**London Citizens Advice, Chair of the Board Recruitment Information**

Dear prospective Chair of the Board

Thank you for your interest in London Citizens Advice. This recruitment pack sets out more information about the organisation, our plans, the role of the Chair, how to apply, and timetable.

For the past two years London Citizens Advice has worked as an immensely successful informal coalition. On 27 February 2024 the Boards of the 28 London Citizens Advice charities approved the decision to transfer to a legal entity including registration with regulatory bodies and the draft Articles of the new charity. We are excited about the future and are looking for an experienced and committed individual to join us as our first Chair of trustees.

**The new charity will have up to twelve trustees.** Five will be member trustees (one local citizens advice trustee for a London region), four independent trustees including the Chair and up to three co-opted trustees. We are currently recruiting three independent trustees and the Chair of the Board.

**What is London Citizens Advice**

London Citizens Advice is a membership consortium of 28 Citizens Advice charities delivering advice services across London. Each of our members is a member of the national Citizens Advice network of around 250 charities. When we become legally constituted, we will be a consortium member of the Citizens Advice network.

London Citizens Advice exists to support and develop the work of local Citizens Advice, through adopting the following aims:

* Share, promote and assure best practice to build consistency and quality of the Citizens Advice Service
* Manage specified contracts on behalf of external partners in conjunction with agreed participating members.
* Identify and develop partnerships to pursue new sources of funding in London.
* Highlight the impact of, and influence responses to, social welfare issues by lobbying at a London and regional level

These reflect, and build on, existing aims that exist though the informal London coalition.

* To ensure the London Citizens Advice voice is heard and has a seat at the table for London policy and service discussions
* To influence commissioners and key funders in terms of London-wide developments, including research and campaigns
* To respond to and apply for London advice funding opportunities
* To facilitate potential London business development and joint working

Over the past two years London Citizens Advice has raised awareness and understanding of the importance of advice for Londoners, responded to London consultations and policy development and successfully applied for project and services funding which, in turn, has further supported our members in delivering advice services to Londoners and developing advice capacity and training for voluntary sector.

**Our team**

We have two full time staff members – James Sandbach (London Development Manager) and Michelle Rose (Project Manager, Cost of Living Crisis Prevention service). Suzanne Hudson, who until recently was CEO at Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth and a member of London Citizens Advice Steering Group, is working with us as a consultant lead on the transition work to full legal status including Board recruitment.

As an informal coalition, the operational work of London Citizens Advice is monitored and directed by the London Steering Group (SG) with members of up to 10 London Citizens Advice CEOs. The London SG reports to the London CEOs Forum.

Looking forward, when the new charity Board is in place the London SG will step down and London Citizens Advice Board will be legally responsible and lead the strategic direction of the new charity. The London Citizens Advice CEOs Forum will continue to meet, and once the new charity is incorporated it will review the frequency and process for bring members together.

**London Citizens Advice Board**

The London Citizens Advice Board (the Board) will have legal responsibility for the governance of London Citizens Advice.

The Board will comprise of up to twelve trustees. The Board will ensure that the organisation delivers its stated objectives including:

* Ensuring organisational purposes remain relevant and valid
* Developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
* Approving the Strategic Plan, Business Plan and Budget
* Monitoring progress and spending against plan and Budget
* Evaluating results, assessing outcomes and impact
* Reviewing and/or amending operational plans and the Budget as appropriate
* Member trustees will engage and report with their regional members
* The Board (Chair) will report to members via the London Chief Officers Forum

Each trustee has a responsibility to contribute to discharging the Board’s responsibilities. We do this by:

* Contributing to setting policy and strategic direction, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
* Monitoring charitable activities, ensuring compliance with our governing documents and policies and monitoring maintenance of Citizens Advice standards
* Monitoring the charity’s financial position and ensuring it operates within its means and delivers on its objectives with clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management
* Supporting the charity’s development through participation in agreed projects
* Supporting the charity’s campaigns and research work
* Acting in the charity’s best interest at all times
* Regularly preparing for, attending and participating in meetings
* Understanding the business of London Citizens Advice
* Being good ambassadors for the Citizens Advice service
* Member trustees also have responsibility of engaging and communicating with other members in their London region.

**Overview of the role**  
The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and direction to London Citizens Advice board of trustees, enabling the board to fulfil its responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

Responsibilities

* Provide leadership to the charity and Board, ensuring maximum impact of London Citizens Advice for all those involved with the organisation
* Help steer London Citizens Advice through a period of development and change, managing risk and ensuring its financial viability
* Lead trustees in the development of a strategic plan for the charity, ensuring that it is implemented in accordance with decisions of the Board
* Support the implementation of the charity’s management structure
* Provide support, guidance and challenge as required to the small operational team
* Model and champion a values driven and learning culture amongst the board of trustees
* Lead on a regular review of board structure, role and effectiveness including chair and trustee appraisal
* Ensure board meetings are focused, meaningful and reflect the responsibility of the trustees
* Ensure that the board reaches clear, consensus driven decisions while ensuring that individual voices are inclusively facilitated to contribute
* Ensure that the board’s overall risk appetite is understood and applied in strategic decision making
* Participate in and/or lead sub-committees of the board as required in the scheme of delegation or on an ad hoc basis
* Lead recruitment of future trustees as necessary, maintaining London Citizens Advice commitment to an equitable, diverse and inclusive board and ensuring the board of trustees has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to operate effectively
* Act as an ambassador for the charity, representing it at external functions, meetings and events as appropriate and as spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate

Skills and experience

* Governance experience including having been a chair, committee chair or equivalent
* Understand the responsibility of the board of trustees for the proper governance of the charity and the legal obligations of a board of trustees
* Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to effectively influence others and hold them to account
* A commitment to and understanding of the best practice in charity governance
* Actively support and champion the principles of antiracism, equity, diversity and inclusion
* Show readiness to take decisions by weighing evidence, reasonable assumptions and factual information, always within the framework of our values
* Demonstrate personal and professional integrity
* Confident in public speaking and stakeholder relationship building when required
* A personal commitment to your own continued development, and a supportive approach to the development of others

As our Chair you will support the charity’s values and objectives and will act as a positive and genuine advocate promoting the work of the charity within your personal networks and to the wider world.

**Diversity**

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is integral to all we do as a service, not only for our clients, but also for our staff and volunteers, and for our governance. Citizens Advice has a key role to play, as a change agent, to help advance EDI in society.

London is the most ethnically and socially diverse region in the UK, but there is abundant evidence that ethnic inequalities are persistent and widespread from employment and housing, to health, life chances and living standards. The leadership of London Citizens Advice should both reflect and understand the experience of the Capital city and the communities we serve. A Board that is well balanced in terms of EDI is likely to make better decisions for the charity and its beneficiaries. We would particularly welcome expressions of interest from Trustees who have lived experience of the challenges that our service aims to redress.

**The commitment we need**

Each trustee attends Board meetings. These will be usually scheduled quarterly, but whilst we are in transition it is envisaged Board meetings will be more regular. As the charity develops and grows, we anticipate the Board will introduce delegated sub-committees and/or ad hoc working groups.

While commitment will differ month-to-month, for the Chair of trustees it will likely average **ten to fifteen hours a month**. The role of a trustee is unpaid, but reasonable out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

Board and other meetings will usually take place on weekday evenings and will be hybrid although we recognise trustees will find it helpful to attend certain meetings in person when possible. Trustees will also be invited to attend key events.

**How to apply**We ask all applicants to send a current CV, a covering letter and completed EDI form. Your covering letter should outline how your skills and experience meet our requirements, and why you would like to take on this role. Please email the documents to Suzanne Hudson at [shudson.londonca@gmail.com](mailto:shudson.londonca@gmail.com) by 6pm, Wednesday 29 May 2024. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview in June.

If you would like to confidentially discuss the role in more detail, please email Suzanne and we will arrange a convenient time to discuss with Suzanne and Raj Kapoor, current Chair of London Citizens Advice Steering Group.

Reasonable adjustments  
Let us know if you require any adjustments to our application process or would like to provide any additional information want us to take into account when considering your application.

If we invite you to an interview, we’ll also ask you if you have any access needs or reasonable adjustments to the interview and any associated task or assessment.

We welcome requests for adjustments to our recruitment process because we want it to be accessible and equitable.