

## Little things can make a **big** difference.



### Jo and Mary

Mum can compile her shopping list as and when she thinks about it, and I can do her shopping for her.

<https://www.vistablind.org.uk/about-vista/case-studies/jo-and-mary/>



### Cameron

It felt amazing to be able to drive, I'd rate the experience 1,000 stars.

Cameron, 12, was born with sight loss and his vision is very limited. He said "I'd like if I could see a bit better, because I can sometimes do things on my own but sometimes I need help."

<https://www.vistablind.org.uk/about-vista/case-studies/cameron/>

# Board Trustee Information Pack

## [www.vistablind.org.uk](http://www.vistablind.org.uk)

### Introduction

Vista is an independent, local charity providing information, support and care to people affected by sight loss living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Our three core aims are:

- To prevent avoidable sight loss
- To reduce the impact of sight loss
- To provide care and support to people affected by sight loss

Our Board of Trustees comprises up to 12 volunteers who bring their knowledge and experience to help lead and govern our charity and make sure we are fit for purpose today and for the future. As part of the routine rotation of board members, we are looking to recruit new trustees to strengthen our board.

Susan Hoath, CEO, said “Our Trustees are really special people. They bring a diverse range of perspectives and skills to provide strategic vision, create opportunities and hold the whole Vista team to account. The past two years have been challenging for so many charities and we are extremely grateful for the support of our trustees, keeping us going through-out and making sure that we continue to plan for the future.”

Vista is a local charity, and so it is important that our trustees have strong connections to the diverse communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and

Rutland.

## Vista's Values

**We care about people.** Challenging unfairness and inequality, we recognise and value people as individuals.

**We are not afraid to change.** Passionate and creative in our work, we are ambitious in our expectations of ourselves and others.

**We listen and learn.** We are driven by the needs, ideas and experiences of the people we support, learning from them and each other.

**We are open and honest.** Together we seek feedback, grow ideas and make a difference. We do what we say we are going to do.

**We work best as a team.** Everyone's contribution to our work is valued. We support each other to achieve our best and hold each other to account.

**We are proud of Vista.** We measure the quality and impact of our work, demonstrating best practice. Each of us is an Ambassador.

## About Vista

Vista is a specialist charity, providing services and support to people affected by sight loss. We support people of all ages, across all local communities, regardless of the cause or impact of their sight loss and we know that the right help at the right time changes lives. We aim to be there when it matters, and our services include:

- For children, families and young people:
  - Staff attached to Paediatrics clinics at University Hospitals Leicester to advise and support families at the point of diagnosis
  - Habilitation (mobility, orientation and life-skills training) for children and young people
  - Family support and activities for visually impaired children, their parents, carers and siblings
  
- For adults:
  - Staff attached to Ophthalmology (Eye Clinics) at University Hospitals Leicester and a community Low Vision Service
  - Needs assessment and support planning

- Rehabilitation including mobility and orientation and training to regain or retain everyday living skills for people with sight loss or dual sensory loss (deafblind)
  - Access to assistive technology, aids and equipment and support to choose and use digital technology
  - Specialist information, advice and guidance
  - Specialist residential care for people with learning disabilities and complex needs
  - Residential care for older people and those with dementia
  - Making connections with other people and local communities and creating opportunities to train and volunteer
- For the wider community
- Training and support for Early Years providers
  - Child screening and education tools for local schools
  - Mobile Screening and Health Promotion
  - Sight Loss awareness

We are funded from a range of sources including fees for residential places, large grants and awards, local authority and NHS contracts and fundraising.

Supported from an office in Leicester, the majority of our services are delivered in our communities, our residential settings and in people's homes. Vista employs around 300 people and has a similar number of volunteers working across all areas of our organisation.

## About you

As part of the natural turn-over, we are always interested in speaking to people who could be right for our board and who bring one or more of the following:

- a lived experience of sight loss and skills, knowledge and experience that will strengthen the board
- familiarity with the concepts and principles of charity governance and finance
- professional experience in a role that can offer us advice and support, for example: HR, contract law, health and social care, facilities and estates, IT and digital infrastructure, marketing or communications
- skills to support our fundraising team and champion everyone's role in fundraising for Vista
- experience of successfully working in a leadership or governance role, successfully dealing with strategic issues, interpreting complex information and business planning

- experience of acting as a credible ambassador for an organisation

Although desirable, prior charity board experience is not essential, and we will provide training and support.

## About the Role

### Time commitment

Vista's Trustees are great; attending our quarterly Trustee meetings which last 2 to 3 hours and reading their papers which are circulated before the meeting – asking questions in advance where appropriate so that they have the information they need to inform discussion and decision. Most are also a member of at least one of our Board Committees.

In addition to these formal meetings, the board meets up to four times a year for informal strategic, development or training sessions and they are encouraged to attend events which occur in ad hoc fashion throughout the year.

The role will require a time commitment of approximately 15 days per annum. This includes:

- 4 formal Board meetings per annum (2 hours per meeting)
- 4 x subcommittees per annum
- 4 board development sessions per annum
- Preparation for meetings including reading time for all papers.
- The Annual General Meeting
- Attending ad-hoc events and engaging informally with our beneficiaries and team

In addition, those trustees who can build a closer relationship with Vista's frontline services will need to commit a further 4 hours a month to get to know - and periodically visit - our services.

### Term of office

The position of Trustee is appointed for a period of 4 years, with the option to serve a second 4-year term.

### Financials

This position is unremunerated but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

### Location

In-person meetings are either held in Vista Offices on New Walk in Leicester or in other local venues around Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Some meetings are carried out remotely (using Teams or Zoom).

## **Primary Objectives**

A Trustee has three main responsibilities:

- To hold Vista in trust and to ensure public confidence
- To determine the overall direction of Vista through sound governance
- To provide leadership

## **Specific Duties**

1. To ensure that Vista complies with its Memorandum & Articles of Association, charity law, company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
2. To ensure that Vista pursues its charitable objects as defined in its Memorandum & Articles of Association.
3. To ensure that Vista applies its resources exclusively in furtherance of its objects. In other words, to ensure that Vista does not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities may be.
4. To actively contribute to the role that the Board of Trustees carries, to give firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
5. To safeguard Vista's good name and values.
6. To ensure the effective and efficient administration of Vista.
7. To ensure the financial stability of Vista.
8. To ensure the proper investment of funds.
9. To appoint and support the Chief Executive Officer and to monitor his or her performance.
10. To represent Vista's agreed position or decisions when speaking publicly and to be an ambassador for Vista.

11. To regularly attend and contribute to meetings of the Board of Trustees and any committees, sub-committees or working groups as required.
12. To use any specific knowledge, skills or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the Board on new initiatives or other issues, relevant to areas of Vista's work in which the Trustee has special expertise.
13. Trustees are legally accountable to the members of Vista and to the Inland Revenue, HM Customs & Excise and the Charity Commission.

A Trustee has the following legal obligations that should be understood and complied with:

- To act rationally, sensibly, carefully and with proper advice in financial and other matters, ensuring that assets are not misused but applied to the charitable objects of Vista and that investments are handled properly.
- Not to enter into financial commitment unless reasonably sure that Vista will have adequate funds to meet any payments due.
- Not to benefit personally, either directly or indirectly, except in the strictly limited and defined ways that are laid out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. E.g. reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses.
- Not to make a profit out of the position of trust or to be in a position where the duties and responsibilities as a Trustee might conflict with personal interests.
- Not to charge for time, trouble or expertise in administering the work of Vista, nor to derive any benefit from it.

## **For information or to apply**

Trustees serve a fixed term of office, so we are always interested in meeting and talking to potential new board members. Please contact our CEO or Chair of Trustees in the first instance:





Susan Hoath, CEO:  
[susan.hoath@vistablind.org.uk](mailto:susan.hoath@vistablind.org.uk)



Pauline Tagg, MBE, Chair:  
[pauline.tagg@vistablind.org.uk](mailto:pauline.tagg@vistablind.org.uk)

For more information about our work, visit:

[www.vistablind.org.uk](http://www.vistablind.org.uk) and [www.vistablind-cyp.org.uk](http://www.vistablind-cyp.org.uk)