



Every smile
tells a story

Chair of Trustees Recruitment Pack

 020 7833 4883  info@clapa.com    [@clapacommunity](https://www.instagram.com/clapacommunity)  www.clapa.com

Registered Charity in England and Wales (1108160) and Scotland (SC041034)

CLAPA is **committed to safeguarding** and ensuring the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. **The suitability of all prospective employees or volunteers will be assessed during the recruitment process in line with this commitment.**

CLAPA is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, and **we welcome applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life.** If you share our values and are passionate about supporting the UK cleft community, we want to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to make your application experience more accessible and inclusive.

Introduction from the Chief Executive

Hello, I'm Claire. I'm the Chief Executive of the Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA), and I want to tell you about this unique opportunity to join an incredible charity that has supported, connected and empowered people affected by cleft in the UK for 45 years. I'd like to thank you for your interest in joining our Board of Trustees.

We are currently looking for a new Chair of Trustees who can use their skills to lead a growing charity. We need someone who thrives as part of a dynamic group of Trustees, who is willing to champion the charity and who values seeing the impact that our work can make. If you think you have the experience, knowledge and passion to help support us to continue to meet the needs of the community we serve, we would love to hear from you.

Please read on to find the Role Description and Person Specification along with more information about our organisation and details of how to apply. We look forward to receiving your application.

Claire Cunniffe
Chief Executive

A word from our outgoing Chair of Trustees

Being a Trustee, sometimes, is not easy however, it has been the most rewarding experience of my professional career. As a person born with a cleft, I have experienced every emotion in my ten years of being on the board. From the incredibly challenging times due to the impact of covid to witnessing the remarkable work of our teams first-hand, meeting our community and the feeling of elation when new funding lands.

We need you to be empathetic, time-generous (8 meetings a year), and willing to share your expertise and knowledge. We need you to be collaborative, to be passionate and to care.

Being a Trustee is a responsibility; both legally and emotionally. Your contributions to our Trustee board impacts the governance of the charity, the work of our amazing team and the impact of our critically important organisation to our wonderful growing community across the UK. The importance of an organisation like CLAPA has never been greater in terms of the support, recognition and awareness of cleft. We have come a very long way, but we still have a very long way to go.

Make the greatest decision of your life and become our new Chair of Trustees. You'll genuinely feel a better person for it, both professionally and personally.

Oliver Hopkins
Chair of Trustees

Chair of Trustees

Role Description

Role Description

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, developing the CLAPA's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

You would be joining our board at an exciting time, as we create and implement our new 5 year strategy for 2025-2030.

The Chair has the overall purpose of leading the Board, ensuring systems are in place to provide trustees with the support they need to carry out their role effectively and enabling trustees to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity. This will be done in accordance with the relevant legal and regulatory guidelines/requirements.

Key Tasks

The Chair of Trustees will be expected to:

- Work collaboratively with the CEO, staff and volunteers to achieve our strategy and optimise the relationship between the Board and CLAPA's staff and volunteers.
- Provide leadership within the Board ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation and promoting good governance among fellow Trustees.
- Contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- 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.
- Lead 8 meetings annually.
- Support and supervise the Chief Executive and act as a channel of communication between the board and the Chief Executive.
- Act as a figurehead for the charity e.g. representing the organisation at events, meetings or in the press.
- Lead on the development of the board, making sure that its decisions are carried out.
- Liaise with the CEO and the Board to keep an overview of the charity's affairs.
- Protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Take urgent action (but not decision-making unless authorized) between board meetings when it isn't possible or practical to hold a meeting.
- Sit on appointment and disciplinary panels as required and liaise with the CEO to develop the board of trustees.
- Safeguard the good name and values of the charity.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration.

- Ensure the financial stability of the charity.
- A willingness to devote necessary time and effort to your duties as Chair and be available and responsive to trustees and others for contact between meetings.

The duties of a Trustee are to:

- Ensure that CLAPA complies with its constitution/memorandum and articles of association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that CLAPA pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure CLAPA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects, i.e. it must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those organisations are
- Contribute actively to the board in giving firm strategic direction to CLAPA, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
- Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions and adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct. Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect.
- Safeguard the good name and values of CLAPA
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of CLAPA
- Protect and manage the property of CLAPA and ensure the proper investment of CLAPA's funds
- Contribute to the broader promotion of CLAPA's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.
- Appoint the Chief Executive and monitor their performance
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Personal empathy for our vision and mission.

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience of Chairing a Charity Board of Trustees (or similar equivalent) and an understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a Trustee/director.
- Strong communication skills and excellent leadership skills along with a willingness to challenge the status quo.
- Strong leadership skills able to foster and promote a collaborative team environment and an inclusive and collaborative leadership style.
- Bring impartiality and objectivity to decision-making.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team as well as independently.
- Integrity, good independent judgment and analytical/ evaluation skills.
- A commitment to CLAPA and willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the charity, and to act as the charity's ambassador to external bodies, charities and companies.
- Competent use of IT skills
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Previous experience of influencing & developing people and organisational strategy.
- Ability to handle and resolve sensitive issues that could potentially jeopardise the reputation of the charity

Desirable

- A willingness to speak their mind
- Strategic vision
- Knowledge and understanding of cleft lip and palate and its impact on people born with a cleft and their families

Terms of Office

1. Trustees will normally hold office for two three year terms.
2. Usually a maximum of two terms can be served.
3. This is a voluntary position.

About Cleft Lip and Palate

Early in pregnancy, different parts of the face form and come together just above the top lip. If this doesn't happen quite as it should, the result is a gap or 'cleft' in the upper lip, the palate (roof of the mouth), or both. It's usually caused by a mix of genetic and environmental factors interacting in a way that can't be predicted or prevented. A cleft can affect feeding, hearing, speech, teeth placement and more. The treatment pathway can last 20+ years, including several surgeries.

Around one in 700 people are born with a cleft – that's 1,200 each year in the UK alone.

About CLAPA

The Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) is a small charity supporting people born with a cleft and their families in the UK. We bring together people affected by cleft to help them connect with others who share their experiences, welcoming them into a supportive community for life.

CLAPA's Services

- Vibrant **social media channels** which promote positivity, bust myths and celebrate differences.
- **Online support groups** moderated by trained volunteers provide an instant connection for those looking for an informal support network.
- **Regular online events** give people the chance to talk about their experiences and worries and hear from others at all stages of the cleft journey.
- Confidential **one-to-one support** provided by trained volunteer patients and parents who reassure those most in need that they can cope with whatever lies ahead.
- Accredited **information** on cleft led by our community, reflecting their experiences and emotional needs as well as medical facts.
- An **Advocacy Service** that provides information and signposting to those with complex enquiries.
- A **Children and Young People's Council** made up of 9-17-year-olds who meet to share their thoughts and experiences, helping to improve our support services as well as cleft research and NHS care.
- A consultancy service for **researchers** which connects their work with our community.
- A **feeding service** that supplies 15,000 subsidised items of specialist equipment for babies born with a cleft each year, including free of charge items for new and vulnerable families



When my Sonographer told me about my baby's cleft I was devastated. Soon after, I found CLAPA who introduced me to a whole new community of smiles and support. The experience has been amazing."

– Parent of young child

CLAPA's Values

- **Inclusive.** Everyone affected by cleft in the UK, regardless of background, identity or socioeconomic status, should be able to find a warm and welcoming community with CLAPA. We value all voices and want everyone to see themselves reflected in our work.
- **Trusted.** We passionately believe in doing what is best for the UK cleft community. Their needs and voices are at the front and centre of everything we do. We take responsibility for our mistakes and use them as chances to learn.
- **Adaptable.** We seek authentic feedback to help us raise the bar in everything we do. We don't stay stuck in our ways. We follow the evidence, try new things, and change with the times.

- **Collaborative.** We work best when we work together, whether this is as a staff team, as a community, or in partnership with others.

CLAPA's Strategy

Like many organisations, 2020-21 saw CLAPA revolutionise its service delivery to better serve communities wishing to access support online. Our 2022-25 strategy has us building on this work to provide a suite of high-quality, community-led, online services which will be able to keep pace with whatever challenges the future may bring.

We are now in the process of developing our 2025-2030 Strategy and Theory of Change. Having survived a very challenging financial period of real uncertainty, we are now in a stable financial position and fortunate to be able to look at growth and sustainability of the organisation.

This Post

The Board is looking for a new Chair of Trustees who is aligned to the ethos of the charity and would enjoy the opportunity to contribute their expertise to provide robust and dynamic governance to ensure we achieve our ambitions and remain financially solvent.

In the role of Chair of Trustees, you will help inspire, set and maintain the charity's vision, mission and values, as well as developing the strategy, and ensuring compliance and accountability for finances, legal and governmental obligations. Previous experience in a trustee role is required, however a full induction will be provided.

Taking on the role of Chair of Trustees is a significant undertaking. An appropriate time commitment will be required for the preparatory work required in between meeting as well as attendance at the meetings as details below.

The role of a Trustee

CLAPA is structured around a small Senior Management Team and CEO who report to the Board of Trustees, but with a constructive, collaborative culture where all voices and contributions are valued. CLAPA encourages cross-team working to give staff a chance to test their skills and learn about every area of how a modern charity operates.

The role of a Trustee is to provide overall strategic direction. Involvement in the detail of service delivery is not required. Trustees are responsible for the financial and legal operation of the organisation but your financial liability is limited to £1 because CLAPA is a company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity. Trustees are unpaid, but travel expenses can be reimbursed.

The Board currently meets 8 times per year with all meetings being held via Zoom on a weekday evening, the exception being the Trustees Awayday which is a daytime meeting every autumn held at the CLAPA office in London.

There is more information on the role of a Trustee on the Charity Commission website www.charity-commission.gov.uk.

CLAPA is committed to supporting new Trustees and will provide a thorough induction once appointed, and access to ongoing training as required.

How to Apply

Please complete the online Application Form:

https://CLAPA.formstack.com/forms/clapa_trustee_application_form

You may request an application form in another format by emailing info@clapa.com with 'Chair of Trustees Recruitment Pack Request' in the subject.

All applications are subject to our shortlisting process. If you're shortlisted, we will contact you and invite you to attend an interview. We'll also tell you if there will be any skills tasks to complete as part of the recruitment process. If you are shortlisted, we will ask you to complete a criminal records disclosure. Check [NACRO guidance](#) for more information on what should be disclosed and your rights.

If you have not heard from us by 4th July, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

Applications close: Tuesday 2nd July

Interviews: Friday 5th July

Start date: As soon as possible – to be agreed

Criminal Record Background Checks

If you are invited for an interview, you will be sent a **Criminal Record Declaration form**. You will need to complete this form prior to the interview, but it will be stored securely and will only be looked at if your application is successful.

If you have declared that you have a criminal record on this form, we will complete a risk assessment process in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

Contact

Contact Claire Cunniffe, Chief Executive at claire.cunniffe@clapa.com, or call the CLAPA office on 020 7833 4883 if you have any questions about the role or the application process.

Due to most of our staff being part-time and flexible working, there is usually limited cover, but if you leave a message on the answerphone, we will call you back as soon as possible. Please leave your full name and phone number when leaving a message.

