

# Chair of Trustees National Star



**National Star**

Realising the aspirations  
of people with disabilities

vbs

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your interest in joining National Star as the charity's new Chair of Trustees. I have been involved with the charity for more than 20 years and have seen many changes to the organisation in that period.

What hasn't changed is the culture and ethos of National Star which motivate both students and staff. Everyone who works at National Star, not only the staff working directly with students and residents, is passionate about playing their part in helping young people with complex disabilities to achieve their aspirations. What motivates us all is seeing students and residents realising their full potential and living as independently as possible, often working and volunteering in their local communities, when they leave college.

National Star is recognised as a centre of excellence in specialist education. This national recognition has been achieved thanks to the charity's culture of continuous improvement. Quality is key and is what we continually strive to uphold, and National Star has never sat back and rested on its laurels. It actively seeks feedback from the young people it supports, their families, staff and other stakeholders and makes changes to meet their needs. Click [here](#) to discover what education means to National Star students.

National Star is in a strong position and, post-COVID, there is a reignited passion to grow and develop. The challenges we faced in continuing to provide our services during the pandemic were very considerable but, as usual with National Star staff they rose to the occasion and in fact we learnt some good lessons to help us improve the delivery of our services going forward. The challenges were not limited to continuing to deliver the required services to our students and residents but, of course, there was a considerable financial challenge that presented itself. That, together with the current significant rise in the cost of living have been very carefully monitored and managed and presently we have no external borrowing requirements and have been able to maintain our reserves which we consider adequate.

National Star's strategy is robust and well thought out. Due to our strong financial position we continue to invest in the facilities required to enable students to fulfil their aspirations. Income is being supplemented by growing our non-statutory income; strengthening and diversifying fundraising activity, developing the charity retail operation and launching an external training and consultancy offer. Having recently invested in new student accommodation at Ullenwood (click [here](#) to learn more) the charity is already considering its next capital project to provide improved student facilities.

Partnership working is something that is embraced at National Star. We recognise that our principal skill set includes being able to provide care and education for young people with physical and learning disabilities. That is why the charity's



strategy also includes plans to explore working with a general FE college to run a satellite provision in the south Midlands to meet local need for these services. This model of collaborative working is also being explored for National Star's day college in Wales as a means of sustaining our educational presence in the area. We recognise that there is a need for a new environment for our day college in Wales, and a requirement to build student numbers, to enable us to meet the obvious demand that exists for such services.

The charity's long-term living provision is hugely popular, and we continue to have more demand than places available. Part of the strategy is to further develop long-term residential services for young people who often face being placed in unsuitable accommodation when they leave National Star. Currently we have plans to develop a long-term living provision in Wales by 2026 and to extend the development of our long-term living offering in Malvern.

If you feel this role of Chair of Trustees could be of interest and you are excited by the future of National Star, please submit an application.

**Paul Styles**



National Star is a vibrant national charity providing high quality education, personal development, care, accommodation and support services for young adults with complex disabilities and learning difficulties.

Although we are highly rated by Ofsted, Estyn and the Care Quality Commission, it is the views and opinions of the young people we support and their families, that matter most to us. In 2021-2022, we provided 795,766 hours of service, supported 495 young people and helped 92% of learners fully achieve their personal learning goals. For more than 50 years National Star has supported people with complex disabilities to achieve their aspirations. From those humble beginnings with just 10 students, we now work with more than 500 young people every year.

We employ more than 1,200 staff across England and Wales, many of whom are experts in their field and include healthcare staff, tutors, therapists and specialist professionals such as teams in finance, fundraising, HR, marketing and facilities management. More than 8 per cent of our current workforce has a disability.

We are one of the largest social care and education providers in the South West and recognise that our employees are key to us delivering exceptional care to the people we support. We offer an innovative career development programme, in-house management training and are an apprenticeship trainer and employer. The ongoing challenge to recruit and retain good quality staff means that we invest heavily in employee engagement.

As well as running a highly successful specialist college for day and residential students with disabilities in Ullenwood, Gloucestershire, we also operate day colleges for learners with disabilities in Hereford and Mamhilad in South Wales. Students come from across the UK to learn with us.

We operate work outcomes courses in conjunction with local employers in London and the South West, and highly successful independent travel training programmes in Gloucestershire, Derbyshire, East Sussex and Cambridgeshire.

In addition, we have long-term residential accommodation for young adults with disabilities in Gloucester (Foundation House), Cheltenham (Bradbury Gardens), Malvern (Matrixcare) and Hereford (Ledbury Road).

For further information about the charity and the impact it has had over the past 12 months, please read our latest Annual Report [here](#).

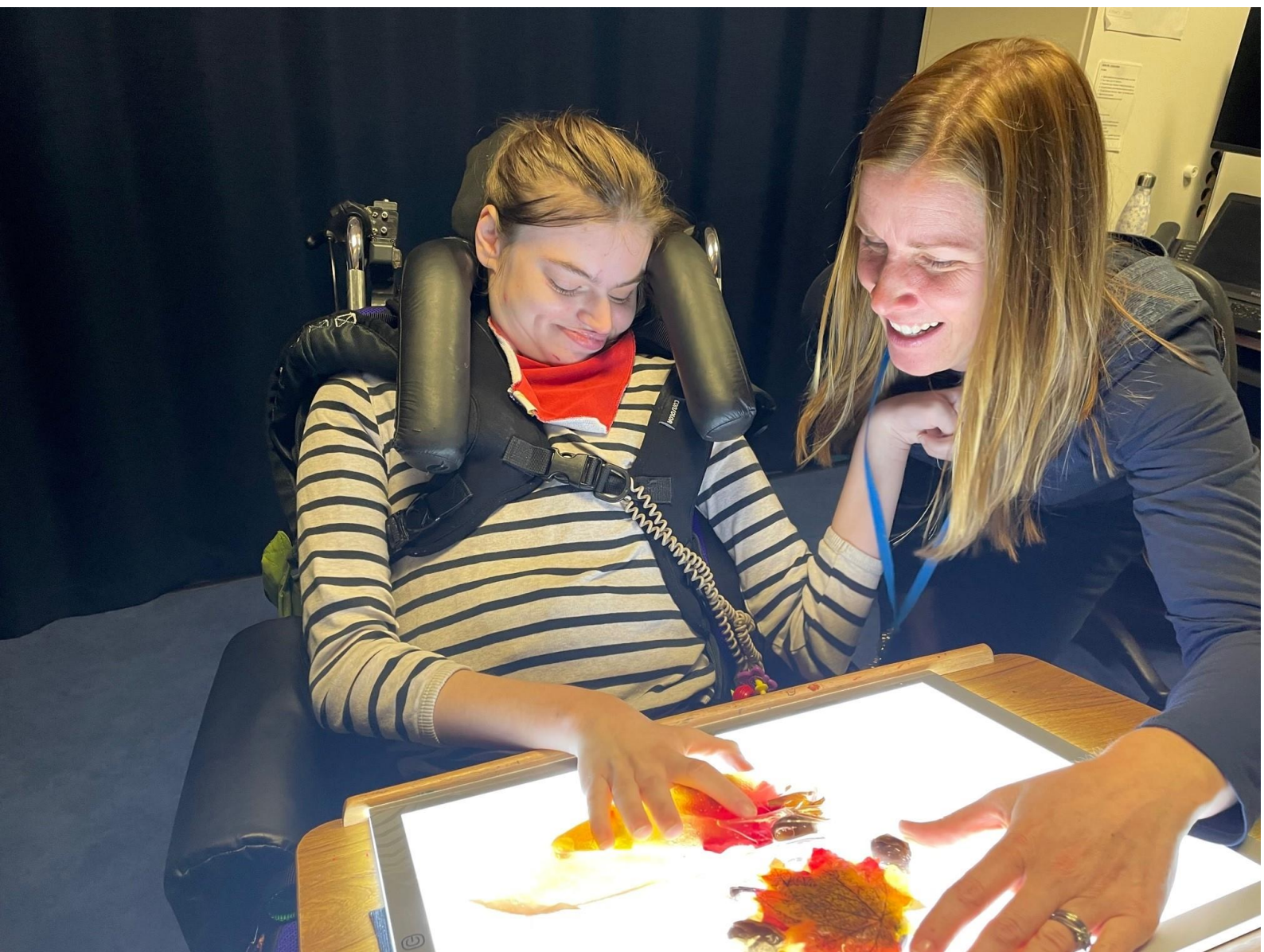
Our ambition for the next five years is to maximise the impact of the charity and increase the number of young people we support to realise their potential. Your expertise as Chair will enable the charity to realise those ambitions.

We are financially and commercially sustainable and have seen substantial growth in the past decade. There is no requirement for external funding. In 2021-2022, the turnover of the charity grew to £36.4m, an increase of £4.1m on the previous year. We



have ambitious plans to be a catalyst for change in the disability sector. Read our strategic plan [here](#).

Our Trustee Board sets the strategy for the charity, working alongside our Governing body. Our vision is of a world in which people with disabilities are able to realise their potential as equal and active citizens in control of their lives. Your involvement as Chair of Trustees would mean you have an active role in enabling us to achieve this vision.



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## Values

We expect everyone on the Trustee Board to demonstrate our core values. We are led by our values:

- Equality
- Diversity
- Self-determination
- Individuality

This means we work with:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Perseverance
- Continuous improvement

## About the board

As the charity is a company limited by guarantee, trustees are also company directors. The Board, which meets quarterly, delegates certain powers in connection with the charity's governance and administration through its committee structure.

**Finance and Investment Committee** – meets quarterly and is responsible for the charity's financial affairs.

**Risk and Assurance Committee** – meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing the charity's risk assessment, risk management and internal controls systems and processes.

**Nominations Committee** – this working group includes representatives of trustees and governors to recruit trustees and governors and determine senior remuneration.

**The Board of Governors** has delegated oversight responsibility for the operational aspects of National Star's programmes and activities, including safeguarding, quality and achievements. At least one Governor sits on the Board of Trustees. The Board of Governors meets quarterly and operates within terms of reference agreed by the Board of Trustees.

[Meet the leadership team – National Star](#)

[Meet the Trustees – National Star](#)

[Meet the Governors – National Star](#)

As Chair of Trustees, you would be maximising your skills and expertise to enable us to bring our strategic plans to life. Your oversight and support of senior managers will be crucial to the growth of the charity.



### Equality and Diversity

National Star is a Disability Confident Employer. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcome applications from all sections of the community, including those currently under-represented on our Trustee board, which includes people with disabilities and members of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.



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### As Chair you will

- Provide leadership to the Board, ensuring Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity.
- Support and where appropriate challenge the CEO and Executive Team, developing a culture where differences of opinion can be aired and resolved.
- Monitor, through the work of the Board and its subcommittees, the performance of the charity, ensuring it satisfies all regulatory and legal compliance requirements.
- Ensure that robust systems and processes are in place to review major risks and mitigate them.
- Ensure that the charity's finances, and internal controls and systems are audited and reviewed regularly.
- Oversee a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size and complexity, stage of development and its charitable objectives.
- Chair trustee meetings effectively to reach clear and agreed decisions.
- Ensure the CEO and colleagues provide the Board with relevant, timely and accurate information.
- In partnership with the CEO, agree respective roles in representing the charity.
- Act as an ambassador for National Star, ensuring the voice of the people we support is at the heart of everything we do.



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**National Star is an open-minded organisation. We are interested in people who have some or all of the following**

- Experience of operating at a senior level as a Chair, trustee or NED with a clear understanding of charity governance and financial management.
- Proven ability as a strategic leader in complex organisations that operate at scale with pace.
- Exposure to social care, education or charity leadership and governance.
- Commercial skills which can be applied in a values-based organisation.
- Ability to represent an organisation externally, to network and to spot opportunities for growth and fundraising.

**Skills and personal qualities**

- Ability to use complex data to help provide strategic leadership.
- Independence of thought and sound judgement.
- An appreciation of the importance of National Star's culture, able to adapt your approach to accommodate cultural preferences and to lead change in a way that works with the prevailing culture.
- Strong interpersonal and relationship building skills with the people we support, families, colleagues, trustees, potential donors and members of the public.
- An open-minded approach to leadership, demonstrating the ability to be comfortable with significant levels of risk and ambiguity.
- Ability and desire to attend National Star and external events.
- An unswerving passion and desire to provide better life opportunities for people with disabilities, ensuring they are at the heart of all decisions.



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## Remuneration and Expenses

Trustees at National Star are volunteers, out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

## Terms of office

As Chair of Trustees, it is envisaged that you will work alongside our existing Chair Paul Styles for a brief period prior to his retirement. Ideally the new Chair will start towards the end of 2023 but there is some flexibility. Paul and the rest of the Trustee board will ensure you receive a comprehensive induction.

## Time Commitment

You should expect to commit to around 3-4 days/month for attending Board meetings, Committee meetings and other adhoc meetings, which are a mix of in-person (usually at Ullenwood) and online.

In addition, you may wish to attend annual Leavers' ceremonies in Ullenwood, Wales and Hereford and the Staff Celebration Event.

## Benefits of joining our Trustee board

By joining our Trustee Board as Chair, you will have the satisfaction of playing a key role in the future development of one of the leading disability charities in England and Wales. Your fresh perspective could help us to see things in a different light and your professional expertise could be utilised to support our staff team in delivering our vision and values.

In gaining a greater understanding of the challenges faced by young people with complex disabilities you will have the satisfaction of playing a key role in ensuring that we continue to deliver excellent outcomes to the people we support and their families.



VBS (Values Based Search) is acting as an advisor to National Star. An executive search process is being carried out by VBS in addition to the public advert.

The closing date for applications is 9am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Completed applications should be sent to [nationalstar@vbsearch.co.uk](mailto:nationalstar@vbsearch.co.uk) using the reference VBS 1005.

Applications should consist of:

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. Please note that the final appointment will be subject to a DBS check.

A covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 which answers the following questions:

- What motivates you to join our Board and why will you be successful?
- What will you bring of yourself, your life experience and your perspective to the Board?
- As a Board member how will you apply National Star's values (Equality, Diversity, Self-Determination and Individuality)

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

Should you wish to discuss the role in strict confidence, please contact our advising consultant at VBS – Rob Hilyer on 07952 316 654 or [rob.hilyer@vbsearch.co.uk](mailto:rob.hilyer@vbsearch.co.uk)

If you require clarification on any aspect of the application or recruitment process, then please use the email address above and we will support you with this.

Closing Date	2nd October
Longlisting	6th October
Preliminary Interview with VBS	w/c 9th October
Shortlist Meeting	24th October
Visits to Ullenwood site and interviews with students	w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> November
Final Panel Interview	17 <sup>th</sup> November