Recruitment Pack for Board Trustee Role

July 2025

Design in Mental Health Network

Intro from Philip Ross, Chair of The Design In Mental Health Network

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in joining the Design in Mental Health Network (DiMHN)

Founded in 2006, DiMHN is a charity dedicated to transforming mental healthcare environments through better design. We believe that the spaces where mental health care takes place are not just buildings or backdrops; they are active participants in care, recovery, and well-being.

When designed well, they can reduce distress, support dignity, promote healing, and improve outcomes for both those receiving and giving care. When designed poorly, they can do the opposite: increase anxiety, undermine safety, and cause lasting harm. Sadly, too many of today's environments still fall short.

This work matters deeply to me. I have seen firsthand how the right environment can reduce fear, build trust, and support healing and how the wrong one can have a lasting negative impact. Good design is not cosmetic. It is fundamental to compassionate, effective, and equitable mental health care.

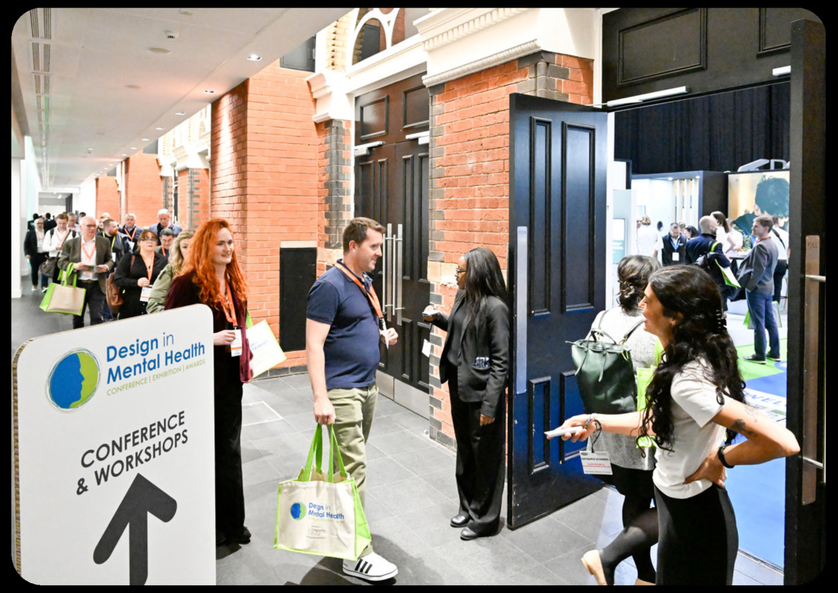
This focus has never been more critical. Mental health needs are rising, while care settings are shifting from hospitals to community hubs, homes, schools, workplaces, and digital immersive worlds. The future is about designing every environment with good mental health in mind. At this pivotal moment, the need for inclusive, evidence-based design is more important than ever. Together, we are repairing what is not working and reimagining and shaping spaces that reflect the dignity, hope, and care everyone deserves.

Where can you support?

We are looking for volunteer Trustees who will bring their insights, connections, and commitment to help us challenge the status quo, influence, and drive innovation in mental health design. The Trustee Board has a strong and constructive relationship with the executive, guiding, questioning, and supporting strategy and implementation. With a small team, trustees also occasionally contribute their expertise to support our work.

Over the past six months, we have welcomed a new Chief Executive (Charlotte Burrows) and begun strengthening our board to support an evolving and ambitious strategy as interest in our work grows internationally. We are seeking to expand and diversify our board to help shape DiMHN's next phase. With two valued Trustees reaching the end of their terms shortly, this presents a natural opportunity to bring in new perspectives and build on the insight, energy, and leadership that already exists. Thank you for considering joining us at such an exciting moment in our journey.

Design in Mental Health Network

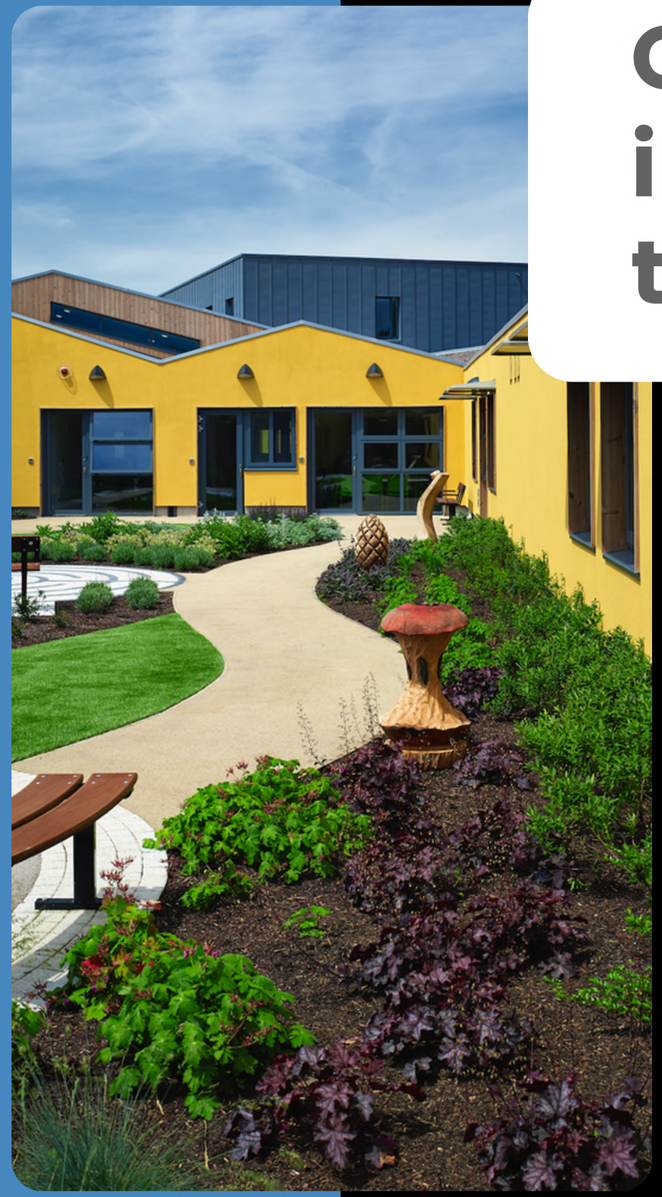


Impact of poor design on our mental health

The Design in Mental Health Network (DiMHN) is a UK-based charity dedicated to improving the environments in which mental health care and support are delivered.
The environments in which mental health care takes place matter.

Yet despite growing evidence, the influence of design on mental well-being is too often overlooked. The spaces where care happens shape how care is experienced. For people receiving mental health support, often at times of acute distress or vulnerability, the environment can aid healing or amplify harm.

Environments are not just backdrops to mental health care; they are active participants in it.
Since 2006, DiMHN has brought together people from mental healthcare, architecture, design, manufacturing, academia, and lived experience to shape safer, more therapeutic spaces for those accessing mental health services and support.



Our purpose is to improve mental health through better design.

We achieve this by sharing best practices, promoting inclusive approaches, and disseminating evidence-based research to inform the design of mental health environments.

Rooted in lived experience and real-world evidence, our work raises awareness of how good design can improve mental wellbeing.

Why it matters

Evidence shows that well-designed mental health settings and environments can lead to better mental health outcomes, including reduced anxiety, shorter hospital stays, improved safety, and increased staff well-being.

Yet, despite this, mental health environments have historically received less investment, innovation, and design attention than other areas of healthcare.

We would love for you to join us in shaping the future of mental health environments through good design.

Why Join Our Purpose-led Mission?

Our work is currently focused on four core work streams to improve mental health outcomes through better design:

1. Informed Choices – Testing Products for Safer Environments

Until recently, there was no consistent standard for assessing whether products were safe and appropriate for use in mental health settings. This left clinicians and estates teams reliant on manufacturer claims or ad hoc testing. To address this, DiMHN partnered with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and over 100 experts to develop a global testing method for products used in mental health environments. This is not a pass/fail system; it grades products based on how well they perform across a range of clinical settings, helping teams make informed, context-sensitive decisions.

Our Work

Why Join Our Purpose-led Mission?

2. Membership – Building a Connected, Informed Community

We are a membership-based organisation, bringing together individuals and organisations with a shared interest in shaping environments that support better mental health.
Our community includes designers, clinicians, service users, estates teams, academics, and manufacturers; together, they are committed to learning, sharing insight, and working collaboratively to improve outcomes.

3. Research & Education – Translating Evidence into Impact

Our research work is rooted in both academic and real-world collaborations. Our Design with People in Mind book series is a cornerstone of our research and education offering. With ten volumes published to date, this series translates research into accessible insights for those seeking to make evidence-based changes and improve outcomes in mental health settings.

Our Work

Why Join Our Purpose-led Mission?

4. International Collaboration

We are actively exploring opportunities to expand our global impact, starting with North America. DiMHN is currently collaborating with a growing network of architects and healthcare leaders in the United States and Canada to establish strong connections and promote our shared commitment to enhancing mental health outcomes through improved design.

Our Work

Trustee role and what we are looking for

First and foremost, we are seeking individuals (like you) who are inspired by our purpose and values and who want to join us in shaping the future of mental health environments through exceptional design. You don’t need previous board experience to apply.

We warmly encourage applications from individuals with lived experience of mental health care, as well as from people in communities currently underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles.

At DiMHN, our work is grounded in our core values.

Be Courageous

You're willing to ask challenging questions, confront assumptions, and help push boundaries to make mental health spaces more inclusive and compassionate.

Empathy in Design

You understand that good design starts with empathy. Whether through lived experience or professional perspective, you value collaboration and co-production with those who access mental health care and support.

Evidence-Led, Impact-Driven

You're curious, reflective, and motivated by real-world change. You use evidence to guide decisions and are focused on outcomes that make a difference.

Improve Together

You believe in learning together. You're generous with your skills and committed to helping the DiMHN and the wider sector grow stronger through collective action.

Role Description: Trustee

Design in Mental Health Network

The Board of Trustees is jointly responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, its financial health, its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing documents, legal and regulatory guidelines. In essence, this means that we expect you to take an active interest in the charity, ask lots of questions, and, when appropriate, challenge other members of the Board of Trustees, the CEO, or staff members.

Key Responsibilities of DiMHN Trustees:

- **Provide strategic leadership**: Set and review the charity's mission, vision, and values. Set strategic direction for the Charity, define goals and evaluate performance.
- **Ensure legal and regulatory compliance**: Fulfil duties under Charity Law and comply with the Charity Commission's requirements, including submission of annual reports, accounts, and returns.

Role Description: Trustee

- **Monitor the performance of the Chief Executive**, ensuring strong executive leadership is in place and that Charity staff are effectively managed, developed, appraised and rewarded.
- **Approve proposed plans and budgets** to empower the Charity's executive to deliver operationally against agreed plans.
- **Promote and uphold DiMHN's charitable aims**: Ensure all activities, partnerships, and resources advance DiMHN's purpose: to improve mental health outcomes through better design.
- **Safeguard the charity's assets**: Provide oversight of DiMHN's resources and operations, ensuring that property, investments, digital platforms, and intellectual property are protected and used effectively.
- **Champion ethical partnerships**: Ensure all income-generating activities and funding partnerships align with DiMHN's values and comply with relevant guidance
- **Represent the organisation**: Act as a credible and passionate ambassador for DiMHN, promoting its work to external audiences and expanding its reach and influence.
- **Ensure transparency and accountability**: Uphold the highest standards of integrity and avoid any conflicts of interest or inappropriate use of charitable assets.

Design in Mental Health Network

Role Description: Trustee

Design in Mental Health Network

Our intention is always to reflect, learn, and grow, and to put in place structures that ensure our new trustees are valued, supported, and can make a full contribution to the Board.

For more information about the role of a trustee, you can refer to this government resource:

The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do (CC3)

What's required of a charity trustee, including your responsibilities to your charity.

Person Specification

We are looking for individuals who bring:

- A clear commitment to DiMHN's values and purpose, and a belief in the role of good design to improve mental health outcomes
- Strategic thinking and independent judgement, with the ability to see the bigger picture while attending to detail.
- Integrity, objectivity, and a strong sense of accountability, upholding the highest standards in governance and decision-making.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, able to listen with empathy, communicate with clarity, and build trusted relationships.
- Willingness to invest the necessary time and energy, prepared to contribute meaningfully to meetings, committees, and broader trustee duties.

Person Specification

Some of the areas where we would particularly value new perspectives and expertise:

Note: If you don't see yourself in this particular role, but you connect to our purpose and feel you have something to offer, please do get in touch; we would love to hear from you too. There may be another collaborative or volunteer role in the organisation that is best suited to you.

Mental Health Service Delivery and the Policy Landscape
Whether your experience is in clinical services, commissioning, mental health estates, community settings, or through lived experience, we're looking for people who are passionate about improving the environments where mental health care takes place. As care increasingly happens beyond hospitals, in schools, housing, workplaces, and communities, your insight can help us influence policy, shape standards, and ensure good design is embedded wherever care is delivered.

Person Specification

Digital Technology
As digital and physical care environments continue to converge, we are looking for individuals who can contribute to digital strategy, health technologies, AI, or immersive Technologies. Your insight will help us shape the future of blended therapeutic environments.

Commercial, Income & Financial Strategy
We are seeking individuals with experience in commercial partnerships, business growth, income generation, or financial planning, particularly within the health, social impact, or design sectors. Your input could help us strengthen DiMHN's economic resilience, develop new revenue models, and build strategic collaborations that grow our influence and sustainability.

Research & Evaluation
We are looking for individuals with experience in academic research, evaluation, or impact measurement. Your input will help us grow DiMHN's evidence base, support our members with real-world insight, and demonstrate the value of better design in improving mental health outcomes.

Terms of Appointment

Trustees are appointed for an initial term of 3 years. They may be reappointed for up to 3 consecutive terms.

Trustees typically contribute **8–12 hours per month**.
The commitment includes attending four board meetings per year and our annual conference in June. In addition to these, Trustees are encouraged to contribute to other aspects of DiMHN's work, depending on their interests and expertise, which may include:

- Participating in sub-committees
- Supporting recruitment
- Reviewing papers
- Attending events or representing DiMHN
- Taking on one-off tasks or advisory roles

We run several working groups, including Marketing**,** Conference Advisory**,** International**,** and Informed Choices, and you would be invited to join one that aligns with your skills and interests.
Training and development costs will also be covered. All trustees will be supported with any role-specific training needs, alongside a clear objective-setting and appraisal process.

Terms of Appointment

Expenses

This is a voluntary, non-remunerated position.
However, DiMHN will reimburse travel and out-of-pocket expenses incurred while carrying out Trustee duties, in line with our expenses policy.

- DBS checks, where required, will be covered by DiMHN.

DBS checks, formerly known as CRB checks, are criminal record checks carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales.

Location

Most board meetings take place online. We aim to have a full-day strategy in person and encourage attendance at our annual conference in June.

Eligibility

You must be at least 18 years old to serve as a Trustee of DiMHN and must not be disqualified from acting as a trustee under charity law. For further guidance, please refer to the Charity Commission's publication: The Essential Trustee.

Terms of Appointment

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

We are actively working to improve the diversity of our Board, recognising that inclusive leadership strengthens both our governance and our ability to achieve our purpose.

Diverse perspectives lead to better decisions, richer insight, and more equitable outcomes for the communities we serve.

We know that some groups remain underrepresented in charity governance, including people from racialised communities, disabled people, LGBTQAI+ individuals, younger adults, and people with lived experience of mental health. We also value regional diversity and welcome applications from across the UK.

We encourage applications from individuals who may not have previously held a trustee role, and we're happy to offer guidance throughout the process. If you have access needs or require adjustments to participate, please let us know. We will do everything we can to support you in engaging fully.

Key Dates

Applications Open: July 2025
Applications Close: 5 pm, Friday 5th September 2025
Interview Dates: 15th September (PM) and 17th September (AM) - if not possible, we seek to accommodate applicants.

How to Apply

We aim to make the recruitment process a mutually supportive one, so that you get to know us and we get to know you. Ultimately, we aim to make the right decision for you and the DiMHN.
To apply to become a Trustee, please submit your CV and either a written statement (2-pages max) or a video or audio recording (5 minutes max).

Please send to **workwithus@dimhn.org** with the email title: '[Your Name] Trustee Role'.

Please ensure your statement or video/audio recording covers the following points:

- What motivated you to apply, and why would you like to become a Trustee for DiMHN?
- What would you bring to the organisation? Please tell us about the skills, knowledge, and experience you would bring to help us achieve our purpose. This might include lived or professional experience that relates to the areas outlined in the person specification, or other strengths you believe would add value to the Board.
- (Optional) Is there anything else you'd like us to know? This could include barriers to participation, or what support might help you thrive in the role.