

Hi there,

I wanted to introduce Options to you and give you a brief flavour of who we are, what we are about and the role the successful applicant will play in Options.

Options is a relatively small organisation (charity) supporting 180 people with learning disabilities to live their lives to the full. We have 350 staff and a turnover of just over £7m. We are passionate about what we do and because we are small we have the opportunity to design and deliver the support we provide, and to run the organisation, in the way we believe is best (less encumbered by bureaucracy and convoluted systems). We are operating in a social care system going through rapid change and struggling to cope with years of central government cutbacks.

The Board of Trustees is at the centre of shaping who we are and what we become. In an organisation our size the role is multi-dimensional, fundamentally focused on making Options the very best it can be. It is a fabulous role – demanding, challenging, rewarding, complex and just right for someone who is brave, insightful, passionate, smart and with great people skills. Every aspect of what each of us does must contribute to our mission. We are not here to make loads of money (though some does come in handy), for fame or fortune but we do want to see people – those we support with disabilities, their families, our staff and the communities we are part of, flourish.

If you are interested please do get in touch. We'd love to meet you.

Best wishes,



Richard Williams  
Chief Executive

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## An Introduction to Options

Options provides innovative and flexible support to people with disabilities, with a range of support needs. We are a registered charity and therefore every penny is spent on providing great support. The organisation was one of the first of its kind in the UK, established in 1993 and has a proven track record of providing community based, supported living for people who want their own places to live with support.

Our first support was provided in Liverpool and Sefton. Each was based on the principle of finding out what each person to be supported uniquely wanted and needed, and then designing support around him/her (what is now called person centredness). Options seeks to support anyone with a learning disability, no matter how complex their support needs. We are committed to turning no-one away and to sticking with people when their lives become very difficult.

Options expanded to the Wirral in 2001. To date, across Merseyside, we support 73 people through community outreach and we support 94 people in supported living.

Outreach support now operates in Wirral, Liverpool, Sefton and Halton. We support these people who have learning disabilities by promoting community inclusion and reablement through voluntary or paid work, college and social activities and offering valuable respite for families and carers.

The support will vary from 3 hours a day to 15 hours a day, usually to someone who lives at home and is supported by their family or another provider agency, or who lives without much support.

Supported Living tends to provide support 24 hours a day (although it can be less), with waking or sleep in staff at night-time. With Supported Living, Options will usually be the main provider of support. We will often assist the person to find a house and to establish their own home from scratch.

We are committed to staying small with few management tiers and an unwavering commitment to support people with complex support needs. We have approximately 350 staff and provide £6 million of support.

Our Mission is to support,

empower, and enable people

with disabilities to live their lives to the full

## Our Aims and Beliefs

1. We believe that all people should live a fulfilled and meaningful life which includes:

- The power, authority and resources to control our own lives
- A sense of belonging and acceptance for who we are
- Being treated with dignity and respect
- Participating as valued members of our own communities
- Having new life opportunities and enriching life experiences
- Meaningful and loving personal relationships
- The opportunity to express our own cultural and spiritual beliefs
- Good health
- Taking responsibility for what we can or ought to do for ourselves
- Caring about and helping those around us.

2. To support families and carers to in turn enable people we support to achieve the lives described above

3. To provide a challenging, rewarding and supportive work experience for staff, where they are able to use their gifts and talents for the benefit of the people we support

4. To help and engage with communities to understand how they can support people with disabilities to live valued lives in those communities

5. To provide excellent value to people we support and to those who purchase that support

6. To work in partnership with Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, specialist trusts, housing associations and others to provide excellent services

7. To share our learning, our successes and mistakes and our experiences with others, and to constantly learn from others

8. To develop and strengthen Options as an organisation in order to fulfil our mission.





## Our Working Values

### **1. Vision**

We have a clear sense of purpose and direction.

### **2. Listening**

We listen to each other, and don't jump in with our own views before considering others. This reflects our respect for each other.

### **3. Enabling**

We support each other to develop our skills and abilities, and to use them effectively for the benefit of those we support. Therefore we don't jump in to do everything ourselves, but look to developing and using the skills of others.

### **4. Integrity**

We seek in our actions, in what we do, to reflect what we say and believe. We say what we mean and mean what we say.

### **5. Teamwork**

We recognise each other's different skills, experiences and abilities and seek to use each to work as a team, and to support each other in good and in bad times.

### **6. Recognition and Encouragement**

Appreciation and encouragement are great motivators.

We seek to identify opportunities to praise and encourage each other, and we celebrate success.

### **7. Challenge**

We rigorously debate our differences of opinion and see such debates as healthy and positive. Once a decision is made we work wholeheartedly towards the agreed decision

### **8. Commitment**

We work hard to enable people we support to achieve their goals. When the going gets tough we stick in there. But we are also committed to balanced lives. As we seek full lives for the people we support so we seek to ensure staff do not work excessive hours, and have time for themselves and others outside of work.

### **9. Confidentiality**

We share specific, private information on a need to know basis, and within supervision systems. We do not gossip about others, and we do not create negative reputations for people we support.

### **10. Rigour**

We act and make decisions on what makes a real difference to the quality of life of those we support. When necessary we take hard and painful decisions.

### **11. Risk Taking**

We are willing and keen to take thought through risks and make productive mistakes.

### **12. Learning**

We are creative and try different ways of doing things. We make mistakes, but after they occur we learn from them to ensure they do not happen again.

# Why join Options?

- An opportunity to make a real difference to someone's life
- You care passionately about people
- The chance to work for the best supported living agency in the world (work in progress!)
- As much responsibility you can take
- Regular support and supervision (which helps you to grow and develop)
- Excellent training and development (you'll have the opportunity to learn from some of the best trainers from around the world)
- A real voice and say in the organisation
- An opportunity to develop your skills as part of a team.
- Recognition for doing a great job (from a simple thank you to more formal recognition)



# What makes us different?

## What is person-centredness?

Options is committed to person centredness – a philosophy which says we think and see all people as people – not as units of production, sales, widgets or anything else. It is our over-arching philosophy and one that drives all aspects of who we are and what we do.

Person centredness as a named philosophy has been around learning disability provision for 30 years and before that, unnamed, for ever. However it got its big break in 2001 when the Department of Health in the White Paper 'Valuing People' named it as the approach all of us should take in supporting people with disabilities. Fundamentally person-centredness organisations believe:

1. All people including those with disabilities are of immeasurable value
2. All people are unique and have the right to express that
3. All people have a contribution to make to the communities in which they live

However person-centredness applies equally to how we relate to each other as staff and in our relationships with purchasers, families, housing associations and basically anyone we are in contact with. In the 1960s EF Schumacher (who didn't drive racing cars) wrote a book called 'Small is Beautiful', subtitled "economics as if people mattered." A similar theme is picked up by Max DePree in his book 'The Art of Leadership'.

So Options strives to be person centred in all aspects of what we do. This will include:

- Supporting people to live as independently as possible
- Using first names and not focusing on titles
- Judging success by the quality of life of the people we support (which we compare to our own to keep us real about success)
- A desire to support staff to maintain a home/worklife balance
- Not creating models of support that force people with disabilities to live with others with disabilities
- Seeing families and our complex relationships with them as part of the partnership we have with them
- Maintaining small differentials between the highest and lowest salaries
- Rewarding staff for their great work in lots of different ways

The list goes on for ever and we will never stop learning better ways of doing this.

# Trustee

## Job Description

### **The duties of an Options Trustee are to:**

- To establish and agree the vision and long-term direction for Options in accordance with our governing document, and through production and approval of the Development Plan
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- To ensure compliance with charity and company law, with the requirements of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects, and specifically to the priorities established in the Development Plan and Organisational Plan
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining objectives, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name, beliefs and values of the organisation
- To represent Options at functions and meetings as appropriate
- To declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a Trustee
- To be collectively responsible for the actions of the organisation and other Trustees
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- To abide by the equal opportunities policy
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds
- To make sure the organisation is properly insured against all reasonable liabilities
- To appoint and support senior staff

# Trustee

## Job Description

**In addition to the above statutory duties of all Trustees, each Trustee should use any specific knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve:**

- Scrutinising board papers,
- Leading discussions focusing on key issues
- Providing advice and guidance requested by the board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the area of, the organisation's work in which the trustee has special expertise
- To attend meetings, and to read papers in advance of meetings
- To attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- To participate in other tasks as arise from time to time, such as interviewing
- new staff, helping with fundraising
- To keep informed about the activities of the organisation and wider issues which affect its work



# Trustee

## Person Specification

### Each Trustee must have:

- A desire for people with disabilities to live full lives in their local communities
- A commitment to Options Beliefs and Working Values (see attached)
- Courage and wisdom as Options stays true to its mission and beliefs, pushing boundaries (whilst recognising responsibility)
- A commitment to the organisation and its objects and an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Trustee. There are 5x 2 hour Board meetings per year, plus a full day strategy meeting (may be diaried as two shorter sessions.) The Finance Sub-Committee meets 5 times a year for 1.5 hours and there will be other occasional meetings – Trustee specific but also Awards events, social events, Staff Consultation Meetings and interviews for Leadership Team members.
- A good, independent judgment
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team

# Recruiting staff with Criminal Records

Options is committed to people – people we support with learning disabilities and people who work for Options – our staff. We recognise that sometimes people commit crimes, but then develop beyond that, with the potential to be great at supporting people with disabilities.

Options is committed to providing opportunities for employment for people who have a criminal record or have been the subject of police enquiries. What we must do is to ensure this happens safely, without putting people we support at risk – financially, physically or emotionally.

Options, therefore has a policy of carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) on all of its employees. DBS checks examine people's police records and other national registers that may indicate someone's unsuitability to work with people who are vulnerable. We do this because:

- a) We want to ensure the safety of people we support
- b) We want to get the right staff (who may have committed offences but have developed beyond that)
- c) We are legally obliged to.

We comply with the DBS Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants fairly. A copy of the code of practice is available from the office if you would like one. We are keen to give a 'second chance' to people no longer likely to commit offences. Potential employees are advised at application stage i.e. in the application form, that they must disclose any cautions / convictions / warnings / court appearances which they have and that failure to do so will result in dismissal should the cautions / convictions / warnings be revealed subsequently, this is true of all civil and criminal offences. Should a candidate disclose cautions / convictions / warnings / court appearances at the interview stage, the chair of the interview panel should ask the person for more details. The decision as to whether or not to appoint should then be made bearing any of the information that has been disclosed in mind.

Should a successful candidate not reveal any cautions / convictions / warnings / court appearances which he/she have at application, Options will terminate that person's employment, based on non-disclosure, and the need for honesty and integrity in the service. Applicants are always appointed subject to a satisfactory DBS check.

Options reserves the right to refuse employment to anyone who has a conviction for the following, should the circumstances of that conviction indicate that the employee may pose a potential threat to any of the people we support.

- Fraud
- Obtaining money by deception
- Crimes of a violent nature
- Burglary
- Theft
- Actual Bodily Harm
- Drug Related Offences.

No offence whatsoever is regarded as spent as Options work and appointments are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 due to the nature of the work that we do.

Options also reserves the right to refuse employment to anyone who has a number of convictions over a period of time, where the crime itself may not warrant either not appointing a candidate or termination of employment but the frequency and the pattern of crime indicate the person may re-offend.

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily bar you from working for us. That will depend on the nature of the conviction and the circumstances and background of your offences. Dishonesty regarding convictions, cautions or court appearances will lead to non-appointment.