Action for Carers
Oxfordshire

Trustee
Recruitment Pack

Action for Carers Oxfordshire

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These unpaid roles are open to all.

We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds. We do not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or other category protected by law.

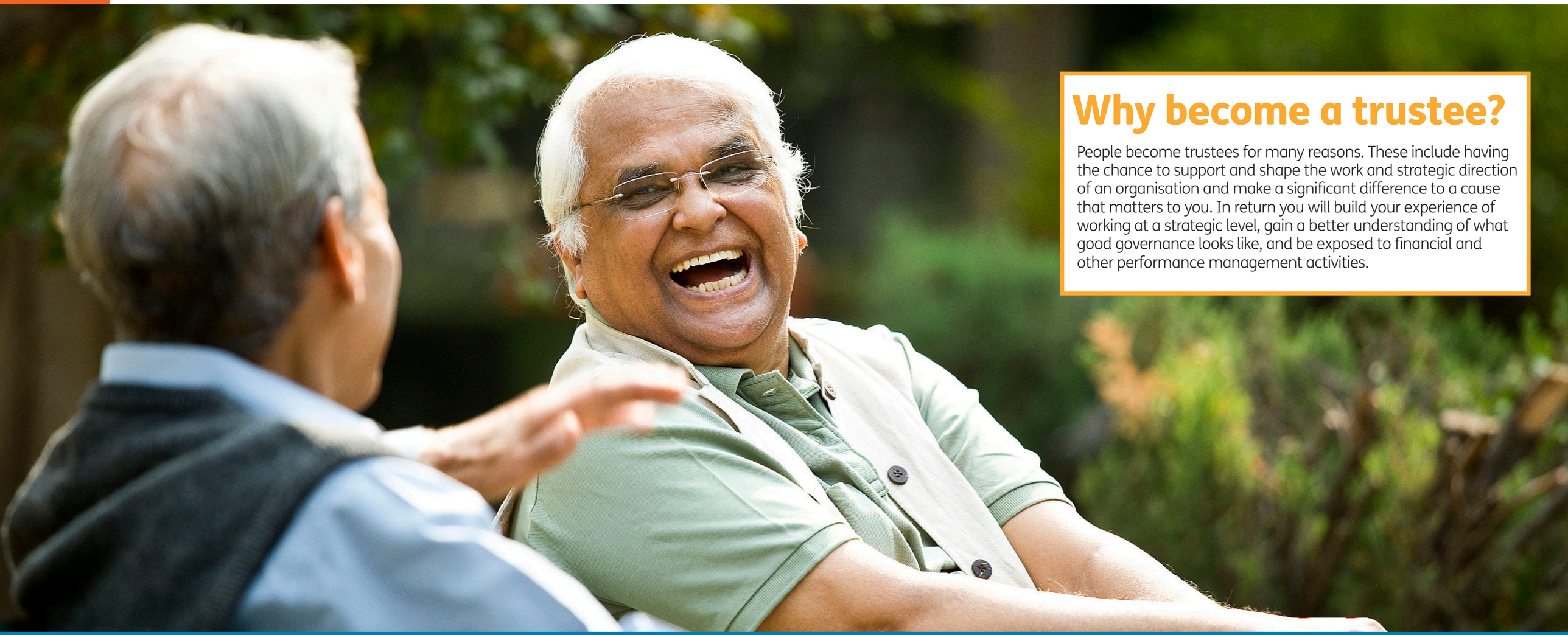
Words from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in the work of Action for Carers Oxfordshire, and for taking time to consider whether you might be a suitable candidate for the role of trustee.

Across Oxfordshire, there are more than 50,000 people who provide unpaid care for an ill, older or disabled family member or friend. Whilst this can be rewarding, it may also impact on the carer's own health and wellbeing, education, employment and finances. We are proud of the positive impact our support services have on the lives of unpaid carers, offering practical and emotional support to improve overall wellbeing.

We are currently seeking three new trustees and are particularly interested in people bringing experience in unpaid caring, health or social care, or people who have experienced adversity or barriers to accessing services. You should be aligned to our vision, passionate about unpaid carers, and bring a diverse range of experience and expertise.

Andrew Lane – Chair of Trustees



Why become a trustee?

People become trustees for many reasons. These include having the chance to support and shape the work and strategic direction of an organisation and make a significant difference to a cause that matters to you. In return you will build your experience of working at a strategic level, gain a better understanding of what good governance looks like, and be exposed to financial and other performance management activities.

About Action for Carers Oxfordshire

Action for Carers Oxfordshire is an independent charity established in 2012, with Age UK Oxfordshire as its sole member. We provide support and information to adult carers aged 18 years and older in Oxfordshire. We are commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, and in partnership with Rethink Mental Illness, we form Carers Oxfordshire.

Action for Carers Oxfordshire + Rethink Mental Illness. = Carers Oxfordshire

How we can help:
An unpaid carer has someone who relies on them to stay safe and well. The person they care for can be any age and doesn't need to live with them. They may need support due to having a disability, mental or physical illness, an addiction, or other support needs. Whilst rewarding, caring can come with a high personal cost. Friendships and relationships can be impacted, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Carers can feel unsupported and undervalued, juggling many different aspects of care alongside other priorities such as childcare and paid employment. Caring often impacts carers' health and wellbeing and can be stressful.

We provide support and information to carers, so they feel less lonely and more able to cope. Our offer is personalised because we understand that no two caring situations are the same.

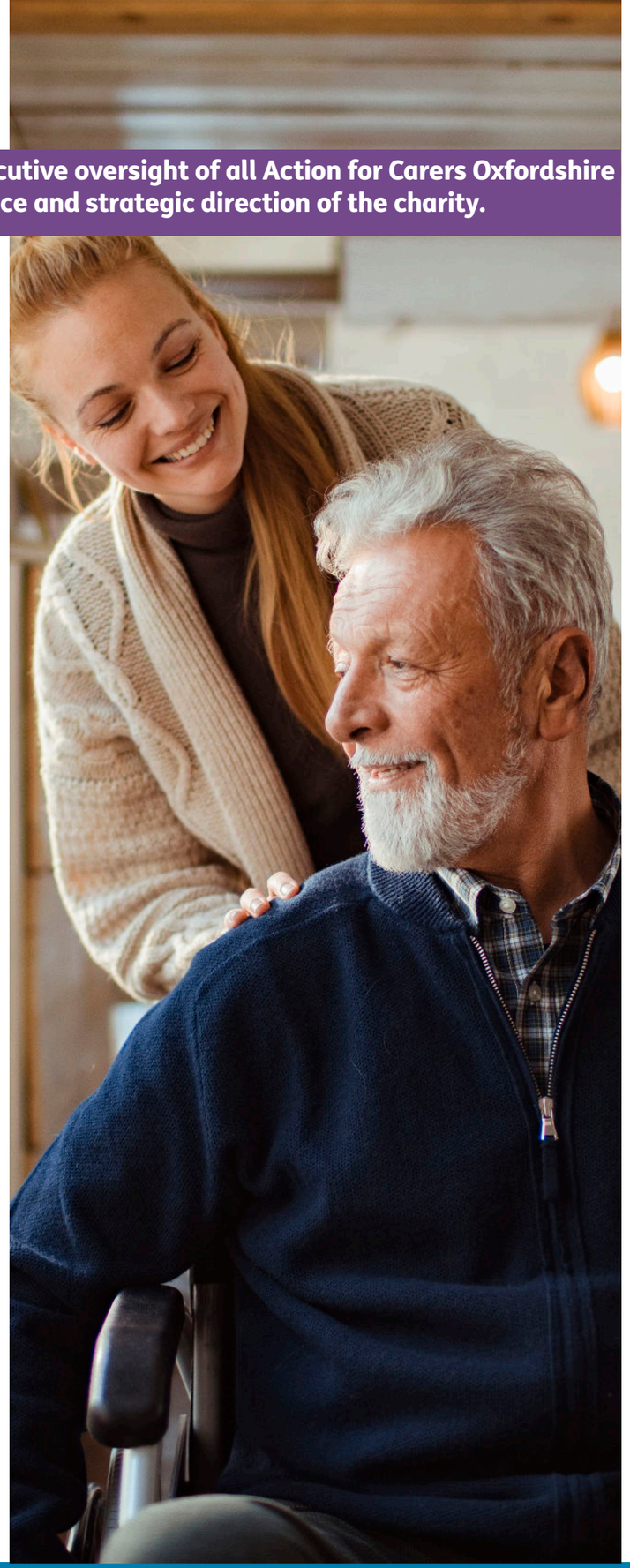
Our support includes:
- Carers assessments
- Telephone helpline
- Short breaks away
- Carers ID cards
- Carers groups
- Courses for carers
- Emergency planning
- Information and signposting
- Care Matters magazine reaching over 9000 carers
- Online communication- website, emails and social media

In 2022/23 we completed 2644 carers assessments, our carers telephone line received 2873 calls offering support and advice to carers and professionals, over 9000 people received our quarterly newsletter and 634 carers took a break from their caring role using our short breaks offer.

- **No. of unpaid carers directly supported per year:** 8,400+
- **Number of staff:** 23
- **Board of trustees:** 7
- **Income (2022-23):** £1,030,993
- **Expenditure (2022-23):** £987,238
- **Free reserves (2022-23):** £487,000

The role

As a trustee, you will provide a non-executive oversight of all Action for Carers Oxfordshire activities and lead the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity.



Trustees have six legal duties

These are to:

1. Make sure their charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
2. Comply with their charity's governing document and the law.
3. Act in their charity's best interests.
4. Manage their charity's resources responsibly.
5. Act with reasonable care and skill.
6. Make sure their charity is accountable.

In addition to the above statutory duties, trustees are encouraged to use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the charity develop its activities.

This may involve:

- Providing guidance on new initiatives.
- Advising or taking the lead on other issues on which the trustee has special expertise.
- Increasing public awareness of the work of Action for Carers Oxfordshire.
- Supporting fundraising at a strategic and practical level.

Specific areas of focus for the board:

Given the needs of the charity and the skills of the current board members, we are particularly interested in increasing diversity to represent Oxfordshire's culture, and bringing to the board the following skills and experience: health, social care and unpaid caring.

Each trustee must have:

- Commitment to the organisation.
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Good, independent judgement.
- An understanding and knowledge of good governance.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

How the board works in practice

Structure of the board

The board of trustees is currently composed of 6 individuals. Different working groups are sometimes established to deal with particular strategic issues.

Time commitment

We hold trustee meetings quarterly in person in Abingdon. The meetings usually last 2 hours. In addition, there is usually one half-day planning a year and an AGM. Papers typically require one to two hours reading per meeting.

Term in office

Our governing documents state that trustees are elected to serve for up to three years. If they wish to continue, they are subject to re-election at the AGM. We ask that trustees provide a minimum of one months' notice if they choose to step down from the board.

How we support you

We want to help new trustees to learn about our organisation and their role within it and we provide an induction programme which includes the opportunity to meet staff and managers. We can also access trustee training programmes, and trustees will have the opportunity to talk to the Chair about their role and address any questions or concerns they may have.

What's in it for you

- Volunteering experience
- Involvement in board activity
- Working with different people
- General management experience

How to apply

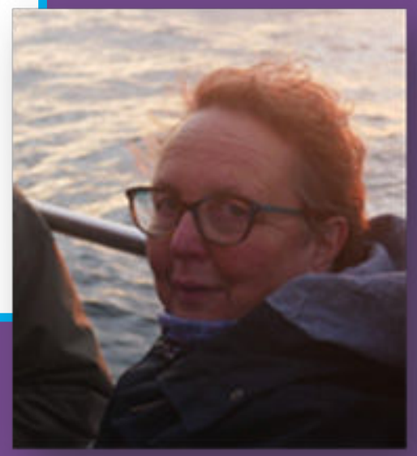
These unremunerated roles are open to all.

Please apply in writing explaining your motivation for becoming a trustee of Action for Carers Oxfordshire, including the experience, expertise and values you would bring to the role.

Email Andrew Lane, Chair of Trustees c/o **vickysteaman@carersoxfordshire.org.uk** or post to Vicky Steaman, Action for Carers Oxfordshire, 9 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT.

Trustees case studies

Sally Foulsham



I joined the board in 2021, having lived in Abingdon for the last 26 years. Previously I worked as a children's worker in an Anglican church in Oxford, and in finance departments in local government and the charity sector. I started a support group for parents and carers of children with special needs and disabilities, which over the last 15 years has supported many families facing the joys and challenges that parenting a child with SEND brings.

Judith Wardle

A split-second misjudgement by Dr Judith Wardle's 5-year-old son crossing a road, left him with a brain injury and her as a carer. She found support services for them both were sparse and difficult to find. So, when a committee was set up in Oxfordshire in 1991 to create an organisation for carers, she knew she had to offer the skills she learned as an English lecturer - adapting language to different audiences, public speaking, and chairing meetings. In 2010 after a new career as a charity CEO, Judith returned to the Board of the Carers Forum as a trustee. At this time, the forum transformed into Action for Carers Oxfordshire. She brought extensive knowledge of structures of the NHS and social care, experience in charity legislation and accounts, and parliamentary lobbying.

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Action for Carers (Oxfordshire) is a local independent charity offering information, advice and support to adult carers of someone living in the county, and is the lead provider of the Carers Oxfordshire service. Registered charity no.1149577 and company limited by guarantee no.08125002, registered in England and Wales.