

**SPARK!
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES
RECRUITMENT PACK
2023**

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

Thank you very much for your interest in the position of Chair at Spark!.

After more than 10 years, our current Chair - Will Tyler, is stepping down from his position, and we are now seeking a new Chair to lead our Board. In this role you will help us to take the step-change we need in order to fulfil our new strategic goals and meet our plans for growth and impact.

We are at a crucial juncture in our organisation's journey and it is genuinely an exciting time to be joining a growing and dynamic charity. Over the past 3 years we have more than tripled in size and reach, formed multiple new long-term partnerships, developed our Board, grown our brand, and embedded our presence across west London. We are very ambitious and aim to continue on this trajectory, in order to effectively meet the increased need and demand for our services.

Youth unemployment in London is over 15%, compared to 3.7% of the general population across the UK, and there are significant challenges ahead to effectively 'move the needle' on this embedded problem in our communities. We firmly believe that Spark! has a crucial and central role to play in addressing these issues.

Our [2025 strategy](#) commits us to moving beyond stand-alone programmes and activities, in order to embed a place-based, targeted and systemic approach in addressing the needs related to youth employment in West London, and beyond. This will have a particular focus on those young people who have the most significant barriers to sustained employment.

As Chair, you would be joining a charity with more than 40 years experience and an outstanding reputation, very well-regarded as experts in our communities. Our proud [history](#) sits alongside a clear approach and objectives, long-term corporate partnerships, a talented staff team and a committed Board, placing us in the perfect position to achieve our goals and effect a long-term impact on young people's career prospects. In this position you will play a vital role in ensuring the future success for the charity and the communities we serve.

As CEO I bring more than 30 years experience working in the youth, community and education sectors, having led not-for-profit organisations of all sizes, and I am very much looking forward to welcoming a new Chair to Spark!, who will be able to push us to succeed, actively support and advocate for the charity, and hold us accountable to our commitments and values.

If the above sounds exciting to you, I sincerely hope you choose to apply!



**MATT LENT,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

ABOUT SPARK!

We believe it is possible for all young people to be ready, equipped, motivated and able to enter the world of work, and with youth unemployment rising, there has never been a more important time for our services.

Working in partnership with schools and colleges, voluntary sector partners, and a large and diverse range of [employers and funders](#), we enhance young people's employability skills, knowledge and experience, so they are better prepared for and able to effectively transition into the workplace, finding and keeping a job.

We do this by enabling and supporting long-term relationships between local employers, the education sector and young people, to:

- Create high quality work experience placements and internships
 - Broker inspiring career mentoring relationships
 - Deliver a range of employer engagement and skills development opportunities
- Support transitions into work

Born out of the Hounslow Education Business Partnership, Spark! has been an independent charity since 2010, and now works across West London, in Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow.

We are a small, motivated and passionate team, led by the desire to positively impact on the employment prospects and life chances of young people. We endeavour to live our values; of empowerment, collaboration, reliability, quality, and learning, in our decision making and all that we do.

- 33,948 young people on a Spark! programme or activity since 2010
- 2,724 young people placed into local work experience since 2019
- 354 young people with employment barriers matched with a Mentor
- 2,792 volunteers have supported our work since 2019
- 98 schools and colleges have partnered with Spark! since 2019
- 371 businesses have partnered with Spark! in 2021/22
- 90% of young people stated that they feel better prepared for the workplace
- 100% of young mentees feel more equipped to achieve their career goals

OUR VISION

A society in which all young people are ready, equipped, motivated, and able to enter the world of work.

OUR MISSION

To ensure all young people, particularly those who will most benefit, have access to meaningful employer engagement, work readiness skills development, and employment opportunities, enabling them to transition into sustained work and rewarding careers.

OUR VALUES

EMPOWERMENT

We believe in empowering young people, ourselves, and others, to be self-determining in achieving personal and professional goals.

COLLABORATION

We believe that a collaborative approach is the most productive and effective way to work, and actively seek to be inclusive and partner with others in achieving our vision and mission.

RELIABILITY

We strive to always be reliable, dependable, and trustworthy in our dealings and interactions with partners and beneficiaries.

QUALITY

We have a continuous commitment to the highest of quality, actively aiming to constantly improve what we do and how we do it.

LEARNING

We are a learning organisation, always seeking to listen, reflect, develop, adapt, and improve.

ABOUT THE ROLE

We are seeking a new Chair to join our Board, helping us to fulfil our 2025 strategy and meet our ambitious plans for growth and impact.

In the past few years we have seen a significant increase in the need and demand for our services. In 2021 we published [our 2025 strategy](#), along with our Theory of Change and an updated Vision, Mission and Values. These combined, define our priority regions and target beneficiaries, and commit to a place-based and collective approach in addressing the challenges related to youth employment.

We have developed our Board and governance to meet the growing needs of our organisation. We onboarded three new trustees in 2022, following our skills audit, are introducing term limits, and are working on building a Youth Board to bring our service users closer to our decision making.

As Chair you will play a vital role in Spark!'s future success, helping us to expand our reach, further develop our governance and deepen our impact for young people who will most benefit from our support.

In this role, you will:

- Hold the Board of Trustees and Executive Team to account for the Charity's mission and vision.
- Provide inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees.
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity.
- Ensure that the Board and Executive functions as a unit and work closely to achieve agreed objectives.
- Support the Chief Executive in the delivery of agreed strategic priorities.
- Act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity, in partnership with the Chief Executive.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We are committed to cultivating a fair and inclusive working environment, where everyone can be themselves and thrive - inclusion is core to the delivery of our mission. We have 17 Young Associates (paid the London Living Wage) from one of our target areas (Brent) who are leading peer-led research to inform our practice and delivery priorities to better meet entrenched challenges in the borough. Alongside this, we've implemented flexible and hybrid working, recently reviewed and updated our DEI policy, reviewed and updated our Parental Leave policy, and appointed two Young Trustees.

In this recruitment, we actively encourage applications from anyone regardless of age, experience, sexuality, religion/beliefs, disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, socioeconomic background or other differences.

During the application process we commit to:

- Paying for childcare and care costs whilst you are at interviews.
- Paying for your travel costs to the office and back for interviews.
- Making any reasonable adjustments – for example ensuring we have a sign language interpreter organised in advance if you'd like them.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.
- Offering a guaranteed first stage interview with Inclusive Boards for disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the role.

If there is anything else you are concerned about or think we could provide, please let us know.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Provide leadership to the Charity and its Board, ensuring that the Charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries.
- Monitor the performance and impact of the Trustees in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Charity.
- Responsibility for the Board operating within its charitable objectives, and provide a clear strategic direction for the Charity.
- Ensure the Board is able to regularly review major risks and opportunities, and satisfy itself that it can take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks.
- Responsibility for the Board fulfilling its duties to maintain sound financial health of the Charity, with systems in place to allow financial accountability.

GOVERNANCE

- Responsibility for governance arrangements working in the most effective way for the Charity.
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees.
- Encourage positive change and, where appropriate, address and resolve any conflicts within the Board.
- Regularly refresh the Board of Trustees incorporating the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the Charity effectively.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- Act as a spokesperson and ambassador for the Charity and our cause.
- Maintain close relationships with key influencers and decision-makers within our sector, and in local and national Government.
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events.
- Cultivate new relationships for the benefit of the Charity and our beneficiaries.
- Address any potential conflicts with external stakeholders.


EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision making process.
- Ensure trustees are fully engaged and decisions are taken in the best interests of the Charity.
- Foster and maintain constructive relationships amongst the Trustees, effectively utilising their individual skill sets.
- Work closely with the Chief Executive to provide direction to Board and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of Trustees.
- Monitor that all decisions taken at meetings are implemented and escalate any material risks to be addressed in a timely fashion.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE WIDER MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive.
- Support the Chief Executive, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the executive and the trustee board.
- Maintain regular contact with the Chief Executive and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
- Liaise with the Chief Executive to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing necessary support.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.



"It was a lovely, wonderful, and amazing place to have work experience. The Manager and employees were very kind and respectful. Thank you Spark! for offering me work experience!"

PERSON SPECIFICATION

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Demonstrate a strong and visible commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives and cause.
- The credibility to lead a growing and ambitious charity.
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities, comfortable in an ambassadorial role.
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively.
- Well connected, with strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity.
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment , with strong commitment to inclusive leadership and a facilitative style.
- Ability to commit the required time to conduct the role well, including travel, meetings and events out of office hours.
- A coaching and mentoring mentality to support the collective growth of the Board of Trustees and Executive Team.
- A personal or professional connection to our target area of West London (desirable).



"I had struggled with finding my voice when it came to my career, as I lacked confidence. It was through the mentoring sessions that I gained the knowledge that I needed, and this boosted my confidence massively"

PERSON SPECIFICATION (cont.)

EXPERIENCE

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation.
- Experience in not-for-profit governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees.
- Experience of chairing meetings and events.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the Civil Society sector and current issues affecting it.
- Broad knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges related to youth employment.
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LOCATION

Our meetings currently take place based in our office in Brentford, London, however we expect to be relocating to new premises in 2024.

TIME COMMITMENT

- 5 Trustee Board meetings a year and 5 one-to-one meetings a year with the CEO
- Ad-hoc meetings and discussions as required
- Review and approval of quarterly finance and management reports
- Attendance at Spark! events as required, including our Annual Awards
- Attendance at our annual staff and Trustee social
- Attendance at an annual Trustee strategy and planning meeting

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All candidates will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest. This will be examined to see if an actual conflict exists.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

3 year term (eligible for a maximum of 3 terms)

REMUNERATION

Unremunerated (reasonable expenses will be reimbursed)

HOW TO APPLY

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Inclusive Boards on behalf of Spark!. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by [23.59 02/07/2023](#).

A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements. A covering letter (maximum 2 sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application and will be assessed as part of your full application.

Details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.

If you have further questions after reading this pack, please email spark@inclusiveboards.co.uk or call 0207 267 8369.

Please visit www.inclusiveboards.co.uk/opportunities to apply online or send your CV and cover letter to spark@inclusiveboards.co.uk



"The sessions have been amazing and made me smile and helped me to write out my plans for the future. I learned that goals can be small or big, or short term or long term, and I found out some of my strengths and weaknesses and ways to grow and learn from them."

INCLUSIVE BOARDS

About Us

Inclusive Boards is the UK's leading board diversity practice. We have worked alongside over 300 organisations to provide support with Board recruitment, development and governance reviews. We strive to be at the forefront of equity and diversity, and believe that everyone should be represented at Board level. Additionally, we also provide bespoke training sessions on a variety of subjects including personal branding, inclusive recruitment practices and board structures and governance as well as delivering leadership development programmes for underrepresented leaders across a range of sectors.

Contact us today

Improve diversity on your Board, please don't hesitate to contact us via hello@inclusiveboards.co.uk.

To join a Board, sign up to become a candidate via our website and be notified of the latest opportunities as and when they become available.



www.inclusiveboards.co.uk



[@InclusiveBoards](https://twitter.com/InclusiveBoards)



<https://linkedin.com/company/inclusive-boards>

