



# Chair of Trustees

Recruitment Pack

August 2025

# Welcome

We're entering an exciting new chapter and looking for a new Chair of Trustees to help shape our future.

At Sight Concern Bedfordshire, we're proud to support blind and partially sighted people across Bedfordshire and Luton to live full, independent lives.

Our small, dedicated team and incredible volunteers provide tailored, inclusive services to help those with sight loss stay active, connected, and empowered.

Now, as we look to grow our reach and deepen our impact, we're seeking a compassionate, strategic leader to guide our Board and support our CEO during this pivotal time.



**“In three words, I'd describe us as values led, professional, and community focussed.**

**As a charity, over the last five years, we've built a strong foundation and developed a sustainable, high quality service.”**

— Carol O'Brien, CEO

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# About Us

Founded in 1999 through the merger of three charities, Sight Concern Bedfordshire became a registered charity in 2007. We are an independent, local organisation with a clear goal: to improve the quality of life for people living with sight loss.

Through one to one support, community based initiatives, and collaborative partnerships, we help people maintain independence, build confidence, and connect with others. Our services are shaped by those we support - and we're constantly evolving to meet their needs.

We work across Bedfordshire and Luton, supporting people of all ages and at every stage of their sight loss journey. Whether someone is newly diagnosed, adjusting to changes in vision, or navigating life with a long-term condition, we're here with compassionate, practical help.

We are proud of our person-centred approach, one that starts with listening. We don't offer one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, we tailor our support to reflect each person's goals, circumstances, and lived experience. From emotional reassurance to technology support, social connection to low vision advice, we offer a holistic range of services to meet evolving needs.

As we build on recent transformations, our focus is on strengthening community engagement, modernising our services, and expanding our influence beyond our current reach. We're also exploring the role of innovation and technology in helping us reach and support more people, more effectively.

At the heart of it all is our belief that no one should face sight loss alone - and with the right support, everyone can live fully, actively, and with dignity.

## Our Vision

An environment where people with sensory loss can live the lives they want to live in a fully inclusive society.

## Our Mission

To provide information, advice and practical support to visually and sensory impaired people across Bedfordshire, Luton and surrounding areas.

## Our Values

Our entire ethos is based on enabling independence so that people living with sight and sensory loss can regain and maintain active and independent lives.

**“It's such a privilege to witness the positive impact that we make, and see the hard work both staff and volunteers put into a client's journey.”**

– Clare Anderson, Charity Operations Manager

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# Our Impact

April 2024 - March 2025

This impact snapshot highlights the difference Sight Concern Bedfordshire made over the past year, thanks to the dedication of our staff, volunteers & supporters. These results reflect not just outputs, but meaningful outcomes for people living with sight loss in our communities.

With dedicated staff, passionate volunteers, and strong local partnerships, we continue to prove that with the right support, people with sight loss can thrive - and live life with independence, dignity, and confidence.

## Specialist Support for Independence & Wellbeing



**887** people received direct, specialist support, including:

- One to one help from Visual Impairment Advisors
- Low vision rehabilitation
- Assistive technology clinics

*"You gave me confidence to live life again, even when I couldn't see the way forward."*

**2744 people reached**

We connected with 2,744 visually impaired people across Bedfordshire - the highest number in our charity's history.

## Fighting Poverty



**£355k+** in benefits accessed by 53 people.

Helping individuals overcome financial hardship.

*"Thanks to your help, I can now live with dignity and hope."*

## Reducing Isolation



**100** volunteers delivered:

- 30+ weekly befriending calls
- A network of clubs and social activities
- Generating 1,200+ attendances in the past year

## Accessible Information for All



**2500+** people reached by our News + Views magazine distributed in:

- Large print
- Audio
- Digital formats



**Our website is now rated the most accessible UK charity website**



# The Role

**We are seeking a passionate strategist who believes in evolution, not revolution.**

This is an opportunity for a perceptive and pragmatic visionary who holds a deep respect for lived experience, and who embodies an inclusive, people first attitude to leadership that is rooted not in control, but in collaboration.

Experience of working or volunteering across the sight loss, disability, or assisted technology space is highly desirable, but not essential.

It is however vital that this person has a practical understanding of charity governance, an affiliation or admiration for our mission, and demonstrable experience effectively delivering within a leadership role in a professional capacity.

This is both a strategic and hands-on leadership role - ideal for someone who can balance governance with empathy, ambition with humility, and vision with action.

You'll work closely with our CEO as a trusted advisor, critical friend, and supportive partner. You'll guide our Board through key decisions, help foster an inclusive and collaborative culture, and act as an ambassador for our work across Bedfordshire and beyond.

We're looking for someone who can bring people together, ask the right questions, and lead with clarity and compassion.



# Key Responsibilities

## Our Chair will:

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board of Trustees and act as a critical friend to the CEO offering both challenge and support in equal measure.
- Ensure the charity complies with its governing documents and relevant legislation and remains in line with the guidance of the Charity Commission.
- Uphold and strengthen the principles of good governance, ensuring the board functions efficiently and maintains appropriate policies, procedures, and risk management practices.
- Effectively chair board meetings, creating a space for inclusive and productive discussions, collaborative decision making, and clear, actionable outcomes.
- Maintain ongoing check ins with the CEO and contribute to subcommittees or strategic initiatives as needed.
- Support succession planning and leadership development, including the recruitment, onboarding, and development of trustees.



- Act as a trusted and credible ambassador externally to help strengthen the charity's reputation and influence across Bedfordshire, Luton, and beyond through nurturing relationships with local stakeholders, community partners, and funders to help influence and broaden the charity's reach and impact.
- Ensure the perspectives of blind and partially sighted people are actively included in board discussions and decision making.
- Lead periodic reviews of board performance and structure.
- Promote and champion a culture of collaboration and citizenship.
- Enthusiastic attitude towards the role emerging technology can play.
- Lead with humility, empathy, and purpose, guiding by example rather than authority or title.

**“I would love for our culture to become more progressive cutting edge and one that enables us to successfully adopt emerging technology.”**

– Simon, a volunteer

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# Essential Requirements

**The key attributes, skills, or experiences that the Chair must have:**

- Senior leadership experience in a professional capacity or as a Trustee.
- Experience supporting or working with a Chief Executive or senior leader.
- Practical understanding of charity governance.
- Ability to think strategically and provide sound judgment while considering both the bigger picture and finer details.
- Interpersonal and communication skills with the capability to unify diverse views and thoughts and facilitate inclusive productive discussions.
- Appreciation and empathy for people living with a disability and a commitment to inclusion and improving accessibility.
- Reliable, consistent and dependable in character.

# Desirable Requirements

**These qualities are not essential, but they would support strong performance in the role:**

- Previous experience as a Chair.
- Professional or voluntary experience in sectors such as sight loss, disability, social care, health, or assisted technology.
- Active networks across Bedfordshire to support partnership building.
- Experience in fundraising, income generation, or partnership development.
- Experience redeveloping or transforming services for beneficiaries.
- Awareness of digital accessibility and the role that technology could serve in improving the lives of visually impaired people.
- Lived experience of sight loss or exposure to someone who has.

**“The Chair needs to be proactive, able to motivate people, and forward-thinking about what the charity can do.”**

– Hubert Pawelkiewicz, Trustee

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# Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion



**We are passionate about building a Board that reflects the rich diversity of the people and communities we serve.**

We know that diverse voices and lived experiences help us make better decisions, challenge assumptions, and stay connected to the real world needs of those living with sight loss.

We warmly welcome and actively encourage applications from individuals who are:

- Racially or culturally minoritised
- Disabled or living with sight loss
- Neurodivergent
- Identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community
- From other marginalised, minoritised, or underrepresented communities

We recognise that representation matters - not just in principle, but in practice. We believe that leadership should be accessible, inclusive, and open to people from all walks of life, regardless of background or circumstance.

If you are passionate about the work we do and only meet some of the criteria for the role, we would still love to hear from you - even if you don't tick every box.

To ensure a fair, equitable, and inclusive recruitment process that is accessible for all, we are happy to make reasonable adjustments at any stage. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any assistance with your application.

Together, we're building a leadership team that is as inclusive, compassionate, and forward thinking as the charity itself.

# How to Apply

Sight Concern Bedfordshire are directly managing the recruitment for this position.

If you would like to express your interest and apply, please email your CV alongside a tailored cover letter to:

[office@sightconcern.org.uk](mailto:office@sightconcern.org.uk)

*Sight Concern Bedfordshire welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and lived experiences. We actively encourage interest from racially and culturally minoritised individuals, those who are neurodivergent, part of the LGBTQIA+ community, or living with a disability.*

*Please get in touch if you would like to talk to us about any support that you may need in completing an application.*





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