together women

A world where all women and girls are safe, valued and in control of their own lives.

Trustee Recruitment Pack

Thank you for your interest in joining the Together Women Board of Trustees, we regularly recruit new Trustees and are delighted you are interested in joining us.

At Together Women, our Board of Trustees plays a vital role in providing governance oversight and strategic direction to ensure the effective delivery of our mission. Trustees are responsible for setting and monitoring Together Women's vision, purpose, values and strategic objectives, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and safeguarding our financial resources.

Our Vision

A world where all women and girls are safe, valued, and in control of their own lives.

Our Purpose

Preventing women and girls from entering or re-entering the criminal justice system.

Our Values

Empathy and Compassion

- We prioritise empathy and compassion in all our interactions
- We strive to understand and support each other, recognising that everyone has unique challenges and experiences

Inclusivity and Diversity

- We celebrate diversity and acknowledge the richness it brings to our work
- We actively create an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels valued

Respect and Dignity

- We treat each other with respect and dignity
- We acknowledge the inherent worth and importance of every individual

Integrity and Transparency

- We act with integrity and transparency
- We uphold the highest ethical standards in all our interactions

About us

Together Women provide specialist trauma-responsive services from our safe and friendly Women's Centres across the North of England. We support and empower women and girls, with particular focus on women who are involved in, or at risk of entering the criminal justice system. We work with women on a one-to-one basis and through group work, to help build aspirations and confidence, strengthen relationships and community connection, and together change current systems of social and criminal justice.

Our delivery model is flexible and dynamic, underpinned by the principles of trauma-informed care, and based in the knowledge that women are affected by gender-specific systemic challenges and barriers, which put them at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

We are a sector leader in gender-specific, trauma-informed services for women involved in the Criminal Justice System. We advocate for the reduction of women in custody, and the alternative model of trauma-informed, holistic support delivered in the community via our network of Women's Centres and services; working alongside women to understand risks, build on strengths and seek to address root causes.

We support women and girls in custody and community on a range of issues through:

- 1 to 1 casework, group work, drop ins, outreach, mentoring, advocacy, counselling, referrals and signposting.
- Our approaches are trauma informed, gender specific, person-centered alternatives to custody.

We also engage with wider society to evoke systemic change by:

- Raising awareness of injustices by centering women's stories and amplifying their voices.
- Promoting alternatives to custody and the impact of Women's Centres.
- Collaborate and share resources with strategic partners.

The change we want to create

The long term impact we want to deliver is that women and girls have the skills and confidence to feel in control of their own life choices. By placing women and girls at the heart of Together Women services, we ensure that women and girls are:

- Safer to live their lives at less risk of harm
- Supported to share their story in a safe space, where their voices are heard, their needs are identified, and their choices are supported
- Strengthened to be emotionally stronger, bold, resilient, and equipped to advocate for themselves
- Secure by having their needs met by community based women's centres and understood by society

What are we looking for in our Trustees?

- Proactive, passionate individuals who are committed to supporting women.
- Collaborative and creative individuals, who are keen to challenge, scrutinise and be our critical friend.
- Individuals who share the values of Together Women's.
- Minimum commitment to attend quarterly meetings, ideally in-person in Leeds city centre.
- Lived experience of the criminal justice system (this is not essential, but we are looking to increase representation on our Board).

What does a Trustee do?

Together Women's Board of Trustees has oversight of governance and risk and is a vital element in the smooth running of the organisation. As a Trustee, you will play a role in leading and steering our charity. You'll contribute to the strategic governance of the organisation and use your knowledge, skills and experience to ensure Together Women achieves its charitable objectives.

The Board meets once per quarter, from 4.30 – 7pm on a weekday evening (usually a Tuesday), with Board papers circulated 1 week in advance. Trustees are also invited to an annual away day to support our strategic planning. Our meetings are lively, task-focused, and informative, with opportunities for every Trustee to contribute, question and offer challenge throughout.

Meet the Board

Our Board of Trustees has been Chaired by Claire Vilarrubi since 2022. Claire took over from Elizabeth Bavidge who was our Chair of Trustees from 2009. Claire is a Criminal Justice Consultant, having previously been an Associate Professor and Unlocked Masters Programme Delivery Lead at Leeds Trinity University. She brings a wealth of experience from senior operational and strategic roles within His Majesty's Prison Service (HMPPS) including Governor at HMP Leeds and Head of Women's and Young People's Group within HMPPS HQ. Claire has been a trustee for Together Women since 2012 and we are very grateful for her time, energy, and ongoing commitment.



I feel honoured and privileged to be the Chair of Together Women. It is a fantastic organisation whose passion and commitment to support women in a holistic way resonates entirely with my own personal values.

Claire is joined on the Board by a dynamic, talented group of women with different areas of expertise, for whose commitment Together Women is extremely grateful.



Dr Alexandria Bradley (Vice Chair)
Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Trauma Informed Specialist

Prior to academia, I worked in Addiction Recovery teams both inside prisons and within the community. Since then, I have specialised in working with trauma and the trauma healing that can take place within the Criminal Justice System and in women's centres. I have always been passionate about the empowerment of women and the creation of safe and energising spaces where women can thrive. My continued hope in supporting Together Women, is that more women find nurturing support within the compassionate work of our amazing staff and the excellent variety of programmes and provisions at Together Women.

Meet the Board



Alison Lowe
West Yorkshire Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I have 30 years' experience of working in the Criminal Justice System, but as a practitioner, and as a leader and politician. I was Chief Executive of Touchstone, a mental health charity, for 17 years and also served as a local councillor for Armley ward for 30 years. I am a founder member of TW.

Making a positive difference to women and girls, wherever they are on life's journey, is my passion and I am proud to be able to support Together Women as a trustee, for this reason.



Dr. Chloe Joanna Wilson
Lecturer in Law and Criminal Justice

One small act can change the future. As trustees, I hope our actions can make a real difference to the women and girls at Together Women.

I have a real passion for learning and sharing my own knowledge and experiences. My professional background is varied, having worked in Education, the Legal Sector, the Home Office and the Police Service (as a Special Constable). These roles have helped me to explore and understand many areas of the justice system, from theory to practice. As an academic, my current teaching and research focuses on violent crimes and exploitation, including the diverse experiences of individuals within the criminal justice system. As well as my passion for justice, I have a deep love for sport – particularly as a tool for supporting and diverting at risk women and girls. I have followed Together Women for years and truly admire the work they do for those who need it most. Their community values and drive for change are exemplary, and to play a small part in the great work they do is an absolute privilege.

Meet the Board

Chris Baines
Retired HR Consultant

For me, being a Trustee at Together Women is about supporting those who work directly with vulnerable and disadvantaged women and hoping that my support can make some small difference.

After working in finance and administration and studying for degrees in psychology, specialising in organisational psychology and the study of sex differences I managed wide-ranging human resources functions in various organisations, including a women's charity, was a member of the regional board of the Chartered Management Institute, where I organised events for Women in Management, and joined Touchstone, a Leeds-based mental health charity, where I learnt a lot about the role of trustees.

The dissertation for my first degree was on the subject of "The Effects of Perceived Sex Roles on the Treatment of Offenders", which opened my eyes to the ways in which women become involved and are treated in the criminal justice system. I retained an interest in the subject and when the opportunity to join Together Women as a trustee arose, I was delighted to be offered the role in an organisation which does so much to support women who are already caught up, or are in danger of becoming caught up, in the justice system.



Dr Natalie Rutter
Senior Lecturer in Criminology

To enable women to build a future they want, we need to empower them. Together Women does this, and it's a privilege to be involved in a small way.

I have worked, or volunteered, across the criminal justice system for over 15 years, alongside working within academia for over 7 years. During this time I have developed my commitment to striving for a better understanding of women and girls whom are involved in the criminal justice system, what is needed, and what isn't, in support of them taking back greater control of their own lives. As a researcher I endeavour to engage in trauma informed, and reflexive, practices that provide women with a voice or creative means in which to communicate their experiences. All of which align with the operations of Together Women, an organisation I have followed and admired for years.

Meet the Board

With more than 20 years in the charity sector, Jennifer has dedicated her career to working with organisations that have social justice at their heart.

She started out as a graduate trainee at the NSPCC, spending nine years with the Society in fundraising focussed roles. She then spent seven years helping to establish the Institute of Imagination. Prior to joining Phoenix Dance Theatre in 2021, Jennifer was Interim Chief Executive of the Voices Foundation.

Jennifer joined the Board of Together Women as she wanted to use her professional experience to support a feminist organisation delivering impact for women in her region she grew up in.



Jennifer Coleman-Peers
CEO Phoenix Dance Theatre



Rachel Davis
Youth Justice Service
Team Manager

I have worked in the Criminal Justice System for over twenty years in various roles. I am a trained Probation Officer and have worked in Youth Justice as a manager for over seven years following a three year secondment as a Probation Officer. My lead areas of interest within the service include child exploitation, trauma informed practice and public safety. I am also the link manager for our seconded nurses and co-ordinate the physical and mental health nursing provision. As a woman, mother of girls and having experienced the challenges women and girls face in the criminal justice system, supporting Together Women is a natural choice.

"It is a privilege to sit on the Board of Trustees and to utilise my sector expertise to support Together Women to continue to make a difference for women and girls in the Criminal Justice System."

Meet the Board



Rebecca Chaloner

Rebecca currently leads the Independent Inquiry into David Fuller. She has previous experience of working on independent inquiries. Rebecca was Director of Governance for the independent investigation into Jimmy Savile at Leeds hospitals, Director of Health at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and Secretary to the Independent Inquiry into the issues raised by Ian Paterson. Rebecca has previously been a Trustee of two charities.

Remembering Elizabeth Bavidge

We would like to recognise the huge contribution of our previous Chair of Trustees Elizabeth Bavidge, who led the Board from 2009 to 2022, made to Together Women, and to convey our deep sadness that Elizabeth passed away in 2023. We will forever be grateful for the guidance, leadership and expertise Elizabeth provided and the pivotal role she played in shaping our organisation and the tens of thousands of women we've supported and empowered as a result. Elizabeth leaves a legacy within Together Women that will never be forgotten.

Could you be our next Board member?

If you are interested in our work and think you could add value to Together Women by becoming a Trustee, we would love to hear from you. We are passionate about ensuring a strong mix on our Board of Trustees of people from varying backgrounds, lived experiences, and skills. We believe a diverse group of people can collectively make better decisions and better deliver for the women and girls we work with.

We're also aware of the underrepresentation of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in the charity sector and are keen to lead this change. Support and training will be made available to successful applicants who would like to develop their skills before attending their first meeting and beyond. We also pay reasonable expenses including travel to Board members.

If you would like more information, or an informal discussion, please contact our CEO Rokaiya Khan on rokaiyak@togetherwomen.org.

To apply for a Trustee role, please send a paragraph about why you would like to be a Together Women Trustee and a CV to rokaiyak@togetherwomen.org.