced leader to become part of a dependable board of exceptional trustees, and contribute to propelling the charity forward into its next phase. React takes immense pride in its accomplishments to date, yet it stands ready for a fresh wave of leadership and expansion, aspiring to broaden its impact. With solid financial footing and minimal overhead costs, there's a strong eagerness to diversify revenue streams, making it primed for further development. The foundation is laid for expansion, inviting a new strategic vision and direction. From its grassroots beginnings, the charity has fostered a wonderful atmosphere, with smooth operations, and a unique approach to support.

**Location:** Meetings are held virtually

**Time commitment:** 1 day per month

## Role responsibilities

- To ensure that the Trust furthers its charitable objectives at all times
- To ensure that the Board of Trustees fulfils its statutory responsibilities for the governance of the Trust
- To ensure that the Board of Trustees holds the Director and the management team to account for effective delivery of the work of the Trust
- To chair meetings of the Trustee body, ensuring that it functions effectively and fulfils its duties
- In working closely with the Director, to oversee the overall direction of the Trust and to ensure that the Trust's mission and objectives are achieved
- To support the Director in implementing the strategy of the Trust and in discharging the operational responsibilities delegated by the Trustees
- To assist the Director in drawing up budgets for each financial year, advising the Director on staff issues and remuneration To act as a spokesperson for the Trust as appropriate
- To initiate and oversee the recruitment of new Trustees to ensure the appropriate balance of skills and needs





- To ensure that the Trust puts in place and maintains an efficient system of financial accounting and investment that meets the stipulations of charity law and protects the Trust's funds and assets
- Ensure that the Trust has a fundraising strategy that is carried out in compliance with the laws, regulations and standards that apply to the Trust
- 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
- To make sure that decisions taken by the Board are implemented
- To initiate a system for advising, informing and training Trustees in relation to their role.
- To review the performance of the Director and also of the Board of Trustees and to take steps to ensure its efficient and effective operation
- To maintain an overview of the charity's affairs



# Person Specification

## Personal Qualities

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives and cause
- Personal gravitas to lead the organisation
- Ability to develop a close working relationship with the Director
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment within the Board structure
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and attending matters out of office hours

## Experience

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees
- Experience of external representation and delivering presentations where required
- Significant experience of chairing meetings and events

## Knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the health sector and current issues affecting it
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate and bring people together
- Proven commercial skills
- Understanding of charity governance issues
- Ability to understand financial statements and management accounts including Xero accounting system used by React





# How to apply

If you would like to apply for this fantastic opportunity, please provide 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 which details how you meet the main criteria along with your motivations for applying

All applications should be sent to [applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk](mailto:applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk).

If you would like a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter at Russam & Trustees Unlimited on [melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk](mailto:melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk) / 07789 985229.

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 1st July 2024

