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Welcome from our Chair



Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of the Dorset Mental Health Forum.

Our organisation has continued to make a positive contribution in these last difficult years, fulfilling the aims of the Charity and supporting the communities that we work with. We embrace change, with the Covid pandemic having escalated our digital transformation work. The Forum remains agile and responsive to the changes and needs of the external environment, in particular to those of the broader NHS, health and social care system in Dorset.

We have continued to develop our workforce, our operating systems and management over this period, in order to ensure we can continue successfully to grow and operate on a financially sound basis in the years ahead, which we expect to continue to be the case. Our work continues in developing and evolving our systems to demonstrate impact which will support and underpin our strategic planning in areas such as fundraising, people and influencing.

Our charity is permitted to have between three and twelve Trustees and currently we have eight, whose range of skill sets provides a strong base for good governance of the charity and covers areas of senior experience in charity governance, government and administration, finance and audit, legal, commercial operations and with the NHS locally and nationally.

We are now looking to recruit four additional Trustees to support the development of the Charity and to ensure that we are always looking ahead at future succession planning and keeping our skill sets refreshed and relevant to the Charity's needs and to fill such roles as a Committee Chair in the future.

A candidate's experience as a Trustee and of chairing would be valuable to meet these requirements. However, as we are looking to recruit four additional Trustees, we would also look to provide any candidate, if appointed, with the support necessary to develop their knowledge and skills as a Trustee. Experience and understanding of mental health and the social care sector would also be valuable.

This is an opportunity to join the Board of an innovative organisation whose purpose is to influence and facilitate significant cultural change in Dorset's mental health landscape.

We are committed to building a diverse and dynamic Board to support the good governance and strategic development of the charity in the years ahead. As you review this candidate pack, if you have the skills, experience and commitment for the role, I hope that you will consider applying.

Tim Harry
Chair of the Trustee Board

Our journey so far

Having a Voice

1991

Forston Clinic opens

1992

Herrison Hospital (former asylum) closes and site sold for luxury flats

1992

West Dorset Mental Health Forum established

2001

Administrator recruited

2001

Service user involvement established

Involvement to Partnership

2003

Advocacy Service and Forum moved to independent premises

2006

Expand to Dorset Mental Health Forum

2007

Awarded Big Lottery Funding

2008

Sports and Social Programme launched

2009

Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership (WaRP) established

2011

WaRP ImROC Demonstration site status

2012

Forum Employment Service launched

2012

Recovery Education Centre launched

2012

Hidden Talents launched

Education

2015 and 2017

CQC validate WaRP work

2016

Acute Care Pathway Review

2018

Retreat East opens

2019

Retreat West opens

2019

Mental Health Integrated Community Care (MHICC) Review commences

2019

Discovery Project launched

2019

Dorset Work Matters launched

2020

Dorset Open Door launched

2024

Complex Trauma Pathway and Flourish project launched



An Introduction to the Forum

Who we are

The Dorset Mental Health Forum is a values-based Charitable Incorporated Organisation influencing social change and advocating for social justice in Dorset and beyond.

Our workforce increase understanding of mental health, wellbeing and Recovery, challenging prejudice around people's experiences of mental distress and trauma, through lived experience expertise, education and coproduction.

Our Vision



A world that understands mental health: where people and communities can enjoy good mental health, citizenship, shared humanity and appropriate support when they experience emotional distress and trauma.

Our Mission

To increase understanding of mental health through lived experience expertise, support Recovery and develop capacity within services and communities to bring about change.

We deliver our Mission through three

Strategic Goals:



Education:

People's understanding of mental health and the impact of trauma will be increased through Recovery Education and Coproduction.



Agency:

People will have agency and be supported and enabled to live the lives they wish to live, beyond services, within their communities.



Influence:

Local services and communities will be influenced, shaped and transformed with the collective voice of Lived Experience.

Our Values

- **Honesty** is our foundation stone. We create choices and opportunity by being honest with ourselves and others.
- Our work requires **Courage**, to be vulnerable and to grow. We believe in people and support them to identify their strengths, to learn and to fulfil their potential.
- We know the power of **Compassion**. Having compassion for each other and ourselves enables us to build trust and create safety.
- **Respect** for who we are is a human right. Being respectful enables us to value others and to celebrate diversity and identity.
- Having **Integrity** means living our values and staying true to our purpose. We bring passion and commitment to all that we do, including our challenges.

Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to creating and sustaining a positive, inclusive and mutually supportive and beneficial environment.

We welcome, respect and value people with diverse and different experiences, identities and backgrounds.

We believe that our differences and collective experiences make us stronger and more effective in fulfilling our purpose and achieving our goals.

Our Beliefs

- That people with lived experience of mental health problems have a wealth of specialist knowledge, valuable expertise and experiences.
- In the effectiveness of partnership working in the design and provision of services.
- That everyone has an equal right to enjoy all the opportunities that life provides.
- That there is 'no health without mental health' and that 'mental health is everyone's business'.
- That individuals and communities hold many of their own solutions.
- That hope, mental health and wellbeing are essential to us all.



What we do

We are a community of people who have experiences of mental distress and managing a mental health condition, experiences of trauma, living with long term health issues or caring for someone who is in emotional distress. Our lived experience infrastructure brings the collective voice of lived experience expertise to the heart of real and sustainable change across Dorset.

Utilising our lived experience expertise, we influence and facilitate significant culture change around mental health in Dorset, as well as undertake a range of specialist independent and partnership activities to fulfil our mission and objectives, supporting individuals, communities and local systems to understand mental health. Intrinsic to this work is modelling Recovery, developing capacity and capability within individuals and communities.

Social Connection

Our Social Connection Programme works with individuals and organisations to offer different activities across Dorset, developing connections and helping people to build a life within their local community.

Advocacy

We support people to have a voice and exercise their rights in matters that directly affect their lives, including times when they may be subject to the Mental Health Act.



Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership (WaRP)

The Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership (WaRP) is a nationally recognised, formal partnership between the Dorset Mental Health Forum and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust, putting lived experience expertise hand in hand with professional and technical expertise. The Partnership promotes coproduction and drives culture change across the Integrated Care System in Dorset.

Together the Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership provides the following projects:

Dorset Recovery Education Centre

Dorset Recovery Education Centre (REC) provides Recovery focused, educational opportunities that enable people to identify their strengths, find hope and build skills, to reframe their experiences of trauma and emotional distress.

Discovery Project

Discovery Project works closely with schools and youth projects to facilitate participation and create mechanisms for young people to have a voice within local services and their communities.

Dorset Open Door

Dorset Open Door is a collaborative, multiagency bereavement support and signposting service for people in Dorset who have been bereaved by trauma or suicide.

Retreats

Retreats provide a collaborative approach to crisis support in Dorset, through open access safe spaces for people to make sense of their distress in times of self-defined crisis.

Peer Specialists

Peer Specialists within services are staff who intentionally utilise their lived experience of mental health issues, trauma, and emotional distress, to support Recovery oriented practices within local services and broader communities across Dorset.

Carers Project

Carers Project supports the development of lived experience voices of carers, particularly people who have been bereaved by suicide or cared for people who have experienced complex trauma.

Dorset Work Matters

Dorset Work Matters provides an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) employment service to people accessing secondary Mental Health services, as part of a broader ambition to create meaningful vocational opportunities for people in Dorset.



Where we do it

We are based in Dorchester, but our workforce of around 80 people works flexibly across Dorset in a broad range of statutory service and community settings, as well as virtually at times. We are excited about the increased opportunities that hybrid working affords as we move forward.



Our Finances

As a System partner, our funding comes from a broad range of different sources across the local health and social care system. In addition to this, we are proactive with fundraising activities to support our work and fulfil our objectives as a charity.

For further information, please see our 2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts. These can be found on the Charity Commission website or obtained from Trustees Unlimited.



Trustee Role Description

The Trustee Board

Dorset Mental Health Forum's Constitution provides for a Trustee Board consisting of a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve Trustees. Trustees share collective responsibility for the overall direction, financial health and probity of the organisation, ensuring effective delivery of charitable outcomes for the Forum's beneficiaries.

Trustees are expected to bring their specific skills, knowledge and experience to the Board to help the Forum reach sound decisions and to govern well.

A comprehensive induction programme is provided to Trustees on appointment. Trustees are expected to commit to ongoing learning and development relevant to the role.

Main Duties of Trustees

Generally

- To promote the Vision and Mission of the Forum.
- To exemplify the Values and Beliefs of the Forum.
- To understand and promote the Principles of Wellbeing, Recovery and Coproduction.
- To act in accordance with the Forum's policies.
- To act with reasonable care and skill, to avoid any personal conflicts of interest and always to act in the Forum's best interests and safeguard its good name.

Strategy

- To determine the overall direction and development of the Forum through clear strategic planning.
- To monitor progress towards agreed strategic goals and priorities.
- To consider and contribute as required to the regular review of structures, skills, capacity and resources required to deliver the strategy.

Compliance

- To ensure that the Forum complies with its Constitution, charity law and all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, continually striving for best governance practice.
- To ensure that the Forum pursues its Objects as defined in its Constitution and uses its resources exclusively in pursuit of its Objects.

Accountability

- To ensure robust systems are in place for sound management, internal control and protection and safeguarding of the Forum's resources and assets, including its staff.
- To ensure risks are identified and managed appropriately at all levels.
- To ensure accountability for charitable funds to beneficiaries, members, stakeholders and funders.

Disclosure and Barring Service

All Trustee appointments are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks.



Other Duties

There are two Board Committees: an Appointments and Remuneration Committee and a Finance and Audit Committee. Trustees are expected to participate in one or more of these Committees when requested to do so.

Time Commitment

The time commitment is around 12 days a year. Board meetings take place at the Forum's offices in Dorchester, or at external venues in Dorset, or virtually via digital platforms. These are half or whole day meetings four times a year with four Committee meetings in between. Committee meetings usually take place virtually. In addition, there may be Board Away Days, Forum events and whole Forum Workforce Away Days.

Expenses

The Forum takes the view that, as volunteers, Trustees should not be financially disadvantaged as a result of their contribution to the Forum's work. Therefore, Trustees are eligible to claim business mileage and subsistence, when appropriate.

Term of Office

Paragraphs 13 and 16 of the Constitution cover the appointment and reappointment of Trustees. Trustees are normally appointed for three years and are eligible for reappointment. Generally, the Forum's expectation is that Trustees will serve for a minimum of six years and a maximum of nine years.

Charity Commission Guidance

All Trustees are required to be aware of and understand their individual and collective responsibilities. These are described further in the following publications:

- CC3: The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do. [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3\) - GOV.UK](#)
- The Essential Trustee – 6 main duties. [Charity trustee: what's involved \(CC3a\) - GOV.UK](#)

Trustee Person Specification

Generally

The Forum seeks to recruit people who have a keen interest in mental health and a desire to build on their understanding through experience and who:

- Feel that their personal values and beliefs align with those of the Forum.
- Are able and willing to allocate enough time to the role.
- Are looking to bring their skills and experience to a meaningful and proactive role.

We celebrate diversity and welcome applications from people with a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. Non-executive experience is desirable but not essential. We encourage applications from all suitably qualified and eligible candidates.

Any person aged 18 or over can act as a Forum Trustee provided they are not disqualified under the Charities Act.

We ensure appointments are made following a transparent, balanced and appropriate process and based on merit.

Skills and Experience

We are looking for a number of trustees with a wide range of skills and experience to include some of the following:

- Understanding of the role of governance and non-executive leadership to support the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties and responsibilities of being a Trustee.
- Experience and understanding of mental health and the social care sector.
- Understanding of and ability to operate in accordance with the Principles of Wellbeing, Recovery and Coproduction.
- Professional background in finance.
- Understanding and experience in relation to safeguarding.
- Ability to think strategically and articulate strategic vision.
- Ability to scrutinise and analyse information, leading to constructive, strengths focused and supportive challenge.
- Good critical thinking, objective reasoning and decision-making skills.
- Good interpersonal and relationship building skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively.
- Ability and confidence in utilising digital technology and systems.

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to the Forum's Vision, Mission, Values and Beliefs.
- Commitment and adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.
- Commitment and adherence to the NCVO's Charity Ethical Principles: Beneficiaries First; Integrity; Openness; and Right to be Safe.
- Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Commitment to collaborative working, collegiate behaviour and reciprocal support.
- Commitment to ongoing learning, reflection and personal development.

Board Review and Development

Comprehensive induction, training and support is provided on appointment and throughout tenure.

The Board regularly reviews the skills and experience that are required to ensure the Forum can meet its current business and governance requirements.

The Forum's approach to Board Review and Development is guided by Principle 5. Board effectiveness of the Charity Governance Code for Charities.

The Code's recommended practice includes:

Reviewing the Board's composition

The Board has, and regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs to govern, lead and deliver the charity's purposes effectively. It reflects this mix in its Trustee appointments, balancing the need for continuity with the need to refresh the Board.

Developing the Board

The Board reviews its own performance, including that of the Chair. These reviews might consider the Board's balance of skills, experience and knowledge, its diversity, how the Board works together and other factors that affect its effectiveness.



Timescale and Application Process

If you are interested in joining the Dorset Mental Health Forum and believe that you have the skills and experience that we are looking for, please apply with the following:

- An up-to-date CV.
- A supporting statement of no more than 2 sides of A4, detailing why you would like to be considered, your relevant experience and expertise and what you think you can bring to the role.

All applications are being handled by our recruitment partner, Trustees Unlimited (part of the Russam group).

For an informal discussion about the role or further information, please contact:

Melissa Baxter, Managing Partner - Charities on: melissa.baxter@trustees-unlimited.co.uk / 07789 985229.

All applications should be sent to: applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk with your full name and Dorset Mental Health Forum in the subject heading.

After the closing date, Trustees Unlimited will review all applications and liaise with the Forum, before getting in touch to let you know the outcome of your application. We have outlined below the dates that we currently expect all the further stages of this process to occur on.

The next stages will be:

Closing date for applications:

Monday 2 June 2025

In person interviews with Dorset Mental Health Forum:

Wednesday 9 July 2025

Our Constitution requires our members to appoint and reappoint Trustees at the Annual General Meeting, which will take place in November 2025. Successful candidates will be engaged with induction activities and Board matters before this date.





The collective voice of lived experience

29A Durngate St, Dorchester DT1 1JP
01305 257172
www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk