

Chair Avenues Group



We are delighted to invite you to consider becoming the next Chair of Trustees at Avenues—a pivotal leadership role that will influence the future of social care for hundreds of individuals across the South East, East and Midlands. This is an opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities, autism, and complex needs.

Avenues is a leading charity dedicated to providing complex social care that empowers people to live fulfilling lives within their communities. With a team of approximately 2,000 dedicated staff, we support hundreds of individuals across London, the South East, South, East Anglia, and the West Midlands. All financial surplus generated is reinvested into our services, ensuring sustainability and continuous improvement.

Our work is guided by values that shape everything we do:

- Respect – Treating people as we would wish to be treated ourselves.
- Excellence – Striving to go beyond “okay” and achieve more.
- Integrity – Doing the right thing, even when it requires extra effort.
- Pride – Taking joy in our work and the difference it makes.

These values are the cornerstone of our culture and the foundation for compassionate, dignified, and empowering care.

Avenues has grown significantly over the past five years, merging with other reputable providers to extend our reach and impact. Our new strategy, launching in spring 2026, focuses on:

- Financial resilience in a challenging social care landscape
- Streamlining our structures, brand and operating models
- Embracing digital opportunities in everything we do
- Growing and diversifying our income streams

Your leadership will help us navigate an evolving social care landscape with confidence and creativity.

As Chair of Trustees, you will guide and empower the Board, making sure we are steering things in the right direction and keeping our governance strong. Working closely with our talented Executive team, you will foster strong and collaborative relationships. You will be a driving force for diversity, inclusion, and fresh ideas, making sure our values are front and centre in all we do.

We are open minded about your professional background but if you share our vision and values, we would love to explore how your experience can help shape Avenues' next chapter.

Best Wishes – Board of Trustees



Thank you for your interest in applying for the position of Chair of Trustees.

We are Avenues Quality Checkers, a team of people who are employed by Avenues to help audit or look at how services are being run. We have all been recruited from people supported by Avenues.

We recently met with the Board of trustees who wanted to find out more about what we do. We told them about our job. Mostly we visit services and see how the houses are and talk to the people who live there about how everything is.



We believe our work is very important for Avenues. Because we are or have been supported by Avenues we know how it feels to need and have support and what is important where you live. Because we are also supported we often notice things that other people may not.

Just recently we noticed someone had a walking aid but to get outside he had to go down a garden step. We knew this wasn't right so we reported this back. Now there is a ramp to the garden so it's easier to access. Another Quality Checker saw that a service had potholes in their driveway and were told that the Wi-Fi service was poor. Our reports go straight to those who can get these things fixed quickly.

Our Quality Checker Raz says "I visited a house and saw some things were broken so I asked for them to be replaced. I love being a Quality Checker because I can let people know what needs done".

We really enjoy our work and enjoy that it makes a difference. The Quality Checkers in the East feel it gives them a voice and makes them feel more empowered in leading their care and support. Jamie, another Quality Checker in the South says "It makes me really proud to be a Quality Checker and represents something. When I was in school or college I never got those opportunities and now I have".

We hope the new Chair of the Trustee Board shares this pride and our passion and commitment to the organisation. We look at trustees a bit like the Quality Checkers of Avenues and what it does. We hope they ask questions and listen to the answers when things are not right at Avenues.

"I think you want trustees to keep you updated about what is going on and involve you" says Richard, who lives in Avenues East.

Jamie and Ian agreed that "you want trustees to be honest, open and talkative" says Jamie.

It's really important that everyone communicates at Avenues, trustees, the Management, people supported and families. We hope working together we can make Avenues the best organisation it can be for the people supported, their families and the people who work here.

Best wishes

Avenues Quality Checkers Team

This letter was produced in conjunction with members of the Avenues Quality Checker team and their support staff.

Avenues is a community where people smile, laugh and grow – and achieve great things.

We love to go the extra mile for people, building confidence and encouraging individuality and independence so people enjoy full, happy lives.

We are a charity that specialises in supporting autistic people, people with learning disability, acquired brain injury and complex support needs.

We do this by supporting and promoting people's intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual welfare, with around 2,000 staff supporting around 650 people with social care across our subsidiaries in the South East, West Midlands, London and the East of England.

People need to live in the place they call home, with the people and things that matter to them and doing the things they love.

We have a core belief in community-based support. This is driven by our vision, that everyone should have the opportunity to be an active citizen and engaged in the community where they live.

Building better lives together

We believe in working together to create the best lives for the people we support. We listen to people's families to aid understanding and create trusted support that really connects people to their community, building their independence and wellbeing.

We are also actively working together with the people we support to develop and better our services and support. As well as regular tenants' meetings and coproduction groups we now employ Quality Checkers, directly recruited from the people we support to help audit our services.

The group operates on a not-for-profit basis, with financial surpluses reinvested into the services we provide. You can read more about our organisation (charity number 1130473) on the Charity Commission's website.

Our depth of expertise enables us to offer young people, adults and older people the right level of support at the right times so they can develop or retain maximum independence throughout life, and we have additional expertise including mental health conditions, dementia and end of life care.

While our support changes as people's lives change, it's always fundamentally based in the principles of Active Support and Positive Behaviour Support.

In November 2023, we welcomed Autism Hampshire to Avenues Group, bringing additional autism expertise and a new range of services.

It's our shared expectation that all our services maintain a Good or Outstanding overall rating from the CQC (Care Quality Commission), the regulator for social care in the UK.

Find out more about our impact by [watching our videos](#) or downloading [Stories of Better Lives \(PDF\)](#).



Purpose of the Role

The Chair will provide strategic leadership, uphold the highest standards of governance, and guide the Board and Executive Team to achieve Avenues' ambitions for sustainable growth, financial resilience, and continued excellence. The Chair will ensure effective decision-making, support a collaborative and values-driven culture, and act as an ambassador for Avenues with key stakeholders.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership

- Lead the Board in setting Avenues' strategic direction, ensuring clarity of purpose and alignment with organisational values.
- Provide constructive challenge and support to the Chief Executive and Executive Team.

2. Governance & Oversight

- Ensure high-quality governance, compliance, and accountability, maintaining a high performing Board that meets legal, regulatory, and ethical standards with the support of the Company Secretary.
- Monitor risk, financial health, safeguarding, quality, and performance through strong oversight structures.
- Set the tone for transparent, inclusive, and values-driven governance.

3. Board Leadership

- Chair Board meetings in a collaborative, facilitative, and inclusive manner, while being decisive when required.
- Ensure all members contribute effectively, building a collegiate culture of constructive challenge and psychological safety.
- Lead Board development, succession planning, and evaluation.

4. Stakeholder & External Engagement

- Build and maintain relationships that strengthen Avenues' reputation, influence, and opportunities for collaboration, funding, and partnership.
- Represent Avenues externally, championing our work and the voices of the people we support.

5. Relationship with the CEO

- Provide support, guidance, and constructive challenge to the CEO.
- Maintain a transparent, trust-based relationship that enables strategic focus and organisational learning.

6. Visibility & Commitment

- Demonstrate commitment through attendance at Board meetings, away days, and key organisational events.
- Be visible to staff, services, and the people we support, contributing to organisational culture and credibility.
- Willingness to travel across Avenues' geography is essential.
- Commitment to learning about the work we do by spending time visiting the people we support.



Leadership Qualities

The Chair is expected not only to embody Avenues' values of Respect, Integrity, Pride and Excellence but to demonstrate them consistently through behaviours that shape culture, decision-making and relationships. The qualities below outline what this looks like in practice.

1. Integrity, Humility & Emotional Intelligence

Integrity: Demonstrates honesty, transparency and ethical judgement, consistent with Avenues' behavioural expectations (e.g., declaring conflicts, making value-aligned decisions).

Respect: Uses emotional intelligence to build trust, actively listen and create inclusive, respectful dialogue in the Boardroom.

Pride: Shows pride in the organisation by modelling behaviours that uplift the Board's culture and celebrating achievements that reflect strong values.

Excellence: Approaches the role with humility and commitment to continuous learning, growth and high standards of conduct.

2. Strategic, Visionary & Innovative Thinker

Excellence: Seeks continuous improvement, brings curiosity and strategic insight, and drives forward-thinking approaches to governance and performance.

Integrity: Ensures strategic decisions are grounded in the organisation's purpose and ethical principles, even when decisions are difficult or time-pressured.

Pride: Takes ownership of Board responsibilities, demonstrating commitment to positioning Avenues as a leader in social care governance.

Respect: Encourages collaborative strategic discussions, valuing all perspectives in shaping future direction.

3. Calm, Articulate & Values-Driven

Respect: Communicates in a way that fosters psychological safety, constructive challenge and inclusive participation.

Integrity: Makes decisions consistently aligned with values whilst modelling transparent, ethical leadership.

Excellence: Brings clarity, composure and professionalism to Board practice, setting the tone for high-quality governance.

Pride: Demonstrates pride in representing Avenues internally and externally, reinforcing a positive reputation for values-driven leadership.

4. Collaborative but Able to Take Decisive Action

Respect: Facilitates inclusive dialogue, ensuring all voices are heard and valued before decisions are made.

Integrity: Uses judgement responsibly, balancing collaboration with fair and principled decision-making.

Excellence: Makes timely, evidence-based decisions that strengthen governance quality and organisational performance.

Pride: Takes ownership for Board outcomes, celebrating successes and addressing issues with accountability.

5. Inclusive, Empathetic, Respectful & People-Centred

Respect: Models inclusive behaviours, such as active listening, constructive challenge and valuing diverse perspectives.

Integrity: Ensures fair treatment, transparency and ethical consistency, especially in decisions affecting people.

Pride: Shows pride in the people Avenues supports and the workforce, championing positive stories and good practice.

Excellence: Prioritises high-quality engagement by spending time with services, understanding lived experience, and seeking continuous improvement.

Essential Experience & Expertise

- Governance experience, ideally in a large, complex organisation.
- Experience leading organisations through growth, change, transformation or mergers.
- Financial acumen, political awareness and commercial sensibility.
- Confidence to engage effectively with key external stakeholders.
- Experience working with Boards and executives on complex strategic and operational matters.
- Strong understanding of governance, risk, finance and performance oversight.
- An understanding of social care, this could be through lived or professional experience.

Essential Skills & Attributes

- Exceptional communication and active listening skills.
- Ability to facilitate inclusive discussions and maintain Board focus.
- Relationship-building, negotiation, and influencing without dominating.

- Strong ethical judgement and commitment to accountability.
- Natural curiosity.
- Passion for our mission and the people we support.

Commitment & Availability

- Chair term: appointed initially for a four-year term. After the first four years, trustees may stand for re-election. Reappointment is allowed up to a maximum total service of nine years.
- This is a voluntary role; reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.
- 1-2 days/month, which includes four Board meetings a year and regular contact with the Chief Executive.
- Participation in Board away days and key organisational events.
- Willingness to visit services periodically to build trust, visibility, and insight.
- Preparedness to engage with stakeholders as required.
- Schedule of meetings: Jan – Full day in person away day, March – online board meeting (5-7pm), July – Full day in person away day, Oct - online board meeting (5-7pm),



VBS (Values Based Search) is acting as an advisor to the Avenues Group.

An executive search process is being carried out by VBS in addition to the public advert.

The closing date for applications is the 13th of March at 9am.

Completed applications should be sent to avenues@vbsearch.co.uk using the reference VBS1035.

Applications should consist of:

1. A full CV including the names and addresses of two referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.
2. Please complete a covering letter of no more than 2 sides of A4 which answers the following questions:

- What motivates you to join the Avenues Group and why will you be successful?
- What will you bring of yourself, your life experience, and your perspective to the Board?
- As a leader, how will you apply the Avenues values (Respect, Excellence, Integrity and Pride) in everything you do.

3. Please click [here](#) to access and complete our equal opportunities monitoring form.

Should you wish to discuss the role in strict confidence or require the information in a different format, please contact our advising consultant at VBS – Rob Hilyer on 07952 316 654 or rob.hilyer@vbsearch.co.uk.

Timetable

Closing Date	13 th March at 9am
Longlisting	19 th March
Preliminary Interview with VBS (Teams)	w/c 23 rd March
Shortlisting	1 st April
Stakeholder panel and service visits	21 st April
Final Panel Interviews	6 th or 7 th May